

U.S. Should Cut Aid to Palestine for Supporting Terrorists

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Although President Abbas has condemned Tuesday's attack in Jerusalem, he allows his advisors and official media to praise the perpetrators as heroes, while his government pays stipends to convicted terrorists and their families.

The first thing that must be said about the synagogue massacre by Palestinian terrorists in Jerusalem on Tuesday is that it's not part of some "cycle of violence." Rather, it is premeditated murder in cold blood; it is an act, as President Obama said about the beheading of Peter Kassig, of "pure evil." To say anything else is simply to fall into the trap of excusing that evil.

Three of these entirely innocent victims were also U.S. citizens. That does not make the crime any worse, but it does provide an extra reason for the U.S. to respond in the right way. The U.S. government should now act, as we often say, to hold to account those responsible for this horror.

So, who is responsible? Israelis are already arguing about that, as they often do. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blames incitement by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. But one of Israel's top security officials says Abbas is not directly involved in terrorism, and that Palestinian security forces are actually cooperating with Israel against terrorists.

In reality, both statements are true -- because Abbas is trying to have it both ways. He personally condemned this terrorist attack, and he directs his forces to keep a close watch on Hamas and other extremists in the West Bank. Yet at the same time, Abbas allows his advisers, his ruling Fatah political party, and his official media to praise and glorify these terrorists as heroes, martyrs and more. His government pays convicted terrorists and their families regular stipends. And Abbas himself just wrote a formal letter of condolence to the family of the Palestinian terrorist who shot and almost killed Rabbi Yehudah Glick just a few days ago.

This means that the U.S. should, in line with existing U.S. law, move immediately to cut some of our very substantial aid to the Palestinian Authority -- unless Abbas publicly repudiates and unequivocally ends this practice of hypocrisy

and deception about incitement to murder. And the U.S. should press all of our allies, European, Arab and other, to do the same. But if we must do this unilaterally, so be it.

Some Israelis will no doubt be tempted to react to the murder of their kinsmen by building more housing for Jews in East Jerusalem. That would be a mistake. It wouldn't punish any Palestinians, or deter future acts of vicious terror. And it might give the U.S. or other governments an excuse for not acting appropriately to address the real issue. Better to punish the accessories to murder instead.

David Pollock is the Kaufman Fellow at The Washington Institute and director of Fikra Forum. ❖

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