INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF SOUTH ASIA

Structural Realism: Concepts and Assumptions

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • November 17, 2026 • 20 min read



Realism is the oldest and most influential theory of International Relations (IR). It explains world politics as a continuous **struggle for power and security** among states in a world without a central authority. **Structural realism** (also called **neorealism**) is the modern, scientific version of realism developed by **Kenneth Waltz** in the late 1970s. It explains state behaviour mainly through the **structure of the international system**, not through human nature or the domestic character of states.

Why study structural realism in a paper on South Asia?

- Unit II is titled **“Limits of Structural Realism and South Asian Security”**. To understand its limits, we must first understand the theory clearly: its concepts, assumptions and logic.
- South Asia has many features that seem to fit realism well: an enduring **India–Pakistan rivalry**, **wars**, an **arms race**, **nuclear weapons**, **alliances** with outside powers and a large **power asymmetry** between India and its neighbours.
- But South Asian states also face threats that realism finds hard to explain: **internal insurgencies, ethnic conflicts, terrorism by non-state actors, identity-based hostility, migration and climate stress**. This tension between what realism explains and what it misses is the core of the unit.

The realist tradition at a glance

Phase	Main thinkers	Main source of conflict
Ancient and early modern thought	Thucydides, Kautilya, Machiavelli, Hobbes	Fear, ambition, human nature, the absence of a common power
Classical realism (1939–1970s)	E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, George Kennan	Human nature: the desire for power (“animus dominandi”)
Structural realism or neorealism (from 1979)	Kenneth Waltz, Robert Jervis, Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer	Structure of the system: anarchy and the distribution of power
Neoclassical realism (from late 1990s)	Gideon Rose, Randall Schweller, Fareed Zakaria	Systemic pressure filtered through domestic factors

Key idea for exams: classical realism says states seek power because **human nature** is power-hungry; structural realism says states seek security because the **anarchic structure** of the system forces them to, whatever their leaders or internal politics are like.

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Classical Realism: The Background

Structural realism grew out of, and partly against, classical realism. A clear idea of classical realism helps to show what is new in Waltz.

Early roots

- **Thucydides** (*History of the Peloponnesian War*, 5th century BCE): the war between Athens and Sparta was caused by "the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta". The **Melian Dialogue** states the realist idea that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must". Today, Graham Allison's **"Thucydides Trap"** (rising vs ruling power) is applied to the USA and China.
- **Kautilya** (*Arthashastra*, around 4th century BCE): an Indian thinker of realpolitik. His **mandala theory** ("the neighbour is the enemy, the enemy's enemy is a friend") and the **six-fold policy** (*shadgunya*: peace, war, neutrality, preparing for war, alliance, double policy) make him an early South Asian realist.
- **Niccolò Machiavelli** (*The Prince*, 1513): politics is separate from morality; a ruler must be ready to use force and deception to protect the state.
- **Thomas Hobbes** (*Leviathan*, 1651): in the **state of nature**, without a common power, life is a "war of all against all" and "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". International relations is like a state of nature among sovereigns.

Twentieth-century classical realism

- **E.H. Carr** (*The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939*, 1939): criticised the "utopian" idealism of the inter-war period (League of Nations, faith in international law) and argued that politics is about power. He also warned against pure realism without moral purpose.
- **Hans J. Morgenthau** (*Politics Among Nations*, 1948): the founding text of modern realism. He defined politics as a struggle for power and international politics as **"interest defined in terms of power"**.

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- **Reinhold Niebuhr** (*Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 1932): human sinfulness and group egoism make conflict permanent.
- **George Kennan**: architect of the US “containment” policy.

Morgenthau’s six principles of political realism

1. Politics, like society, is governed by **objective laws rooted in human nature**.
2. The key concept is **interest defined in terms of power**.
3. Interest defined as power is a universal category, but its content changes with time and place.
4. **Universal moral principles cannot be applied directly** to state actions; prudence is the supreme political virtue.
5. The moral aspirations of a particular nation must not be identified with universal moral laws.
6. The political sphere is **autonomous**; the political realist asks “How does this policy affect the power of the nation?”

