

JOEL C.
ROSENBERG

AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER THE KREMLIN CONSPIRACY

“Authentic,
fast-paced, and
totally engrossing.”

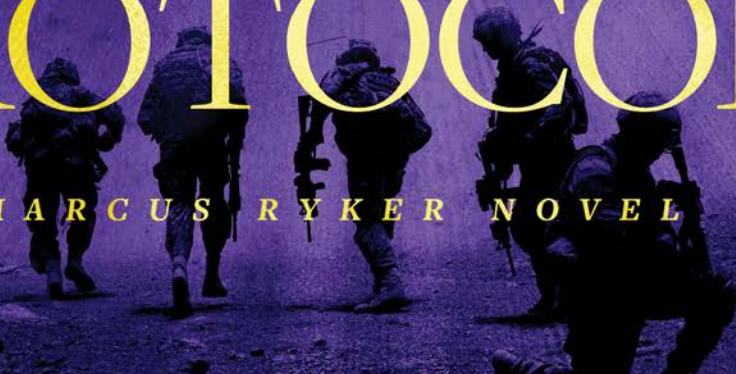
KYLE MILLS

#1 *New York Times* bestselling
author of *Total Power*

THE

BEIRUT
PROTOCOL

A MARCUS RYKER NOVEL



PRAISE FOR JOEL C. ROSENBERG

“Rosenberg’s imagination is a tumultuous place where Middle Eastern geopolitics combine with devious minds. Authentic, fast-paced, and totally engrossing.”

KYLE MILLS, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Total Power*

“Rosenberg once again proves to be at the top of his game. . . . The plot is all too possible. Marcus Ryker is a perfect hero, right where we need him, at just the right time. *The Beirut Protocol* will take your breath away as Rosenberg marches to the brink of a war only Ryker can stop—if he can save himself first!”

ANDREWS & WILSON, bestselling authors of the Tier One, Sons of Valor, and Shepherds series

“Nobody builds tension and suspense like Rosenberg, who has quickly developed his hero Marcus Ryker into one of the most formidable action stars the genre has to offer. . . . Fast, twist-filled, and ripped-from-the-headlines, *The Beirut Protocol* soars with authenticity and will leave readers breathless. At this point, Rosenberg’s stuff is pretty much mandatory reading for all lovers of high-octane thrillers.”

RYAN STECK, *The Real Book Spy*

“A taut, brilliant thriller ripped right from today’s headlines. Joel Rosenberg is masterful! *The Jerusalem Assassin* is an absolute home run.”

BRAD THOR, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Backlash*

“Gripping. . . . Readers will tear through the final pages to see whether Marcus can once again triumph over evil.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY on *The Jerusalem Assassin*

“Joel C. Rosenberg continues to mix his unique blend of prophetic fiction and nonstop action unlike anyone else working today.”

THE REAL BOOK SPY on *The Persian Gamble*

“Joel C. Rosenberg writes taut, intelligent thrillers that are as timely as they are well-written. Pairing a fast-paced plot with an impressive understanding of the inner workings in the corridors of power of the Russian government, *The Kremlin Conspiracy* is a stellar novel of riveting action and political intrigue.”

MARK GREANEY, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Agent in Place*

“*The Kremlin Conspiracy* is my first Joel C. Rosenberg novel, and I am absolutely blown away by how good this guy is. The story moves at a blistering pace, it’s crackling with tension, and you won’t put it down until you reach the end. Guaranteed. Simply masterful.”

SEAN PARNELL, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Outlaw Platoon*

“Rosenberg cranks up the suspense, delivering his most stunning, high-stakes thriller yet.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY on *The Kremlin Conspiracy*

“Joel Rosenberg has an uncanny talent for focusing his storytelling on real-world hot spots just as they are heating up. He has done it again in *The Kremlin Conspiracy*.”

PORTER GOSS, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency

“Marcus Ryker rocks! Breakneck action, political brinksmanship, authentic scenarios, and sharply defined characters make Joel C. Rosenberg’s *Kremlin Conspiracy* a full-throttle and frightening ride through tomorrow’s headlines.”

BRIGADIER GENERAL (U.S. ARMY, RETIRED) A. J. TATA,
national bestselling author of *Direct Fire*

“If you love the ABC drama *Designated Survivor* or are always looking for the next well-written novel about America and her fight against terrorism, you’ll definitely want to pick up *Without Warning*.”

BOOK REPORTER

“A compelling and complicated political thriller that includes an edge-of-your-seat climax impossible to put down.”

MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW on *The First Hostage*

“Rosenberg has ripped a page from current headlines with a heart-stopping plot about the Islamic State.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY on *The Third Target*

“If there were a *Forbes* 400 list of great current novelists, Joel Rosenberg would be among the top ten. . . . One of the most entertaining and intriguing authors of international political thrillers in the country. . . . His novels are un-put-downable.”

STEVE FORBES, editor in chief, *Forbes* magazine

“[Joel Rosenberg] understands the grave dangers posed by Iran and Syria, and he’s been a bold and courageous voice for true peace and security in the Middle East.”

