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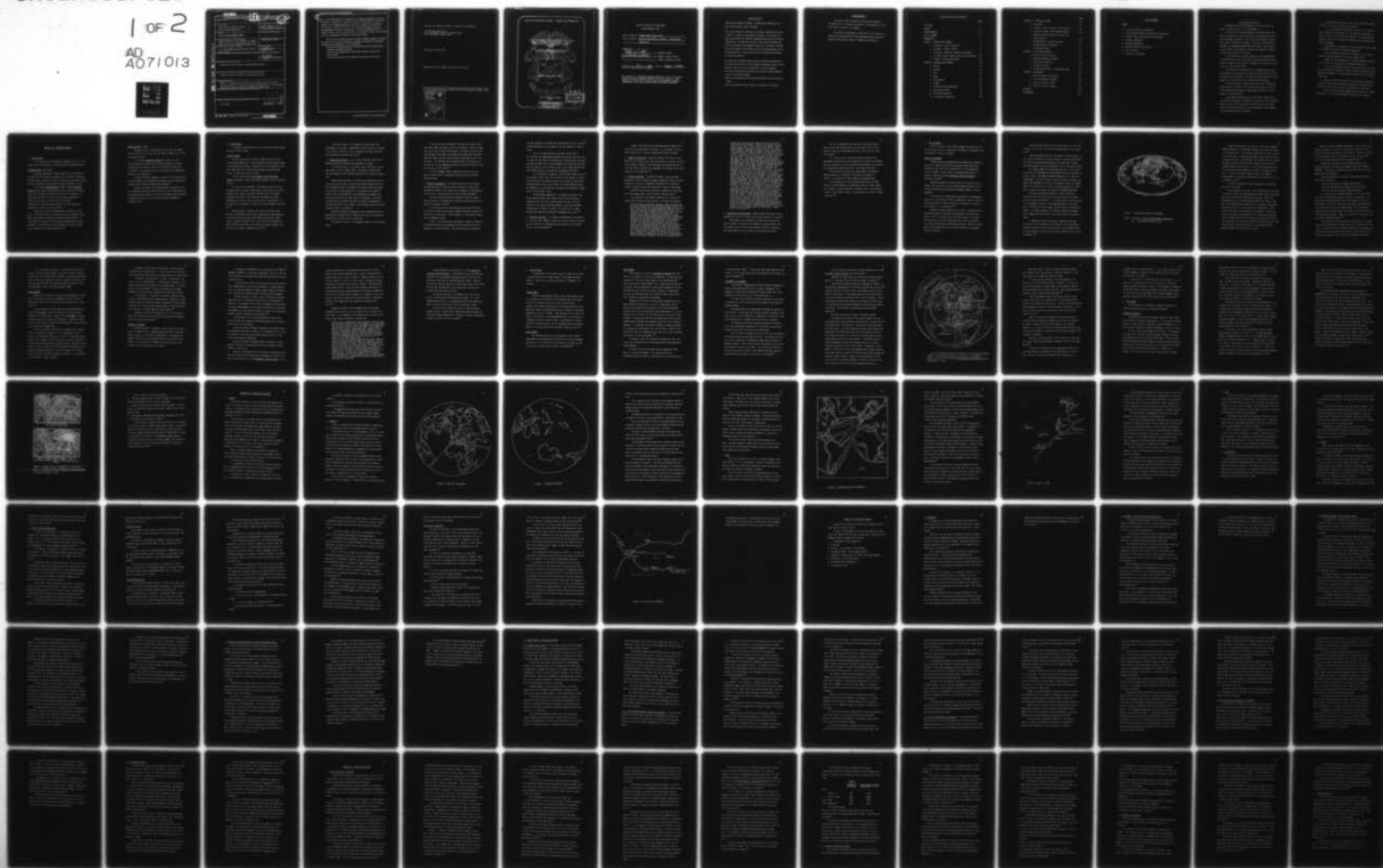
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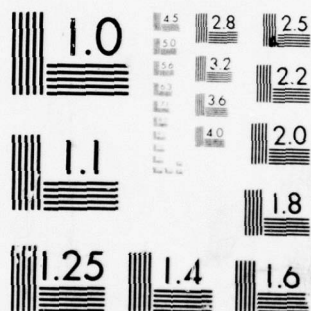
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2 This study attempts to establish the strategic importance and value of Spain in relation to the defense of Europe. The research has been done through four different approaches consisting of analyzing successively : the position of Spain in the light of the main geopolitical theories , the geographic features of the country , the most significant events of Spanish history , and the possible role to be played by Spain in the current political confrontation between the East and the West.

The conclusions reached through the four different approaches confirm and point out the critical strategic importance of Spain in the European scenario and be summarized in these statements :

- Who rules the Heartland and the Iberian Peninsula simultaneously, controls the western Rimland.
- Who rules the Heartland and the western Rimland, controls the World Island.
- Who rules the World Island controls the destiny of the World.

Spain and the Defense of Europe: A Geopolitical Perspective

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U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

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SPAIN AND THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE: A GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

BY

LEANDRO PENAS, MAJOR, SPAIN

AD BELLUM PACE PARATI

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

A B S T R A C T

SPAIN AND THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE: A GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE, by
Major Leandro Penas, Spain, 110 pages.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This thesis is dedicated to the writer's wife, Ana Maria, as a token of his appreciation for her understanding and continuous support during the hours spent in research and reflection.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Throughout the course of Western Civilization, Spain has played a significant role in its development.

Since the first cultures emerged in the Mediterranean Sea, Spain has always been a part of the nation that developed the culture and guided its destiny. Thus, Spain was successively Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian and Roman. On its soil was decided the struggles for supremacy between Rome and Carthage. Great leaders such as Hannibal of Carthage and Trajanus and Theodosius, Emperors of Rome, were also born in its land.

At the time of the greatest expansion of the Moslem Empire, the Iberian Peninsula was the shield that defended Europe from the Saracen conquest and the center--in Cordoba--of the highest cultural life of the world at that time.

The discovery of the new world in the Modern Age, and the colonization and incorporation of America and great parts of Africa and South Asia into western civilization was also done mainly by the people of the Iberian Peninsula, Spaniards and Portuguese.

The Spanish Empire, "where the sun never set", lasted about three centuries (the 16th, 17th, and 18th) giving way to the birth of more than twenty nations with the common heritage of its language, religion and culture.

During these three centuries, Spain played a major role in the permanent struggles for supremacy in Europe and in the Twentieth Century, Spain was the battlefield in which the principal ideologies--liberalism, communism, fascism--contended, and new weapons, tactics and techniques were tested.

What could be the reason for this nearly permanent presence of Spain in the crest of the wave of History?

It is the purpose of this study to find out if the response to this question and the reason for the important role played by Spain in the political and military events is its outstanding geopolitical value in any struggle for the dominion of Europe and the world's supremacy.

The analysis of the geopolitical and strategic value of Spain will be done following four different approaches:

- First, through the review of its position in the light of the most important geopolitical theories (Chapter One);

- Second, by the consideration of the main geographic features of the country and its physical environment (Chapter Two);

- Third, investigating the most significant events in the history of the peninsular people to find out the role that geopolitical patterns have played in the development of Spanish history (Chapter Three); and

- Fourth, through the evaluation of the strategic importance of Spain in the current confrontation between the two major powers and their Allies, that is, NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries.

Finally, the fifth Chapter summarizes the conclusions reached through the four different approaches followed in the research.

CHAPTER ONE: DOCTRINAL THEORIES

1 - The Precursors.

As the precursors of the science of geopolitics, we will consider briefly the theories of Friedrich Ratzel and Rudolf Kjellen.

FRIEDRICH RATZEL (1844-1904)

The German geographer Friedrich Ratzel can be considered to be precursor of the Science of Geopolitics. With him, the new geographers began to study the physical conditions of the earth to find out which geographic factors enable a state to achieve its ends.¹

In his books Antropogeographie (1882) and Politische Geographic (1897), Ratzel developed the idea of state as an imperfect "territorial organism" and studied the rules of its growth. He established seven main laws for the territorial expansion of states. Ratzel used, for the first time, the term "Lebensraum"--living space--and defined it as the adequate and necessary territory for a state to exist.²

Ratzel was also very concerned about the dominion of the seas. He considered that the three main spiritual elements of sea power were prudence, perseverance and wide-spread sighting. He stated that the creation of maritime power promotes the spiritual strength of a country more than the dominion of extensive lands, that it renews that strength inexhaustibly.³

RUDOLF KJELLEN (+ 1922)

The Swedish jurist and professor of political law, Rudolf Kjellen, was the first one to give the name of "geopolitics" to the new applied science.

In his book, Statem Som Lifsform--the state as a life form--he defines the state as a biological organism, a "living supraindividual structure", which is the principal finality of individuals. The state does not strive to achieve the happiness of people, but its perfection.

He ranked the basic elements of a state into two categories: the main elements--the geographic environment and the race--and the secondary ones, economy, society and government.⁴

Kjellen, an admirer of the German people, preached the rise of a Pangerman state which should include also the Nordic countries and should dominate Europe. For him, as for Ratzel, the new science of geopolitics was a tool to be used by the decisionmakers of national policy.⁵

2 - The Sea Power

The theory of Sea Power has as its first and principal representative Alfred T. Mahan.

ALFRED T. MAHAN

The U.S. Navy officer, Alfred T. Mahan, one of the first writers about geopolitics, is well known for his main theories about the importance of Sea Power. According to him, the dominion of the seas, supported by solid naval bases settled on good sheltered coasts, is sufficient to gain victory.

His most famous book, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, published in 1890, had a great influence over all the later writers.

His theory has a precedent in the Spanish doctrine of the sixteenth century, probably established by the founder of the first permanent naval force of the world, the Canciller of the Queen Elisabeth the Catholic, who stated that "No puede ser ninguno poderoso por la tierra si no lo es por el mar", which means "It is not possible to be powerful in land if you are not powerful over the sea".⁶

Mahan analyzed, in detail, the history of the main naval battles to demonstrate that the most important wars were decided at sea and were won by the power which controlled the seas. Mahan listed a number of examples such as the 2nd Punic war between the Roman and the Chartaginians, the British war against Napoleon, and the war of the League of Augsburg (Louis XIV).⁷

According to Mahan, six fundamental factors affect the development of sea power: geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, size of population, national character and governmental character and policy.⁸

1. Geographical position. This is one of the major factors that makes possible and influences the sea power of a state.

In the first place, it is obvious that a nation has to have easy access to one or several seas. In addition, relative good position depends on the favorable conditions of the seas for navigation.

Mahan pointed out that if a nation could concentrate its aim exclusively upon the sea, without being forced to defend the territorial boundaries from its neighbors and without being able expand its territory on land, because of its insularity as the case of England, such a state had definitive advantages as compared with those nations that do not enjoy "natural" boundaries. More over, the possibility of controlling some of the great thoroughfares of the maritime traffic from a state's land increases significantly the strategic value of the nation.⁹

According to Mahan, the geopolitic and strategic position of England was so favorable that it gave her the world's sea power and permitted her to hold it for two centuries.

The position of Spain is considered by Mahan in the following terms:

"But for the loss of Gibraltar, the position of Spain would have been closely analogous to that of the England. Looking at once upon the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, with Cadiz on the one side and Cartagena on the other, the trade to the Levant must be passed under her hands, and that round the Cape of Good Hope not far from her doors. But Gibraltar not only deprived her of the control of the Straits, it also imposed an obstacle to the easy function of the two divisions of her fleet".¹⁰

In this statement, Mahan recognizes clearly the value of Spain's position and its favorable location to control two main maritime routes.

2. Physical conformation. The number and quality of the harbors and the easy access to the sea along the coast of a country are considered by Mahan as facilitators of the tendency of the people to use the sea for intercourse with the other nations and people.

The best places to develop a prosperous trade are normally those situated on the seaboard with sheltered harbors which are the outlets of navigable rivers.¹¹

In the case of the nations separated into two or more parts by the sea, its dominion and control becomes absolutely essential to the survival of the nation. This statement is illustrated by Mahan with the example of Spain:

"Spain, in the 17th century, afforded an impressive lesson of the weakness caused by such separation when the parts are not knit together by a strong sea power. She then retained, as remnants of

her past greatness, the Netherlands (now Belgium), Sicily, and other Italian possessions, not to speak of her vast colonies in the New World".

"Yet so low had the Spanish sea power fallen, that a well-informed and soberminded Hollander of the day could claim that "in Spain all the coast is navigated by a few Dutch ships; and since the peace of 1648, their ships and seamen are so few that they have publicly begun to hire our ships to sail to the Indies whereas they were formerly careful to exclude all foreigners from there".

"It is manifest", he goes on, "that the West Indies, being as the stomach to Spain (for from it nearly all the revenue is drawn), must be joined to the Spanish head by a sea force; and that Naples and Netherlands, being like two arms, nor receive anything thence but shipping--all which may easily be done by our shipping in peace, and by it obstructed in war".

"The Government depended for its support, not upon a wide spread healthy commerce and industry that could survive many a staggering blow, but upon a narrow stream of silver trickling through a few treasure ships from America, easily and frequently intercepted by an enemy's cruisers. The loss of half a dozen galleons more than once paralyzed its movements for a year".¹²

3. Extent of territory. "As regard the development of sea power, it is not the total number of square miles which a country contains, but the length of its coastline and the character of its harbors that are to be considered".¹³

However, the length of the coast must keep an adequate proportion to the population of the country. A long coastline with a small population is a source of weakness more than a strength.

4. Number of population. According to Mahan, this factor of sea power not only refers to the total population of a country, but also to the number of people living by the sea, sailing and fishing, or "at least readily available for employment on ship-board and for the creation of naval material".¹⁴

5. National character. The thesis of Mahan is that sea power is based mainly upon an extensive commerce developed in peace time and, therefore, it must be a fundamental characteristic of people of nations holding sea power the aptitude for trade and interchange.

