

The Perils of *AN International*
Anarchy *Security READER*
Contemporary Realism and
International Security

EDITED BY

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and Steven E. Miller

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Realism is at the center of many contemporary debates about the theory and practice of international politics. Realists continue to engage in a spirited debate with their critics, and different schools within realism argue over the merits of contending realist theories. These debates have contributed to much intellectual ferment and spurred scholars to refine contemporary realism. This volume contains several important contributions to the continuing debates over realist theory.¹

There is a long and rich tradition of realist thinking about international politics. Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes all have contributed to the evolution of realist thought. They and other writers have emphasized the enduring importance of power, conflict, and military force in international politics. The contemporary realists represented in this volume focus on similar issues.

Realism is a general approach to international politics, not a single theory. There are many different realist theories of international politics, but most realists share the following core beliefs about the nature of international politics.² First, realists believe that states are the most important actors in international politics. They therefore focus on explaining the behavior of states and tend to pay less attention to individuals and transnational actors like corporations and multinational organizations. Second, realists regard anarchy—the absence of any common sovereign—as the distinguishing feature of international life. Without a central authority to enforce agreements or to guarantee security, states must rely on their own means to protect their interests. Third, realists assume that states seek to maximize either their power or their security. Some realists focus on power as an end in itself, whereas others regard it as a means to security. Fourth, realists usually assume that states generally adopt rational policies that aim to achieve power and/or security. Fifth, realists normally agree that states will tend to rely on the threat or use

1. An earlier volume, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, eds., *The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace*, expanded edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993) covered related themes, but concentrated on explanations of the long postwar peace and whether it will continue after the Cold War. Two essays from that volume are reprinted here because they present important realist theories before applying them to the post-Cold War world.

2. For other discussions of the elements and assumptions of realism, see Robert O. Keohane, "Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics," in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 7–16; Robert Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," in Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*, pp. 304–305; and Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances, Threats, and U.S. Grand Strategy: A Reply to Kaufman and Labs," *Security Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring 1992), pp. 473–474. In addition, most realists spell out their assumptions when they explicate their own theories.

of military force to secure their objectives in international politics. Sixth, most realists believe that aspects of the international system—especially the distribution of power among states—are the most important causes of the basic patterns of international politics and foreign policy. Although realists may recognize that state-level factors matter, they emphasize the importance of international factors.

Realism is not monolithic. There are several schools of thought within the realist approach. Most observers draw a distinction between classical realists and structural realists, who are also known as neorealists.³ Classical realists generally argue that power is the most significant factor in international politics. States attempt to maximize their power, at least partly because the desire for increased power is rooted in human nature. Rational states define their national interests in terms of power. States often seek to create a balance of power, an equilibrium among states that sometimes preserves peace and at least helps to preserve the independence of the great powers.⁴

Structural realists share the classical realist emphasis on power, but they attempt to build a deductive, social-scientific theory of international politics. Instead of assuming that human nature contains an innate drive for power, structural realists posit that states seek to preserve their security. They argue that the anarchic structure of international politics shapes most international outcomes. In an anarchic international system, states must rely on self-help to guarantee their survival. States will build up their own military arsenals and form alliances to balance against more powerful—and therefore more threatening—states. War and conflict are likely in such a world, but they become less likely in a bipolar world that has only two great powers.⁵

3. The terms “structural realism” and “neorealism” are generally used interchangeably. Note that Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) uses neorealism to refer to Kenneth Waltz’s theory and refers to more general systemic theories as structural realism.

4. The seminal work in the classical realist tradition is Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948 and later editions). Other important works include E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939); Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich, and the Problem of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957); Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (Harmondsworth, Great Britain: Penguin, 1978); and Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962).

5. The seminal exposition of structural realism is Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979). See also Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Waltz, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory,” in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Waltz, “Reflections on *Theory of International*

The division between classical realism and structural realism no longer fully captures the complexity of the contemporary debate among realists. Some of the most important debates are between different variants of structural realism. In addition, a new generation of classical realists has challenged important elements of structural realism. Finally, some scholars have argued for realist theories of hegemonic rivalry and war, which cannot easily be classified as classical or structural.