Limits of classical realism (which led to neorealism)

- It explained conflict through **human nature**, which is constant and cannot explain why conflict varies over time.
- It was criticised as **unscientific**, based on history and intuition rather than testable theory, during the “behavioural revolution” in social science.
- It focused on **statesmen and foreign policy**, not on the international system as a whole.
- These criticisms led Kenneth Waltz to build a **systemic, parsimonious and scientific** theory: structural realism.

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Kenneth Waltz and the Structure of the International System

Kenneth N. Waltz (1924–2013), an American political scientist, is the founder of structural realism. His two key books are *Man, the State and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979).

The three "images" of war (*Man, the State and War*, 1959)

Waltz asked: **what causes war?** He found three levels of explanation, which he called "images":

1. **First image: the individual (human nature)**: wars happen because of selfishness, aggression or stupidity of human beings (classical realists, St Augustine, Niebuhr).
2. **Second image: the state (internal structure)**: wars happen because of the nature of particular states, for example authoritarian or capitalist states (liberals, Marxists).
3. **Third image: the international system (anarchy)**: wars happen because there is **no authority above states to prevent them**. As Rousseau's **stag hunt** shows, even well-meaning actors may fail to cooperate without trust and enforcement.

Waltz concluded that the first two images explain particular causes, but the **third image explains why war is always possible**: "wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them".

Theory of International Politics (1979)

- Waltz built a **systemic theory**: one that explains outcomes by looking at the **structure of the system** rather than the attributes of its units.
- He criticised earlier theories (classical realism, Marxist theories of imperialism, liberalism) as **"reductionist"**: they explain the whole by its parts.
- He wanted a **parsimonious** theory: one that explains a few big and important things (recurring war, balance of power, the stability of systems) with a few variables. He stressed that it is a theory of **international politics**, not a theory of **foreign policy**.

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The three elements of structure

Waltz defined the structure of any political system by three elements:

Element	In a domestic political system	In the international system
Ordering principle	**Hierarchy**: a government with authority to command and enforce	**Anarchy**: no world government above sovereign states
Character (function) of the units	Units are **differentiated**: different institutions perform different functions	Units are **functionally similar** ("like units"): every state must perform the same basic tasks (defence, taxation, law)
Distribution of capabilities	Varies, but the ordering principle matters more	The key variable: how power is distributed among states (**polarity**)

- Since the international system is always anarchic and units are always functionally alike, the only element that **changes** is the **distribution of capabilities**. So, for Waltz, international political change means a change in **polarity** (e.g., from multipolarity to bipolarity).
- **Capabilities** include population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence.

How structure shapes behaviour

Waltz said structure works through two processes:

- **Socialisation**: states learn from each other and copy successful behaviour.
- **Competition**: states that ignore power realities suffer or are eliminated, so states tend to become alike (copying military techniques, forming alliances).

Therefore, states tend to behave similarly in similar structural positions, **whatever their ideology or regime type**. A democracy and a dictatorship facing the same threat will both balance against it.

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Core Concepts and Assumptions of Structural Realism

Basic assumptions

1. **States are the main actors** in international politics. Non-state actors (MNCs, NGOs, terrorist groups) matter less.
2. **The system is anarchic**: there is no world government to protect states or enforce agreements.
3. **States are unitary and rational actors**: they act as single units and choose the best means to achieve their goals.
4. **Survival is the primary goal** of every state. As Waltz said, states at a minimum seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination; but survival comes first.
5. **States can never be sure of others' intentions**: today's friend may become tomorrow's enemy, so states must plan for the worst case.

Anarchy

- Anarchy does **not** mean chaos or disorder; it means the **absence of a higher authority** above sovereign states.
- In anarchy, there is no "911" to call (Mearsheimer's phrase). Each state must ensure its own safety.

