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<u>**Man, the State and War: Kenneth Waltz**</u>

Introduction:

Waltz states that social scientists are inclined to be conservative in estimating the possibilities of a radically better world. The answer to the moot question of whether it is possible to have peace where once there was war is usually pessimistic. But this may change if a different question is posed—are there ways of decreasing the likelihood of war and increasing the likelihood of peace? Historically, theorists have believed human misery to be the product of human nature. Waltz opines that though this may be one of the reasons for war, there are many other explanatory factors "bewildering in their variety and their contradictory qualities" (p. 12). To make this variety manageable, these factors can be ordered under three headings:

1. The first image of international relations—within man i.e. the nature and behavior of man.

2. The second image of international relations—within the structure of the separate states i.e. the internal organization of states.

3. The third image of international relations—within the state system i.e. the anarchy of the international system.

Every prescription for greater peace in the world is then related to one of the three images of international relations or to some combination of them.

Chapter 1:

According to the first image of international relations "the locus of the important causes of war is found in the nature and behavior of man" (p. 16). Waltz outlines the arguments of various philosophers such as Spinoza, Rousseau and Niebuhr who believed that war was the direct result of human selfishness, misdirected aggressiveness and stupidity and, thus, to achieve peace men must be changed in their moral-intellectual outlook or their psychic-social behavior. Waltz agrees that though the events of world history cannot be divorced from the men who made them, the importance of human nature as an independent variable in the causal analysis of social events is reduced

by the fact that this very same nature (no matter how it is defined) has to explain an infinite variety of social events. It is erroneous to explain social forms on the basis of psychological data—an uncritical analysis from the parts to the whole (individual to group) is problematic. While human nature undoubtedly plays a role in causing war, it cannot by itself explain both war and peace.

Chapter 4:

The second image of international relations sees the internal organization of states as the key to understanding war and peace. Thus the perception is that defects in states cause wars among them—peace and war are the products of good and bad states. However, Waltz emphasizes that no prescription for international relations written entirely in terms of the second image can be valid because the approach itself is faulty—it relies on the generalization of one pattern of state and society to explain peace or war in the world. Bad states *can* lead to war but the reverse—that good states mean peace in the world—is a doubtful theory. Just as individuals must be examined in the context of society, the actions of states must be examined in the context of the international system—"the international political environment has much to do with the way states behave" (p. 123).

Chapter 6&7:

The third image emphasizes the anarchical international system composed of states and the interdependence of the policies of all states. Waltz draws heavily upon the work of Rousseau and states that just as individuals act upon their immediate interests to the detriment of the general group interests, states too follow a rational course of action. Harmony in anarchy exists when not only is every state rational but every state assumes that every other state is rational too. Moreover, "to allow...for the irrational acts of others can lead to no determinate solution but to attempt to act on a rational calculation without making such an allowance can lead to (my own) undoing" (p.169). It is also important to think of states as acting units due to the centripetal force of nationalism. In modern times, the mass of men feel a loyalty to the nation state and this combined with the antagonisms that frequently occur in international relations feeds the unity of nation states. Individuals participate in war because they are members of states.

When states look beyond survival as their sole political ambition, others are forced, rationally, to look to their defenses. In this context, balance of power becomes important as states will

be tempted to form coalitions because those who combine will acquire an advantage over those who do not.

Thus, the third image implies that each state pursues its own variously defined interests in ways it judges best. Force is a means of achieving the external ends of states because there is no consistent, reliable process of reconciling the conflicts of interests that invariably rise in a condition of anarchy. A foreign policy based on this image is neither moral or immoral—it is rational. The first and second images describe the forces in world politics but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results. The obvious conclusion of the third image analysis is that world government is the remedy for world war and though it may be sound in logic, it is unattainable in practice.