



What Causes War?: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict

By Greg Cashman

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Now in a thoroughly revised and updated edition, this classic text presents a comprehensive survey of the many alternative theories that attempt to explain the causes of interstate war. For each theory, Greg Cashman examines the arguments and counterarguments, considers the empirical evidence and counterevidence generated by social-science research, looks at historical applications of the theory, and discusses the theory's implications for restraining international violence.

Among the questions he explores are: Are humans aggressive by nature? Do individual differences among leaders matter? How might poor decision making procedures lead to war? Why do leaders engage in seemingly risky and irrational policies that end in war? Why do states with internal conflicts seem to become entangled in wars with their neighbors? What roles do nationalism and ethnicity play in international conflict? What kinds of countries are most likely to become involved in war? Why have certain pairs of countries been particularly war-prone over the centuries? Can strong states deter war? Can we find any patterns in the way that war breaks out? How do balances of power or changes in balances of power make war more likely? Do social scientists currently have an answer to the question of what causes war?

Cashman examines theories of war at the individual, substate, nation-state, dyadic, and international systems level of analysis. Written in a clear and accessible style, this interdisciplinary text will be essential reading for all students of international relations.

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Editorial Review

Review

Greg Cashman thoroughly examines the validity and reliability of empirical findings and the theories of international relations they attempt to test. He is clear, balanced, and precise. Every student of world politics ought to own this book. (Charles F. Doran, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of International Relations, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies)

Cashman takes a comprehensive look at the various factors thought to contribute to the outbreak of war. Using a levels of analysis approach, he presents an exhaustive set of theories at the individual, substate, state, dyadic, and international levels. Following the explanation of each theory, Cashman presents the empirical record supporting and/or refuting the theories. In this second edition, the book has been expanded to include the growing body of literature examining the causes of war. Further, Cashman has added more depth to the theoretical discussions by including throughout the book case illustrations that should help pique the interest of students. He has also added a chapter on constructivism reflecting an evolving field of study. This book presents a most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of literature surrounding the causes of war. It is ideal for graduate and advanced undergraduates studying contemporary war. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduate, graduate, research, and professional collections. (*CHOICE*)

About the Author

Greg Cashman is professor emeritus and adjunct professor in political science at Salisbury University, Maryland.

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