He affirms that history confirms his thought with the exception of the Roman people, not particularly fond of trade.¹⁵

As an example of the negative conditions of a country for trade, Mahan analyzes the case of Spain in its epoch of splendor:

"If history may be believed, the way in which the Spaniards and their kindred nation, the Portuguese sought wealth, not only brought a blot upon the national character, but was also fatal to the growth of a healthy commerce; and so to the industries upon which commerce lives, and ultimately to that national wealth which was sought by mistaken path. The desire for gain rose in them to fierce avarice; so they sought in the new-found worlds which gave such an impetus to the commercial and maritime development of the countries of Europe, not new fields of industry, not even the healthy excitement of exploration and adventure, but gold and silver. They had many great qualities; they were bold, enterprising, temperate, patient of suffering, enthusiastic and gifted with intense national feeling. When to those qualities are added the advantages of Spain's position and well situated ports, the fact that she was the first to occupy large and rich portions of the new worlds and long remained without a competitor, and that for a hundred years after the discovery of America she was the leading state in

Europe, she might have been expected to take the foremost place among the sea powers. Exactly, the contrary was the result, as all know. Since the battle of Lepanto in 1571, though engaged in many wars, no sea victory of any consequence shines on the pages of Spanish history; and the decay of her commerce sufficiently accounts for the painful and sometimes ludicrous inaptness shown on the decks of her ships of war. Doubtless such a result is not to be attributed to one cause only. Doubtless the government of Spain was in many ways such as to cramp and blight a free and healthy development of private enterprise; but the character of its government, and it can hardly be doubted that had the bent of the people been toward trade, the action of government would have been drawn into the same current. The great field of the colonies, also, was remote from the centre of that despotism which blighted the growth of old Spain. As it was, thousands of Spaniards, of the working as well as the upper classes, left Spain, and the occupations in which they engaged abroad sent home little but specie, or merchandise of small bulk, requiring but small tonnage. The mother-country herself produced little but wool, fruit and iron; her manufactures were naught; her industries suffered; her population steadily decreased. Both she and her colonies depended upon the Dutch for so many of the necessities of life, that the products of their scanty industries could not suffice to pay for them. "So that Holland merchants", writes a contemporary, "who carry money to most parts of the world to buy commodities, must out of this simple country of Europe carry home money which they receive in payment of their goods". Thus, their eagerly sought emblem of wealth passed quickly from their hands. It has already been pointed out how weak, from a military point of view, Spain was from this decay of her shipping. Her wealth, being in small bulk on a few ships, following more or less regular routes, was easily seized by an enemy, and the sinews of war paralyzed; whereas the wealth England and Holland scattered over thousands of ships in all of the world, received many bitter blows in many exhausting wars, without checking a growth which, though painful, was steady".¹⁶

6. Character of the government. Mahan considers two ways in which government policy can influence the sea power position of a country.

During peace, the government can foster and stimulate the natural tendency of people on the seaboard to develop commerce and relationship by way of the sea and support the efforts leading to the establishment of naval industries and related activities.

For war, the government can maintain a navy that, keeping pace with the whole defense effort and the possibilities of the country, assures an advantageous position in the fight for control of the seas.¹⁷

It is obvious that in the case of Spain, the policy of government, during the last four centuries as a whole, had forgotten the naval necessities, thus, contributing significantly to the decay of the Spanish sea power and with it to the decline of Spain.

These are the six main factors that affect, according to Mahan, favorably or unfavorably, the growth of sea power in nations. He considers all these elements as permanent ones:

"The considerations and principles which enter into them belong to the unchangeable, or unchanging, order of things, remaining the same, in cause and effect, from age to age. They belong as it were, to the Order of Nature, of whose stability so much is heard in our day".¹⁸

3 - The Land Power

We will consider in the following pages the theories of the British author, Harold J. Mackinder; the German, Karl Haushofer; and the American, Nicholas J. Spykman.

HAROLD J. MACKINDER

The man who gave to geopolitics the coherence and systematic unity of a science was the English geographer Harold Mackinder. Mackinder's most significant publications are "The geographical pivot of history"--a paper read to the geographical society in London in 1904--and the book Democratic Ideals and Reality, published in 1918.¹⁹

Mackinder exposed his theories about the influence of geography in the universal history, the development of which is irrevocably conditioned by the immutable permanent elements of world geography.

This principle is enunciated by Mackinder as "the geographic causality in the universal history" recognizing, however, that while men and not nature initiates the action of history, it is nature which directs it in a great part.²⁰

Mackinder looked at the world as a whole. He noted that, of the total surface of the globe, three quarters is water and one quarter land. Of the land area, two thirds consist of one great continuous mass, the joint continent of Asia, Africa and Europe. This land mass Mackinder called the World-Island. Offshore lie two small island groups, the British Isles to the west, the Japanese islands to the east.

The World-Island has not only twice the area of all the rest of the world, but also it has more than seven-eighths of the population.²¹

Outside the World-Island, in the middle of the big ocean, are the "Lands of the outer or insular crescent", North and South America, South Africa and Australia mainly, with other small islands. Only one-sixteenth of the world population live in the outer islands.

The "WORLD ISLAND" has three grand sections: In the center of Eurasia, the "HEARTLAND" or "PIVOT AREA"; the rest of Eurasia was called in 1904, "THE INNER OR MARGINAL CRESCENT" and in 1919, the "COASTLANDS". The third section, around the marginal crescent, was named "OUTER CRESCENT" for British and Japanese islands and "DESERT BAND" for the desert part of Africa and Arabian Peninsula in 1904; Africa, south of the Sahara, was named "THE SOUTHERN HEARTLAND".

The Heartland consists chiefly of a great lowland also stretching from far eastern Siberia to the Volga Basin and broken only by the low Ural Mountains. It includes also the Iranian Upland in the southwest, and part of the Mongolian Upland in the southeast. In terms of national states, the Heartland is overwhelmingly Russian. It embraces almost all of Siberia, Mongolia and western China, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Iran, and about half of European Russia.

In "Democratic Ideals and Reality", Mackinder made some alterations in the boundaries of the Heartland, for the purpose of strategic thinking, including the Baltic Sea, the navigable Middle and Lower Danube, the Black Sea, Asia Minor, Armenia, Persia, Tibet and Mongolia".²²

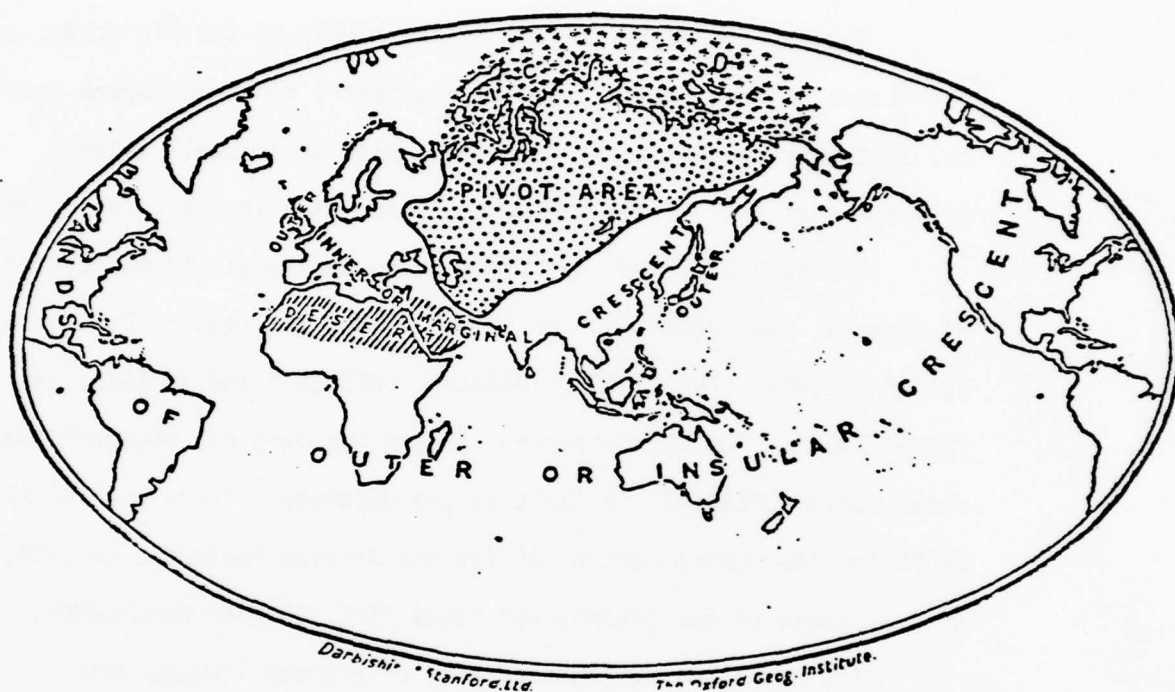


FIGURE 1 : THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MACKINDER

Source : Nicholas J. Spykman, The Geography of the Peace.
 N.Y. , Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1944.

Around the Heartland, in a huge arc, stretch the "INNER OR MARGINAL CRESCENT" or "COASTLANDS" defined as the area of drainage into navigable seas. All of Europe, except part of Russia, belongs to the Coastlands. So does the Near East, India and most of China, Indochina and Korea. The Coastlands, for the most part, are favored with ample rainfall and fertile soil. Many of their rivers are navigable deep into the interior. In the Eurasian Coastlands--not in the Heartland--have sprung all the great civilizations of history. If you include their offshore islands, they embrace three-quarters of the world's population and all but one (U.S.) of its powerful states.²³

The great importance of these "coastlands" is outlined by Mackinder in this way:

"Outside Arabia, the Sahara, the two Heartlands, there remain in the World-Island only two comparatively small regions, but those two regions are the most important on the globe. Around the Mediterranean, and in the European peninsulas and islands, there dwell four hundred million people; and in the southern and eastern coastlands of Asia, or to use the historic expression, in the Indies, there dwell eight hundred million people. In these two regions, therefore, are three-quarters of the people of the world. From our present point of view, the most pertinent way of stating this great fact is to say that four-fifths of the population of the great continent, the World-Island, live in two regions which together measure only one-fifth of its area.

These two regions resemble one another in certain other very important respects. In the first place, their rivers are for the most part navigable continuously from the ocean. Another similarity is the widespread rainfall on the plains as well as in the mountains, that allows them to nourish great populations".²⁴

The Americas, Australia, and the large islands off the Eurasian continent, were named the "LANDS OF THE OUTER OR INSULAR CRESCENT". These areas, he suggested, offer other natural seats of power around the Heartland.

The main principles of Mackinder's theories were stated in a three-point proposition:

- Who rules East Europe, commands the Heartland.
- Who rules the Heartland, commands the World-Island.
- Who rules the World-Island, commands the World.

As is pointed out by Joseph Thorndike, "It is at this point that some later geopoliticians part company with Mackinder. For though most of them agree with the first proposition and many of them agree with the third, they doubt the second. The Heartland is for the most part barren and underdeveloped. Until the Soviets began building up industry east of the Volga, it was never the seat of any considerable power. Hence, it is difficult to see how it can yet control the World-Island".²⁵

For Mackinder, the Russian Empire can dominate all the continent of Europe and Asia; only would resist to his control--and this only for a certain period of time--the peninsulas, for example, the Iberian Peninsula and Indochina and the off-shore islands as the British and Japanese islands, that can be defended from outside.

It is a great merit of Mackinder that being a Britain and living in the era of the splendor of English sea power he saw the threat that a unified Heartland--a powerful land power--could represent in the future. Because with such an important land-base, the new land power could easily outship and outman the forces of the maritime powers. And it was what Mackinder feared.

KARL HAUSHOFER

General Karl Haushofer, a former Division commander in World War I and professor of political geography at the University of Munich after the war, was the creator of the German school of geopolitics.

He was introduced to Hitler when he was imprisoned and dictating his Mein Kampf. Haushofer gave Hitler the solid base he needed for his cloudy ideas. Chapter XIV of Mein Kampf is thought, by some students, to be almost pure Haushofer. Because his ideas have had such explosive military effect, Haushofer is often referred to as the father of geopolitics.

He took from Ratzel and Kjellen his concept of the "Organic State". The State, he thought, is a living organism, like an animal. It must grow and develop, or it dies. If the state lacks certain vital "organs" (such as large space or secure frontiers), it is justified in grabbing them from weaker states. Haushofer's whole theory of "organic state" was a false analogy from nature, but was precisely what established him in Hitler's esteem, for it gave a cloak of science to the Nazi scheme for expansion. Its cornerstone is this precept: "Space is Power".

Haushofer saw what the British did not: that the bases of sea power were no longer secure. A state in control of the continental mass behind these bases could capture them by overland attack.

The theory of the Heartland is crucial to Haushofer's doctrine, as it is to Mackinder's. In laying down a strategy of conquest, Haushofer told the masters of the German State: "First get control of the Heartland". Once that was achieved, he taught, Germany could overrun Western Europe and the whole World-Island.

In retrospect, it is possible to discern a remarkable fact. So long as the German State followed Haushofer's teaching, it made progress toward its objectives; when it departed from that teaching by going to war with the western powers before it had assured control of Russia, it started down the road to defeat.²⁶

Haushofer's definition of geopolitics is: "The science of territorial features and racial traits that determine the development of the Nations and States".²⁷

NICHOLAS J. SPYKMAN

Professor Nicholas J. Spykman, of Yale, was one of the foremost U.S. geopoliticians. Spykman adopted Mackinder's basic geography, but gave it a different interpretation. He rejected the apparent fatalism of the land-power doctrine and offered his own formula: "who controls the "RIMLAND", rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia, controls the destiny of the world".

For Spykman the "RIMLAND" was the new name of the "INNER OR MARGINAL CRESCENT" or coastlands of Mackinder. That is to say the ring of countries and coasts that envelop the heartland all around Europe and Asia.

He hoped that the USSR, USA, and Great Britain would realize their common stake in controlling the Rimland. He knew, however, that "it may be the pressure of Russia outward toward the Rimland will constitute one important aspect of the post-war settlement.

Spykman believes in neither a simple land power--sea power opposition, nor in the fatalistic doctrine of the domination of heartland. For Spykman, "the historical alignment has always been in terms of some members of the rimland with Great Britain against some members of the rimland with Russia, or Great Britain and Russia together against a dominating rimland power".²⁸

The heartland, in its limited sense of the interior and Arctic drainage area, menaced the maritime states only in conjunction with part of the Rimland.

Looked at broadly, the Mahan, Mackinder, and Spykman strategic geographies have much in common, but in Spykman's point of view the countries in the Rimland--and Spain among them--have a most significant weight and importance.

Spykman discussed and mapped location, landforms, climate, economic production, and population before he proceeded to modify Mackinder's world view.

Spykman's understanding of the influence of technological and political changes and how they affect the geopolitic situation of a country can be found in his book Geography in War and Peace: "The

primary characteristic of any geopolitical analysis, as distinguished from a purely geographic one, is that it is dealing with a dynamic rather than a static situation. Changing conditions in the political world will affect the conclusions by changing the importance given at any one time to specific factors. Changing technological conditions will also alter the situation, particularly in the exercise of power, because advances in the speed of communications and in the techniques of industry will necessarily cause variations in the power position of particular countries. Geographic facts will not change, but their meaning for foreign policy will".²⁹

Spykman also made a clear statement about the strategic changes derived from the rise of air power and its influence over naval bases. This statement could be applied very properly to the British naval base of Gibraltar in Spanish land.

"There is not a geopolitical area in the world that has been more profoundly affected by the development of air power than this one of the marginal seas. No longer is sea power effective without air power and aircraft have little strength if based on small widely --separated areas. Because of this, many of the geographic points that were selected and controlled by the British Empire to serve as naval bases are completely inadequate from the point of view of air defense. It has also become evident that land-based aircraft are superior to carrier-based planes".

"This fact does not, however, mean that the whole literal of Eurasian land mass must inevitably fall completely into the hands of Eurasian air power. There are certain important sections in which it is possible to give land-based-air support to naval operations from both sides. If there is an opposite coast on which air power can be based, certain regions of the Old World can be effectively controlled from these points. The North Sea, the European and Asiatic Mediterraneans, and the Sea of Japan can be considered in this classification, for the opposite coast of these marginal seas can support air power which could be utilized against a continental air force".³⁰

Spykman analyzed the US position in his book America's Strategy in World Politics. Since Monroe's time, he pointed out, the security of the western hemisphere rested on the fact that Europe had always been divided among several states. American policies, he advised, should be to keep either Europe or Asia from falling under the domination of any one power, no matter how friendly that power might be today.