DANNY AYALON, former Israeli deputy foreign minister

“Joel has a particularly clear understanding of what is going on in today’s Iran and Syria and the grave threat these two countries pose to the rest of the world.”

REZA KAHLILI, former CIA operative in Iran and bestselling author of *A Time to Betray: The Astonishing Double Life of a CIA Agent inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran*

“His novels seem to be ripped from the headlines—next year’s headlines.”

WASHINGTON TIMES

“Rip-roaring, heart-pounding, page-turning, high-octane, geopolitical thriller.”

FORBES on *The Last Days*

“An action-packed, Clancyesque political thriller.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY on *The Last Days*

“A wild, rocketing read. *The Last Jihad* is Tom Clancy writ large.”

VINCE FLYNN, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Consent to Kill*

THE BEIRUT PROTOCOL



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The Beirut Protocol

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The Beirut Protocol is a work of fiction. Where real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales appear, they are used fictitiously. All other elements of the novel are drawn from the author's imagination.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Americans

Marcus Ryker—special operative, Central Intelligence Agency
Kailea Curtis—special agent, Diplomatic Security Service
Geoff Stone—special agent in charge, Diplomatic Security Service
Peter Hwang—special operative, Central Intelligence Agency
Jennifer Morris—officer, Central Intelligence Agency
Noah Daniels—officer, Central Intelligence Agency
Donny Callaghan—former commander, SEAL Team Six
Andrew Clarke—president of the United States
Carlos Hernandez—vice president of the United States
James Meyers—chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Richard Stephens—director of the Central Intelligence Agency
Martha Dell—deputy director of intelligence (DDI),
Central Intelligence Agency
William McDermott—national security advisor
Margaret “Meg” Whitney—secretary of state
Robert Dayton—U.S. senator (D-Iowa)
Annie Stewart—senior foreign policy advisor to Senator Robert Dayton
Marjorie Ryker—Marcus’s mother

Iranians

Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ansari—Supreme Leader of Iran
Yadollah Afshar—president of the Islamic Republic of Iran

THE BEIRUT PROTOCOL

Mahmoud Entezam—commander of the Iranian Revolutionary
Guard Corps
Dr. Haydar Abbasi—director of Iran’s ballistic missile program

Israelis

Reuven Eitan—prime minister of Israel
Shimon Levy—minister of defense
Asher Gilad—director of Mossad
Tomer Ben Ami—deputy director of the Shin Bet
Yonatan “Yoni” Golan—chief of staff (*Ramatkal*), Israeli Defense Force
Yossi Kidron—head of IDF’s Northern Command
Yigal Mizrachi—IDF intelligence officer

Saudis

Faisal Mohammed—monarch of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Abdulaziz bin Faisal—crown prince and minister of defense
Abdullah bin Rashid—director of the General Intelligence Directorate

Turks

Ahmet Mustafa—president of the Republic of Turkey
Hamdi Yaşar—producer, Al-Sawt satellite television network

Others

Abu Nakba—commander of the Kairos terror organization
Sheikh Ja’far ibn al-Hussaini—spiritual leader of Hezbollah
Amin al-Masri—deputy commander of Hezbollah’s Radwan Unit
(special forces)
Tanzeel al-Masri—member of Hezbollah’s Radwan Unit
Zayan ibn Habib—member of Hezbollah’s Radwan Unit
Abdel Rahman—member of Hezbollah’s Radwan Unit
Kareem bin Mubarak—commander of Hezbollah’s
counterintelligence unit

*“There are things which a man is afraid
to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number
of such things stored away in his mind.”*

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY



PART
ONE

1

THE ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER—2 MAY

Marcus Ryker heard the whoosh of the incoming missile but never saw it coming.

What he did see was the lead Humvee disintegrating in a massive fireball. An instant later, the cool morning air erupted with the sound of automatic weapons fire.

“Go back—go back!” he yelled as burning wreckage rained down upon them.

Their driver tried to jam the vehicle into reverse. But it was too late. The vehicle behind them was already burning, hit by an anti-tank missile, and Marcus knew they were next.

“Get out,” he ordered his team. *“Everybody out—now!”*

Marcus grabbed his weapon and backpack and kicked open the front passenger door, then jumped out of the Humvee. Scanning the horizon, he spotted muzzle flashes coming from a grove of olive trees to the northeast. He raised his M4 carbine, positioned himself behind the engine block, and provided covering fire for his colleagues.

Kailea Curtis was the first to scramble out of the backseat. She grabbed their young Israeli counterpart by his jacket, yanked him out of the Humvee, and tossed him his Tavor assault rifle. “Find cover and radio for backup,” she ordered.

Marcus’s eyes locked on two masked men climbing through a breach in the security fence. They were thirty yards ahead to his right. Pivoting hard, he took aim, fired two bursts, and felled them both. Then he shouted for Kailea to move to the rear of the Humvee to cover their six.