There are two important debates among structural realists. First, several writers have distinguished between the “aggressive” and “defensive” variants of structural realism.⁶ The aggressive version of the theory holds that the international system fosters conflict and aggression. Security is scarce, making international competition intense and war likely. Rational states often are compelled to adopt offensive strategies in their search for security. In this volume, John Mearsheimer’s “Back to the Future” is the preeminent example of this variant of realism. Defensive realists, on the other hand, argue that the international system does not necessarily generate intense conflict and war. States that understand the international system will realize that security is plentiful and that defensive strategies are the best route to security. In this volume, the essays by Stephen Walt and Charles Glaser represent defensive realism.⁷

Second, structural realists are divided on whether the most important determinant of international outcomes and foreign policies is the distribution of power or the level and sources of threats. In this volume, Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer, and Christopher Layne represent the first position. They emphasize the importance of the polarity of a system—the number of great powers it has—as well as the role of changes in the relative power of states. Stephen Walt and Charles Glaser, on the other hand, argue that the overall distribution of power is less important than the level and direction of threats. Walt’s “balance-of-threat” theory claims that states react to threats. The level of threat

Politics: A Response to My Critics,” in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 322–345. For critical discussions of the differences between classical and structural realism see Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics,” and Richard Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism,” in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 255–300.

6. Jack Snyder uses these terms in *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 11–12, and Fareed Zakaria adopts “defensive realism” in his contribution to this volume. Whether these terms will be accepted widely remains to be seen.

7. For other important statements of similar arguments, see Stephen Van Evera, “Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 7–57 at 11–17; and Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), especially pp. 68–69. Robert Jervis articulated the theoretical underpinnings of defensive realism in “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167–214.

posed by a given state depends not only on its overall power, but also on its geographic proximity, offensive power, and offensive intentions.⁸ Glaser adopts a similar approach, arguing that the severity of the security dilemma determines whether power can easily be translated into threat when offense has the advantage, increases in power translate easily into threats, and cooperation becomes more difficult.⁹

Structural realism also has been challenged by a new generation of classical realists. These new classical realists share Waltz's belief that the distribution of power is an important determinant of international politics and foreign policy, but they disagree with most structural realists on the goals of states and the role of domestic factors in shaping those goals. In particular, they question whether it is theoretically useful to assume that security is the prime goal of states, arguing that security is a malleable concept that states can pursue in many different ways. Unlike earlier classical realists, however, they do not posit that state behavior can be explained by individuals' lust for power. Instead, they argue that states seek to maximize their influence or that state goals vary. Fareed Zakaria and Randall Schweller make these arguments in their contributions to this volume. William Wohlforth adopts a broadly similar position. Some new classical realists also reject the claim that the internal politics of a state and its goals and values are relatively unimportant.¹⁰ Like some earlier classical realists,¹¹ they place more weight on state-level differences, especially the distinction between revisionist and status-quo powers. Randall Schweller's essay emphasizes this point.

Finally, structural realism has been challenged by realist theories of hegemonic rivalry and war. Unlike structural realism, which tends to see international politics as a series of attempts to balance against potential hegemonies, theories of hegemonic rivalry argue that international politics has been shaped by the rise and fall of successive hegemonic states that have dominated their respective international orders. War is particularly likely dur-

8. For a more complete explication of balance-of-threat theory, see Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), especially pp. 263–266.

9. For a similar argument with historical evidence, see Ted Hopf, "Polarity, the Offense-Defense Balance, and War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (June 1991), pp. 476–493.

10. Although most structural realists do not deny that internal factors sometimes are important—especially in determining a given state's foreign policy—they construct theories that rely on systemic factors to explain outcomes in international politics. See, in particular, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chaps. 2–4.

11. For important examples, see Arnold Wolfers, "The Balance of Power in Theory and Practice," in Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, pp. 125–126; and Kissinger, *A World Restored*.

ing periods of hegemonic transition.¹² Such theories cannot easily be classified as classical or structural, because they share the former's assumption that states are not content with security but seek to maximize their power or influence, while often attempting to build a deductive theory that is as social-scientific as structural realism. In this volume, William Wohlforth's essay draws on realist theories of hegemonic rivalry to criticize structural realism and to explain the end of the Cold War.