This policy parallels, on a grander scale, the historic policy of Britain toward the continent of Europe. It is cold blooded power politics. It assumes that wars are inevitable and seeks to assure that the US will hold the balance of power.

To critics that condemn this policy as cold and brutal, Spykman replied: "Nations which renounce the power struggle and deliberately choose impotence will cease to influence international relations either for evil or for good".³¹

4 - The Air Power

As precursors of the theories about air power, we will mention here the writing of Leopold Amery, Giulio Douhet and John Slessor. Then, we will consider the theory of Alejandro P. De Seversky.

LEOPOLD AMERY

The British geographer and politician, Leopold Amery, could be considered as the precursor of the theoreticians of air power. As early as in 1904--one year after the flight of Wright Brothers--he pronounced these words on the solemn occasion of the Mackinder lecture "The Geographical Pivot of History" to the Royal Geographical Society in London: "Both the sea and the railway are going in the future...to be supplemented by the air as a means of locomotion, and when we come to that...a great deal of this geographical distribution must lose its importance and the successful powers will be those who have the greatest industrial basis".³²

GIULIO DOUHET

The strategic doctrine of Italian General Giulio Douhet (1869-1930) was the beginning of the doctrine of aerial supremacy. According to it, aviation will be the force of the offensive and land and naval forces would be used for the defense.³³

JOHN SLESSOR

John Slessor, in his book, Strategy for the West (New York, 1954), is an example of the air-first moderates. He holds that the strategic Air Force with nuclear bombs is the "Great Deterrent" which could prevent another general war. Slessor does not describe his global view, but manifestly it must combine something like the Rimland--the locus of local war--with a disbelief in heartlands. His views on heartlands seem like an echo of Amery's amplified by half a century of aeronautical development:

"Meanwhile do not let us be distracted by geopolitical talk about heartlands which was all very well in Mackinder's day but ceased to be relevant with the advent of the long-range bombers. Russia's central position has some tactical advantages vis a vis her neighbors, but in a world air war she would be at a decisive disadvantage. Air power has turned the vast spaces that were her prime defense against Napoleon and Hindenburg and Hitler into a source of weakness. In these days of near-sonic speeds, the depth of penetration necessary to reach some of her vital centres is offset by the size of the area to be defended and the fact that it can be attacked from almost all round the compass".³⁴

In Slessor's view, the virtues of the Heartland--size, centrality, and inaccessibility--have become either of no advantage or disadvantageous.

In order that the Soviet power base be penetrable "from almost all around the compass", it is essential that the non-communist powers maintain a strong position in the Rimland and

in the off-shore islands. If these areas come under communist domination, it will be the Americas that are penetrable "from almost all round the compass".³⁵

ALEJANDRO P. DE SEVERSKY

The principal representative of the strategic and geopolitic ideas giving absolute priority to air power is Alejandro P. De Seversky, a former Major of Russian Air Forces in World War I and afterwards at the service of U.S. before World War II.

His ideas have a primarily military character, but are based in geopolitical criteria that essentially change the Mackinder and Haushofer thesis.

De Seversky definitely subordinates the Army and the Navy to the Air Force. He believes that virtually complete supremacy in the air, not just local or temporary air superiority, is possible. The side that obtains air supremacy holds the other at its mercy.

The azimuthal equidistant projection centered on the North Pole is the cartographic expression of his doctrine and has been a valuable corrective to the over-use of the Mercator.

As it is shown in the map, only in the vicinity of the Bering Strait does orthodox warfare seem justified. Latin America, within the circle of American air dominance, becomes the main reserve of American industry. Much of Africa and all Southeast Asia are within the ellipse of Soviet air dominance. The overlap of the American circle and the Soviet ellipse is the "AREA OF DECISION", where De Seversky thinks the mastery of the air will be decided.³⁶

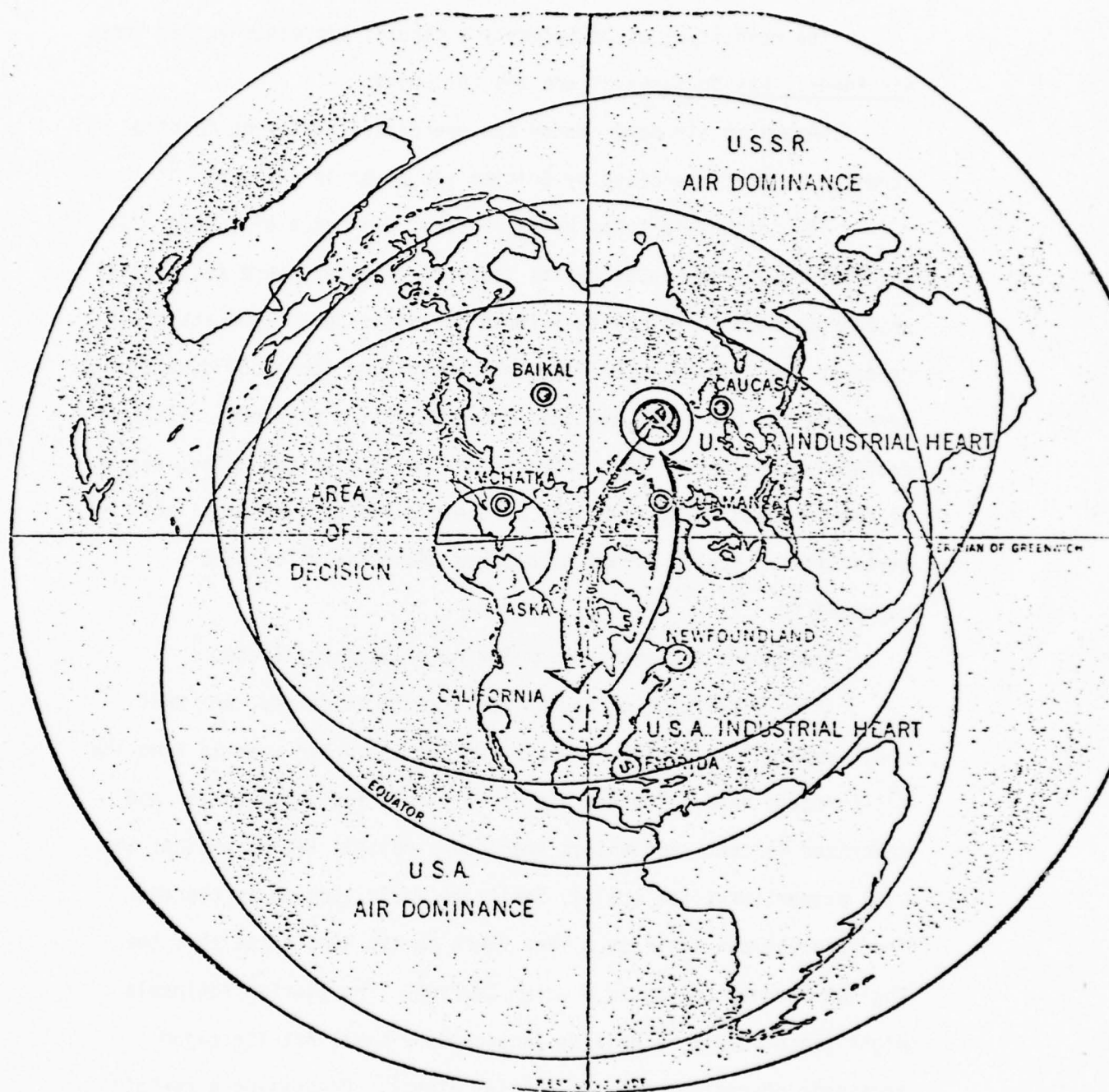
The main ideas of De Seversky's thought expressed in his book Air Power: Key to Survival are the following:

"American air power today can exercise a pacifying function parallel to that exercised by British sea power in the past".³⁷

"Soviet Russia today holds physical dominance of Europe. If the Red Army, spearheaded by its tactical aviation, were set rolling westward, there is no military force in existence to stop its progress to the Atlantic. Only another great land force could halt or turn back the Red tide, and that force is not in existence. Talk of containing the Soviet land colossus on the Elbe or the Rhine, even if the proposed forty-five west European divisions were available is unrealistic. Stalin cannot be blocked where Hitler crashed through".³⁸

And about the position of Spain, de Seversky stated:

"The tidal wave of Soviet force could be damned, and that only temporarily, by the Pyrenees, saving Spain for a while from the all-European fate. The terrain is difficult for large armies and motorized forces. But unless American strategic action against the USSR proper turns the scales, Spain too would succumb in the end. The Pyrenees can serve as a land block in the same sense that the English Channel serves as a water barrier. The Iberian Peninsula might conceivably be held as an accessory base, not for major strategic operations but for initial attack. Possessing a certain amount of industrial vitality and manpower, Spain certainly makes a more hopeful base than some of the "African bases" being shaped into strategic offensive bases. Whether it could continue to be used after the initial stage would depend, of course, on who holds control of the air over the rest of the European continent".³⁹



THE POWER EQUATION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN AND THE EURASIAN CONTINENT
 - FIGURE 2: POLAR-CENTERED AZIMUTAL PROJECTION.- A. DE SEVERSKY
 Source: Alejandro P. De Seversky, Air Power: Key to Survival, Simon and Schuster, N.Y. , 1950.

Some years later, in 1961, De Seversky published another book, "America: Too Young to Die", in which he exposed his later ideas about the air power and the role of NATO:

"It is not the new explosive, but the new method of its delivery, that revolutionizes warfare. Therefore, it is not the size of the stockpile of nuclear bombs, but the superior means of their delivery which will decide the issue. And that means superior supersonic planes, missiles and satellites".⁴⁰

"Japan was defeated without invasion and without a great climatic land battle by air power alone. Air power emerged from World War II a dominant military force. Victory on land and sea had become dependent on control of the air above. From then on, it was plain that the classic decisive battles of the future would be fought in the air.

Today, of course, with supersonic aircraft and ballistic missiles flying at eighteen thousand miles per hour, the range of air power is global and, with nuclear weapons, its firepower immense. It is clear now that the triphibious warfare of World War II was highly transitory, a make-shift from surface strategy to the strategy of aerospace.

The goal of the nation which will be victorious in the next war must be simple and unambiguous: Dominance in the air and space above".⁴¹

"Those who are obsessed with the importance of NATO as an overriding factor in the defense of the West exploit a lofty slogan. They tell us that with the NATO forces the West has "a

stronger shield...a sharper sword"... To call NATO a shield of the Atlantic Community, important to the defense of the United States from Europe, is ludicrous.

In actuality, it is NATO that has to be shielded if it is to come to full strength and survive in case of war. The shield generally protect the bearer of sword. The Strategic Air Command of the United States is the sword of Damocles, pointed at the Kremlin. The true shield is the North American Air Defense Command, which protects the sword--our retaliatory force--from being blunted".⁴²

5 - The Climate

We will consider the climate as a specific geopolitical factor following the theory of Ellsworth Huntington.

ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON

The American, Ellsworth Huntington, studied in great extent the influence of climate in human behavior. His scientific research found out a great amount of data about the main components of climate and their interaction with the development of men's activities.

His main ideas can be summarized as follows: "The geographical distribution of health and energy probably depends on climate and weather more than on any other single factor. The well-known contrast between the energetic people of the most progressive parts of the middle latitude and the less active inhabitants of the humid tropics and even of intermediate regions, is largely due to climate. This arises not only from the direct effect of weather

upon human activity, but also from the effect of climate upon agriculture, diet, disease, occupations, and general progress. Indirect effects are often more important than direct effects.⁴³

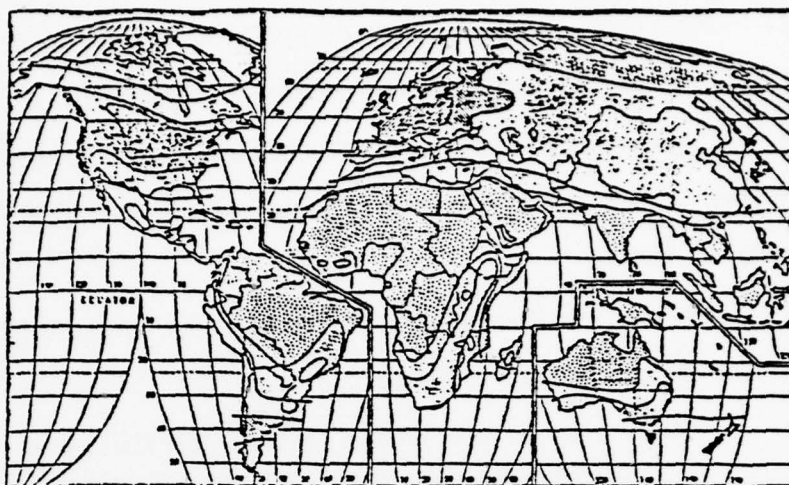
Three conditions of climate are of special importance in their influence on health and energy: temperature, humidity and variability. For each of these, there is a certain most favorable or ideal condition which is called the optimum. Every species of plants and animals has an optimum temperature at which it thrives most vigorously, and man is no exception. The optimum may vary a little from individual to individual, but not much.

Taking the white race as a whole, the best temperature is an average of not far from 64 F (18 C) for day and night together. Put in another way this means that people's health and strength are greatest when the thermometer drops to 55 or 60 F by night (13-16 C) and rises to 70 or 75 F by day (21-24 C). For mental work, however, the optimum appears to occur when the temperature outdoors--not indoors--averages a good deal lower than for physical activity, probably about 40 or 45 F (5-8 C).⁴⁴

"On the basis of all this, the optimum climate for human progress may be summed up as follows: 1. -Average temperature ranges from somewhat below 40 F (5 C) in the coldest month to nearly 70 F (22 C) in the warmest month. 2. -Frequent storms, or winds from oceans or lakes, keep the relative humidity quite high except in hot weather, and provide rain at all seasons. 3. -There is a constant succession of cyclonic storms which bring frequent moderate changes of temperature, but are not severe enough to do harm.

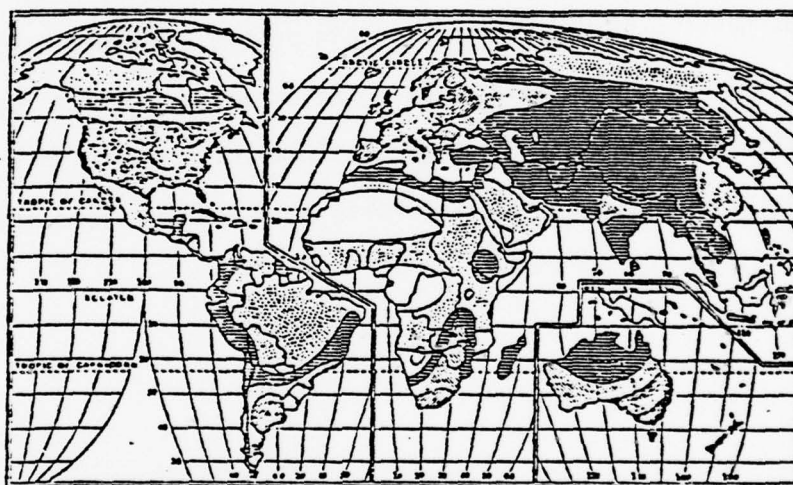
What parts of the world have the best climate for man? No region on earth fully satisfies all requirements. England and the neighboring parts of continental Europe come nearest to the ideal, northern United States, a narrow strip close to the Pacific coast from California to British Columbia, and finally New Zealand, fall little if any behind.

