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Strategic Defense Initiative, Folly or Future

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Keith Bird's guide to German naval history is volume seven in the series of military history bibliographies under the advisory editorship of Robin Higham and Jacob Kipp. The general editors hope that their series of international bibliographies will eventually reach more than 30 volumes devoted to military history in countries other than the United States and Great Britain. This volume is first in the series devoted to a single country's naval history.

More than half of Bird's volume is devoted to a series of nine bibliographical essays which review the literature in each period of German naval history, analyze current research themes, and make suggestions for future research which complete current themes. One of the essays, "The Origin and Role of German Naval History in the Inter-War Period, 1918-1939," appeared as an article in this journal, March-April 1979.

The lesser half of the book is an alphabetical listing of the 4,871 books and articles mentioned in the essays. This listing also serves as a kind of index with references, marred by occasionally faulty page citations.

Keith Bird has provided a magnificent piece of scholarship that represents a great step in providing a sound academic basis for the study of naval history. He deserves recognition for his achievement, and one hopes that others will follow his example and apply it to naval history in other countries. Only the astonishingly high price can prevent its wide usage.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
Naval War College

Haley, P. Edward and Merritt, Jack, eds. *Strategic Defense Initiative, Folly or Future*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986. 112pp. \$24

As reflected in the preface, the editors' objective was to publish a compilation of opposing views on SDI in a single volume which might be useful for a wide audience; they have done just that. Unlike many recent efforts, they have spanned the entire general debate rather than focus on a particular aspect. Their topics begin with the relevant text from the 23 March 1983 Presidential address with supporting and expanding positions of high administration officials, including discussions of both strategic and technical feasibility, and the U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-NATO impact on international relations and foreign policy. In each case the editors offer formal presentations by internationally recognized authors from both the "pro" and "con" communities. Each of the articles could be considered causal on their respective topics, and the collection, therefore, becomes extremely useful for anyone wishing to survey the literature and debates on SDI. However, as with any attempt to survey a broad subject, potential readers are left to their own devices to build their depth; but the breadth is provided.

To compensate for this, the editors have written an exceptional introduction which provides a succinct conceptual placement of SDI in the body of deterrent theory, the international legal environment (ABM Treaty) and general framework of

the "nuclear dilemma." In my opinion, these 17 pages are so well-developed that they probably are a major strength of the book. While the essay collection reviews the SDI debate from 23 March 1983 forward, the introduction synthesizes the much needed historical perspective on defense in the nuclear age, tracing key Presidential decisions in the nuclear arena.

Overall, the book accomplishes its purposes, reads easily, and presents a reasonably balanced treatment of central issues. As such, it would be quite usable in colleges and universities or for the informed and interested public.

STEVE FOUGHT
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force

Snow, Donald M. *National Security: Enduring Problems of U.S. Defense Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. 272pp. \$35

This text presents a timely, concise overview of many aspects of the national security field such as America's military experience, the evolution of our country's defense policy, conventional military threats in Europe and the Third World, current nuclear strategy, deterrence, and arms control issues. Since it is an introductory work designed for a relatively unsophisticated audience, it is written to be easily understood, and it achieves this goal. In addition, for those who desire to know more, a brief list of suggested readings is included at the end of each chapter.

In short, this book has a good deal to be said in its favor.

On the other hand, even as an introductory text, it also has some problems. First, its terminology tends to be imprecise. For example, Snow uses terms such as "wars," "intervention," "commitment of forces," and "military involvement" as though they were interchangeable when, in fact, they have distinctly different meanings.

Second, the simplicity with which most issues are discussed becomes harmful unless the reader is aware of the drastic simplification of most subjects. To cite one instance, the maritime strategy is covered in just a single paragraph of twelve lines. That is truly being concise with a vengeance!

Third, there is little sense of the connection between national security policy and foreign policy. The focus on the former tends to be so narrow that the use of U.S. military forces to aid in achieving many foreign policy goals often disappears from view. Moreover, Snow's discussion concentrates on ground combat with next to no recognition of the existence of "gunboat diplomacy."

Fourth, Snow never really looks at the institutional setting within which national security policy is made. Yet for many writers, the institutional framework itself (e.g., the structure and operations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) is a major "enduring problem." It hardly seems fitting to discuss the nature and difficulties of many policies without any consideration of how they were developed.