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The Atlantic Wall

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Soviet Union will avoid nuclear war because of unacceptable damage unless a way could be found to avoid this damage. If the U.S.S.R. were attacked, the Soviets would defend themselves with everything available, including nuclear weapons.

(2) Peace is an absence of fighting and is used as a means to obtain a respite to regroup and replenish. Peace is accepted by the Soviets when it seems the best means of attaining long-term goals at any particular time.

(3) Neutrality is a concept generally rejected by the Soviets. Neutrality is only useful when it suits long-term Soviet goals or when it is useful to prevent another country from falling under capitalist influence.

Professor Vigor cites numerous examples of Soviet military operations, political maneuvers and policy pronouncements to support his theories. In general, the facts of past Soviet history seem to support his theories. This is particularly disquieting when viewed in the context of the continuing increase in Soviet military capabilities.

Professor Vigor has produced a book that would serve very well as a textbook for students engaged in a study of Soviet attitudes toward war and defense decisionmaking. The only criticism that this reviewer would make is that there is not enough discussion of more recent Soviet attitudes, recognizing that the book was published in 1975. It is hoped that follow-on chapters will be produced with discussions of Soviet attitudes as exemplified by continued strategic weapons development, a navy with a global capability and continued improvement of tactical ground/air weapons systems.

There is considerable evidence available upon which to make judgments regarding Soviet military capabilities. It is within the area of Soviet intentions that the evidence is meager, conflicting and difficult to understand. Professor Vigor's book contributes to our under-

standing of Soviet intentions by recounting past history and providing theories that have remained fairly constant. The message is clear and disturbing. While the Soviets are not likely to start a war they cannot win, they are building their military and economic strength for use at some appropriate time in the future.

RALPH N. CHANNELL
Captain, U.S. Navy

Wilt, Alan F. *The Atlantic Wall*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1975. 244pp.

Alan Wilt not only details the fortifications of the Atlantic Wall, but he also examines the entire German defensive system in the west. He describes the construction of the coastal defenses, and also includes the manpower and firepower factors that formed the essential components of the Atlantic Wall concept. In addition, he analyzes the major strategic decisions made by the Germans and how these decisions affected the construction of the barrier in the western theater, an area that was left behind until 1944 by the larger events of World War II.

The greatest problem with the development of the Atlantic Wall was the German involvement in a prolonged war on several fronts. Because the Germans did not perceive a threat in the west until 1943, they did not give any priority of men or materials to the western theater for the construction of the "wall." These men and materials were desperately needed elsewhere.

However, with the growing allied threat in the west, the major work on the coastal defenses began in 1943. Massive construction efforts were completed, with the port cities receiving the major fortifications. The Germans believed that the allies would attempt to seize a major port with the initial invasion, and, therefore, they heavily defended these cities. Since the entire

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coast could not be fortified, the key to the German defense rested in the mobile armor formations.

The real controversy between the German commanders began on how to deploy these formations. Rommel, because of his appreciation of allied airpower, wanted the armor deployed as close to the coast as possible. He believed that if the armor were not close to the coast, the formations would be destroyed before they moved very far. Von Rundstedt, on the other hand, wanted a defense-in-depth with the armor formations under his personal control. This heated debate led to so many problems that the completion of

the Atlantic Wall suffered. Finally, Hitler solved the problem by taking control of the armor himself. The results of this decision are well known.

Professor Wilt has done an excellent job of covering a long neglected theater of World War II. He has approached the strategic aspects of the western theater during the period other writers have ignored and has greatly added to the understanding of the critical decisions made by the German High Command in building Hitler's Atlantic Wall.

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U.S. Air Force Academy

RECENT BOOKS

Selected Accessions of the Naval War College Library

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Ann Hardy, with Kathleen Ashook
Doris Baginski and Mary Ann Varoutsos

Akindele, R.A. *The Organization and Promotion of World Peace: a Study of Universal-Regional Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976. 209pp. \$15.00.

A survey of the legal and political problems which have arisen in the international community during the last 50 years as a result of the conflicting interests of global and regional agencies organized to promote world peace and security.

Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1976. 301pp. \$12.95

This lucid and thought-provoking philosophical interdisciplinary discussion, which is basic to understanding the author's previous and projected works, holds that the three areas in contemporary society—the economy, polity, and culture—are disjunctive (“ruled by contrary axial principles”) and consequently exert a disintegrative effect on the amorphous state of modernism. Bell supports a restoration of moral and religious values, improvement in social equity, and a distinction between social needs and wants.

Bloodworth, Dennis and Bloodworth, Ching Ping. *The Chinese Machiavelli: 3,000 Years of Chinese Statecraft*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976. 346pp. \$10.00

The authors seek to explain China's political and foreign policy through chronological review of the philosophical thought and the principles of