

## The Prisoner's Dilemma: Hostage Diplomacy 101

### Description

This week's episode of the *Irregular Warfare Podcast* examines how states use hostages and hostage diplomacy to achieve their interests.

Our guests begin by addressing why states and non-state actors engage in hostage taking, as opposed to relying on other, more traditional instruments of power. They then talk about how the U.S. and other states have traditionally approached hostage crises to secure the safety of their citizens. Finally, our guests conclude by discussing how countries can employ traditional international relations concepts, like deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment, to safeguard their citizens from malign actors in the future.

[Ambassador Roger D. Carstens](#) currently serves as the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. Previously, Ambassador Carstens was the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the State Department, and he has decades of experience providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons around the globe. Mr. Carstens is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and he holds advanced degrees from the Naval War College and St. John's College.

[Dr. Dani Gilbert](#) is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University. Her award-winning research explores the causes and consequences of hostage taking and hostage recovery. She previously served as a professor of Military & Strategic Studies at the U.S. Air Force Academy, a non-resident fellow with the Modern War Institute at West Point, and a Peace Scholar with the U.S. Institute of Peace. In August of 2022, she authored a Foreign Affairs article entitled, ["The Prisoners Dilemma"](#), which serves as the anchor for episode 89.

[Ben Jebb](#) and [Julia McClenon](#) are the hosts for this episode. Please reach out to Ben and Julia with any questions about this episode or the Irregular Warfare Podcast. The [Irregular Warfare Podcast](#) is a production of the [Irregular Warfare Initiative](#) (IWI). We are a team of volunteers dedicated to bridging the gap between scholars and practitioners in the field of irregular warfare. IWI generates written and audio content, coordinates events for the IW community, and hosts critical thinkers in the field of irregular warfare as IWI fellows. You can follow and engage with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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