Map A shows how human energy would be distributed if it depended wholly on climate. Of course, it actually depends also on many other conditions, such as biological inheritance, food, shelter, and training, but for the present we may omit these. The parts with the two heaviest types of shading show where the climate has the greatest effect in giving people good health and making them energetic. Notice the two main dark areas in the northeast and west of United States and another in Western Europe. Only in the far eastern side of Asia, in Japan, does an Asiatic area of high, but not very high, energy appear. South of the good areas in the United States, Europe, and Japan the conditions of health and energy decline, reaching their worst in the great deserts and near the equator. South of the equator they again improve. Probably nowhere in the southern hemisphere, however, does climate energy rise so high as in the north, although small areas in New Zealand and Tasmania and perhaps the newly settled southern part of Chile north of the dense forest, may rank very high.



Quade's Stereographic Equal-Area Projection; Copyright, The University of Chicago Press.

A—The Distribution of Climatic Energy.



Quade's Stereographic Equal-Area Projection; Copyright, The University of Chicago Press.

Very High High Medium Low Very Low

B—The Distribution of Civilization. Based on the opinion of fifty experts in many countries.

FIGURE 3 : CLIMATE. MAPS OF DISTRIBUTION BY HUNTINGTON

Source : Ellsworth Huntington, Principles of Human Geography

J. Wiley and Sons, N.Y. , 1951.

From all these three main facts appear:

1. -The north temperate zone of cyclonic storms is the best part of the world climatically so far as man is concerned.
2. -Coastal regions are more favorable than continental interiors, unless the latter are helped by some special condition such as altitude or lakes.
3. -The southern hemisphere has good areas corresponding to those of the northern, but not equal to them".⁴⁵

"The relation of climate to the distribution of civilization is very close. Map B is based on the opinion of about fifty eminent men from different countries in North America, Europe, and Asia. The heavily shaded regions contain people who stand especially high in the scale of civilization. The agreement between regions of stimulating climate and high civilization suggests that health and energy imparted by such a climate provide conditions especially favorable for progress".⁴⁶

CHAPTER TWO: GEOPOLITICAL FEATURES

1. General

The Iberian Peninsula is one of the more clear geopolitical units of the globe, with well defined limits and peculiar characteristics. Its substantial unity derives mainly from the tectonic and geological formation and from the posterior geographic mold of the peninsular soil.¹

As was stated by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, Alberto Martin Artajo, Spain is a house with four facades: One, north to Europe; the second, west toward America; the third, east over the Mediterranean Sea; and the fourth, south looking at Africa.² It is not surprising, therefore, that the strategic advantages of Spain are such that the historian Salvador de Madariaga should comment that if Spain is strong she must represent an important role in the world, and if weak, she has to be the objective of the attention of all the powerful.³

From a strategic viewpoint, the peninsular condition of Iberia combined with the natural obstacle of the Pyrenees, gives this area the qualities of a bastion, very much like Great Britain.

This bastion has the characteristics of:

- A stronghold, on account of its almost insular condition and its geographic profile with the wall of the Pyrenees and the well defended fortress of the Central Plateau of Castille.
- A base (aerial, naval, logistic) on account of its location, its geographical configuration and its ample central platform.

- A potential reserve by its population and its military capability.

This geographic condition of bastion is reinforced by one psychological factor:

- The experience acquired during the history of the peninsular people of successful resistance to the invaders (Romans, Moslems, the Napoleonic French Army, and other foreign powers).

2. Location

Iberia is the westernmost European peninsula, Europe being but an enormous peninsula of the supercontinent of Eurasia.

If we divide the world in two hemispheres in such a way that one of them holds the largest possible part of the emerging lands and the other remainder, we can see that in the first one are located Eurasia, Africa and the most of America and this portion holds 94% of world population and 98% of the industrial activity, meanwhile the second hemisphere is predominantly liquid and holds only six percent (6%) of the human population.⁵

The position of Spain is near the geometric center of the continental hemisphere and, if we split the hemisphere into three parts corresponding to the three main continental land masses, Eurasia, Africa, and America, the outstanding location of Spain as the central link of the three continents and meeting point of the main routes of communications is clearly shown.

We can qualify the geographic location of the Iberian Peninsula as truly exceptional. There are few--if any--geopolitical



FIGURE 4 : PRINCIPAL HEMISPHERE

unities on the planet that enjoy such an absolutely favorable position.

If we imagine the world traveled over by magnetic channel of geopolitical forces, we can see that the most important ones pass through Iberia or are dominated completely by her strategically located islands.

The Iberian Peninsula is the center of a cross whose arms are two geopolitical axes of great significance in the world's history.

One is the East-West direction or the Mediterranean way with its eastern extreme linked to the Orient through the Suez Canal and pointed to the New World, the Americas, in the west.

The other is the North-South direction that communicates Europe with Africa and is also the most western way from the continent of Eurasia towards Africa.⁶

The importance of both geopolitical directions cannot be over emphasized. The Mediterranean route was the way followed by the old cultures of the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans during ancient times, the shortest route to the spices in the Middle Ages and the route of oil in the Twentieth Century.

The North-South direction has been throughout history one of the main avenues of migration. From the south towards the north were the migrations of the neardenthal capsienses in the Paleolithic Era and the Moslem conquest of Iberia and from the North towards the South during the settlements of Romans, Spaniards and Portugueses in North Africa until the colonization of the Southern shore of the Western Mediterranean by the emigrants from the Iberian Peninsula.

On the other hand, near the Atlantic coasts of the peninsula and parallel to them, runs a third system of geopolitical forces, established in the Modern Age, that directs the strength of Europe towards America, South Africa, and the Indian Ocean through the Atlantic.

These routes--the most important of all maritime traffic ways--are also essential routes in strategy. The Iberian Peninsula and the islands that belong to it can exert a complete dominion by the use of its naval forces upon all these routes.

Galicia, the Canary Islands, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Balearic Islands are the four Spanish Keys to the ways of world, and Lisbon, Cape S. Vicente, the Azores, and Madeira Island are the Portuguese assets with this function.⁷

The situation of both Iberic countries represents, as a whole, the most important strategic area in the world particularly during a period of confrontation between a western maritime power and an eastern continental power.

3. Size

The size of a geopolitical unity is of great strategic importance because, if it is large enough, it permits the defense of the country in depth and allows the dispersion and thus the security of key industrial complexes throughout its domain.

The land surface of the Earth is approximately 50 million square miles, divided into more than 150 states ranging in size from the 0.2 square miles of the Vatican City to the 8.6 million square

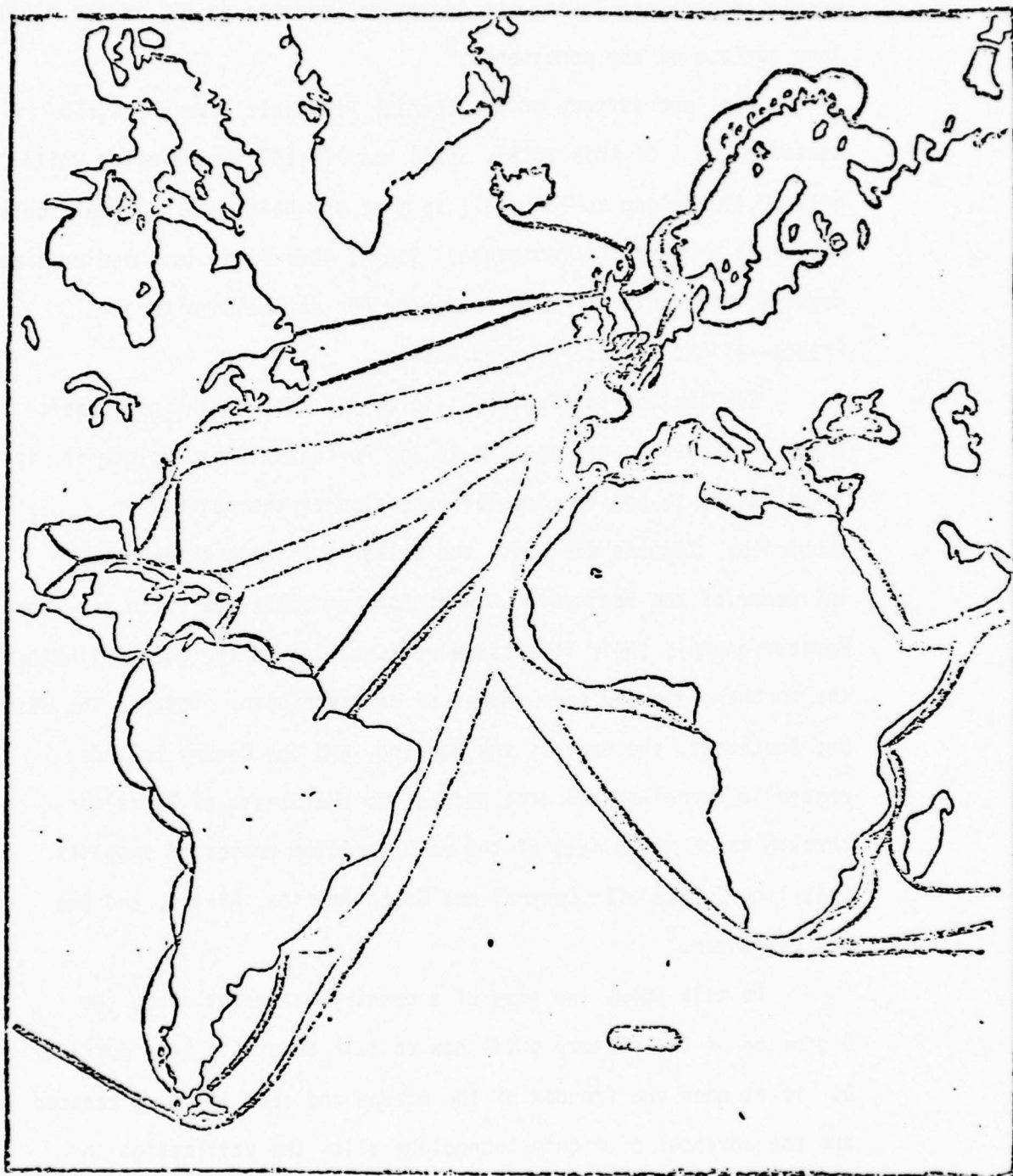


FIGURE 6 : MARITIME ROUTES OF THE ATLANTIC

miles of the USSR. Only eight States (USSR, Canada, USA, China, Brazil, Australia, India, and Argentina) constitute 50% of the total land surface of the continents.⁸

The land surface of the Iberian Peninsula covers 224,650 square miles. Of this total, Spain has 194,160 square miles while only 30,490 belong to Portugal, so that she holds approximately only a seventh part of the Peninsula. Spain, therefore, is a medium size country that ranks third in Europe by her extension after France--slightly superior--and Russia.

But the Iberian Peninsula is only a part of the geographic space of these two nations, Spain and Portugal. To complete it, it is necessary to add the insular extension of the peninsular countries. Towards the East, the Balearic Islands extend the influence of the Peninsula on what Spykman calls the Latin sea (West Mediterranean); their importance relates also to the routes linking the northern and southern shores of Mediterranean. Towards the West and Southwest, the Azores, the Madeira, and the Canary Islands control a funnel-shaped area pointed to the Strait of Gibraltar through which cross most of the main maritime routes of supplies that link Europe with Central and South America, Africa, and the Mediterranean.⁹

To talk about the size of a country has meant since the beginning of the history until now to talk about its land surface. But today when the freedom of the oceans and seas is being reduced and the advances of modern technology allow the utilization in several different ways of the seabottom, we must count also the territorial seas of each nation.

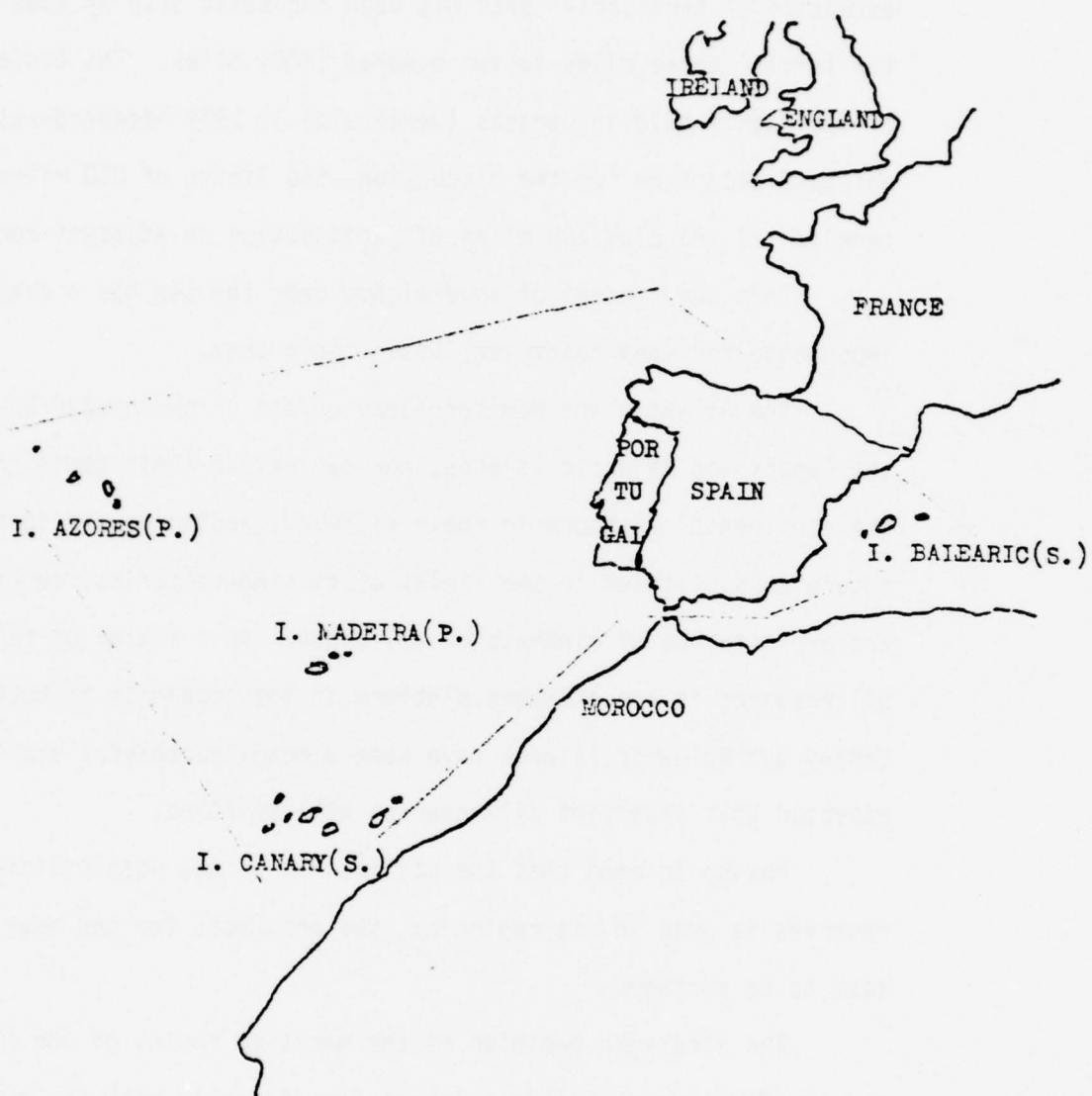


FIGURE 7: IBERIA'S SPACE

Since the Geneva Conferences in 1958 and 1960, the unilateral extension of territorial seas has been increased step by step from the initial three miles to two hundred (200) miles. The Conference of Sea Rights held in Caracas (Venezuela) in 1974 accepted--as a point of departure for the discussion--the limits of 200 miles of territorial sea plus 188 miles of jurisdiction in adjacent zones.¹⁰

This new concept of sovereignty over the sea has a great importance for many countries, Spain among them.

The Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of peninsular Spain and the Canary and Balearic Islands, now can extend their dominion over the continental platform in their vicinity, adding to the country future possibilities in the fields of fishing-factories, sea-farms, and exploitation of minerals of all kinds. As a matter of fact, the oil research in the offshore platform in the proximity to both Canary and Balearic Islands have been already successful and is expected that important oil reserves will be found.

Having in mind that the utilization of sea possibilities and reserves is just in its beginning, the prospects for the near future seem to be enormous.

The strategic dominion of the maritime routes of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean also augments significantly with the extension of the territorial seas of Spain and Portugal and if we consider the whole geographic space of the two Iberian countries, including continental and insular lands and territorial seas, we find that the new size and location together give Iberia the most outstanding position along the entire Rimland.

4. Shape

The Iberian Peninsula is an irregular pentagon whose largest side--between Cape Prior and Cape Creus, at the North--is 950 kilometers long and the shortest one, in the Southwest--from Cape Saint Vicente to Tarifa--is 350 kilometers. The isthmus, which joins the Iberian Peninsula to Europe, is 450 kilometers wide and is traversed by the mountains system of the Pyrenees.¹¹

The peninsula has nearly four thousand kilometers of coasts, both in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Along them there are quite long beaches and giant cliffs, good sheltered harbors and capes dangerous to coastal navigation.

From a strategic viewpoint, it is stated that a country that is nearly circular or rectangular in shape, a compact State, has many advantages: Short boundaries, more effective central control and interior communications.¹² Thus, the Iberian Peninsula has nearly the ideal shape, but the advantages of shape decrease considerably if we consider separately the shape of Spain and Portugal.

5. Configuration

The configuration of Iberia as a peninsula accounts for one of the main geopolitical assets of Spain. Most of her borders are coasts giving her the comfortable position of isolation and distance from the neighboring countries. The isthmus that joins Iberia to Europe--her only land frontier--is blocked by the Pyrenees Mountains that form a formidable defensive barrier that protects Spain from neighboring France and the rest of Europe.

The broken topography of the country makes it very difficult to be dominated by an invader from outside as Spanish history demonstrates.

The core of the Peninsula, the high central plateau is isolated and defended from penetrations coming from the north, east or south by the Cantabric, Iberic and Oretana Mountains. Only the western avenue of approach has no natural obstacle, thus making clear again the geopolitical absurdity of the division of a compact and strong unity into two different States.

Geeconomically speaking, Spain is nearly an island. Ninety-five percent (95%) of Spanish foreign trade is performed by sea. Only five percent of her trade volume passes through the Pyrenees or is carried by air.¹³

6. Climate

The two basic ingredients of climate, temperature, and precipitation are integral parts of most other components within the geographic element of power.¹⁴

The physical structure of the Iberian Peninsula accounts for great difference in the scenery and climate of Spain. The Peninsula is a zone of great variety and climatic contrasts. Different regions of Spain show climates of diverse as continental, maritime, Mediterranean, and tropical, all along a maximum distance of about seven hundred kilometers.¹⁵ For this reason, it is often said that Iberia is a complete small-scale continent.

The general location in the temperate, mild latitude and the great variations of temperature, winds, and rains cooperate with the

differences in altitude and distance to the sea to shape one of the transitional lands where human health and intellectual energies are favorable to human progress.

7. Mineral and Energy Resources

A subsoil rich in minerals is an essential base for the strength of a country and therefore, a positive geopolitical factor. But if the country which owns this wealth has not the capability to use it in the interest of the country and to maintain its independence, this wealth becomes a negative factor.¹⁶

In the dawn of civilizations, the wealth of minerals of Spain was proverbial. From the Bronze Age, numerous expeditions came to the Peninsula attracted by the gold, silver, copper, and tin of its subsoil.

In the epoch of the industrial revolution, the coal and iron of the north of Spain and the lead, copper, zinc, and mercury of the south could have played an important role in the industrialization of the country but, unfortunately, the lack of Spanish investments and technology gave free access to the foreign companies that drained the country of most of this wealth.

At the present, recent discoveries of uranium in the central plateau of Castille rank Spain first in Europe in this important mineral, and the possibilities of rich oil fields in the continental platform near both the Canary and the Balearic Islands allow the hope of a good future position in this essential source of energy.

To complete the geopolitical picture of Spain, it is necessary to consider the two maritime spaces that surround it, the

Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and the communication between them, the Strait of Gibraltar.

The Atlantic Ocean

The strategy of the Atlantic is based upon its importance as a way of transport and human relationship since the beginning of the Sixteenth Century.

The volume of interchange and movement through the Atlantic represents today eighty percent (80%) of total international maritime traffic.¹⁷

In case of threat to the RIMLAND because of HEARTLAND will to dominate the entire WORLD ISLAND, the Atlantic is the essential way for the Rimland to be supported from the OUTER CRESCENT ISLANDS (AMERICA).

As the strategy of the defense of the free world is based today in great part on the integrated defense of this region through the NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO), we will study this area in the last part of this work.

The Mediterranean Sea

The word "Mediterranean" stands for "middle of the lands" and it really fits well the Mediterranean Sea because it is the meeting place of the three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.¹⁸

The Mediterranean is possibly, in geographic terms, the best defined strategic zone in the world. Also, the sea and lands and countries that circle the Mediterranean probably make up the zone of the world with the most cultural, historical, and political weight.

The Mediterranean Sea, besides joining three continents, is the natural axis of penetration between East and West and constitutes the shortest route of communication between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Geographically, the Mediterranean is a closed sea separated from the two oceans by two narrow gates: Gibraltar and Suez.

This configuration accounts for a well defined geophysical homogeneity in terms of climate, landscape, and living conditions. But in contrast with it, this area shows the greatest political, religious, and cultural variety. Twenty independent states, ten different languages with a babelic variety of dialects, five separate religions, and all kinds of political organizations coexist in this small area.

The strategic consequences of this lack of political consistency of the zone are quite clear. First, the existence of potential conditions of conflict among two or more countries of the area, and second, the inevitable result of the dominion of the sea by an exterior power, as was the case of England in the last centuries and of the United States and Russia today.¹⁹

The different roles played by the Mediterranean Sea during history have been:

- 1 - A maritime route of communication.
- 2 - An interior sea or "Mare NOSTRUM" of a predominant Empire or Power
- 3 - A frontier between two different worlds.²⁰

We can establish three main epochs in the Mediterranean's history.

- From the year 1000 B.C. to year 800 AD: The period of the development across the sea of great classic civilizations: Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and, toward the end of the period, Islamic.

- From 1100 to 1600: From the first crusade until the control of the oriental Mediterranean by the Ottoman Empire.

- From 1869, when the opening of the Suez Canal inaugurated a new era of splendor for the Mediterranean traffic, which doubled its importance, to today's status as main route of oil supply to Europe from the Middle East.²¹

Most of the history of Spain has been influenced by the Mediterranean people and countries, from the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans to the Moslems. However, Spain also dominated the western Mediterranean in its epoch of splendor (14th-17th centuries).

As history demonstrates in any situation of confrontation between East and West in which the security of Europe is debated, the dominion of the Mediterranean Sea is a key strategic issue for both contenders.²²

Speaking in well-known geopolitical terms, we can say that the Mediterranean is the same of one of the principal scenarios of the struggle for the RIMLAND, either to contain the Heartland expansion or to consolidate the RIMLAND in order to project its power over the Heartland.

The most concrete example of this conflict in the modern period were the efforts of the West to deny Czarist Russia in the 19th century and the Soviet Union in the 20th century access to the warm water of the Mediterranean and beyond. In this context, the

Strait of Gibraltar assumes major significance as one of the critical strategic points of the globe.

The Strait of Gibraltar

The Strait of Gibraltar is called the western gate of the Mediterranean Sea. This term is used in the restricted sense of the waterway, limited to only eight miles at the narrowest point, or in the wider sense where the concept of gate is expanded to include those countries which by their geographic location on either side of the Strait are in a position where they can dominate it, as are Spain and Morocco.²⁴

The Strait of Gibraltar--considered in the restricted sense--has a minimum width of thirteen kilometers, a length of about fifty kilometers and an average depth of 350 meters (maximum of 990 meters in the Algeciras Meridian) and is located on the 35th parallel.

It has two strong maritime flows; one superficial towards the East and another deep flow towards the West.

The Strait cannot be mined because of its depth and the above mentioned flows.²⁵

In the wide sense, the Strait also includes:

- The West, funnel-shaped Sea of Spain with the North and South coasts converging to the East.

- The Alboran Sea in the East, with an average width of 130 kilometers and surrounded by high mountain systems on both sides (For comparison, the English Channel is 140 kilometers wide between Cherbourg and Portsmouth). On the African coast, Spain holds two

cities: Melilla (since 1497) and Ceuta (1580), and in the Alboran Sea, the islands of Alhucemas, Penon de Velez, and Chafarina.²⁶

The maritime traffic that crossed through the Strait consisted in 1965 of more than 60,000 ships and 600,000 tons, which represented forty percent (40%) of the entire maritime movement of that year and the passing of one ship each eight (8) minutes.

In 1972--in spite of the closure of the Suez Canal--the number of ships passing through the Strait was over 70,000 which was more than the combined total number of ships passing through the Panama and Suez Channels.

And as important as the quantity of traffic is, the quality must also be considered because most ships are tankers carrying the crude oil essential to the industrialized western countries.

The dominion of the Strait of Gibraltar was kept by the Moslems from 710 until 1292--more than five centuries--and they exploited rationally their position from Tarifa, demanding payment of a toll as is done in Panama or Suez.²⁸ Since 1292, Tarifa and the dominion of the Strait was held by Spain which also dominated the west Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean until the conquest of Gibraltar in 1704 by the English Navy in the name of the Archduke of Austria, pretender to the Spanish throne. Once the British settled in Gibraltar--albeit by illegitimate means--they build there one of their most powerful military bases to protect the maritime routes of the British Empire.

The evolution of technology during the twentieth century has reduced the strategic importance of a Gibraltar isolated from the

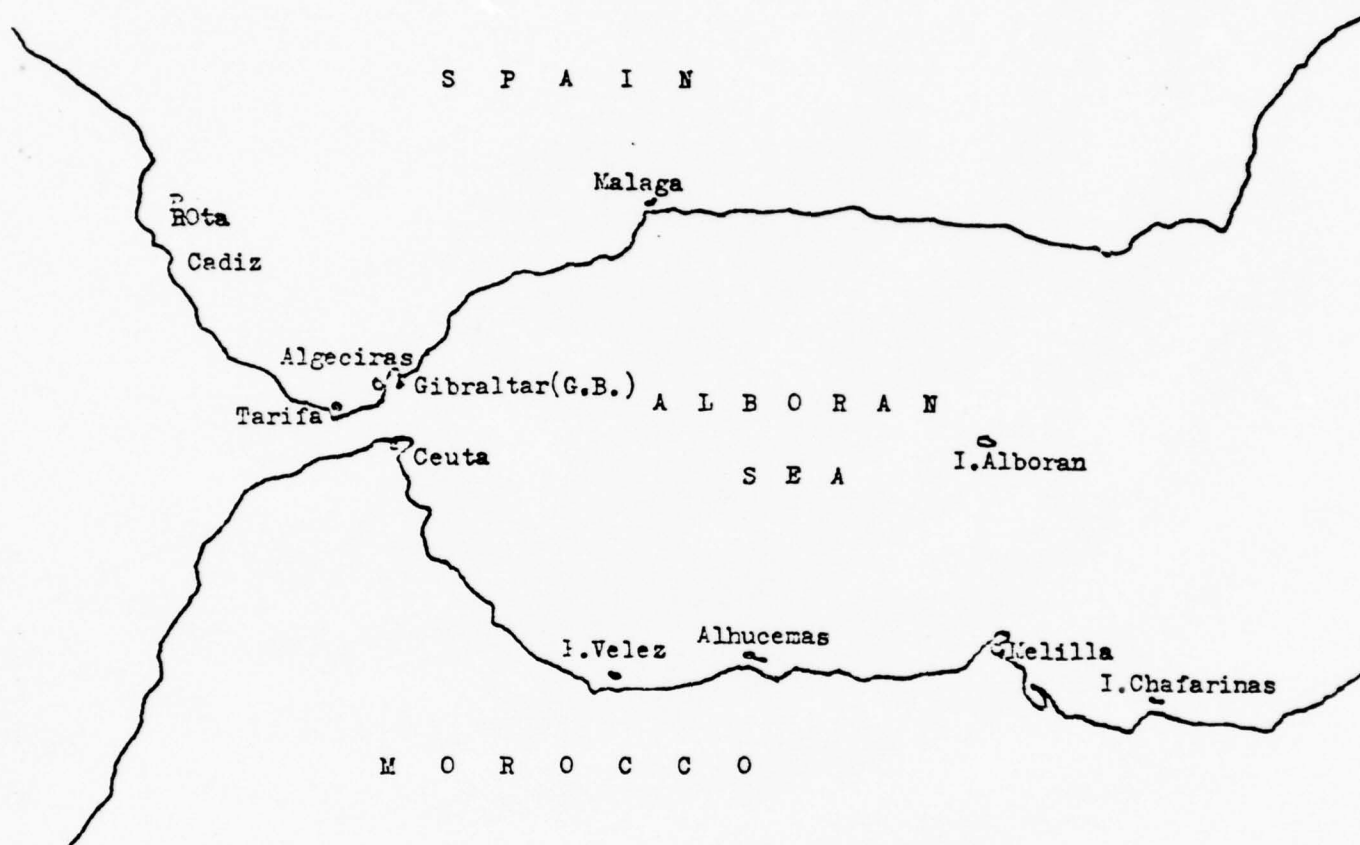


FIGURE 8 : THE STRAIT OF GIBRAITAR

surrounding country, but it remains--even now--a main military establishment for Great Britain and NATO forces and a permanent affront to all Spaniards as the last colony on European soil.

