

Political Constraints on the Balance of Power: The Logic of Strategic Rivalry in International Relations

The balance of power is a central concept in international relations, but it is often misunderstood. Some scholars argue that the balance of power is a natural and inevitable feature of the international system, while others argue that it is a product of human agency and can be manipulated to achieve desired outcomes.



Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power (Princeton Studies in International History and Politics) (Princeton Studies in International History and Politics, 125) by Randall L. Schweller

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2090 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 200 pages

Screen Reader : Supported



In this book, I argue that the balance of power is not a natural or inevitable feature of the international system, but rather a product of political constraints. I show that domestic politics can shape states' foreign policy choices in ways that can either stabilize or destabilize the international system.

I begin by developing a theoretical framework for understanding the political constraints on the balance of power. I argue that there are two main types of political constraints: *domestic* and *international*. Domestic constraints include factors such as the distribution of power within a state, the level of public support for foreign policy, and the strength of interest groups. International constraints include factors such as the distribution of power among states, the level of interdependence, and the presence of international institutions.

I then use this framework to analyze a number of historical cases, including the Peloponnesian War, the Thirty Years' War, and the Cold War. I show that domestic politics played a major role in shaping the outcomes of these wars. In some cases, domestic constraints led to a more stable balance of power, while in other cases they led to a more unstable balance of power.

I conclude by discussing the implications of my findings for the study of international relations. I argue that political constraints are a key factor in understanding the balance of power, and that they must be taken into account in any analysis of international security.

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Reviews

"This book is a major contribution to the study of the balance of power. It provides a clear and concise theoretical framework for understanding the political constraints on the balance of power, and it uses a number of historical cases to illustrate the importance of these constraints. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in international security."

John Mearsheimer, University of Chicago

"This book is a timely and important contribution to the study of international relations. It provides a new and innovative way of thinking about the balance of power, and it has important implications for our understanding of international security. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the future of the international system."

Stephen Walt, Harvard University



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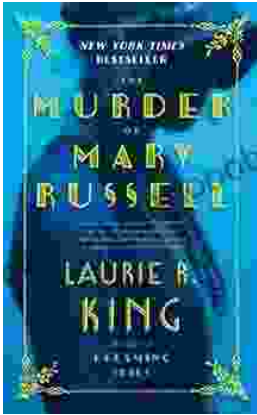
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