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Book Reviews

Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf
by Gary R. Hess. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 262 pp. Cloth, $59.95; paper, $18.95.

In *The Federalist*, No. 74, Alexander Hamilton states that "the direction of war most peculiarly demands those qualities which distinguish the exercise of power by a single hand." Gary Hess focuses precisely on that dynamic by analyzing presidential leadership in the three wars in the latter half of the twentieth century. His focus is twofold: to evaluate the decision to go to war, and then to evaluate the president's wartime leadership. Each chapter deals with one of these two questions, providing the reader with a coherent framework to compare the decision making of three presidents. This makes it easy to see what the three situations have in common and what distinguishes them from each other.

Hess's approach is unabashedly presidency-centric. He states in his introduction that he attempts "to recreate the sense of crisis . . . as seen from the perspectives of the three presidents and to recount their actions within the context of unfolding events and anticipated contingencies" (p. 5). There is some justification for this perspective, given the unitary nature of the presidency, especially in his role as commander-in-chief. To his credit, however, Hess tempers this institutional partisanship by thoroughly discussing the constitutional limits to the president's war power, as well as the historical constraints that faced these presidents.

Hess is skillful in his storytelling. In all three cases he effectively details the larger historical context of the crises, the process of escalation, and the deliberation that occurred within the executive branch. He emphasizes the importance of mental templates for action, especially the "lesson" of the 1930s. The Munich/appeasement paradigm is common to all three wars. Hess also does an admirable job of detailing how each war affected the thinking of later presidents and how problematical the application of the "lessons" of history can be. For example, Lyndon Johnson sought to avoid Harry Truman's mistake by resisting the move toward a wider war, all the while proving himself incapable of obtaining a Korea-like status quo when the nature of war in Vietnam was so fundamentally different. Similarly, George Bush drew lessons from both Korea and Vietnam, most effectively coordinating political and military objectives, while wrestling with the great uncertainty that followed the end of the cold war.

The book is clearly organized and easy to follow. In each case Hess lays out the process that led to war and then explores the president's role as a wartime leader. He includes an extensive bibliographical essay that will be helpful to anyone who wants to do further research. One frustrating drawback is the utter lack of citations in the text. Hess often refers to things like "one Truman biographer" (p. 32), but there is no way to identify the biographer to seek out the source.

Most refreshing is Hess's willingness to take his descriptive data and evaluate these presidents according to his normative criteria. Thus, Hess sees the war in Korea as most justifiable, with Vietnam most problematical. He thinks Truman demonstrated a blatant disregard for constitutional processes, while Bush adhered most faithfully to his obligations, however reluctantly. Hess is willing to argue that presidential decisions matter, and the quality of decision making in these three cases led to different results. But throughout the book, he also emphasizes the tremendous problems that faced these presidents because they waged limited wars, in which "presidents must seek to build popular support without generating demands for victory" (p. 6). The demands on presidents are greater when they wage limited wars, and all three of these presidents ended up political casualties of war. Hess's analysis merits a wide audience—not the least of which should be current policy makers.

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The Collapse of the Kyoto Protocol and the Struggle to Slow Global Warming *by David Victor. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001. 160 pp. $22.95*

Policy prescriptions that offer fresh combinations of emissions trading and tax instruments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions beg important questions about political feasibility. Should the 1997 Kyoto Protocol be scrapped and replaced by a more promising regime? Will a hybrid solution work best? Is the *best* the enemy of the *good*?

According to David Victor, there is very little good to be found in the Kyoto Protocol. The alarming title of his monograph is intended to be predictive. The impending collapse of the protocol is assured by its implied reliance on an international system of emissions trading—a cap-and-trade system that regulates the quantity of emissions without regard for the price of emissions credits. To this he adds the perennial problems of allocating permits, monitoring, and enforcement across 38 industrialized countries initially, and 190 countries, eventually.

This slender volume provides a penetrating and well-documented overview of the strategic issues and policy dilemmas that arise in the debate over climate protection. The author's perspective is that of a policy analyst concerned about