

## WILL THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS EVER VANQUISH THE LUST TO RETALIATE? (November 20, 2014)

On Tuesday of this week, two Palestinians from East Jerusalem armed with knives, axes, and a gun burst into a Jerusalem synagogue and killed four Orthodox Jewish men, including three rabbis.

Among the many comments provoked by this horrendous act, President Obama's combined condemnation with something like hope. "The murderers for today's outrageous acts," he said, "represent the kind of extremism that threatens to bring all of the Middle East into the kind of spiral from which it's very difficult to emerge. But we have to remind ourselves that the majority of [Palestinians](#) and Israelis overwhelmingly want peace and to be able to raise their families knowing they're safe and secure."

I don't doubt the truth of that statement. But once again, I am led to wonder if a majority of Israelis and Palestinians want peace any more than they want retaliation, which means perpetuating the cycle of attack and revenge that promises to last as long as the Middle East itself.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority issued a statement Tuesday saying, "We condemn the killings of worshipers at the synagogue in Jerusalem, and condemn acts of violence no matter their source." The same statement, published by Wafa, the official Palestinian news agency, called for a halt to "incitement against Aqsa," one of two shrines at the holy site.