POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

HEARTLAND, RIMLAND, & ORGANIC THEORIES
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the concepts of political power and territoriality.
  - **Political power** is expressed geographically as control over people, land, and resources (e.g., heartland, rimland, and organic theories).
  - **Territoriality** is the connection of people, their culture, and their economic systems to the land.
24. Heartland Theory

- Proposed by MacKinder
- The state that controlled the resource-rich “heartland” of Eastern Europe and Western Asia could eventually dominate the world
24. Heartland Theory

- **Pivot Area**: resource-rich Eastern Europe → Siberia
  - Later renamed “the heartland”
- **Inner Crescent**: most of the world’s people & resources
  - Later called “the rimland”
- **World Island**: the Eurasian continent
24. Heartland Theory

- SIG: influential to US containment policy to stop the expansion of the Soviet Union
  - Led to the creation of NATO
24. Heartland Theory

- Ukraine
  - Leading wheat producer
  - Coal resources
  - Black Sea ports
- Hitler invaded Eastern Europe
- Soviet Union controlled after WWII
25. Rimland Theory

- Proposed by Spykman
- Sea power is more valuable and alliance will keep the heartland in check
25. Rimland Theory

- Rimland contains most of the world’s people and large share of the world’s resources
25. Rimland Theory

- **Buffer Zone** between sea and land power:
  - Asia minor
  - Arabia
  - Iran
  - Afghanistan
  - Southeast Asia
  - China
  - Korea
  - East Siberia

- Must defend from both sides
- Security problems
25. Rimland Theory

- NATO formed to keep the heartland in check
- Heartland is trapped by its own geography
- Rimland would use the oceans to control the heartland
- **SIG:** basis for containment theory – keeping communism from spreading
Mackinder’s Heartland Theory

- One Belt, One Road:
  - Massive investment in trade routes with Eurasian countries
- Interior development

Spykman’s Rimland Theory

- South China Sea
- Naval power
Proposed by Ratzel

The state resembles a living organism that needs to consume other territories in order to survive

Based on observations of 19th century states
26. Organic Theory ("Geopolitics")

- Hitler and the Nazis conquer European nations due to racial superiority
- Europeans colonizing (God, gold, glory) → spread Christianity, gain natural resources, own property, and benefit from more land
27. Shatterbelt

- A region caught between stronger colliding external cultural-political forces, under persistent stress, and often fragmented by aggressive rivals
  - Israel (Jews, Christians, Muslims)
  - Kashmir (Muslims in NW India)
  - Eastern Europe during the Cold War
Make Connections!

- Heartland Theory
- Rimland Theory
- Organic Theory (Geopolitics)
- Buffer Zone
- Shatterbelt Region
- Hitler’s German Empire
- ISIS in the Middle East
- UK Navy Power
- US Imperialism in the South Pacific
- Ukraine