In addition to the debates among realists, contemporary debates over realist theory have featured vigorous exchanges between realists and their critics, often called "anti-realists." Anti-realists have offered many different criticisms of realism. Liberal institutionalists argue that international institutions can make cooperation possible even in an anarchic international system. Critical theorists (sometimes known as post-structuralists or post-modernists) have attacked the epistemological foundations of realism. Proponents of the "democratic peace" hypothesis have argued that the absence of wars between democracies challenges the realist claim that domestic factors are less important than international ones, and that international politics is necessarily a realm of conflict. Other theorists have contended that domestic factors such as strategic culture, levels of modernization, and norms and values are more important than international factors in shaping grand strategy and foreign policy. Numerous commentators have faulted realism for failing to predict the end of the Cold War. Others have charged that realism is excessively preoccupied with states and ignores other important actors, such as ethnic groups and social movements. Several examples of these anti-realist arguments are included in the final section of this volume. Many of the realist essays collected in this volume respond to at least some of these criticisms.

The first section of this book explores how realist theories can shed light on changing international orders of the past, present, and future. Realism suggests that changes in the distribution of power in an international system have important implications for levels of conflict, war, and peace, and for the foreign policies of individual states. The four essays here use the insights of realist

12. Important works that present realist theories of hegemonic rivalry and power transitions include Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1968). A variant of these theories has been employed in the realm of international political economy to argue that international economic cooperation and stability are most likely when a hegemonic power exists to make and enforce rules. See Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); and Stephen D. Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (April 1976), pp. 317–343.

theories to explain why the Cold War ended, and to predict how the international system will be changed by the end of hostility between superpowers.

In "Realism and the End of the Cold War," William Wohlforth argues that realist theories of hegemonic rivalry and power transitions can shed light on the transformation of the international system wrought by the peaceful decline and dissolution of the Soviet Union. In contrast to other scholars who claim that realist theories have been invalidated by the end of the Cold War, Wohlforth finds that realism explains much about the end of U.S.-Soviet antagonism. Realist theories focus on the consequences of changes in the international distribution of power. In Wohlforth's view, a shift in the distribution of power—the relative decline of Soviet power—caused Moscow to retrench strategically and to seek a peaceful rapprochement with the United States. Wohlforth argues that Soviet perceptions of the distribution of power must be examined in any full account of the Cold War's end. When Soviet leaders perceived that their country was falling further behind the United States and its Western allies, they adopted "new thinking" and a more moderate foreign policy. Because the Soviet Union was a declining challenger, not a declining hegemon, it more readily accepted its loss of power without launching a preventive war. Wohlforth concedes that realist theories are "terribly weak" because they cannot always offer clear predictions and explanations, but concludes that they remain stronger than the alternatives, which are even more indeterminate. In his view, realist scholars need to focus on how states actually perceive relative power, instead of relying on quantitative indicators of power such as gross national product, population, military force levels, and defense spending. Scholars should test realist theories by tracing how leaders' assessments of power shape their choices about foreign policy.

Kenneth Waltz's *"The Emerging Structure of International Politics"* uses neorealist theory to assess how the international order is evolving in the aftermath of the Cold War. He focuses on how the structure of the international system is changing, and on what effects those changes will have. In Waltz's view, the post-1945 emergence of bipolarity gave rise to the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union adopted similarly competitive policies toward one another. The changing structure of international politics in the 1980s made the end of the Cold War possible. Waltz argues that the world remains bipolar for now, because Russia can still take care of itself militarily, and because no other great power has emerged; however, he claims that bipolarity is altered, because the United States is no longer balanced by any other country. In such circumstances, balance-of-power theory predicts that other states will strive to hold the United States in check. The existence of

preponderant U.S. power will motivate other states to distance themselves from the United States. In the absence of a Soviet threat, Waltz argues that "NATO's days are not numbered, but its years are." In the longer run, other countries will rise to great-power status so that they can protect their interests. Waltz writes that "the door to the great-power club will swing open if the EC, Germany, China, or Japan knock on it," and that "for a country to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly." Thus Waltz argues that we can expect the emerging world eventually to hold four or five great powers. Traditional patterns of great-power competition have been modified, however, by the advent of nuclear deterrence, which enables any state with survivable nuclear force to protect itself without relying on allies or on matching its competitors militarily and economically.

