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Beyond Exit: Examining Protégés' Intra-Alliance Bargaining Strategies

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Military alliances are often seen as hierarchical security institutions where powerful patrons use 'sticks' (e.g., threats of abandonment) and 'carrots' (e.g., reassurance) to shape the policies of their protégés. However, alliance dynamics are not one-sided. Institutionalized alliances provide protégés with opportunities to bargain for better terms, rather than merely accepting their patron's preferences or leaving the alliance. Weaker states employ intra-alliance bargaining strategies, such as voicing criticism of the alliance patron, abstaining from military exercises, delaying cooperation, or even evicting allied troops, to extract concessions from their patron.

This research investigates the bargaining strategies of alliance protégés vis-à-vis their patrons. It develops a typology of bargaining strategies available to protégés and presents data on their use. Second, the study examines under what conditions these bargaining attempts are effective. Drawing on the case of Armenia's within the Collective Security Treaty Organization - including its absence from CSTO activities and threats to withdraw - this study explores when states choose bargaining over exit and what makes such bargaining effective. By identifying when and how protégés can successfully bargain with their alliance patrons, this research contributes to a better understanding of intra-alliance dynamics and provides insights for policymakers to build enduring security institutions.

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Political Science / International Relations

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Yes

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