

1981

Kingdoms of the Blind

James John Tritten

Harold W. Rood

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Tritten, James John and Rood, Harold W. (1981) "Kingdoms of the Blind," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 34 : No. 6 , Article 22.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol34/iss6/22>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

110 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

could be eliminated for a \$55 billion saving with no noticeable reduction in national security will also be questioned. And Kaufman's skepticism about the value of the B-1 strategic bomber and the need for additional Navy carrier battle groups to press the attack to Russian home waters will not please advocates of these programs.

Readers of this year's Brookings analysis of the federal budget will, as in the past, find plenty of material that is informative, enlightening, or provocative.

JOHN A. WALGREEN
Wheaton College

Rood, Harold W., *Kingdoms of the Blind*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1980. 294pp.

Professor Rood has written a book which should provide interesting reading to naval officers and other serious students of strategy. His two central themes are to document the "dangerous inclination democratic people have of discounting the likelihood of war" and call attention to the repeated Soviet preparations for war.

Without adhering to the principle that history repeats itself ("It is only the behavior of democracies that seems repetitious"), Professor Rood quickly repeats the lessons of the 1930s and then provides keen insights into the strategic nature of Soviet foreign policy since 1945. His analysis of submarine warfare is extremely well thought out and documented. Professor Rood does not dwell on the past and argues a good case for the current international situation being far worse than anything experienced by Great Britain in the prewar years.

The book presents a number of detailed case studies of the geopolitical implications of events in Cuba, Czechoslovakia and of the strategic importance of central Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Caribbean. Professor Rood develops

an interesting and revealing scenario with regard to the magnitude of any operations which would be undertaken to neutralize Cuba. He adroitly ties this to his thesis that strategy is essentially "to force one's enemy to defend that which he has no choice to defend and in areas away from the principal theater of war, while one's own forces concentrate to achieve a decision in that theater of war where the outcome of battle will decide the outcome of war."

Europe remains the center of what Professor Rood views as the most likely area of future East-West confrontation. The book documents numerous examples of Soviet maneuvers that have significantly altered their options to the detriment of NATO. Soviet successes in arms control negotiations, while continuing to openly prepare for a winnable war, have been met with American optimism and adoption of the classic role of any peacetime democracy. Rood argues that the shift in favor of the East has already started to occur. He states that, "If the West prepares for war and no war comes, we may enjoy the freedom of criticizing ourselves for our foolishness. If war comes and the West is unprepared . . . Our freedom will have died, killed by our blindness."

Kingdoms of the Blind is indexed and extremely well footnoted.

JAMES JOHN TRITTEN
Commander, U.S. Navy

Roskill, Stephen. *Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty. The Last Naval Hero: An Intimate Biography*. New York: Atheneum, 1981. 430pp.

The claim on the dust jacket notwithstanding, Captain Roskill's biography of Admiral Beatty is not the first biography of this distinguished British naval officer of the World War I era. Thirty years ago, Rear Adm. W.S. Chalmers recorded Beatty's naval achievements without delving into the more delicate features of Beatty's personal life or