

Reassurance, Resolve and Wedge Strategy*

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Abstract

What is a wedge strategy and under what conditions does it lead to military conflicts between the aggressor and the third-party state? I present a novel framework for understanding wedge strategy by conceptualizing wedge concessions as costly reassurance signals. In particular, I show how driving a wedge between the target and the third-party could be understood as the aggressor seeking to simultaneously demonstrate resolve for the "local" issue while reassuring the third-party of its lack of greed for the "global" issue. I present a formal model for conceptualizing wedge strategy, and analyze historical cases through the lens of this new framework.

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