Waltz made simple

Realism

The political world is made up of states, political communities occupying territory

There is no world government or sovereign; this is called *anarchy* (without a head).

States are autonomous in the int’l state system and are *sovereign* over territory.

Sovereignty implies *full* jurisdiction within territory and *no* jurisdiction outside.

States must *monopolize* violence inside and engage in *self-help* outside, via *power*.
Waltz asks “why do wars happen?”

He identifies three possible sources of war in the literature.

**INDIVIDUAL (1st image):** People are by human nature violent, aggressive, fearful, sinful. Changing human nature would eliminate the problem of war.

**STATE/SOCIETY (2nd image):** Some states possess a “bad character” and a propensity toward dictatorship at home and aggressive expansion abroad. Democratic and “happy” states do not fight each other.

**SYSTEM/ANARCHY (3rd image):** There is nothing to prevent war among states, no monopoly of violence, and accidents happen. World government or empire might solve the problem of interstate wars.
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<th>Image</th>
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<td>First (domestic)</td>
<td>Sources of foreign political action and policy are found in individuals, groups, society, social beliefs and practices</td>
<td>Hitler and Saddam Hussein were bad people; tribal societies tend to be warlike; George W. Bush wants revenge for his father's failures; the American people favor a war on terrorism</td>
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<td>Second (state)</td>
<td>Sources of foreign political action and policy are found in the organizations and structures of the state, and struggles among its agencies</td>
<td>Dictatorships are aggressive and expansionist; democracies tend toward peace; the President is granted too much power; liberalism fosters cooperation; Defense and State Departments are struggling for dominance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third (systemic)</td>
<td>Sources of foreign political action and policy are found in the system and relationships among states and groupings</td>
<td>Wars happen because there is nothing to prevent them; states must protect themselves; capitalism is based on the rich exploiting the poor</td>
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Examples of the three images

1st

Hitler and Saddam Hussein were bad people;
Tribal societies tend to be warlike;
George W. Bush wanted revenge for his father’s failures;
The American people favor a war on terrorism

2nd

Dictatorships are aggressive and expansionist;
Democracies do not fight each other;
The U.S. President has too much power to wage war;
Capitalism fosters free trade and interdependence

3rd

Wars happen because there is nothing to prevent them;
States must protect themselves and may threaten others;
Capitalism requires imperialist expansion, colonialism, war;
A dominant United States can impose peace on others
But Waltz also makes the following point clear:

The third image is only a permissive condition of war—it does not explain why particular wars happen or how they might develop.

World War One was made possible (inevitable?) by the close proximity of many hostile states and empires; when some mobilized, others had to, and one decided to strike first.

World War Two was made possible by the existence of many Great Powers, but Germany had a policy of expansion in Europe, which drew others in for a variety of reasons, defensive and offensive, domestic and international.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq was made possible because nothing could stop it, yet it was motivated by personal and domestic political reasons as well as the notional potential of a security threat.
Waltz's argument is a *structural* one

We (and states) are independent and autonomous agents, with free will and choice, and we can act.

But we never act in complete freedom: power (as well as social rules and conventions) constrain us in certain ways.

Sometimes these constraints not only trump autonomy, they also determine what we must do to survive: *we have no choice but to protect ourselves, perhaps with violence*. 
International politics can be explained via 3 images

**Liberalism**
States seek to pursue their economic self-interests by negotiating and bargaining in international forums and seeking favorable investment rules: *int'l competition; domestic growth; corporate goals*

**Realism**
States seek to acquire the tools of “hard” and “soft” power in order to wield influence over others and to engage in coercion and war if necessary: *int'l anarchy; concentrated power; desire for status*

**Socialism**
States and capital seek to intervene, invest, and make rules that foster accumulation and economic power: *imperialism; interests of capital; class status*