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THE PA DRIFTS TOWARD GREATER RADICALISM...

Last month, Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* obtained an internal Palestinian Authority report detailing the possibility of a "new wave of terrorism" and internal unrest in the West Bank. The report, authored by the PA's security services in early August, identifies a heightened risk for a security crisis in the West Bank, and the growing possibility of mass disturbances there. Of particular concern to the PA's security officials is the generation of West Bank Palestinians aged 16-25, many of whom remain unemployed and are considered to be the most at risk for violent behavior.

This propensity, the report notes, could be caused by worsening internal conditions within the West Bank itself, where mismanagement and corruption have caused protracted economic decline. Salient, too, is the ongoing unrest instigated by the Hamas terrorist group on the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel - with recent clashes providing inspiration for similar actions by West Bank youth. Also significant is the growth of extremism within the PA's own ruling party, Fatah, where disenchantment with Israel and the Trump administration is leading to a growing acceptance for the need for confrontation among local officials. (*Algemeiner*, August 18, 2019)

...AS HAMAS CLEANS HOUSE (SORT OF)...

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, the radical Hamas movement is clamping down on its ideological rivals. The group has reportedly arrested nine former members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) for their roles in suicide bombings targeting police checkpoints in Gaza City. The attacks represented a clear challenge to the primacy of Hamas, which has ruled the Gaza Strip for more than a decade, and they were met with an iron-fisted response. The Hamas operation is said to have yielded an arsenal of small arms - including explosive belts and automatic rifles - belonging to PIJ, which rejects Hamas rule. (*i24News*, August 29, 2019)

...AND BENDS THE KNEE TO TEHRAN

In early September, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh wrote a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, expressing thanks for the recent "extensive support" that had been provided by the Islamic Republic to Gaza. Haniyeh expressed his "utter joy (for) Iran's readiness to equip the resistance for whatever it needs to discharge its duty." Haniyeh's letter additionally praises Iran's strong anti-Israel and anti-U.S. rhetoric and statements, which have helped open "new horizons" for the radical Palestinian movement.

The public show of fealty comes amid escalating signs of Iranian support for the group's "resistance" in Gaza. In July, Hamas Deputy Chairman Saleh Arouri was received warmly in Tehran, and shortly thereafter Iran increased its annual pledge to the group from \$100 million in aid to \$360 million - aid which is thought by some to be a *quid pro quo* of sorts for technical information that Hamas has amassed regarding Israeli missiles. (*Jerusalem Post*, September 2, 2019)

AL-QAEDA SEEKS TO RECLAIM THE HIGH GROUND

In a half-hour-long video released on the 18th anniversary of the September 11th attacks, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri encouraged renewed attacks on U.S., European, Israeli, and Russian targets, in particular foreign military installations, as an expression of continued activism. The video marks a milestone, following a period of comparative passivity for the group and coming amid doubts about the organization's worldview and ongoing salience - doubts propelled by the reported ill-health of Zawahiri himself, and confirmation of the death of Osama bin Laden's heir apparent, Hamza. Against this backdrop, experts say, the Bin Laden network is taking pains to emphasize its ongoing relevance, activism and global agenda. Al-Qaeda's efforts, in turn, have been aided by the decline of its chief ideological rival, the Islamic State, a trend which has allowed the group to once again seek to claim the mantle of global *jihad*. (*Foreign Policy*, September 4, 2019; Associated Press, September 11, 2019)