

International relations notes on balance of power

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. The Balance of Power: Hans Morgenthau

- a. Balance of power- how power is distributed.
 - i. As a policy aimed at a certain state of affairs
 - ii. As an actual state of affairs
 - iii. As an approximately equal distribution of power
 - iv. As any distribution of power
- b. The weaker states will balance against the stronger states
 - i. Comparatively, a weak state aligning with another weak state will have more influence, b/c the weaker state has a great need for assistance.
 - ii. A weak state aligning with a strong state will have much less influence, because it adds relatively less to the coalition and it leaves it vulnerable to the whims of its new partners
- c. Hard Balancing
 - i. Internal balancing- the state has direct control over its own stuff.
 - ii. External balancing-states balancing with allies. NATO would be external hard balancing

2. Balance of Threat: Stephen Walt. (structural realist movement) (1985)

- a. Aggregate Power-state's total resources
- b. Approximant power-how close is the enemy
- c. Offensive power-military power
- d. Offensive intentions- (capability + intent = threat)
- e. Bandwagoning-BoT predicts this, but not BoP
 - i. Why do some countries bandwagon against a threatening power- b/c they have no other choice, the enemies are too big and too close, they just want to freaking survive
 - ii. Also they might want to get a share of the spoils from war.
 - iii. Balancing is more common than bandwagoning.
- iv. Domino theory- aka the US failure in vietnam shows our weakness, and other countries will turn to communism, however this theory did not hold up during the cold war. As long as the ussr presented a threat, then our allies would not join them.
- f. The regime threat really doesn't matter (aka democracy vs. islamic vs. socialist)

BoT all relies on power and intentions.

3. Soft Balancing(Polarity) : Robert Pape (2005)- the only kind of balancing in a unipole system.

- a.

Multipolar system- all powers are more or less equal. Any power can balance another power. Is not very stable, one small event can have huge consequences (aka WWI) b. Bipolar system-two great powers, other smaller powers. (fairly stable system. -cold war) c. Unipolar system (Hegemony-sorta)-one great power. (stable depending upon the intentions of the unipole state) d. Who wants to be first to stand up against a unipole, to be the first one and all of a sudden all of your allies are gone, and the unipole smacks you in the face. e. The unipole must abide by its own rules that it made, otherwise it will lose its legitimacy and cast doubt upon whether we are a status quo player.