Like Waltz, John Mearsheimer draws upon structural realism to analyze the implications of the changing international distribution of power. Mearsheimer's well-known article, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," employs neorealist theory to present a pessimistic vision of Europe's future. Mearsheimer contends that Europe has enjoyed peace for the past 45 years for two key reasons: bipolar systems tend to be peaceful, and the presence of nuclear weapons has induced general caution. If the Soviet Union and the United States withdraw from Europe, he argues, Europe will devolve to multipolarity, and a renewed era of wars and major crises may erupt on that continent. Although others believe that European peace and stability will be preserved because economic interdependence causes peace, because democracies do not fight one another, or because war is becoming obsolescent among industrialized countries, Mearsheimer suggests that these theories are inapplicable or wrong. He also warns that more European countries, including a united Germany, will seek nuclear arsenals if the superpowers withdraw. If not carefully managed, this trend toward nuclear proliferation may create new risks of major crises and wars.¹³

13. For alternative visions of Europe's future, see Jack Snyder, "Averting Anarchy in the New Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Spring 1990), pp. 5–41; and Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 7–57. For a more general theoretical rejoinder, see Robert Jervis, "The Future of World Politics: Will it Resemble the Past?" *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 39–73. Letters from Stanley Hoffmann, Robert Keohane, Bruce Russett, and Thomas Risse-Kappen replying to Mearsheimer's arguments, as well as Mearsheimer's responses, can be found in "Correspondence: Back to the Future, Part II: International Relations Theory and Post-Cold War Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall 1990), pp. 191–199, and "Correspondence: Back to the Future, Part III: Realism and the Realities of European Security," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 216–222.

In “The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise,” Christopher Layne analyzes the implications of the apparent emergence of a unipolar world in which the United States is the sole superpower. Applying neorealist theory to the future of international politics, he argues that the unipolar world is a passing condition, because new great powers will inevitably rise. Neorealism predicts that states will balance against potential hegemonies by building up their own power and by forming alliances. Layne finds support for these predictions in two historical “unipolar moments,” French predominance in the late seventeenth century and British hegemony during the “Pax Britannica” of the mid-nineteenth century. He concludes that a U.S. strategy of attempting to retain international primacy is not likely to succeed, and he outlines an alternative grand strategy aimed at protecting U.S. interests in the inevitable transition to a multipolar world.

The next three essays in this collection turn from how realism explains broad changes in international orders to the more specific causes of aggression and alignment. Most scholars recognize that countries often have gone to war because they expect that aggression will bring rewards. Peter Liberman’s “The Spoils of Conquest” asks whether conquest still pays in the modern world. He notes that this question lies at the root of important debates over the way the world works, and over what foreign policies states should follow. Realists claim that conquest pays, so states have economic and security incentives to expand. Only defensive alliances stand in the way of imperial adventures. Liberals, on the other hand, argue that occupying a conquered state drains more wealth than it delivers up to the conqueror, and that therefore conquest does not pay; the world is a safer place than the realists imagine. Liberman takes account of several cases of twentieth-century conquest, including the Nazi occupation of Europe, the Japanese Empire, and the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern and Central Europe. He finds that conquest does pay in the modern era. Modernization itself has made conquest more profitable by increasing the economic wealth of societies, thereby making them more appealing targets for aggressors. Modernization also has made it easier for conquerors to control populations, because the citizens of modern states have more to lose and can be coerced more easily than the populations of nonmodernized societies. Liberman concludes that the potential spoils of conquest will continue to tempt states to start aggressive wars, and that civilian-based resistance movements are unlikely to thwart conquerors.

In “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” Stephen Walt considers the causes of alliances. He identifies several prominent explanations

of international alignments: states ally against external threats (balancing); states ally with external threats (bandwagoning); states ally with other states that share a common ideology; states ally with states that offer them foreign aid; and states ally with states that successfully penetrate and manipulate their domestic politics. Walt assesses the merits of each hypothesis, and reaches two conclusions. First, external threats are the most powerful causes of alliances. Second, states usually balance against an external threat instead of bandwagoning with it. Ideology, economic aid, and political penetration turn out to be very weak sources of alignment. Unlike balance-of-power theorists, Walt contends that states balance against threats, not against power. He argues that how threatening a state is depends on its aggregate power, offensive power, proximity, and offensive intentions.

