Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," in *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (October 1997), pp. 171-201.

***In short***
Using Jervis's seminal article on the security dilemma as a springboard, Glaser argues that the security dilemma does not depend on misperception, but can arise between perfectly rational states. Glaser posits two new variables—the presence of greedy states, and each state's perception of other states' motives, impact the severity of the security dilemma. A state's actions communicate its nature to other states, such that states are not required to have unit-level knowledge of their adversaries in order to interpret their actions.

***Central Question***
How do rational states get caught in the security dilemma? How can rational states distinguish between security seekers and greedy states?

***Central Hypotheses***
A rational state will react to another state's build-up with counter-measures if it believes that the other state is willing to expand for reasons other than security (i.e., greed). In some circumstances, security-seeking states will prefer cooperation to competition, which means that anarchy does not necessarily imply competition.

***How he makes his argument***
Glaser starts out by summarizing Jervis, focusing on Jervis' argument about how one state's security-enhancing move can spawn an action-reaction process that can lead to an offensive arms race that ultimately undermines everyone's security. The important underlying insight here, according to Glaser, is that the states involved have fundamentally compatible goals. Another, sort of converse side to this compatibility is that one state's security can actually be reduced by reductions in its adversary's security, insofar as that adversary thereby places a greater value on expansion. This can happen in two ways—the adversary either believes that it must react in order to bolster its ability to defend itself, or it begins to believe that the state initiating the buildup is actually dangerous. What Glaser refers to as a greedy state is more likely to engage in buildup beyond the means necessary to ensure its survival, and to opt for offensive buildup. The importance of uncertainty, then, comes not so much in being sure of the character of the adversary, but in knowing its size and nature of its security requirements. Moreover, each state also assesses the other state's evaluation of its own motives, and characterizes the other state's actions accordingly. Thus, a state can reassure its adversaries into restraint by adopting a unilaterally defensive doctrine, abstaining from buildup itself, and by joining in arms control agreements. The extent to which a state is able to make its defensive intentions public depends upon the ability of states to distinguish between offensive and defensive weaponry, and the extent to which a state is willing to signal and adopt defensive intentions will depend upon the offense-defense balance. Glaser believes that the likelihood of war will depend upon variation in the offense-defense variables, a stance that he labels "contingent realism."

Glaser argues that some unit-level knowledge must underpin the application of the security dilemma, as states will choose different policies depending on their goals (security or 'more'). He proceeds to take on a number of criticisms directed against applications of the security dilemma. To the extent that state goals are manifest (whether they are greedy or security-seeking), the explanatory value of the security dilemma declines, although its arguments still somewhat condition state interactions. He contends against Schweller that real conflicts of interests between states, as opposed to perceived conflicts of interests generated by misunderstandings, are possible, as a resullt of uncertainty about motives. Glaser dismisses Mearshimer's assertion that states are uniformly power maximizers as lacking empirical and theoretical foundation. Next, he argues that Wendt mischaracterizes the implications of realist anarchy when Wendt claims that anarchy necessarily engenders competitive behavior in the realist story. Furthermore, he believes that Wendt is too optimistic when Wendt suggests that the current state of competitive anarchy can be transformed. Finally, Glaser argues that offensive and defensive weapons can be differentiated based on whether their deployment would shift the military capability balance in favor of offense or defense.

Glaser closes with some suggestions for further research. He suggests that future studies should recognize that states are variously greedy and security-seeking, along a continuous spectrum. Moreover, future research should attempt to ascertain whether states are primarily motivated to maximize power or military capability, and how the offense-defense balance is measured. Finally, Glaser argues for the testing of empirical links between a more carefully-specified offense-defense balance and security-seeking versus aggressive behavior.