In this new and much-expanded edition of his classic study, John Vasquez examines the power of the power politics perspective to dominate inquiry, and evaluates its ability to provide accurate explanations of the fundamental forces underlying world politics. Part I of the book reprints the original 1983 text of *The Power of Power Politics*. It examines classical realism and quantitative international politics, providing an intellectual history of the discipline and an evaluation of statistical research guided by the realist paradigm. Part II provides six new chapters covering neorealism, post-modernism, the neotraditional research program on balancing, Mearsheimer's analysis of multipolarity and institutionalism, the debate on the end of the Cold War, and neoliberalism. Through the use of comparative case studies these chapters analyze the extent to which the realist paradigm has been progressive (or degenerating), and empirically accurate, and the extent to which it remains a relevant and explanatorily powerful theoretical approach for our current era.

John Vasquez is Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. His work focuses on international relations theory and peace research. His books include *The War Puzzle* (1993), *In Search of Theory: A New Paradigm for Global Politics* (with Richard Mansbach, 1981), *The Power of Power Politics: A Critique* (1983), and *Classics of International Relations* (3rd edition 1996). He has published articles in *International Studies Quarterly*, *World Politics*, *American Political Science Review*, *Review of International Studies*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and *Journal of Politics*, among others.

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For Barbara
Some things, although understood,
still passeth all understanding.

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Preface

Longer ago than I care to relate, I thought it would be nice to have a paperback edition of this book released with perhaps an epilogue addressing some issues facing international relations theory since the original publication. From this whimsical idea, the volume before you has emerged. It has fully six new chapters, each with its own research design and argument. In part, this is a function of the fact that it proved impossible to treat the question of the power of the realist paradigm to guide inquiry and adequately explain it since the publication of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) in just one or two chapters, let alone an epilogue. It is also partly a result of the change in historical events that resulted in the end of the Cold War and that has led to much rethinking (with new historical perspective gained with the passing of an era) about the nature of world politics and the ability of our theories to explain it. However, the main reason behind the expansion of the book can be found in the richness and variety of the discourse on international relations that has emerged since I worked on the original text. Many of the topics I treat in the new chapters, from neorealism to the debate over the end of the Cold War, simply did not exist when I wrote the dissertation (1974) that gave rise to the original text (completed in 1980, but not released until 1983 because of problems at the original press).

While these intellectual currents have expanded the book, the new chapters are not just a hodge-podge of essays reflecting recent trends. From the outset I made the commitment to make the new chapters a logically tight self-contained unit. They, like the original text, are linked into an overall argument that seeks to appraise the adequacy of the realist paradigm. They also seek to complement the original text by examining a new body of evidence and by applying some

additional criteria of adequacy. Whereas the original text examined quantitative evidence quantitatively to make an evaluation, the new chapters examine neotraditional research through the use of comparative case studies to make an appraisal. The old and the new form a unified whole, even though they are separated by about seventeen years.

Every book you write takes part of your life and part of the lives of those close to you; you can only hope that it returns more than it takes. When it does so, it tends to give back more to you as author than to those close to you. Nevertheless, I have learned a great deal writing the new chapters and seeing how they relate to the original chapters written in a very different time and different place. I hope readers, both the original ones and new ones, will also learn from this work.

I have been fortunate that the person closest to me has been able to provide not only emotional support for my work but also intellectual support and criticism that has improved it. Marie T. Henehan read the entire manuscript more times than she would like to count and offered numerous emendations and comments. I remain, as always, in her debt. My thanks also to several others. John Haslam, my editor at Cambridge University Press, waited patiently for this manuscript. After it was promised several times, I still kept adding things here and there. Steve Smith, the series editor, was supportive of the project from the initial idea to the review of the final product. I much appreciate his critical reading of the manuscript, and the conversation (mostly by reading each others' work) on international relations theory we have had over the years. My new colleague at Vanderbilt, James Lee Ray, also read the manuscript and offered counsel, which I always find valuable. Fred Chernoff generously provided a detailed reading of about 100 manuscript pages for which I am enormously grateful. A special thanks goes to Matthew Evangelista who was kind enough to review the chapter on the Cold War for me. As always it has been a pleasure working with the editorial and production staff at Cambridge, particularly Dr. Anne Dunbar-Nobes who copy-edited the manuscript professionally and expeditiously. Needless to say, none of the above individuals should be held responsible for my own errors.

Parts of this book draw upon two of my previously published pieces. An early version of Chapter 10 appeared in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge:

Polity Press, 1995) as "The post-positivist debate," pp. 217–240. The chapter here is longer and its theme more focused on the need for theory appraisal and how to conduct it. A shortened version of chapter 11 appeared in the *American Political Science Review* 91 (December 1997): 899–912 with responses by Kenneth Waltz, Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, Randall Schweller, and Stephen Walt. The chapter here is more tightly linked with the theme of the book and structured as one of several case studies. In this chapter, I have also taken the liberty of replying mostly, but not exclusively, in the footnotes and in the section on "Shirking the evidence" to the points made by my critics.

Let me also state here that the criticisms I make of realist and other scholars in this book should not be taken as meaning that I find their work without value – just the opposite is the case. It should come as no surprise that I still use Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* as the main text in my freshman international relations course, and that I use Waltz (1979) in my core graduate course in international relations theory. Criticism remains one of the main ways (but not the only way) by which knowledge in the field grows. One of my greatest debts is to the scholars I criticize in this book, for they have made me think (and rethink) the most fundamental questions currently facing international relations theory.

Support for this project was provided by Vanderbilt University in the form of paid leaves both to start this work and later to complete it. Without that released time and support from the University Research Council, this work would have taken even longer. Most of what is new in this book was completed on Block Island, which proved once again to be a congenial place for reflection and for the arduous labor of transforming thoughts into written arguments.