General Argument:
Deterrence (failure) v. Spiral theory both operate in explaining war. Which is more salient depends largely on one state’s image of the state’s intentions (aggressive or defensive?) Psychological variables matter.

Deterrence model (Offensive Realism) – There’s a revisionist power, or some aggressor. If this aggressor tests the waters and perceives the responding state to have less resolve/capabilities than it actually has, conflict will break out when the aggressor pushes more. Thus war breaks out when there’s an aggressor and deterrence fails.

Spiral model (Defensive Realism) – Even when there’s no aggressor, status quo states can fall into spirals which lead to war. Each state’s defensive actions are misinterpreted as offensive by others. Each state also tends to think it’s obvious that they are merely being defensive, so that when others send competitive signals in response, those signals are even more likely to be labeled intentionally hostile. The security dilemma arise not just because of anarchy, but because people perceive what they expect to be present – cognitive rigidity, rather than material forces are at work.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role of misperception (image of the other)</th>
<th>DETERRENCE (failure)</th>
<th>SPIRAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aggressors will underestimate the resolve of the defenders</td>
<td>Each side will overestimate the hostility of the other</td>
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Policy recommendations
- Develop strong and flexible armed forces
- Be willing to fight for issues of low intrinsic value
- Avoid signs of weakness, make threats credible
- Reassure other side of one’s non-aggressiveness
- Avoid provocation
- No undertaking of unilateral initiatives

To avoid the pitfalls of being wrong about which model applies:
- Develop policies that have high payoffs if the assumptions about the adversary turn out to be correct, and tolerable costs if wrong.
  - Ex. Procure weapons useful for deterrence that are not effective for aggression (avoiding first-strike weapons and getting ones for retaliation)
- Decision-makers should empathize with their adversaries and calculate how others will respond if your estimation of them is right, and if it’s wrong.

Unit of Analysis: (I’m unsure about this!)
State + International System (Perception of state intentions + Anarchy (causes zero-sum competition))

Main Hypothesis:
- If an aggressor believes that the status quo powers are weak in capability or resolve, war is expected.
- If one state develops a hostile image of the other, it will interpret information to fit that image, and conflict is expected even when the issues under dispute are not of intrinsic importance.

**Assumptions**
- States have ‘images’ of other states. Whether or not images are unified, whose images count (which decision makers) - this is not clarified. An assumed jump from personal perception on the part of individuals to perceptions of states is made.
- In spiral model: state are assumed to seek security, not expansion

**Empirics:**
Historical examples are cited to support both models at different times.
Exs:  
- Britain conformed to the deterrence theory in the Fashoda Crisis with France
- Spiral theory recommendations would not have placated Hitler.
- Anglo-German relations pre WWI conformed to spiral model. (pg. 92)
- Spiral was immediate cause of war in 1914 – all powers thought waiting for other side to signal intentions would mean loss of first-strike opportunity and defeat, so to be safe there was strong incentive to strike first.

**Critiques:**
Pointed out by Jervis himself: Misperception is not the only cause of conflict.
- There are times when the conflict of interest is real,
- At the heart of the realist security dilemma problem is that increasing the security of one state really does decrease the security of the other. Thus the psychological explanation cannot explain all reasons for hostility (p. 76).

The **bottom line** in reconciling the two theories in that the intention of the other side is very important. When faced with an aggressor, threats and force are necessary. BUT, how do you know when you’re facing an aggressor? And how do political scientists know ex-ante who is an aggressor?

**Where this fits in the literature:** Psychological explanations