“Done,” she shouted back, moving into position and beginning to lay down suppressive fire with her own M4.

Marcus ordered their young driver, no more than nineteen, to keep his head down and come out the passenger door. With dozens of rounds pelting their vehicle, it was far too risky to exit the exposed driver’s side. There was no response.

Marcus finished loading the M203 grenade launcher attached beneath the regular barrel of his weapon. Spotting more muzzle flashes—these coming from an abandoned stone house on the top of a nearby ridge—he steadied his breathing, took aim, and squeezed the trigger. The 40mm grenade exploded from its tube, streaked across the ravine, and scored a direct hit. Flames poured out of the windows of the house, followed by thick black smoke. The muzzle flashes ceased.

Marcus repeated his order to the driver. The convoy had already been hit by two anti-tank missiles. The third was coming any second.

There was still no reply.

Finally Marcus turned and saw why. The young man was slumped over the steering wheel. The window beside him was shattered. Blood and brain matter were splattered all over the cab. Trained to be certain, Marcus leaned inside and felt for a pulse. There was none. Nor time to mourn.

“Marcus,” Kailea shouted, “*more tangos—eight o’clock.*”

Marcus looked over his left shoulder and counted no fewer than a dozen masked fighters racing through the ravine and advancing on their position. There was no question they were Hezbollah. The Iranian-backed terror group controlled the whole of southern Lebanon, the Lebanese regular army

having long since ceded the frontier with Israel. As they reached the fence line, most of the fighters opened fire with AK-47s, while two carrying bolt cutters began to cut a second hole in the fence.

Marcus and Kailea returned fire, starting with a barrage of 40mm grenades. They took out two men. Most of the rest ran for cover, but one of them was preparing to use an RPG.

Marcus ordered a retreat. Both agents grabbed their backpacks off the ground and sprinted for the thick brush behind them. The grenade missed its mark, slicing just over their heads and exploding in the trees well beyond them. Five seconds later, though, the third anti-tank missile found its target. The explosion was deafening. The Humvee they had been riding in all morning was gone.

They found the young Israeli intel officer and took cover under the thick spring foliage, ignoring the roaring fires and billowing smoke. Marcus motioned for Kailea to take up a position facing the northeast. He ordered the Israeli officer to cover the northwest. Marcus himself aimed his M4 through the bramble directly to the north.

“Did you reach your guys?” Marcus asked in a hushed tone.

“Radio’s not working,” the Israeli replied.

“Broken?”

“No, sir—but I can’t get through.”

“Why not?”

“No idea, sir.”

“Use mine,” Marcus offered, fishing his radio out of his backpack and tossing it over.

But Marcus’s radio didn’t work either. Nor did Kailea’s. The radios weren’t the problem. They were fine. Hezbollah had to be jamming their signals.

Marcus checked his watch. It was only 9:17 in the morning. Yet already the temperature was soaring past ninety degrees. It was critical they connect with the IDF’s Northern Command. They weren’t going to make it to the bottom of the hour if they didn’t get help fast.

“Send up a red star cluster,” Marcus ordered Kailea, peering through the scope of his M4 and scanning for any signs of movement. “I’ll cover us.”

During the Vietnam War, American GIs would literally fire red flares into the sky to indicate to their commanders that they were under fire and needed immediate assistance. The flares also helped guide friendly forces to their position. In the modern era, “sending up a red star cluster” was simply code for calling in the cavalry.

Kailea set down her weapon, reached into her backpack, pulled out a device the size of an alarm clock radio, and powered it up. Designed and built exclusively for the U.S. military and known as a Blue Force Tracker, the handheld unit allowed her to almost instantaneously uplink their precise GPS coordinates along with a brief distress message via a secure military satellite to both American and Israeli commanders.

“Message sent,” Kailea said a moment later, powering down the device and picking up her weapon.

Marcus continued scanning for tangos. He saw no one yet but had no doubt they were coming. Lots of them. Soon, he knew, this military service road, which ran for dozens of kilometers along the Israeli-Lebanese border, would be crawling with Hezbollah operatives. Feeling his heart rate spiking, he began silently counting down from fifty. It was an old trick he had learned in the Marines and used on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. As always, it worked like a charm. The adrenaline stopped pumping into his system. His breathing slowed. So did his pulse.

Marcus glanced to his right and could sense the fear in the young man—barely twenty—lying beside him. The Israeli officer’s hands were shaking, as was his weapon, and Marcus knew why. This kid knew all too well the stories of the IDF soldiers who had been kidnapped on this border. And not just kidnapped but tortured without mercy. Butchered. Dismembered. Mutilated beyond recognition. For an Israeli, falling into the hands of a Hezbollah fighter was a fate worse than death.

Marcus turned back and peered once again through the reticle of his scope. Hezbollah was coming, fast and hard. If reinforcements did not arrive quickly, they would be overrun, and for all his moral revulsion at the notion of suicide, Marcus knew he’d sooner put a bullet into his own mouth than—