

# The maginot line

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The Maginot Line Sur College The Maginot Line The idea of effective defense was especially poignant for the French as they had sustained their losses in World War I on the soil of their own. Therefore it is no wonder that after that war was over many in France were preoccupied with the idea of making such defensive arrangement which could surely secure La Republique from repeating devastations of 1914-18. These efforts resulted in creation of tremendous and expensive Maginot Line, an extensive system of linked underground railways, interconnected fortresses comprising hospitals, barracks, armories, fuel and ventilation systems which would allow the defenders to fight even if encircled by the enemy. Entire defensive complex cost France 7 billion francs. As French military leadership pinned all their hopes on this defensive line the funding for other areas of the French military was reduced. The main weakness of the entire arrangement was that the Line did not extend the length of Belgian border - the likely route of invaders. The line actually stretched from Strasbourg to Montmedy only. Having invested so tremendous sums in construction of Maginot Line facilities French establishment developed the so-called Maginot mentality that did not allow them to consider other ways of warfare. In 1935 the Minister of War in his speech to the Chamber of Deputies stated: " How can we still believe in the offensive when we have spent thousands of millions to establish a fortified barrier?" (Havers 2002) Furthermore in addition to their reluctance to offensive tactics, French military leadership failed to utilize offensive properties of armor, although developed excellent tanks and vehicles toward the beginning of 1940 German invasion. In spite of the desperate protestations of such notable officers as Charles de Gaulle French military leadership remained stubbornly addicted to the ideas of the passive

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defense. Their reluctance and narrow-mindedness cost La Republique not only 7 billion French francs but her freedom and honor as well. References  
Havers, R. (2002). *The Second World War (2) Europe 1939-1943*. Osprey Publishing. pp. 26-27