Self-help

- In an anarchic system, states can rely only on themselves. Waltz called international politics a **self-help system**.
- This explains why states build armies, seek allies and remain suspicious of others.

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Power and capabilities

- For structural realists, power means **material capabilities**, especially military and economic strength.
- Waltz saw power as a **means** to security; Mearsheimer sees power as both means and end (the more, the better).

Balance of power

- The central theory of structural realism. When one state becomes too powerful, others will **balance** against it to prevent domination.
- **Internal balancing**: increasing one's own strength (military build-up, economic growth, new weapons).
- **External balancing**: forming alliances with other states.
- Waltz argued that balances of power **recur** automatically, even if no state intends to create them, because states seek to survive.
- **Balancing vs bandwagoning**: balancing means joining the weaker side against a threat; **bandwagoning** means joining the stronger side. Waltz and Walt argue that balancing is more common, because joining the stronger side risks being dominated by it.

Relative gains vs absolute gains

- Structural realists argue that states care about **relative gains** (how much they gain compared to others), not just absolute gains. This makes cooperation difficult even when both sides would gain, because one may gain more and become stronger.
- Joseph Grieco (1988) used this argument against neoliberal institutionalism.
- Waltz also stressed that states fear **dependence**, so they try to limit economic interdependence.

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Security dilemma

- First described by **John Herz** (1950) and **Herbert Butterfield**, and developed by **Robert Jervis** (“Cooperation under the Security Dilemma”, 1978).
- When one state increases its security (e.g., by building weapons), other states feel less secure and respond by arming themselves. The result is an **arms race** and less security for all, even if no one intended aggression.
- Jervis said the dilemma is sharper when **offensive weapons** have the advantage and when offensive and defensive weapons cannot be distinguished.

Polarity and stability

- **Polarity** refers to the number of great powers in the system: **unipolar** (one), **bipolar** (two), **multipolar** (three or more).
- Waltz argued that **bipolarity is the most stable** system: with only two great powers, each watches the other closely, miscalculation is less likely, and responsibility is clear. The Cold War’s “long peace” (no great-power war, 1945–1991) was his example.
- **Multipolarity** is less stable because alliances are uncertain and states may “pass the buck” or be dragged into war by allies (“chain-ganging”, in the words of Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder).
- Since the Cold War, the world has been described as **unipolar** (US dominance) and now increasingly **multipolar** or bipolar (USA and China).

Nuclear weapons and deterrence

- Waltz argued that **nuclear weapons promote stability** because they make war too costly: no rational state would risk nuclear destruction. In “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better” (1981), he argued that **gradual nuclear proliferation** could increase peace.
- This argument is directly relevant to the India–Pakistan case (Unit III); Scott Sagan disagreed, arguing that organisational problems make proliferation dangerous (Sagan

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and Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, 1995).

Variants of Structural Realism and Related Theories

After Waltz, structural realism developed into different branches that disagree on **how much power states want** and **how dangerous anarchy really is**.

Defensive realism

- **Main thinkers**: Kenneth Waltz, Robert Jervis, Stephen Van Evera, Jack Snyder, Charles Glaser, Stephen Walt.
- **Core idea**: states seek an **appropriate amount of power** to be secure, not maximum power. Too much expansion is self-defeating because it provokes others to balance.
- **Security, not power, is the goal**. Anarchy encourages caution and moderation.
- **Offence-defence balance**: when defence is easier than offence (for example, with nuclear second-strike forces or difficult terrain), war is less likely (Jervis, Van Evera).
- Jack Snyder (*Myths of Empire*, 1991) argued that over-expansion is usually caused by **domestic factors** (logrolling among interest groups), not by structure.

Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory

- **Work**: *The Origins of Alliances* (1987).
- **Core idea**: states balance against **threats**, not just against power. A powerful state that is not threatening may not be balanced against.
- **Four sources of threat**:
  1. **Aggregate power** (total resources)
  2. **Geographic proximity** (nearby states are more threatening)
  3. **Offensive capabilities**
  4. **Perceived offensive intentions**

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- **South Asian relevance**: explains why Pakistan balances against India (a nearby, powerful state with perceived hostile intentions) by allying with distant powers (USA, China), and why many neighbours fear India more than distant China.

Offensive realism

- **Main thinker**: **John J. Mearsheimer** (*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2001).
- **Core idea**: states seek to **maximise their relative power**, and the best guarantee of survival is to be the **hegemon**. Great powers are always looking for opportunities to gain power at others' expense.
- **Five assumptions**:
  1. The international system is anarchic.
  2. Great powers have some offensive military capability.
  3. States can never be certain about others' intentions.
  4. Survival is the primary goal of great powers.
  5. Great powers are rational actors.
- **Regional hegemony**: global hegemony is impossible because of the **"stopping power of water"** (oceans make it hard to project power), so the best a state can achieve is **regional hegemony** (like the USA in the Western Hemisphere) while preventing rivals from becoming regional hegemons elsewhere.
- **Strategies**: war, blackmail, **bait and bleed**, **bloodletting**, **balancing** and **buck-passing** (getting another state to bear the burden of balancing).
- **Prediction**: the rise of China cannot be peaceful; China will try to dominate Asia, and the USA and its neighbours (including India) will balance against it.
- **South Asian relevance**: some scholars see India's goal of regional primacy in South Asia, and the China–India rivalry, in offensive realist terms.

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Neoclassical realism

- **Term coined** by **Gideon Rose** (“Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy”, *World Politics*, 1998).
- **Main thinkers**: Randall Schweller (*Unanswered Threats*, 2006: “under-balancing”), Fareed Zakaria (*From Wealth to Power*, 1998), William Wohlforth, Thomas Christensen.
- **Core idea**: the **international system sets the broad limits**, but how a state actually responds depends on **domestic intervening variables**: leaders’ perceptions, state capacity to mobilise resources, domestic politics, elite consensus and strategic culture.
- It brings back the “second image” that Waltz left out, so it is a **theory of foreign policy**, not only of international outcomes.
- **South Asian relevance**: useful for explaining why India and Pakistan sometimes behave differently from what structure alone predicts (e.g., the role of Pakistan’s army, India’s strategic culture of restraint).

Related power-based theories

- **Hegemonic stability theory** (Charles Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin): an open and stable international order needs a dominant power (hegemon) to provide public goods.
- **Power transition theory** (A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics*, 1958): war is most likely when a **rising challenger** dissatisfied with the existing order approaches parity with the **dominant power**.
- **Robert Gilpin** (*War and Change in World Politics*, 1981): uneven growth of power leads to “hegemonic wars” that create new orders.

Summary

All these variants share the realist core (anarchy, states, power, survival), but differ on whether states are **security-seekers** (defensive) or **power-maximisers** (offensive), and on how much **domestic factors** matter (neoclassical).

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Comparison Tables

Classical realism vs structural realism

Point of comparison	Classical realism	Structural realism (neorealism)
Main thinkers	Morgenthau, Carr, Niebuhr	Waltz, Mearsheimer, Walt, Jervis
Key text	*Politics Among Nations* (1948)	*Theory of International Politics* (1979)
Root cause of conflict	Human nature (lust for power)	Anarchic structure of the system
Level of analysis	First and second image (individuals, states)	Third image (international system)
Power seen as	An end in itself	A means to security (Waltz); maximised (Mearsheimer)
Method	Historical, philosophical, normative	Scientific, deductive, parsimonious
Role of statesmen and morality	Prudence and statesmanship are central	Little attention to individuals or ethics
Domestic politics	Important (national character, morale, diplomacy)	Largely ignored (states are “like units”)
Theory of	Foreign policy and international politics	International politics only

Defensive vs offensive realism

Point of comparison	Defensive realism	Offensive realism
Main thinkers	Waltz, Jervis, Van Evera, Walt	Mearsheimer
Goal of states	Security; “appropriate” power	Maximum relative power; hegemony
Effect of anarchy	Encourages caution	Encourages expansion when possible

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Expansion	Usually self-defeating; provokes balancing	Rational when the opportunity exists
Status quo or revisionist	Most states are status quo	All great powers are revisionist until hegemony
Explanation of aggressive behaviour	Domestic distortions, misperception	Structural incentive
Rise of China	Can be managed peacefully	Likely to lead to intense competition

Structural realism vs its main rivals

Point of comparison	**Structural realism**	**Neoliberal institutionalism**	**Constructivism**
Main thinkers	Waltz, Mearsheimer	Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye	Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf, Peter Katzenstein
Nature of anarchy	Fixed and conflict-producing	Fixed, but cooperation possible	“What states make of it” (Wendt, 1992)
Main actors	States	States, institutions, transnational actors	States and social agents shaped by norms
Main concern	Relative gains, security	Absolute gains, cooperation	Identity, norms, ideas
Role of institutions	Reflect power; little independent effect	Reduce uncertainty and cheating	Shape identities and interests
Key concepts	Balance of power, security dilemma	Complex interdependence, regimes	Social construction, identity, norms

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Strengths and General Criticisms

Strengths and contributions

1. **Scientific and parsimonious**: explains major patterns of world politics (recurring war, balance of power, alliances) with a few variables.
2. **Systemic view**: shows that outcomes can be produced by the structure of the system, even when no state intends them (for example, the security dilemma).
3. **Explains continuity**: why conflict and power politics persist across centuries, regimes and ideologies.
4. **Useful for security studies**: concepts like the security dilemma, deterrence, balance of power and polarity remain central tools for analysing military competition, including in South Asia.
5. **Explains the Cold War "long peace"** through bipolarity and nuclear deterrence.
6. **Policy relevance**: warns against idealism and over-expansion (Waltz and Mearsheimer opposed the 2003 Iraq War on realist grounds).

General criticisms

1. **Neoliberal institutionalism** (Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 1977; Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 1984): states can cooperate through institutions and regimes; economic interdependence makes war costly; absolute gains matter.
2. **Constructivism** (Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It", 1992; *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1999): anarchy has no fixed logic. It can produce enmity (Hobbesian), rivalry (Lockean) or friendship (Kantian) depending on **shared ideas and identities**. India–Pakistan enmity and India–Bhutan friendship exist under the same anarchy.
3. **Failure to predict the end of the Cold War**: neorealism, focused on material structure, did not foresee the peaceful collapse of the USSR, which came from ideas,

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domestic change and leadership (Gorbachev).

4. **Ignores domestic politics and individuals**: by treating states as “like units” and black boxes, it cannot explain why states with similar positions behave differently (a point developed by neoclassical realists and liberals, including the **democratic peace** theory).
5. **Critical theory** (Robert Cox, 1981): neorealism is a **“problem-solving theory”** that takes the existing order for granted and serves the interests of the powerful; “theory is always for someone and for some purpose”.
6. **Richard Ashley** (“The Poverty of Neorealism”, 1984): criticised its positivism and state-centrism.
7. **John Ruggie**: neorealism cannot explain **transformation** of the system (e.g., the shift from medieval to modern states).
8. **Feminist critique** (J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*, 1992; Cynthia Enloe): realism’s concepts of power and security reflect a masculine view and ignore human and gendered insecurities.
9. **Third World or post-colonial critique** (Mohammed Ayoob, Stephanie Neuman ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, 1998; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory*, 2010): neorealism is **Eurocentric and great-power-centric**. In Third World states, the main threats are **internal**, sovereignty is contested, and states are weak, so the anarchy–external threat model does not fit. This criticism is the basis of the next topics in this unit.
10. **Human security and non-traditional security**: neorealism ignores threats such as poverty, disease, climate change, migration and terrorism by non-state actors.

Relevance to South Asia: A First Look

This topic is the base for the rest of Unit II. The table below previews how each core concept will be applied and tested in the next topics.

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Structural realist concept	How it seems to apply in South Asia	Question to test later
Anarchy and self-help	No regional authority; SAARC is weak; states rely on their own forces	Do internal threats matter more than anarchy?
Balance of power and alliances	Pakistan balances India through ties with the USA (1950s–60s, 1980s, 2001 onward) and China; India's treaty with the USSR (1971)	Is it balancing against power, threat or identity?
Balance of threat (Walt)	Neighbours see India as close, powerful and potentially threatening	Why do some neighbours (Bhutan) bandwagon instead?
Security dilemma and arms race	India–Pakistan and India–China military competition	Is the rivalry driven by structure or by identity and history?
Nuclear deterrence (Waltz)	Both India and Pakistan tested in 1998; no full-scale war since	Has deterrence brought stability, or more risky crises (Kargil 1999, 2001–02, 2019, 2025)?
Polarity	Cold War bipolarity shaped alignments; today US–China rivalry shapes South Asia	How far do great powers drive regional conflicts?
Regional hegemony (Mearsheimer)	India's quest for primacy in South Asia and the Indian Ocean	Is India a benign or a hegemonic power?
States as unitary rational actors	Governments make security policy	What about non-state actors, army dominance and ethnic insurgents?

Indian and South Asian strategic thought

- **Kautilya's realism** (mandala theory, *shadgunya*) is often cited as an indigenous source of Indian strategic thinking. Some scholars (e.g., studies of Indian **"strategic culture"** by George Tanham, 1992) argued that India lacked a strategic tradition; others point to Kautilya and to Nehru's blend of idealism and realism.
- Pakistan's strategic thinking is strongly realist and India-centric: **"strategic depth"** in Afghanistan, alliances with outside powers and nuclear deterrence.

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Conclusion

Structural realism, developed by Kenneth Waltz, explains international politics through the **anarchic structure** of the system and the **distribution of power** among states. Its core concepts (self-help, balance of power, the security dilemma, polarity, relative gains and deterrence) remain powerful tools for understanding conflict and competition. Its later branches (defensive, offensive and neoclassical realism, and Walt's balance of threat) refine the theory in different directions.

But structural realism was built mainly on the experience of **European great powers** and the **Cold War**. It treats states as unitary actors, ignores domestic politics, identity and non-state actors, and focuses on external military threats. In South Asia, where states are **post-colonial, internally insecure and identity-driven**, these assumptions face serious challenges. Understanding the theory clearly is therefore the first step to understanding its **limits in explaining South Asian security**, which is the theme of the following topics.

Quick Revision: Thinkers and Works

Thinker	Key work	Main idea
Thucydides	*History of the Peloponnesian War*	Rising power and fear cause war; Melian Dialogue
Kautilya	*Arthashastra*	Mandala theory; six-fold policy
Thomas Hobbes	*Leviathan* (1651)	State of nature as war of all against all
E.H. Carr	*The Twenty Years' Crisis* (1939)	Critique of utopian idealism
Hans Morgenthau	*Politics Among Nations* (1948)	Interest defined as power; six principles
Kenneth Waltz	*Man, the State and War* (1959)	Three images of war
Kenneth Waltz	*Theory of International Politics* (1979)	Structure: anarchy, like units, distribution of capabilities

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Kenneth Waltz	“The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better” (1981)	Nuclear proliferation can promote stability
John Herz	“Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma” (1950)	Security dilemma
Robert Jervis	“Cooperation under the Security Dilemma” (1978)	Offence-defence balance
Stephen Walt	*The Origins of Alliances* (1987)	Balance of threat
John Mearsheimer	*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001)	Offensive realism; regional hegemony; stopping power of water
Gideon Rose	“Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy” (1998)	Named neoclassical realism
Randall Schweller	*Unanswered Threats* (2006)	Under-balancing
A.F.K. Organski	*World Politics* (1958)	Power transition theory
Robert Gilpin	*War and Change in World Politics* (1981)	Hegemonic war
Joseph Grieco	“Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation” (1988)	Relative gains
Alexander Wendt	“Anarchy is What States Make of It” (1992)	Constructivist critique
Robert Cox	“Social Forces, States and World Orders” (1981)	Problem-solving vs critical theory

One-line memory aids

- **Three elements of structure**: ordering principle (anarchy), character of units (like units), distribution of capabilities.
- **Three images**: individual, state, international system.
- **Walt’s four sources of threat**: aggregate power, proximity, offensive capability, offensive intentions.
- **Waltz**: bipolarity most stable; more nuclear weapons may be better.

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Exam Practice

Long-answer questions

1. Explain the main assumptions of structural realism as developed by Kenneth Waltz.
2. Distinguish between classical realism and structural realism.
3. Compare defensive and offensive realism with suitable examples.
4. What is the security dilemma? How does it explain arms races in South Asia?
5. Explain Stephen Walt’s balance of threat theory. How is it different from Waltz’s balance of power theory?
6. Critically evaluate structural realism with reference to its liberal, constructivist and Third World critics.
7. “Anarchy is what states make of it.” Discuss this statement in the light of the neorealist view of anarchy.

Short-answer questions

1. Anarchy
2. Self-help system
3. Security dilemma
4. Balance of threat
5. Relative gains
6. Polarity
7. Stopping power of water
8. Neoclassical realism
9. Buck-passing
10. Three images of war

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MCQs (UGC-NET / OPSC style)

1. *Theory of International Politics* (1979) was written by:
   - (a) Hans Morgenthau (b) Kenneth Waltz (c) John Mearsheimer (d) Robert Keohane
   - **Answer: (b)**

2. According to Waltz, which element of international structure changes over time?
   - (a) Ordering principle (b) Character of units (c) Distribution of capabilities (d) None of these
   - **Answer: (c)**

3. The concept of “balance of threat” was given by:
   - (a) Stephen Walt (b) Robert Jervis (c) Joseph Nye (d) Hedley Bull
   - **Answer: (a)**

4. Which of the following is NOT one of Walt’s sources of threat?
   - (a) Aggregate power (b) Geographic proximity (c) Regime type (d) Offensive intentions
   - **Answer: (c)**

5. “The stopping power of water” is a concept associated with:
   - (a) Defensive realism (b) Offensive realism (c) Neoliberalism (d) Constructivism
   - **Answer: (b)**

6. Who coined the term “neoclassical realism”?
   - (a) Fareed Zakaria (b) Gideon Rose (c) Randall Schweller (d) William Wohlforth
   - **Answer: (b)**

7. Match the following:
   - A. *Politics Among Nations* – 1. John Mearsheimer
   - B. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* – 2. Hans Morgenthau

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- C. *The Origins of Alliances* – 3. Kenneth Waltz
- D. *Man, the State and War* – 4. Stephen Walt
- **Answer: A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3**

8. Assertion (A): Structural realists argue that cooperation among states is difficult. Reason (R): States are concerned about relative gains in an anarchic system.
   - **Answer: Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.**

9. According to Waltz, the most stable international system is:
   - (a) Unipolar (b) Bipolar (c) Multipolar (d) Non-polar
   - **Answer: (b)**

10. The security dilemma was first described by:
    - (a) John Herz (b) Kenneth Waltz (c) Alexander Wendt (d) Robert Keohane
    - **Answer: (a)** (along with Herbert Butterfield)

Suggested readings

- Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.
- Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*.
- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.
- Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.
- John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics* (chapters on realism).
- Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*.
- Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*.
- Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament*.

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