Geopolitical principles and trends have impressed a clear trace upon the history of Spain.

In the following pages, we will consider some of the most significant moments when the flow of human events impacted upon the permanent pattern of geopolitical science.

The chosen historic stages are:

- 1 - Prehistory
- 2 - Tartesos: First State in the Peninsula
- 3 - Carthage and Rome: Iberia became Hispania
- 4 - Defense of Europe Against the Islamic and Ottoman Empires
- 5 - The Empire: Land and Sea Powers
- 6 - The Spanish War of Succession
- 7 - The Napoleonic Wars

1 - Prehistory

The geopolitical direction North-South that crosses the Iberian Peninsula as a bridge between Eurasia and Africa, played a very important role from the beginning of the evolution of human society.

Iberia was the land where the successive waves of European race and culture--Cromagnonenses and Francocantabrics during the Paleolithic--coming through the Pyrenees, joined the migrations of people proceeding from Africa; capsians in the Paleolithic and Saharienses in the Neolithic.¹

Also, the two main peoples of the Peninsula represent two different origins: The Ibers--who gave the name to the Peninsula--were an agricultural people probably arrived from the North of Africa, while the Celts, a tribe of warriors dominating the metallurgy of iron, came through the Pyrenees on their way from the Danube Valley.²

Since this early epoch, it is possible to identify in the Peninsula two main cultural centers of influence, one in the Cantabrian zone of the North and the other on the Eastern coasts of Valencia that anticipate the two leading geopolitical centers of attraction to the Iberian people during their history, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.³

Another significant fact of European prehistory is the cultural splendor of the Iberian people during the Eneolithic epoch when the influence of Iberian culture--represented in the campaniform vase expanded toward the Eastern Mediterranean activating this

geopolitical West-East direction that would be an important--but in⁵⁵
the contrary sense, East-West--to the development of the classic
civilization.⁴

2 - Tartesos: The First State in the Peninsula

The human stimulus generated by the crossroads of different routes of communication and traffic, normally develops human settlements and on interchange of ideas that lead to the rising of cultural and political organizations.⁵

It was during the Bronze Age when the communication between the advanced cultures of the Mediterranean Sea and the people and countries of the Atlantic Ocean coasts was established.

The Southwest of the Iberian Peninsula--the geopolitical Zone of the Strait--was the point of convergence of the route of Casiterides (Britain)--the islands of tin--in the Atlantic, the export point of the layers of silver, copper and other minerals of the Peninsula and the arrival point of the commercial traffic of the Mediterranean Sea.

The role played by the Iberian Peninsula, as the place of relationship and communication between two continents and two seas, gave birth to the flourishing of the fabulous Tartesos, the oldest Peninsular State, with its capital Gadiz founded in 1100 BC. The rich Tartesos, sited in the fertile low valley of Guadalquivir River, pointed out the "Plus Ultra" of new horizons to the Mediterranean world.⁶

It was not an accidental coincidence that twenty-five hundred years later, it was precisely from this point of the Peninsula that sailed the expedition that would discover the New World. We are not talking about geographic determining, but of the geopolitical conditions that allow and promote human enterprises and realizations.

The numerous expeditions to the metals market of Tartesos developed a sense of navigation and a competition for the dominion of sea routes towards the Strait. Thus, during the 8th century BC, the Western Mediterranean, for the first time in its history, often repeated afterwards, became a geopolitical zone of friction, the Iberian Peninsula being one of the most significant factors.

3 - Carthage and Rome: Iberia became Hispania

The geopolitical importance of the Iberian Peninsula and the strategic necessity of its dominion became apparent at the very beginning of the struggles for the supremacy in Europe. Thus, Iberia played a decisive role during the Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome.

At the end of the first Punic War, Rome had established a powerful maritime defensive line--Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily--and held dominion over the Western Mediterranean. In front of this sea power was Carthage, a land power. The Barcida family, leaders of Carthage, decided to build up a land power based in the Iberia Peninsula which would attack Rome in its homeland by crossing the Gallia and reaching the Italian Peninsula by the North.⁷ With that purpose, Amilcar landed in Gadiz (283 BC), founded Carthage Nova and strengthened his Army with Ibers soldiers. This audacious military maneuver, executed by the genial Hannibal, was very close to a complete success.

The Roman strategy to overcome Hannibal's threat was focused also in the Iberian Peninsula. The Roman troops commanded by General Scipion landed on the Mediterranean Coast--in Tarragona--and cut the flow of communication and supplies to Hannibal's Army, forcing him to retire to the Peninsula--his threatened rear--to be finally defeated in the battle of Zama, near Carthage Nova.⁸

The subsequent defeat and destruction of Carthage and the eventual conquest of the Balearic Islands by the Romans were the final steps in establishing the supremacy of Rome in the Western Mediterranean, the future roman, MARE NOSTRUM, for five centuries.

Another historic fact that would be a constant in the behavior of the Peninsula people appeared for the first time at the Roman conquest of Iberia. Namely, the determined and often successful resistance of the indigenous people against the intrusion of a foreign military power in the Peninsula. The typical warfare of Celtibers, the "guerrilla" showed their effectiveness in fighting well-organized forces of powerful regular armies.

The conquest of the central plateau became effective only in the year 133 BC after the murder by treason of the leader Viriato and the complete annihilation of the heroic city of Numancia near the Duero River. The submission of the Cantabric people in the mountainous North did not take place until the year 19 BC, after one hundred years of fighting, when Augustus finally pacified the zone.⁹

With the romanization of the Peninsula, Iberia became Hispania, a political unity established in a geopolitical entity, and acquired at the same time the unification of language, religion and culture. The strong personality and high cultural level reached by Hispania during the Roman Empire was manifest in the region being the birthplace of the philosophers Seneca and Columela and the Emperors Trajan, Adrianus, Marcus Aurelius and Theodosius.

Two thousand years have now elapsed and yet the language, the organization, the law, and the culture of Rome are still embodied in the people of Hispania and remain one of the basic elements of Western Civilization. Like a new Rome, Spain passed on to dozens of countries this rich heritage with the Christian spirit that has been embraced since the times of the apostles.

The geopolitical relationship between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa is shown very clearly in this epoch. The Empire of Carthage was an African-Iberian construction that could not survive after the loss of Iberia. After that time, during the six centuries of the Roman Empire, all North Africa was but an annex of Hispania named Tinitania or Transfretania, a province administered from Seville from the year 69 AD.¹⁰

This union with the North Africa land was continued also during the time of Visigothic Kingdom of Spain, and with the Moslem conquest in the eighth century.

In this sense it has been said that the occupation of the places of North Africa by the Spaniards and Portuguese in the 15th and 16th centuries was only the continuation of the Reconquest of the former Spanish-African territories.¹¹

4 - Defense of Europe Against the Islamic and Ottoman Empires

There are three possible avenues of approach to dominate Europe, and the three have been utilized during history by the invaders coming from the East.

The first one, the direct approach through the central European plain was the way chosen by Atila the leader of the Huns for his advance from the Asiatic steppes. The long distance from his base of departure to the westernmost European peninsula, Iberia, slowed down his impulse and finally stopped him in the battle of "Champs Catalaunics" in French territory, giving proof of the great difficulty inherent in the conquest of Iberia from the eastern side of Europe.

The other two eligible courses of action, an advance by the Mediterranean Sea or through the North coast of Africa to attack Europe by the Iberian Peninsula, were followed by the Moslems in two different times in the history.

And twice in its history, Spain has also defended these approaches successfully and saved Europe from the threatening wave of the advance of the Moslem Empire. The first one stopping and driving back, in an epic fight of eight centuries, the land expansion achieved by means of the Holy War preached by Mohammed the Prophet and his successors.

The second one was in the 16th century when the sea power of Spain defended the Western Mediterranean from the successive attacks of the Ottoman Empire in a series of seabattles--the Conquest of Tunis (1535) and the Liberation of Malta (1565)--that culminated at the decisive battle of Lepanto in 1571.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Arabs of the Hedjaz of Mecca and Medina sent forth the Saracen armies and after a series of successful campaigns spread out their dominion towards the East and the West reaching the Iberian Peninsula in the year 710. The internal contradictions of the Visigothic Kingdom facilitated the conquest of the country and the approach to central Europe.

However, the small Christian nucleus that survived the Moslem conquest in the Cantabric Mountains and in the Pyrenees, immediately started the longlasting fight to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula. From the first Christian victory in the Astur-Mountains of Covadonga in the year 722, until the last city conquered, Granada in 1492, eight centuries elapsed testifying to the gigantic effort made by the people of the Peninsula to overcome the Moslem dominion.

In this way, the Spanish Christian Kingdom was the shield that protected Europe during the Middle Age from the successive waves of Moslems, Berberian, Almoravides, and Almohades.

During the 16th century, the geophysical importance of the Mediterranean Sea decreased because of the discovery of America and Asia and the utilization of the Atlantic and Indic routes. However, its geopolitical value remained because it was in its waters that the main battle to stop the advance of the Ottoman Empire was fought.

The land attacks of the Ottoman on both sides of the Mediterranean were successful, overcoming the slav defense of East Europe in Mohacs (1526) and dominating the North of Africa with the Berberisc regencies.

On the Mediterranean, Ottoman sea power dominated completely the eastern part and tried to extend its dominion towards the West to join the fleets of Barbarroja and Dragut that operated from Argel. However, the success of the Spanish defense in the Straits of Sicily and Tunis shut the Western Mediterranean to the Ottoman expeditions and finally destroyed completely the Moslem fleet in Lepanto (1571) assuring for the future the free navigation of the Mediterranean to the European nations.¹²

5 - Spanish Empire: Land and Sea Power

5.1 - Geopolitical trends. The converging process that transformed the mosaic of small Kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula into a first national power and then into a world Empire was only the final stage of a geopolitical imperative that achieved its complete fulfillment in the year 1580 when the Iberian Peninsula became a political unity.

During this realization, from the years of the Reconquest onwards, the successive steps in this process were in accord with the geopolitical theoretical patterns. As examples, there were the predominance of Castille--the high central plateau--in the unification of the low lands that surrounded it; the Mediterranean attraction to the Kingdom of Aragon at its maritime natural expansion; and the African and Atlantic vocation of Portugal.

Another example is the centripetal political force that pushed the several Kingdoms of the Peninsula to become a unity: Castille and Aragon in 1464, Navarre in 1512, and Portugal in 1580.

The high concentration of spiritual strength and physical force of the Iberian people during this period generated an irresistible, centrifugal trend that, following all the possible geopolitical directions of expansion, spread the Spanish presence and culture in all directions.

The Catalanian-Aragonese trend to the east, through the insular diagonal Barcelone--Balearic Islands--Sardinia--Sicily followed the geopolitical principle of the dominion of the route and control of the opposite coast. The same principle brought the

Spanish armies to the north of Africa--expeditions to Melilla, Mazalquivir, Oran, Bujia, and Tripoli between 1497 and 1510--and to the Canary Islands in 1478.¹³

The expansion towards Central Europe was not a geopolitical tendency derived from the position of Spain, but the result of a dynastic change and the heritage of the father of Charles V. As J. H. Elliot points out, "the imperial tradition was foreign to medieval Spain and the imperialism of Charles V awakened no ready-made response in the Castilian population at large. Ferdinand had already dragged Castile behind him into great European enterprises in support of Aragonese interests. Now with Charles V, Castile was subject to a fresh set of European ideas, preconceptions, and values, many of which it found hard to accept."¹⁴

This explains the reluctance of the Spanish Cortes (Parliament) to allocate money to the European campaigns.

The geopolitical trend to the expansion of Iberian people towards the west, through the Atlantic, found a new world to discover, conquer, and colonize and gave to the Spaniards and Portuguese the great opportunity to develop all their potentialities in this historic moment.

5.2 - The Ultramarine Empire: America (sea power). During the last decade of the 15th century and the first decades of the 16th, the people of the Iberian Peninsula were the protagonists of the great exploit to extend the reduced European world all over the entire planet.

Obviously, the reason for this protagonism was not accidental. The position of Iberia in the western extremity of Europe, close to Africa and open to the "MARE TENEBROSUS" of Romans (shadowy sea) near the flow of Alisios winds, was quite determinant.

The technical progress of the art of navigation and the advances in the science of geography, together with the stimuli of immense wealth, the attraction of adventure, and the religious spirit made the achievement possible. The potential of the Iberian people joined simultaneously with the religious and spiritual strength of the Reconquest and the adventurous and enterprising new man of the Renaissance.¹⁵

The parallelism between the Spanish and Portuguese discoveries is amazing. As a sample, it is enough to say that the main successful voyages, Colon towards the West (1492) and Vasco do Gama towards the East (1496), took place only four years apart, and the discovery of the Pacific Ocean was made by the Portuguese in the Molucas in the year 1511 and by the Spaniard Nunez de Balboa in Panama in 1513.¹⁶

The colonization of America by the Spaniards was accomplished in accord with the main geopolitical features and zones of influence of the continent.

Among the three existing routes from Europe to America, the Northern one was not utilized because of its distance from the Iberian Coasts. The Central route--that enjoying the Alisios winds--was the way followed by Colon in his voyages, and afterwards, the main route through which Spain exercised her main effort of

exploration and colonization. The meridional route towards Rio de la Plata was only used afterwards and never reached the importance of the Caribbean one.

The center of expansion of Spain in America was the Caribbean Sea, the most outstanding zone from the viewpoint of the geopolitical science. From there, the expansion followed two different routes towards the North through the Mexican Gulf and the East coasts of Mexico, and towards the South, across Panama down the eastern Pacific coasts, to include the predominant Andean nucleus of Peru and then to the east coast in the Rio de la Plata estuary.

The Fleets of Indias--the only elements of relationship between the Peninsula and America--set up one of the most significant facts in geopolitics because they concentrated all the military, naval, economic, and also spiritual power of the Spanish-American relationship constituting the basic geopolitical element of the Empire.

Probably never in the history of humanity has a Nation depended so closely on the successful sea voyages of its fleets. Therefore, there was never a greater necessity for sea power to maintain a naval strength to reduce the inherent vulnerability of the system.

The social and political organization of the Spanish-American territories showed its efficiency and vitality during three centuries in spite of the decadence of the Spanish State and the loss of power and influence in Europe.

The continuous attacks of England, Holland, and France, looking for new colonies and trying to weaken Spanish power, were

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directed against the most strategic zone--the Caribbean Sea--and the most vulnerable piece of the Empire: the long line of communication across the Atlantic.¹⁷

The final failure of Spain to keep the sea power necessary to defend its possessions gave free access to the dismemberment of the ultramarine territories.

