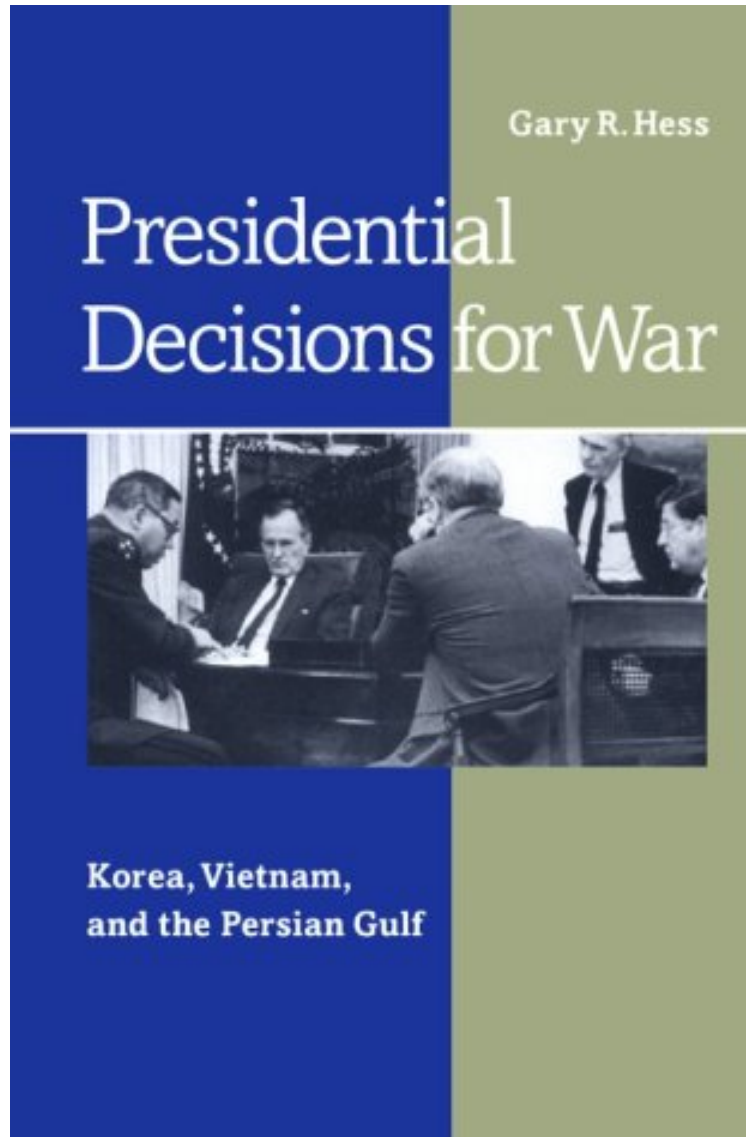


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Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf (The American Moment)

Gary R. Hess

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Gary R. Hess : Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf (The American Moment) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf (The American Moment):

In 1950, Americans expected that the United States would wage another major war in the near future. Instead, over the course of the next half-century, they fought limited wars against minor powers: North Korea, North Vietnam, and Iraq. In *Presidential Decisions for War*, Gary R. Hess explores the ways in which Presidents Truman, Johnson, and Bush took America into these wars. He recreates the unfolding crises in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, explaining why the presidents and their advisers concluded that the use of military power was ultimately necessary to uphold U.S. security. The decisions for war are then evaluated in terms of how effectively the president assessed U.S. interests, explored alternatives to war, adhered to constitutional processes, and built congressional, popular, and international support. Once at war, each president as commander in chief faced the challenge of waging a limited war, which imposes restrictions on military operations and objectives and on the extent to which popular emotions can be aroused. After tracing how Truman, Johnson, and Bush responded to unfolding military developments, Hess evaluates the wartime leadership of each president in terms of his effectiveness in coordinating political and military objectives, managing civilian-military relations, communicating objectives and sustaining popular and congressional support, gaining and sustaining international backing, and responding to diplomatic initiatives and opportunities for peace. *Presidential Decisions for War* concludes that the quality of presidential leadership directly affected the different outcomes of these three wars, each of which remains a topic of ongoing controversy among historians and the public.

This book admirably introduces an historical cross-analysis that allows some assessment of US leadership during these critical times. (Virginia Quarterly) Hess's writing is clear, each chapter is sharply focused, and his comparisons are deft, all of which we have a right to expect from an historian of his stature. (Warren I. Cohen International History) Hess's book provides us with useful and substantive cases of the ways presidents manage international crisis. (Chris J. Dolan White House Studies) A solid work... Hess has packaged three historical vignettes in a thorough, concise, and readable primer on wartime presidential leadership. (Dan Koprowski Historian) A thoughtful and interesting book, not the least of its merit being a useful bibliography. (John Kentleton Journal of Contemporary History) The basic conception for this book is a stroke of genius... Hess gives a fine sense of how various pressures operated to shape both a president's decision for war and the way in which the decision was carried out. The book is genuinely comparative, frequently drawing parallels and showing what one president learned from his predecessors. Hess's evaluations are always thoughtful and measured. (David W. Levy, University of Oklahoma) Hess is skillful in his storytelling... Hess's analysis merits a wide audience?not the least of which should be current policy makers. (David A. Crockett Political Science Quarterly) Yields numerous insights and observations of presidential decision making. (Jeremy Kuzmarov History News Network) An illuminating examination of U.S. involvement in war by a sophisticated observer of modern American diplomacy. (Melvin Small H-Diplo) "The basic conception for this book is a stroke of genius... Hess gives a fine sense of how various pressures operated to shape both a president's decision for war and the way in which the decision was carried out. The book is genuinely comparative, frequently drawing parallels and showing what one president learned from his predecessors. Hess's evaluations are always thoughtful and measured." -- David W. Levy, University of Oklahoma

About the Author Gary R. Hess is Distinguished Research Professor of History at Bowling Green State University. He is the author of *The United States at War, 1941-1945*; *Vietnam and the United States: Origins and Legacy of War*; *The United States' Emergence as a Southeast Asia Power, 1940-1950*; *America Encounters India, 1941-1947*; and numerous essays. He was president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in 1991 and has served on the Board of Editors of *Diplomatic History*. He has been a four-time Fulbright Scholar/Lecturer in India.