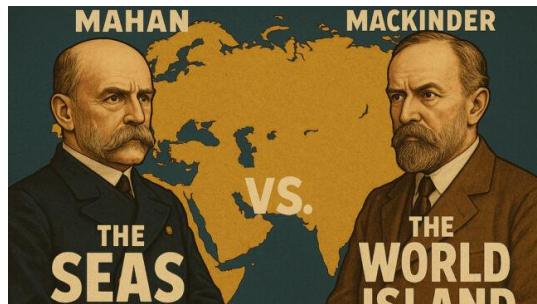


Building Eurasia's New Fortress

By Sean Ring



For over a century, two dead advisors have shaped the way great powers view the world.

On one side, we have Alfred Thayer Mahan—the American naval officer who believed sea power determined global supremacy. According to Mahan, controlling the oceans means controlling trade. If you control trade, you control wealth. If you control wealth... well, you get the picture.

On the other side is Halford Mackinder, the British geographer who argued the exact opposite. Forget the seas, he said. Whoever controls the “World Island”—Eurasia—controls the world. Railways, rivers, pipelines, and land empires are what count. Not frigates and aircraft carriers.

Mahan and Mackinder are no longer with us, but their ideas continue to influence the world today.

And we're watching it unfold.

It's Mahan's World... For Now.

The United States and the United Kingdom—Mahan's spiritual children—have long benefited from an ocean-based order. Ruling the waves built their prosperity and power. The British Empire's reach was maritime. The U.S. Navy now patrols every major sea lane. The dollar reigns supreme because oil, commodities, and trade settle in greenbacks. That world—the Mahan world—is why Americans live like kings while land powers like Russia and China have spent decades playing catch-up.

But Mahan's world has limits. Especially when you try to keep your rivals bottled up in theirs.

That's precisely what the U.S. has tried to do with China.

China's Story

The First and Second Island Chains—stretching from Japan through Taiwan and the Philippines to Guam and Indonesia—are like maritime prison bars

hemming China in. They prevent Beijing from turning its navy into a global force and restrict its access to the open Pacific. And that's no accident. It's U.S. policy.

So what did China do?

Simple: they pivoted landward. Hence, the Belt and Road Initiative. If the Americans and their allies can dominate the seas, the Chinese reasoned, then the answer lies in dominating the land. Ports, railways, roads, pipelines, dry docks, fiber optic cables, and power grids. Not just in Asia, but across Eurasia, the Middle East, Africa, and even into Europe.

What Mackinder once called the "Heartland" is now becoming a Chinese-funded construction site.

Russia's Story

And then there's Russia.

After the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the West slapped Moscow with every sanction it could think of. No dollars. No euros. No Swift. No tank parts. No semiconductor chips. No comfy Davos forums. In effect, the West attempted to sever Russia's ties to the global economy. Cut it off from the ocean-based system.

And how did Russia respond?

They doubled down on Mackinder. On land power. On rivers, specifically.

If you watch the YouTube video [*How Russia Plans to Rule Eurasia by River*](#)—and I strongly suggest you do—it outlines Moscow's plan to build out an internal network of rivers, ports, and rail links that integrate the entire Eurasian landmass. The Volga. The Don. The Ob. The Lena. Not names we normally associate with global trade, but maybe we should.

Chinese Capital and Russian Geography

What's emerging is a strategic marriage between Chinese capital and Russian geography.

One has money and ambition. The other has territory, rivers, and a pressing need to stay relevant. Together, they're laying the foundation for a new continental infrastructure—one that's largely immune to the U.S. Navy, the EU's bureaucracy, or whatever sanctions the White House dreams up next.

Think about what that means.

New trade corridors will be built from China to Europe, bypassing the Strait of Malacca and the Suez Canal. Russian river ports will feed Chinese rail lines into Kazakhstan, Iran, and Turkey. They'll have pipelines that carrier groups can't

blockade. Their digital infrastructure routed through friendly capitals, not Silicon Valley or Brussels.

A Mackinder world. Built in plain sight.

Potential Outcomes

So, where does this go?

There are a few scenarios.

Scenario A: coexistence. The ocean powers maintain dominance over maritime trade, but the Eurasian system becomes a serious, functioning complement. You get a multipolar logistics world—ships and ports meet trains and pipes.

Scenario B: Eurasian ascendancy. The land routes become faster, cheaper, and more secure. Europe, sick of American lectures, cozies up to Asia via Russian and Chinese connections. The sea-based West is beginning to resemble the old system. The future is inland.

Scenario C: confrontation. The U.S. and the UK start sabotaging, sanctioning, or undermining Eurasian projects. Think pipeline explosions, proxy wars, targeted sanctions on Belt and Road nodes. It gets ugly.

Scenario D: synthesis. Everyone accepts that the world now runs on multiple systems. Sea and land. Sanctions and swaps. Rail and sail. You need to hedge your trade routes, just as you hedge your portfolio.

Wrap Up

For now, Mahan's world still rules. The U.S. Navy is unmatched. The dollar is still king. But the Heartland is stirring. The land powers are done playing defense. They're building rivers, rails, roads—and they're doing it without asking Washington for permission.

And if they succeed, Mackinder might finally get the last laugh.

Even if most Americans still have no idea who he was.