To complete the picture of the Spanish Empire, it is necessary to consider the Philippines, Marianas and Carolinas Islands in the Pacific Ocean and the geopolitical route of "Poniente" (sunset) along the Kuro-Sivo flow, followed by the ship of Acapulco, and materializing the axis Philippines--Mexico as the main one of the Pacific during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The loss of the Philippines in 1898 was the inevitable result of three factors: the lack of any close geopolitical land base of support once Spain lost the American territories, the declined sea power of Spain, and the geopolitical trend of the United States to establish a defensive barrier for the American continent in the Pacific Ocean.

The Spanish-American War was, in fact, only the occasion to secure the seizure of sea power preached by Mahan some years before, by controlling these two outstanding geopolitical areas: The Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

5.3 - The European Empire (land power). In the European Spanish Empire built up in the time of Charles the First, two different components converged. On one side was the old idea of the Christian Emperor--with his roots in Charlemagne and the Roman Empire--as the

secular and powerful arm of the Catholic Church, which was the cause for the continuous wars against the Protestants and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸

On the other side, the potentiality of Spain that had overflowed the physical limits of the Peninsula in all directions, followed also--led by the Catholic King Ferdinand of Aragon--the geopolitical trend to expansion through the Mediterranean that has always been present in the history of the Kingdom of Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia.

The Spanish Empire in Europe had a preponderant characteristic of land power. This was true not only in Central Europe, but also in the Southern lands of the Mediterranean where Spain sought more for the dominion of lands--Naples, Milan, Sardinia, Sicily, etc.--than for the control of sea routes through the holding of strategic harbors or naval bases.

However, the discontinuity of the territories of the Empire was a permanent threat to keeping it together and needed a strong land power to fight against the numerous enemies, mainly religious--Ottomans and Protestants--and political, France and England.

Because of the position of France, blocking the terrestrial communications between the two main parts of the Empire, Spain needed also a strong sea power to maintain permanently the flow of communications and supply among the different territories.

The insistence of the Spanish monarchs of the Austrian dynasty on keeping the European territories was a geopolitical mistake that consumed most of the strength of the Spanish

armies--the famous Tercios--in a permanent struggle against the inevitable, natural rising of the nationalities of these countries.¹⁹

After Charles V, the Spanish Empire suffered a deep modification. On the one hand, the separation from Spain of the Austrian territories, heired by Ferdinand, brother of the Emperor Charles, left the Spanish dominion in Central Europe reduced to a narrow strip of small territories aligned from North to South (the Pays-Bass, Louxemburg, Franc-Condee, Milan, Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia), which were very difficult to defend from attack by the neighboring countries.

On the other hand, the Union of Spain and Portugal in 1580 under Philipp the Second joined the two most powerful sea powers in the world in a superpower that held important and vast territories on the four continents.

The decades 1570-80 and 1580-90 mark the turning point of the Spanish policy. After the battle of Lepanto in 1571 stopped the threat of the Ottoman Empire, Philipp the Second shifted the focus of his policy from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. The incorporation of Portugal in 1580 gave new life and incentive to this policy. The unfortunate accumulation of calamities that led to the defeat of the "Invincible Armada" in 1588 and the earthquake that threatened Lisbon and prevented the establishment of the Capital of the Empire in this city, contributed decisively to the discouragement of Spanish governments in the prosecution of what could have been the adequate geopolitical direction of their efforts: the building of Spanish sea power.

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The union between Spain and Portugal only lasted eighty-eight years and ended in 1668 when Portugal became independent again and began, for the two Iberian people, a longlasting period of three centuries of living ignoring each other in a complete misunderstanding of the strong geopolitical ties that join both countries. This geopolitical mistake has had very negative consequences in the recent political history of both nations.

The Spanish predominance in Europe succumbed to the reiterated attacks of France and Holland during the 17th century. The country--badly administrated and led--could not maintain the necessary strength in both worlds--America and Europe--and, in spite of that the major resources--both military and financial--were allocated to the fight for supremacy and permanence in Central Europe, Spain lost its European Empire more than one hundred years before its ultramarine territories.

The Spanish Empire confirmed, in this way, the theory affirming that Empires based in land power last less time than the ones based and held by sea power.

6 - The Spanish War of Succession (1700-1714)

The Spanish War of Succession at the beginning of the 18th century was one of the main conflicts in modern European history. The members of the "Great Alliance": England, Holland, Prussia, Austria, Savoy, and Portugal fought against the axis: France--Spain, officially to support the Austrian candidate to the throne of Spain, Archduke Charles. At the same time, the Alliance was attempting to seize some of the Spanish territories in Europe that the agonizant monarchy was unable to defend.

The major nations of Europe tried, in fact, during this war of fourteen years duration, to establish--by the weight of their arms--a new geopolitical balance that represented more accurately the actual strength of each of the major nations.²⁰

Spain was completely exhausted after one century of bad government and continuous struggles both in America and in Europe. France, after reaching the zenith of her splendor in the 17th century, had become a danger for the equilibrium of the Continent. In addition, Austria wanted to inherit the possessions of Spain in central Europe. Finally, England and Holland--the rising maritime powers--were fighting against any hegemonic power on the Continent, either France or Austria.²¹ The outcome of this war as edified by the Peace of Utrecht (1713) and Rastadt (1714), was the dismemberment of the Spanish possessions in Europe and their transfer to Austria to balance the power of France: Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Milan, and the Pays-Bas plus the loss of Gibraltar (1706) and Minorca (1708), which were retained by England.

From a geopolitical point of view, the main consequences of this war were the disappearance of Spain's control of the Western Mediterranean, after more than two centuries of complete dominion, and the emergence of a new power foreign to the region: England.

The conquest and retention of Gibraltar and Minorca by the British was the first step in her establishment along the maritime route towards the Middle East and India (the Island of Minorca, recovered by the Spaniards in 1782 was replaced by Malta in 1800).

This conquest was not a war's hazard, but a preplanned objective of English policy of long standing.

On the 26th of April 1656, the Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, wrote to his Admiral Edward Montague: "Maybe it could be possible to attack the town and castle of Gibraltar, which in our hands and well defended would be an advantage to our commerce and at the same time, a trouble to Spain...".

The suggested military operation was not undertaken at this time because England had an opportunity to seize Tangier on the other side of the Gibraltar Strait in 1662. However, Tangier turned out to be not strategically valuable and was abandoned in 1684, reviving the English desires for Gibraltar.²²

The importance of the presence of England in Gibraltar until today, is not easy to understand in all its breadth, but it was certainly one of the main causes of the deprivation of the geopolitical role of Spain during the last two centuries.

7 - The Napoleonic Wars

There are three aspects of the Napoleonic Wars in the Iberian Peninsula that have geopolitical significance: the end of the declining sea power of Spain, the historic parallelism with the other land powers in Europe and the defense of the country in its peculiar style: the "guerrilla".

The subordination of Spanish foreign policy to the interests of France--a result of the "Family Pact"--produced at the beginning of the 19th century, the important sea battle of Trafalgar (1805), in which the Spanish and French fleets, commanded by the French Admiral Villeneuve were defeated by the British fleet of Nelson. This defeat was the turning point from which the maritime power of Spain never recovered. The resulting weakness of Spanish seapower was directly responsible for the inability of Spain to maintain its American possessions.²³

There were, in the history of Europe, two military geniuses that, developing and implementing a new concept of war strategy and tactic, tried to achieve the dominion of the Continent.

Hannibal and Napoleon, each the builder and leader of the greatest land power of his epoch, understood perfectly the strategic importance of the Iberian Peninsula and based their military plans on its dominion. Nevertheless, both of them experienced their first defeats in Iberia.

In both cases, the enemy--the Roman and English--enjoying the dominion of the sea, landed on the coasts of the Iberian Peninsula without any difficulty and successfully attacked the rear of the land power, whose leader was far away, behind the Pyrenees.

In both cases, the generals that obtained these first victories, restored the confidence of their countries and the morale of their troops and were, afterwards, the same generals who would win the decisive battles of Zama and Waterloo: Escipion Emilianus and the Duke of Wellington.

The third significant fact of the Napoleonic presence in Spain was the revival of the sentiment for independence in the people which put into effect the new concept of "total war" against the foreign invader. The entire population of Spain, civilians and military, men and women, fought heroically in the so called "War of Independence".

The victory of General Castanos in the battle of Bailen (1808), the epic resistance of the besieged cities of Zaragossa and Gerone, and most of all, the numerous "guerrillas" that rose all over the country--most of them led by civilians--made the seizure of Spain by the French armies impossible giving proof of the effectiveness of the concept of "nations in arms" or "total war" for the defense of a country in the Modern Era.

During the 20th century, in the last attempt of a European land power--the Third Reich--to seize the whole Continent, the victorious German armies stopped in front of the Pyrenees without essaying an attack on Spain in spite of their conviction of the strategic necessity of blockading the Strait of Gibraltar and occupying the excellent harbors on the Atlantic Coast of the Peninsula. The psychological attitude of the Spaniards--led by General Franco--the difficult geography of the country and the lessons of history, were the deterrent that stopped Hitler.

CHAPTER IV: POLITICAL SITUATION

1. World's political situation

The principal feature of the today's world is the political confrontation of two political systems: The Eastern, led by the USSR, and the Western, headed by the United States.

The Eastern block has a distinct character of land power strengthened by its dominant position in the Heartland, whereas the Western Alliance, split in both sides of the Atlantic, holds the sea power.

The strategy of the two confronting powers is conditioned by the axis of continental communications. However, while the Eastern strategy is based in terrestrial communications, the Western is defined by three maritime axes. Of these, two go in the North-South direction and the third East-West along the parallels.

The first vertical axis is the American that connects the two parts of the Continent. The second one is the European-African one that along the east coasts of the Atlantic which establishes the relationship and trade interchanges between the two Continents. The horizontal axis, from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean through the Atlantic, is the link that forms the necessary union between the two parts of the Western Alliance. These two parts share a common culture and close political and economic ties.

These three strategical axes form an H, whose points of union are the Caribbean Islands in the West and the Iberian Peninsula in the East. The dominion of these two critical points become, therefore, strategically decisive, and explains the efforts of the USSR to control them.¹ The initial attempt was directed at Spain

in 1936 following the instructions of the VII Congress of the International Socialist held in Moscow in 1935. In this Assembly, the whole situation of Spain was studied in detail, and a complete program was addressed for the final communist assault on the State, in order to establish a proletariat's dictatorship over satellite States in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco. These were the necessary prior conditions for blocking Europe, following the mandate of Lenin to envelop Europe by the South.² Although this attempt failed completely, the political pressure of the Portuguese communist party, in the years 1974-1975, proves that the USSR continues giving a capital importance to the dominion of the Iberian Peninsula.

The USSR action on the other critical point of the strategic structure of communications of the Western Alliance, achieved, on the contrary, a complete political success in 1957 with the seizure of Cuba. Although the Russian intention of establishing its military power on the island was stopped by the United States during the missile crisis in 1962, the physical presence of Eastern power in the Caribbean Sea has been a very important strategic asset in the worldwide confrontation during the last twenty-two years.

General T. Steinhoff, German Air Forces, stated in March 1974--after being for three years President of the Military Committee of NATO--that the development of Soviet naval power is possibly the most important political-military event of the second half of this century. This judgment does not seem excessive if we consider that the USSR, the gigantic land power surrounded by ice and land, is competing with the United States for maritime supremacy in all the waters of the world.³

In fact, a careful examination reveals a high number of points of supply, mooring berths, and anchorage points established by the USSR in the last few years along the eastern and western coasts of Africa.

In this way, the Soviet navy, without having naval bases in the traditional concept, obtains the necessary logistic support from her merchant and fishing fleets, giving to its navy enough mobility and the capability to threaten the vital economic routes of supply of western countries.⁴

The consequences of this Soviet naval growth are:

- In case of conflict, the survival of Europe is gravely threatened, given the fact that nearly ninety percent (90%) of the necessary supplies, calculated in 100,000 tons per day, must arrive by sea.
- The defense of Europe cannot be accomplished exclusively in Central Europe; the maritime flanks have a similar importance, especially the southern flank because of its connection with Africa and the routes of the Middle East oil.

If we look at the map of Europe and think in terms of global strategy between the two opposite blocks, we arrive at the conclusion that the conventional wisdom of the last twenty-five years must be changed. It is no longer time that Central Europe is the only important battlefield.

Although the Warsaw Pact powers undoubtedly have a great superiority of men and arms on the continent of Europe, the political military situation on the Central Front is stabilized.⁵

Because the nuclear balance in central Europe is very difficult to break down, political pressure in peacetime and military actions in

war must logically be oriented on the envelopment of Europe on the Northern and Southern flanks. It will also be essential to cut the communications with America and Africa, which are the suppliers of the military items and raw materials that are essential to Europe's survival.⁶

A land attack and advance towards the Atlantic is not very likely to be successful if threatened on the northern flank from the Scandinavian Peninsula and Great Britain and from the Iberian, Italian, and Greek Peninsulas on the southern flank. Therefore, it seems more probable that the first attacks against Europe must be made through the weaker flanks in order to isolate the battlefield before engaging in an attack on the main strength of NATO's land forces.

The general trend of our time is the continuous decline of western influence. The psychological and moral weakness of the Western world has favored the USSR, whose strategy is to promote and foster socio-political internal conflicts inside the western countries. It is its purpose, as stated clearly by the Kremlin, to pursue the ideological fight against the capitalist system by trying to weaken both the strength and the will of western societies. At this time, the expansionist policy of the USSR has as its first objective the nations of the southern flank of Europe; those which are the most vulnerable to this type of attack because of their political and social tensions. The rapid changes occurring in the young African nations and the close ties now existing between the USSR and some of them--such as Ethiopia, Libya, Algeria, and Angola--permit us to predict further Soviet pressure in the southern flank of Europe.

The center of gravity of the Eastern Power threat to Europe has clearly been displaced towards the south in the last few decades. The lack of independence between Europe and Africa from a strategical viewpoint was pointed out by Lieutenant General James T. Gavin in his book War and Peace in the Spatial Era when he said that in a future war, Europe and Africa will constitute a tactical unit. (Neither strategic, nor logistic, but tactical).⁷

In this context, it is easy to understand the extraordinary strategic importance (for Algeria and her supporter the USSR) of the dominion of the ex-Spanish Sahara. This territory is the land terminal of the Saharan aerial corridor and provides direct access to the free and coveted waters of the Atlantic without crossing the Strait of Gibraltar.⁸

The Saharan corridor is a strip two thousand kilometers wide that crosses Africa from the Red Sea towards the Saharan Coasts, between Morocco and Mauritania. This strip, desert-like and wide, is a natural aerial corridor, not under significant control by the States of the Zone, that permits the projection of aerial power into the Atlantic Ocean as the USSR demonstrated during the Angolan crisis. The strategic location of the Canary Islands in front of the Saharan corridor stress the importance of this Spanish territory.⁹

To complete these general considerations about the strategic balance of power of today's world, it will be useful to make the following theoretical comparison.

If we compare the two main components of national power--human resources and economic potential--of the Eastern and Western Alliances, we will appreciate the very favorable position of NATO.

