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Kidnapping constitutes a central component in the "attack repertoire" of terror organizations. It is a means of promoting the goals of their organizations and their patrons. Since the 1960s, Israel has been extorted by terrorist organizations holding Israeli soldiers and civilians hostage, only to be returned in a deal securing the release of imprisoned members of these terror organizations. Since the 1980s, in the wake of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the ascent of a terror-supporting regime in that country, Islamic terror entities such as the Lebanese Hezbollah organization and the Palestinian Hamas movement have become preeminent in the Middle East in all matters connected to terror in general, and kidnappings in particular. This study analyzes the challenges that radical Islamic groups pose and the response of Israel relating to abductions in Lebanon via the Hezbollah organization (1983-2016), and abductions in Israel via the Hamas movement (1989-2016). The main debates about prisoner exchange within Israeli society revolve around the following questions: (1) Does conceding to terrorists lead to further kidnappings? and (2) Do the terrorists that are released return to terrorist activity? The challenge issued by terror organizations to Israel whose citizens have been kidnapped, and the way Israel has risen to that challenge, is the prime focus of this study. It follows two earlier books by the author published by Sussex Academic on the regional and global aspects of terror abductions.