The debate over balancing and bandwagoning has critical implications for the formulation of grand strategy and the definition of vital interests. States that believe that balancing predominates over bandwagoning are less likely to attempt to expand, and will worry less about the solidarity of their defensive alliances. When bandwagoning is seen to predominate, aggression becomes more tempting, states worry about maintaining their credibility, and defensive alliances are fragile. Randall Schweller's "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In" recognizes these implications, but challenges Walt's conclusion that balancing is more common than bandwagoning. He offers a different perspective on whether states ally more often with the weaker or with the stronger side in a conflict. Schweller notes that while scholars like Walt and Waltz have argued that states balance against threatening increases in others' power, foreign-policy practitioners through the ages have believed that states bandwagon with power. Seeking to explain this discrepancy, Schweller argues that it is a mistake to view balancing and bandwagoning as opposite behaviors motivated by the same goal of achieving security. Schweller suggests that Walt's definition of bandwagoning limits the term to cases in which states actually capitulated and then aligned with a threatening country. He points out that states frequently bandwagon opportunistically, as well as when threatened, and that bandwagoning may thus indeed be far more common than balancing. More generally, Schweller argues that neorealist theory cannot account for much of international politics, including a particular state's decision to balance or bandwagon, because it does not recognize that states have different goals. He divides states into status-quo and revisionist powers. Status-quo powers are generally content with what they have, so they tend to balance against threats and to seek security. Revisionist powers, on the other hand,

want to add to their wealth, power, or prestige, so they tend to initiate wars of conquest or to jump on the bandwagon of more powerful aggressor states.

The following three essays present realist approaches to the causes of peace in international politics. The first two offer realist rebuttals of important non-realist explanations of peace. The third argues that realism itself can explain many instances of peace and international cooperation.

The observation that democracies have not made war on one another has fired the imaginations of theorists and practitioners alike during the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁴ Some scholars think that it is “as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations,”¹⁵ and seek to explain how it works, while others dispute its very existence. Christopher Layne, in “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace” scrutinizes the claim that democracies rarely, if ever, go to war with one another. Taking issue with what has become the conventional wisdom, Layne claims that the “democratic peace” is a myth. Layne argues that the deductive logic of the two main explanations proffered for its workings—institutional or structural constraints, and democratic norms and cultures—are not as persuasive as realist explanations that emphasize the distribution of military capabilities. Reviewing four historical cases of “near misses”—where democracies came close to making war with one another, but refrained from doing so—he looks in vain for the empirical indicators that the democratic-peace explanations are valid. He finds no evidence that democratic leaders tried harder to avoid wars with other states, that they justified their actions on the grounds that democracies should not fight one another, or that public opinion in democracies opposed war with other democracies. Layne warns that the democratic-peace theory is dangerous; founded on “wishful thinking,” it suggests an interventionist U.S. foreign policy that would lead not to peace, but to more wars fought to spread democracy throughout the world.¹⁶

John Mearsheimer’s “The False Promise of International Institutions” rebuts arguments that international institutions can reduce the risk of war sig-

14. For important examples of this argument, see Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” parts 1 and 2, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, Nos. 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall 1983), pp. 205–235 and 323–353; and Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

15. Jack S. Levy, “Domestic Politics and War,” in Rotberg and Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, p. 88.

16. For an affirmation of the “democratic peace” hypothesis that analyzes several of the historical cases considered by Layne, see John M. Owen, “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1994), pp. 87–125. See also the exchange of correspondence in the Spring 1995 issue of *International Security*.

nificantly. He explicates three “anti-realist” arguments for how institutions can promote peace: (1) the liberal-institutionalist claim that international institutions promote cooperation by preventing cheating and providing information; (2) the critical theorists’ argument that the adoption of new norms and ideas can eliminate war, even in an anarchic international system; and (3) arguments for collective security, which usually contend that wars would become unlikely if all states pledged to defend any victim of aggression. Mearsheimer does not deny that institutions sometimes matter, but he finds little empirical evidence or logical support for claims that institutions can increase the chances of peace. Instead, he concludes that realist theory correctly suggests that wars will be a recurrent feature of international politics, and that realism more successfully identifies the conditions for peace than any of the contending anti-realist theories.