CHART 1

| | <u>POPULATION</u> (millions) | <u>GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT</u> (\$ billions) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| NATO: | | |
| Europe (*) | 314 | 1,500 |
| USA and Canada | <u>240</u> | <u>1,867</u> |
| TOTAL NATO | 554 | 3,367 |
| TOTAL WARSAW PACT | 365 | 1,240 |

(*) France Included

The full strength of the Warsaw Pact nations could be fairly balanced by either the European countries of NATO or their American partners.¹⁰

This possibility contrasts sharply with the real military strength developed by the two blocks. It also demonstrates very clearly that if Western Europe had the will to act as a unit, it would have the capability and the resources to build up its own defense, recover its strategic independence and freedom of action, and become a fourth world power--together with the USA, the USSR and the PRC--in the balance of the multilateral powers of the future.

2. Strategic importance of Spain

The strategic importance of Spain in the global situation after the World War II, was promptly recognized in the United States.

The Secretary of Defense, Mr. Dean Acheson, stated in 1951: "Spain is of strategic importance to the general defense of Western Europe".¹¹

The strategic value of Spain was well summarized by Hanson Baldwin in an article in the New York Times in 1953: "Spain's bases help to seal the western gateway to the Mediterranean; her Atlantic islands aid in controlling and protecting trans-Atlantic shipping lanes, and the Iberian Peninsula provides additional dispersed sites for light, medium, and heavy bomber strips. And Spain, behind the rampart of the Pyrenees, provides a last line of defense if the rest of Western European should fall, and offers a springboard for offensive land, sea and air operations."¹²

The political instability of the countries in the southern flank of Europe combined with the predicted increasing ability of the two main powers to achieve control of the maritime lines of communications has increased the strategic value of Spain as the maritime bastion of Europe.¹³

Spain dominates and can easily control the following great maritime routes with air and naval forces based in her territories:

- From the south and east of the Peninsula and the Balearic Islands, the Mediterranean traffic to and from the Atlantic through the Strait of Gibraltar.
- From the northwestern coasts of Galicia, the north Atlantic route that goes from the United States to the southern access of the English Channel. This route is the most important of the world in terms of the total amount of traffic, with more than three hundred ships daily.

- From the Canary Islands, the "energy route" that goes around the Cape of Good Hope and the routes from Central and South America. These three critical routes continue along the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula towards the English Channel.

The decrease of western structures in the Mediterranean, together with the loss of territorial bases in Algeria, Libya, and lately Malta, increases the strategic value of the Spanish Mediterranean bases.

It is quite essential to the Western Alliance to diversify, as much as possible, the routes of supply to Europe and to disperse the areas of logistical support and the location of the reserve mobile forces. The Iberian Peninsula, for accessibility, distance, extension, and configuration, is without doubt the best place to fulfill this significant role in the defense of Europe.¹⁴

We can summarize the main features of the Iberian Peninsula and its islands in the strategic scenery of today as follows; it:

- Is an excellent platform, tactical as well as logistical, for the projection of military power over western Europe.
- Is the bridge, that, joining Europe to Africa, permits military interaction between the two continents.
- Dominates the Strait of Gibraltar, one of the strategic keys of the world.
- Controls the main Atlantic maritime routes, essential to the survival of western Europe.
- Is the mandatory access for all the military and civilian resources that Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel, or Egypt will need in case of threat by the Eastern Power.

- Is protected from a land attack by the Pyrenees, a formidable natural obstacle. The configuration of the terrain facilitates the defense of the country against armored units and typical "guerrilla" warfare.
- Has a great number of sheltered harbors and well equipped maritime terminals on its Atlantic coasts to handle the flow of American logistical supply to Europe.
- Has enough extension to accumulate, with relative security, the logistical elements necessary to support the European Theater of Operations.
- Would allow more room for maneuver and more space for dispersal of troops and facilities in a nuclear environment.
- Has a significant military strength in terms of number of men, fighting spirit, and industrial capacity.¹⁵

3. The Strait of Gibraltar

Given its enormous value in the current confrontation between the two blocks, we will analyze in more detail the Strait of Gibraltar.

The strategic value of a maritime zone is defined by two factors: its importance as a way of communication--represented by the density of maritime traffic in peacetime--and its war value as an axis of attack in the offense and capacity for resistance in the defense. As the first factor has been already considered above, we will now focus in the second one.

From a military viewpoint, the Strait of Gibraltar is the natural direction of naval penetration between the Western and the

Eastern zones of influence. The dominion or blockade by the USSR of the Strait in a war would mean that South Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa would fall in its hands. On the contrary, if it is the Western Alliance who holds the Strait, it will have a direct naval route to the heart of Russia and will be able to deny Soviet naval forces access to the Atlantic.

The Strait of Gibraltar is possibly the only major Strait that cannot be neutralized and blocked by nuclear means. The width, depth, and flow of the Strait and the nature of the coasts that surround it, make this blockade impossible by long distance weapons, including nuclear weapons.

The proximity of the two continents, Europe and Africa, in this zone is another aspect of strategic value. The distance of twenty-two kilometers that separates the harbors of the Spanish cities of Algeciras and Ceuta on both sides of the Strait, is the link that permits military interaction as abundantly demonstrated by the History.

The defense of this critical zone can no longer be done from only one point, not even from the English base at Gibraltar. Today, to dominate the Strait it is absolutely necessary to have a locking force deployed all along the coast on both sides.

The complex deployment of airfields, naval bases, electronic installations, and aerial and naval forces of reconnaissance and interception that are necessary to control effectively and defend this point--essential for the western world survival--can only be done on the Spanish territory.¹⁶

As stated by the Spanish Admiral, Jose Guitian, the defense of the Strait must be established in a double line, in the east from Malaga--Island of Alboran to Melilla--Islands of Chafarinas and in the center of the Strait from Algeciras-Tarifa to Ceuta.¹⁷

Installation of the electronic system necessary to achieve an accurate control of the whole area--similar to the CESAR system that protects the Eastern Coast of United States--would also require the collaboration and participation of Spain.¹⁸

4. Portugal and Spain

Portugal and Spain are two sovereign nations well defined historically and politically, but at the same time two components of one geographic, economic, and strategic entity. From a geopolitical point of view, the Iberian Peninsula is a well defined unity whose extraordinary value is dramatically increased by the addition of the four insular territories, Azores, Canary, and Madeira in the Atlantic and the Balearic in the Mediterranean.

The political existence of two independent nations, each with its own international issues, creates a reciprocal weakness that acquires greater significance in the consideration of their strategic position. While the Pyrenees are the natural defensive border of Portugal, the Atlantic coast of Portugal is the exposed flank of Spain.

Mr. Mario Soares, Premier of Portugal, pointed out on the 30th of April 1978: "The entrance of Spain into NATO does not reduce the strategic value of Portugal, but on the contrary, if

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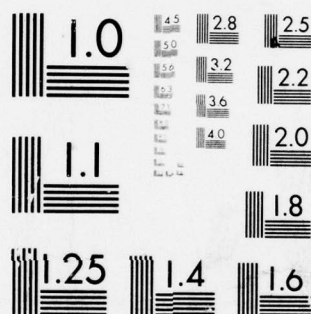
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there would be some modification, it would be in a positive sense because of the greater military coordination that it will bring."¹⁹

But in order to play a significant role on the international scale, it is necessary for Spain and Portugal to join their respective weights and policies and to appear as a single actor in the world arena. This unique presence would have a strategic value considerably greater than the arithmetic addition of its two components.²⁰

5. The Iberian Peninsula: an important asset

The Iberian Peninsula in the hands of the Eastern Block would mean:

- A powerful air and naval base to project its threat over the Atlantic and Africa.
- The blockade of the Strait of Gibraltar.
- The dominion of the Mediterranean and consequent pressure over the countries on both shores.
- The difficulty of western access to Israel and the Middle East oil.
- A dangerous threat to the rear of the NATO military deployment in Central Europe.
- Great difficulties for the support of Europe from America.

On the contrary, if the Iberian Peninsula, as a whole, participates in the Western Alliance, it would permit:

- The dominion of the Strait of Gibraltar and its blockade to the Soviet Navy's access to the Atlantic.

- The utilization of the Mediterranean for the defense of the Suez Canal and the Middle East countries and the threatening of the southern flank of the USSR.
- The easy defense of North Africa.
- The projection of air and naval power from this natural aircraft carrier to counterattack in Europe and to protect the maritime routes of supply in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean.
- The Allies to give more depth to their defensive scheme, and take advantage of the natural barrier of the Pyrenees.
- The establishment of a relatively secure and ample zone for sea terminals for oceanic traffic and dispersed logistical bases.
- A significant reinforcement of the military strength and industrial and economic capacity of Western Europe.²¹

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the preceding pages we have examined the geopolitical value of Spain from four different points of view: doctrinal theories, geographical features, historical events, and the current political situation.

The conclusions reached are summarized as follows:

1. From the doctrinal theories

- Spain holds all the geographic conditions necessary to a sea power, but failed to keep her maritime strength by wrong government policy and its failure to develop a steady flow of trade among the different territories and the Motherland. (Mahan)

- The location of the Iberian Peninsula in the western Coastland (Rimland) gives it a significant role in the struggle for the world supremacy between the land and sea powers. (Mackinder-Spykman)

- The political union of Europe must be pushed ahead to build up a solid opposition to the strength of the USSR and maintain the world balance of powers. (Spykman)

- The strategic changes caused by the technological development of air power has not reduced the strategic value of the Iberian Peninsula. It continues to be a stronghold able to resist the first attack from the Eastern power. (De Seversky)

- The climatic conditions of the Peninsula are favorable for the further development of the human dimensions--cultural, political and economical--of the peninsular people. (Huntington)

2. From the geographic features

- The unique central location of the Iberian Peninsula with respect to the emerged lands and in the vertex of communications of the three main continental masses, accounts for its permanent presence in the important events of humanity.

- The Iberian Peninsula is the center of a cross of geopolitical forces, whose arms are two axes of great significance in the relationship of Europe with the East (Asia), the West (America), and the South (Africa).

- The size of Iberia is large enough to permit an adequate defense in depth, and if we take into account the sovereign maritime space, according to the newly developing patterns, the total size controlled becomes greatly enlarged.

- Her dominion of the Strait of Gibraltar--gate of the Mediterranean--and its closeness to North Africa, gives Spain the key to communication between two seas--the Atlantic and the Mediterranean--and two continents, Europe and Africa.

- The natural barrier of the Pyrenees and the broken topography of its territory establish Iberia as a bastion difficult to conquer or subdue.

- The concentration of the main lines of maritime traffic inside the zone dominated by the Peninsula and its dependent insular territories, permits it to easily control the critical routes of supply which are essential to the survival of Europe.

- The Iberian Peninsula is one of the most clear geographic units in the world. Its division into two political entities entails additional weakness for both Spain and Portugal.

3. From the historical events

- The two geopolitical axes that cross the Peninsula have played a significant role in the development and expansion of culture and civilization during the entire recorded history of Humanity.

- Since the year 1100 B.C., in which the Phoenician founded Cadiz, the Iberian Peninsula has been the melting point of the classic Mediterranean culture and the Atlantic world.

- The strategic imperative of the dominion of Iberia was clearly understood by the different leaders of the land powers that tried to subdue Europe by their military strength: Hannibal, Napoleon, and Hitler.

- It was in the Peninsula--through the landing of troops arriving by sea--where the first defeats of the military geniuses who conquered Europe, Hannibal and Napoleon, took place initiating the decline of their expansions.

- The proximity of the lands of Iberia and North Africa has melted both territories into a political unity, sharing for centuries the successive events of a common history.

- The long distance that separates the Iberian Peninsula from Eastern Europe has made her impossible to reach by the invaders coming from the East.

- Spain has several times successfully defended Europe from the threat of being conquered by an eastern power.

- The political union of the several Kingdoms of the Peninsula into a unique and powerful State was a geopolitical imperative accomplished in 1580. Its rupture was the successful outcome of the English efforts to weaken the Peninsular Power.

- Spain has been for centuries the armed might of the Christian Faith and Civilization in its fight against attacks by foreign peoples which threatened its survival.

- The lack of a maritime policy of the government, the consequent decline of the Spanish Navy, and the associated loss of sea power have pushed Spain's position backwards in the international arena.

- The ultramarine possessions of Spain have for a long time survived its loss of world power, proving the great duration of sea powers in comparison with land empires.

- The conquest of Gibraltar by England, together with the political and military weakness of the State, deprived Spain of its geopolitical role during the last two centuries.

- The Iberian people are very difficult to subdue by foreign powers due to their success in defending their soil by "guerrilla" warfare. This has already acted as a deterrent force to stop a possible attack on the Peninsula.

4. From the political situation

- The political confrontation between the Eastern and Western Blocks during the last decades has strengthened the strategic value of Spain for several reasons. These are:

1. - The critical location of Spain in the point of confluence of the strategic axis of communication of the western world.

2. - The increased value of the Strait of Gibraltar which controls the access of naval forces of the Eastern power to the Atlantic and of the Western Alliance to the Middle East and the Black Sea.

3. - The impossibility of an effective control of the Strait of Gibraltar without the participation of Spain.

4. - The lack of depth of the western military deployment in Europe, without enough maneuver room and space for strategic or even tactical reserves.

5. - The necessity of ample spaces for the dispersion of troops and supplies in a nuclear environment.

6. - The conventional and nuclear equilibrium of forces in central Europe which would probably shift in the direction of the first attacks towards the weaker flanks, both North and South, of Europe.

7. - The political weakness of most countries in Southern Europe, any of which could deny support to NATO in a critical future moment.

8. - The closeness and ease of communication with Africa, a major objective of the Eastern powers and the possible scene of an envelopment attack on Europe from the South.

9. - The dramatic increase of Soviet naval power and its deployment into the Atlantic which have revitalized the role of the Iberian Peninsula and the Canary Islands in the future protection of vital routes of supply.

- The critical location of the Canary Islands, across the main maritime lines of communication, from America and Africa, and in front of the aerial Saharan corridor and the possible access to the Atlantic of a satellite nation of the Eastern Block, has increased dramatically their strategic importance for the Western world.

- The geopolitical and strategic value of the Iberian Peninsula with its territories of the Canary, Azores, Madeira and Balearic Islands, augments extraordinarily if considered as a single unit. However, significant weaknesses arise if Spain and Portugal act separately in the international arena.

- The Iberian countries share with France and Morocco the strategic asset of being on both seas, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and must coordinate their defense policy with those two countries.

- The addition of the strategic, economic and military strength of Spain, could be a significant contribution to a Europe willing to build up its own strategic and military weight in the world's balance of power.

Finally, if we focus on the geopolitical value of the Iberian Peninsula, we can say:

- WHO RULES THE HEARTLAND AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA
SIMULTANEOUSLY, CONTROLS THE WESTERN RIMLAND.

- WHO RULES THE HEARTLAND AND THE WESTERN RIMLAND, CONTROLS
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- WHO RULES THE WORLD-ISLAND, CONTROLS THE DESTINY OF THE
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