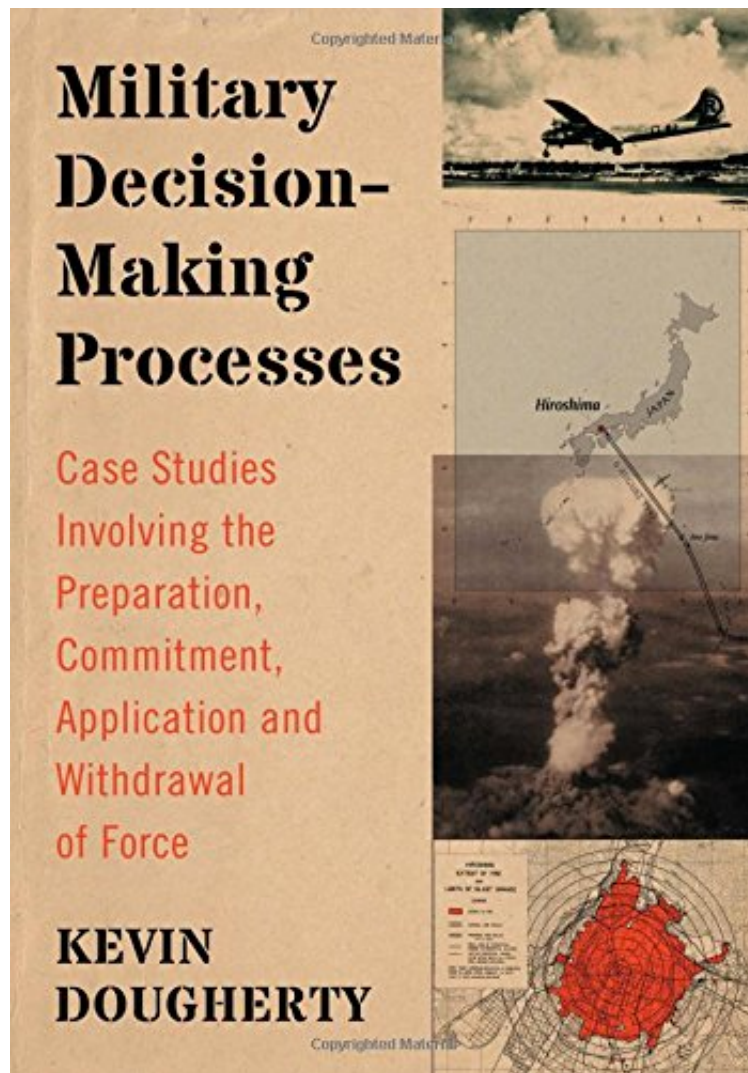


[Free pdf] Military Decision-Making Processes: Case Studies Involving the Preparation, Commitment, Application and Withdrawal of Force

# Military Decision-Making Processes: Case Studies Involving the Preparation, Commitment, Application and Withdrawal of Force

*Kevin Dougherty*

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**Kevin Dougherty : Military Decision-Making Processes: Case Studies Involving the Preparation, Commitment, Application and Withdrawal of Force** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Military Decision-Making Processes: Case Studies Involving the Preparation, Commitment, Application and Withdrawal of Force:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Case Studies are focused By William C. Hagen Eight models or

theories of decision making processes are presented. The eight are described and then three case studies for each model are presented with a short summary of utility following. In the epilog the author acknowledges that the models are more useful as tools for historical analyses than as guides to be used going into a decision making situation—the real world is much too complicated and events evolve too dynamically to capture in a mechanistic ‘recipe’. As presented by Dougherty the models are not crisply defined but rather generalities about leadership styles. As a consequence, the case studies seem more focused on the execution of the decision than on the decision itself. An example is the Chapter Six case study of the action of the ‘Blockade Board’ in the Civil War. It starts with Lincoln’s decision to blockade the Southern ports which was a decisive act but then focuses on the evolving methods of execution. The author makes some attempt to knit the case studies to the models but the relationships are often obscure. Many of the case studies concern the determination of policy rather than the determination of specific courses of action. This seems contrary to the book’s title which implies a concentration on military decision-making—in our society, the making of policy is not a prerogative of the military. It is important, however, that policy be fixed because there is a natural lag between the making of policy and its execution so a wavering policy usually results in muddled execution such as in Viet Nam. The main value in the book is that it underscores the importance of defining a path—any path—leading to a successful outcome of a crisis. Any one of the eight models presented can work but can also lead to disaster if objectives are ill-defined or resolve lost. A lesson that can be drawn from the book but not explicitly addressed is that the lower in the decision making hierarchy, the more probable it is that the decision can be successfully executed. Truman’s decision to drop the atomic bomb is a notable exception. Another latent message is that decisions not to act and even decisions not to make a decision can and often do have historical consequences. This is a good book if only for the interesting case studies rather than the models and processes described. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. MilitaryBy Denis E. McgrathDougherty writes with surgical precision and offers excellent case studies and good documentation that is appropriate and timely to his theme. This is a book that can be appreciated by a wider audience than military strategists. Anyone in government or public service at a decision making level would do well to examine the components of the eight models he so carefully details. As an added bonus it was enlightening to see snippets of real historical events through a different looking glass.

President Bill Clinton, speaking as might any commander-in-chief, on the eve of his decision to deploy ground troops to Bosnia in 1995, declared he had "no responsibility more grave than putting soldiers in harm's way." Such a statement suggests that a study of the decision-making process associated with the weighty matters of using force would be enlightening. Indeed, it is. The decision-making process is far from standardized nor is it simple. While all individuals associated with important decisions about national security and the lives of America's service members take their responsibilities seriously, the processes by which they reach their conclusions are varied and complicated. The book traces eight traditional and emerging theories or models of decision-making by first explaining the components of each model and then by analyzing its practical application through three case studies. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of the utility and explanatory power of the particular model.

About the AuthorKevin Dougherty is a retired Army lieutenant colonel, currently working as a tactical officer and adjunct professor at The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina.