

WALTZ, KENNETH N. (born June 8, 1924) is one of the most important contemporary theorists of international politics. He was one of the first to identify the *levels of analysis problem* in international affairs, and he has remained throughout his career a firm advocate of theorizing at the systemic level. Waltz received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1954. He taught at Oberlin College (1950-53), Columbia University (1953-57), Swarthmore College (1957-66), and Brandeis University (1966-71). In 1971 he became the Ford Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley. He retired from full-time teaching at Berkeley in 1994. In 1997, he returned to Columbia as adjunct professor. Waltz received a number of major fellowships and awards. He was Research Associate at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University (1963-64, 1968-69, and 1972) and a Guggenheim fellow (1976). He became a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1980 and was president of the American Political Science Association (1987-88). He served as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the Hudson Institute, Los Alamos National Laboratory, the U.S. Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency. He has been a member of the Council on Foreign Relations since 1970 and the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London since 1978. In 1991 he won the APSA's Heinz Eulau Award for "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," the best article published in the *American Political Science Review* in 1990. In 1999, he won the APSA's James Madison Lifetime Achievement Award in Political Science.

Waltz's dissertation, published in 1959 under the title *Man, the State, and War*, was and remains one of the most important summaries and criticisms of the writings of political philosophers and social scientists on the causes of war. Waltz argued that war

could be explained at three different levels: (1) at the level of individuals in terms of *human nature*, (2) at the level of the nation-state in terms of the characteristics of political regimes, and (3) at the level of the international system in terms of the balance or distribution of power. Waltz found the international systemic explanations to be the most persuasive and the most useful guides to policy. This theme was to reappear in subsequent works.

In 1964 Waltz published an essay titled “The Stability of a Bipolar World” in *Daedalus*. The essay generated a vigorous debate over the relative merits of bipolar and multipolar systems. In the next two decades, scores of articles and several edited volumes addressed this issue using quantitative techniques. Waltz’s article became one of the most widely cited essays in the field of international politics.

Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* encapsulated his thoughts of two decades on the philosophy of social science and the distinctive features of the study of international politics. He recast and made more general his earlier arguments about the superiority of systemic level theorizing, adapting the ideas of microeconomic theory and of Emile Durkheim on the differences among social systems. According to Waltz, the great powers were sufficiently undifferentiated with respect to function to make changes in the distribution of power among them the best way of characterizing changes in international systems. He argued against any attempt to explain international outcomes in terms of subsystemic (and particularly national level) variables alone because of the strategic and interactive nature of international politics.

Selected Works

- 1959 *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- 1964 "The Stability of a Bipolar World." *Daedalus* 93: 881-909.
- 1967 *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*.  
Boston: Little, Brown.
- 1971 *Conflict in World Politics*. Ed. with Steven Spiegel. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop.
- 1971 *The Use of Force*. Ed. with Robert J. Art. Boston: Little, Brown. 3d ed. 1988.
- 1979 *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 1990 "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities." *American Political Science Review* 84:  
731-45.
- 1997 *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*. Ed. with Scott Sagan. New York:  
Norton.

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