

Warming Arctic Ocean Implication for Asia-Pacific Geopolitics

Thematic Discussion 3

Ocean Policy and Maritime Governance

International Symposium on Climate Security in Asia Pacific

February 8, 2024

Kazumine Akimoto

Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Paradigm Shift in Geopolitics brought by ice-free Arctic Ocean

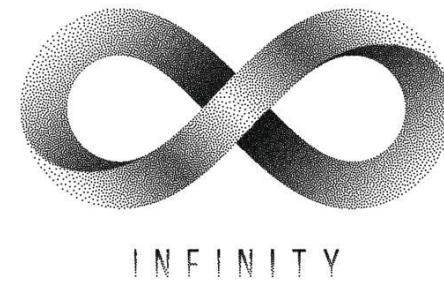
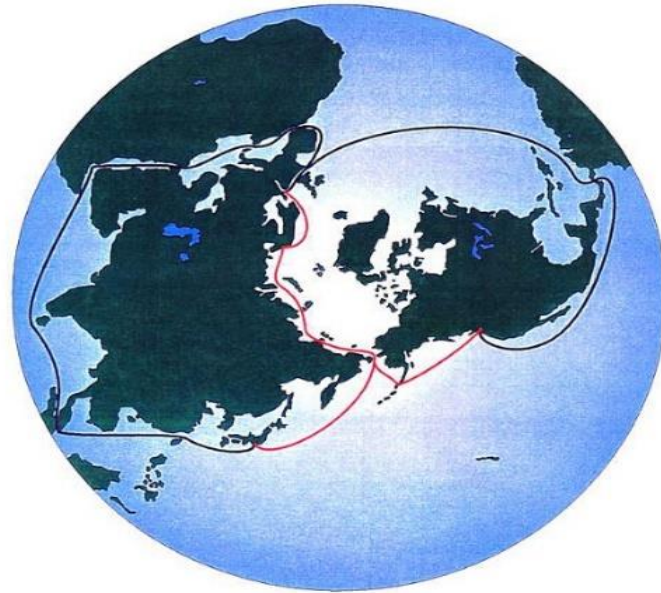
The security environment of the Asia-Pacific region will be bound to change dramatically as melting Arctic sea ice progresses.