In “Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help,” Charles Glaser argues that realist theory can explain international peace and cooperation. Realists and their critics have exaggerated the extent to which the nature of the international system makes war likely or inevitable. Both camps have been too pessimistic in their interpretation of realism. In Glaser’s view, the logic of realism can lead to predictions of peace and cooperation. These benign outcomes are most likely when the offense-defense balance of military technology favors the defense. This condition creates a mild security dilemma, which enables security-seeking states to pursue security for themselves without undermining it for others. Whether the security dilemma is often mild is an empirical question, not a theoretical one; war is not a necessary consequence of international anarchy and other realist assumptions. Realists who are pessimistic about the prospects for peace and cooperation need to show that offense usually has the advantage, and that the security dilemma is frequently severe. Glaser recognizes that states may not behave peacefully even if international conditions encourage peace, but contends that these outcomes may reflect domestic conditions or state-level pathologies, not the structure of international politics.

The essays in the final section of this volume present several prominent criticisms of contemporary realist theory. These criticisms by no means exhaust the range of challenges to realism, but the arguments offered in these essays directly confront the arguments presented elsewhere in this volume.

In “Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory,” Paul Schroeder takes all realists to task for misreading history. He reviews the Westphalian era from 1648 to 1945 to see whether history actually supports, as realists argue, the propositions that states tend to balance against power or threat; that they are not

threat; that they are not functionally differentiated in international politics; that potential hegemons are countered by the balancing efforts of other states; and that unipolar periods motivate other states to rise to great power status. Schroeder argues that the more one examines these historical generalizations about the conduct of international politics, the more doubtful, “indeed strange,” these generalizations appear. He suggests that Waltz’s neorealist theory does not help to explain most of European diplomatic history, and cites Layne’s essay, “The Unipolar Moment,” as an example of how neorealism produces or rests upon problematic interpretations of history.

In “Realism and Domestic Politics,” a review essay on Jack Snyder’s *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Fareed Zakaria assesses Snyder’s attempt to improve upon realist theories by incorporating domestic politics into his model of international relations. Zakaria’s arguments may be directed at Snyder’s domestic-political explanation of over-expansion, but he makes it clear that they also apply to many of the variants of realism presented in this volume, including the essays by Waltz, Walt, and Glaser. Zakaria argues that “defensive realism”—the attempt to explain foreign policy as a response to external threats—is a weak theory, because states respond to shifts in relative power, not threats. He contends that attempts to build a realist theory on the assumption that states seek security are conceptually flawed. Such theories, in his view, fail to explain much of international politics and ultimately must “smuggle in” domestic factors to explain international politics and foreign policy. Zakaria suggests that realist theory should instead assume that states seek to maximize their influence in international politics.

Lisa Martin’s “Institutions and Cooperation: Sanctions During the Falkland Islands Conflict” presents important elements of the institutionalist challenge to realism. She argues that realism is wrong to posit that states always pursue their narrowly-defined self-interests. Membership in international institutions can change how states define their interests and produce different policies. Martin examines European Economic Community (EEC) cooperation on multilateral sanctions against Argentina during the 1982 Falklands crisis. She finds that states acted against their interests in ways that they would not have in the absence of the institution of the EEC. Only Britain had a strong interest in imposing sanctions on Argentina; however, other EEC members supported sanctions because Britain was able to link sanctions to other important EEC issues, and forge a coalition by striking bargains across issues. Martin concludes that realists have underestimated the importance of international institutions in promoting international cooperation.

The essays included in this volume are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the state of contemporary realism. They do not cover all the issues raised in the debates between realists and their critics and among realists themselves. For example, they devote relatively little attention to the controversy over whether states seek absolute or relative gains.¹⁷ The essays do, however, demonstrate that realism continues to be a source of vibrant debates and theoretical innovations. The editors hope that this collection stimulates additional debate, research, and better theories.

17. Several important articles on that issue are included in David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). See also Robert Powell, "Anarchy in International Relations: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 313–344.