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978-0-521-69760-6 - The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models

Richard Little

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The Balance of Power in International Relations

The balance of power has been a central concept in the theory and practice of international relations for the past five hundred years. It has also played a key role in some of the most important attempts to develop a theory of international politics in the contemporary study of international relations. In this book, Richard Little establishes a framework that treats the balance of power as a metaphor, a myth and a model. He then uses this framework to reassess four major texts that use the balance of power to promote a theoretical understanding of international relations: Hans J. Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1948), Hedley Bull's *The Anarchical Society* (1977), Kenneth N. Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) and John J. Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001). These reassessments allow the author to develop a more comprehensive model of the balance of power.

Richard Little is Professor of International Politics at the University of Bristol. He is a former Chair and President of the British International Studies Association and the author of *International Systems in World History* (with Barry Buzan, 2000).


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