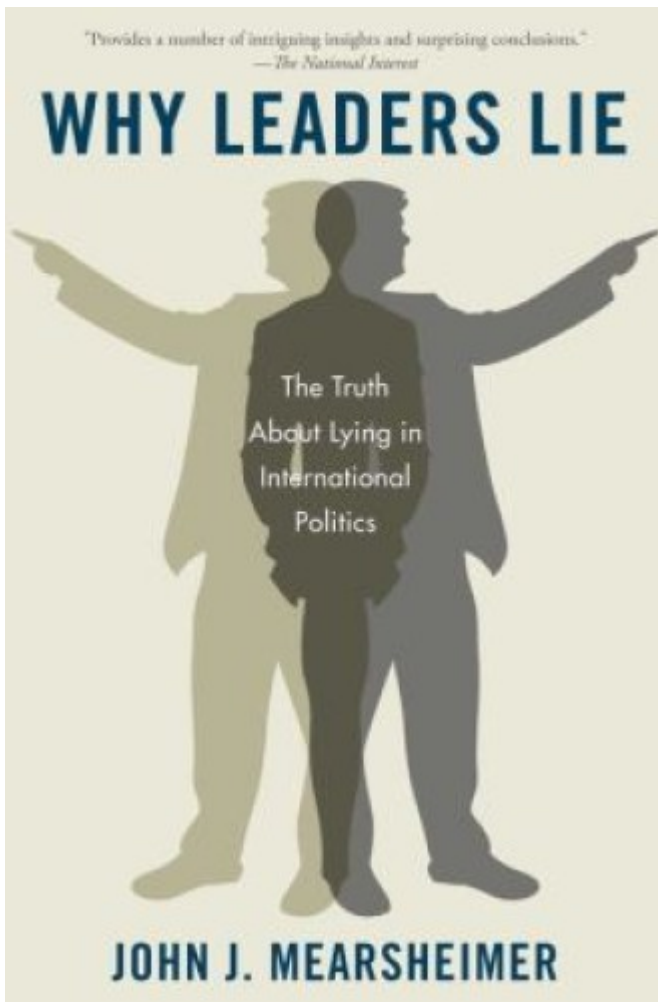


Why Leaders Lie, by John J. Mearsheimer

Books in the [May 29, 2013](#) issue

In Review



Why Leaders Lie

By John J. Mearsheimer
Oxford University Press

Lying is usually considered reprobate behavior, yet it seems to be acceptable behavior for political leaders and even expected in international affairs. Mearsheimer was surprised to learn that political leaders are much more inclined to lie to

their own people about foreign affairs than they are to lie to the leaders of other countries. Leaders lie to their own people to exaggerate the threats of other countries, to cover up their own strategic mistakes, to perpetuate national myths and to conceal the gap between a country's ideals and reality. Leaders lie to other countries to get some kind of strategic advantage, especially in war.