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Decision-Making for Defense

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Hitch, Charles J. *Decision-Making for Defense*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965. 83 p.

Decision-Making for Defense is a series of four lectures delivered by Charles J. Hitch. Known as the Gaither Lectures, the series was arranged by the Graduate School of Business Administration and the Center for Research in Management Science of the University of California, Berkeley. President Johnson recently termed Mr. Hitch "a principal architect of America's modern defense establishment It is largely as a result of [his] efforts that this country now possesses the most balanced, flexible, combat-ready defense force in history and a management system to maintain our superior military posture and use it with precision." Like it or not, planning-programming-budgeting and cost/effectiveness are the management tools being employed by the Secretary of Defense to exercise "direction, authority, and control" over the Department of Defense without another major reorganization of the defense establishment.

This little book could well be read by every American interested in defense—especially by all military officers. The first lecture traces the evolution of the defense problem over the course of our nation's history in order to understand the nature of our decision-making process in the 1960's and why certain improvements were needed in 1961. In the second lecture the speaker develops the purpose and function of the programming system and how it fits into overall management. The third address is concerned with the efforts to apply techniques of operations research or systems analysis to the problem of defense decision-making, particularly with regard to the choice of weapons systems and the allocation of resources among alternative forces and programs. In the last lecture Mr. Hitch evaluates these innovations, in order to discuss the unresolved problems in their application and to assess their place in the future. This reviewer noted an interesting undercurrent in the series of lectures and that is that somehow the United States military forces prior to 1960 were poorly managed—yet history records a victory in every war in which they were called upon to fight. If the Vietnam war can be considered a test for the policies and theories of Mr. Hitch—the only war in which they have been tested—history may prove that when it comes to war perhaps admirals and generals are better managers than economists.

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