A Change in the Sea Lanes

Melting Arctic Ice



Sea Lane + Sea Lane = Sea Circle

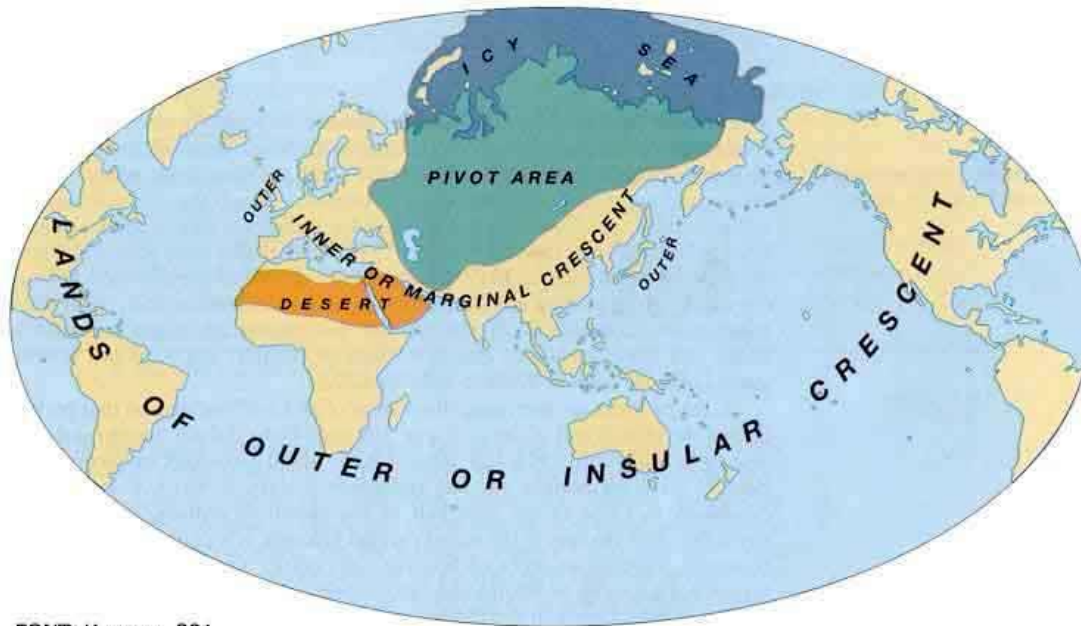


8 shaped infinite Sea Circle going around the world



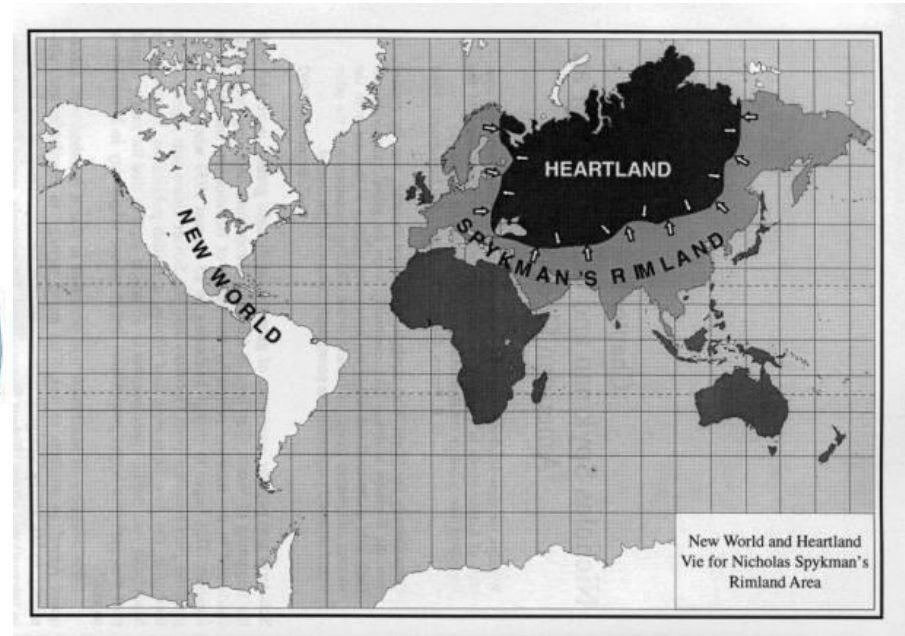
Classical Geopolitics

Mackinder's World



FONT: Knox, p. 391

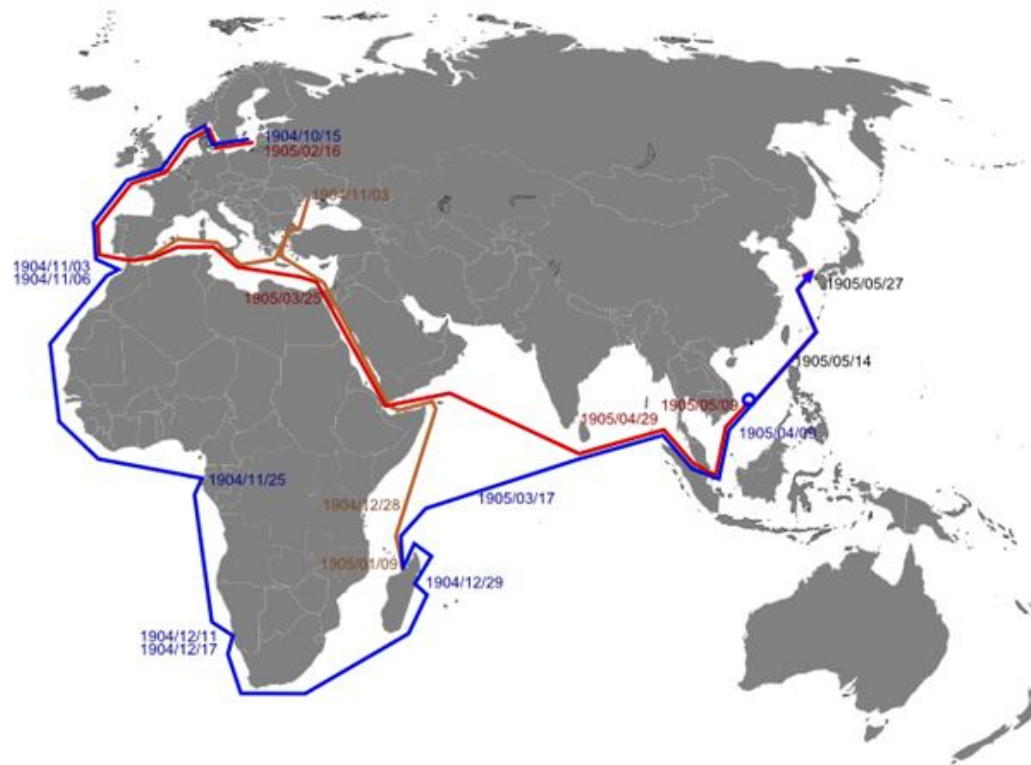
Spykman's World



The deployment of the Baltic Fleet at the Russo-Japanese War

The main forces = blue route

The auxiliary forces = red route



Asia-Pacific as the Geopolitical Pivot New Rimland “Arctic Maritime Corridor”



New Rimland, “Arctic Maritime Corridor”


- brings prosperous and a well shaped governance
to the Asia-Pacific

Or

- cuts possibility of connection for further development
and / or
- brings another security threat to the Asia-Pacific

Depends on the security environment of the Arctic Ocean

Security environment of the Arctic Ocean

- Impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine
 - Increasing military activities in and around the Arctic Ocean
 - Causing apprehension of accidental arms conflict
 - Finland has joined, Sweden has set to join NATO
- 
- Prospect for a stage of the 2nd Cold war or armed conflicts
- Disputes over territories, boundary delimitations

How we should ensure safety security environment around the Arctic Ocean

Considerations;

- Generating a world common recognition for the importance of the safety navigation over the Arctic Maritime Corridor.
- Maintaining the stabilized Arctic security environment

Need for securing the Arctic Ocean

Former U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday called for a massive international exercise in the Arctic similar to Rim of the Pacific at a Brookings Institution panel in Washington, D.C., 7 June 2023

Saying ;

The trade routes between Asia and Europe will fundamentally change in our lifetime due to the erosion of the polar ice cap. The Arctic becomes now an area of competition that we must think more deeply about.

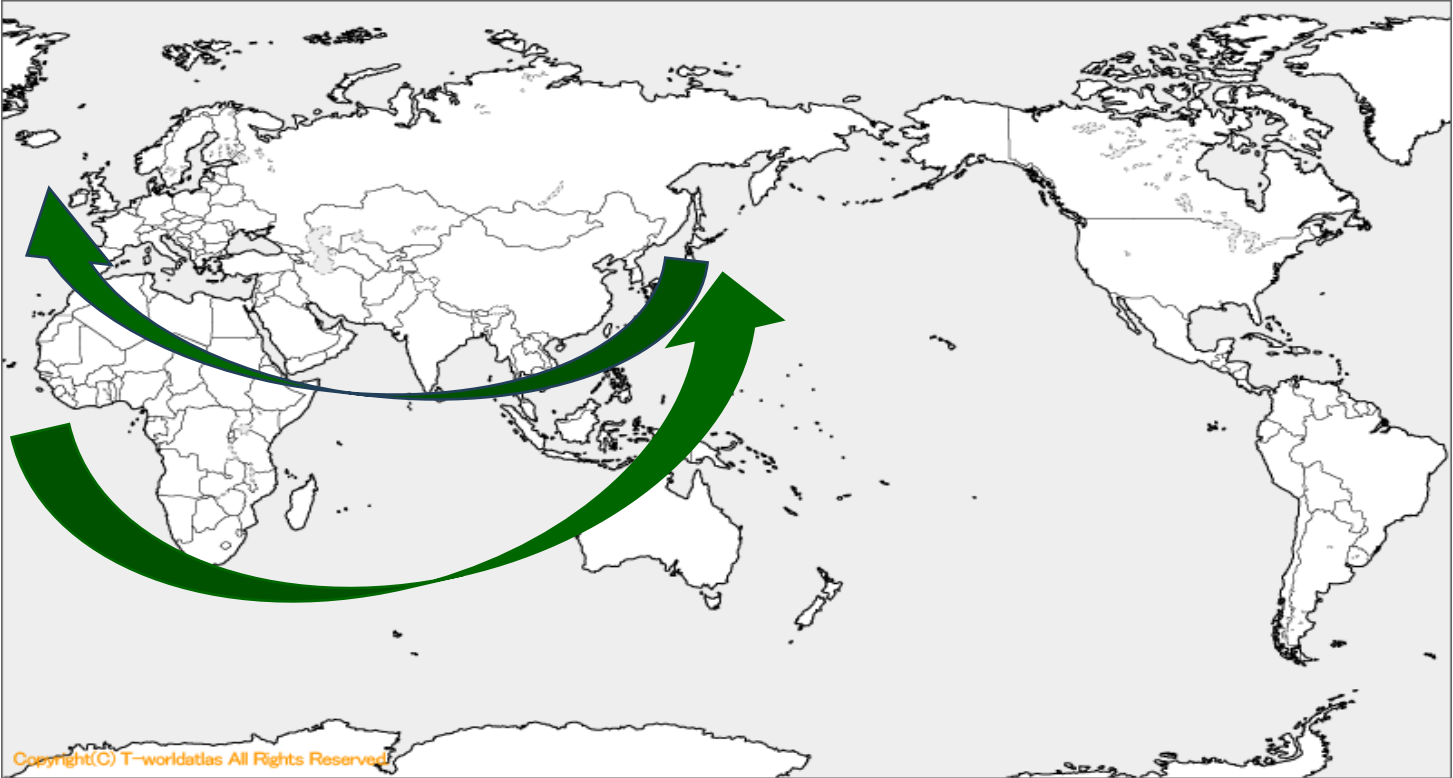
Confluence of the two regions

Intensifying trans-regional joint defense exercise / operation among the likeminded nations across Europe and Asia-Pacific

- Joint exercise
 - *Air Defender 2023*, NATO + Japan, in Germany
 - Coordinated Air Sea drill; France, US, Japan, in East China Sea
 - Naval drill *Noble Typhoon* ; Canada, France, Japan, US, in East China Sea

- Developing new security framework
 - Negotiation started on a New Security Cooperation Plan among NATO, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea
 - Plan of NATO Liaison Office in Tokyo ?
 - Adopted the ITPP between Japan and NATO

Current stage of region to region security interactions



Prospects for change Increasing graphical connectivity between Europe and Asia-Pacific through the Arctic Ocean

