



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

ANALYSIS

Hostages, Assassinations, and the Future of National Defense

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By: Eric Edelman and Eliot A. Cohen

Related Expert: Eric Edelman

Eric and Eliot discuss the multinational hostage return deal with Russia and talk about what it reveals about the Russia and the Putin regime, the diplomatic skill in pulling it off and the moral calculus between the imperative of getting wrongly accused American citizens home and the danger of political moral hazard by encouraging Putin to take more "hostages" in the future. They also discuss the Israeli strikes in Beirut and Tehran that eliminated Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr (one of the terrorists who carried out the Marine Barracks bombing in 1983) and Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh as well as the news that military intelligence has now confirmed that an earlier strike in July killed Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif. They discuss what this reveals about Israeli intelligence capabilities as well as the prospects for Iranian retaliation and the possibility of a wider regional war. Finally, they discuss the recent release of the National Defense Strategy Commission (Eric served as Vice-Chair of the group) report on the 2022 Biden Administration National Defense Strategy. They discuss the Commission's criticisms of the strategy and the need for a force planning construct that foresees U.S. military presence in three key theaters (Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific) as well as the need for additional resources for defense to meet the most challenging international security environment that the nation has faced since the end of the Second World War.

Shield of the Republic is a Bulwark podcast co-sponsored by the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia.