PROPOSED TOR FOR
A PALESTINIAN "MONITORING SUPPORT CAPACITY"

1. Idea: This idea is pursuant to the challenges that began to be confronted in summer 2001 for an expanded Palestinian team, as part of a US-sponsored monitoring mechanism. It is also becoming relevant for the same reasons in current considerations of an International Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (IMVM) for an International Implementation Mission.

The existing proposal for an IMVM envisions three technical monitoring and verification Teams, for security, settlements and economic/civil affairs. Within each Team, there are three groups of International, Palestinian and Israeli monitors. **Developing a coordinated strategy and manner of functioning is critical for the Palestinian observers designated for the IMVM.** A Monitoring Support Capacity (MSC) could harmonize their approach, but more importantly it could provide an independent clearinghouse for information that can then be used by the Palestinian monitors in their IMVM strategy.

Developing an independent Palestinian information-management capacity would be useful not only for ensuring effective Palestinian usage of an IMVM, but it would be a capacity that would be critical for Palestinian effective usage of a follow-on international mission to monitor and implement a permanent status agreement. (The IMVM is envisioned to continue until the conclusion of the final agreement.) Developing such a capacity now would give time for it to grow, test its effectiveness through the IMVM and be fully prepared in advance of deployment an international mission for the permanent status agreement.

The MSC could be established by the Negotiations Support Unit for the Palestinian observers of the IMVM.

2. Scope: The MSC would provide a base of activity for the Palestinian observers in each of the three IMVM Teams, as well as for the IMVM Chair's Palestinian counterpart. The MSC could also be an effective means of using IMVM reports. (One Palestinian failure with regards to TIPH has been the non-publication by the Palestinian side of its reports.)

For the Security Team, the MSC would provide a contact basis for the observers and a reinvigorated DCO system, as well as other aspects of Palestinian deployments throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It could also be a repository for detailed maps to compete with the Israeli capacity on this front. (Some of this has already been looked at in anticipation of supporting monitoring last summer.)

For the Settlement Team, the MSC could be a place to gather reports on violations of a settlements freeze. This may include aerial and satellite imagery from private or government sources, information from NGOs or governments, or the press. Such information could be analyzed and formulated into a strategy for Palestinian observers to use in their dealings with the IMVM.

For the Economic/Civil Affairs Team, the MSC could house a data base--linked to other data bases in the area--and assess progress in these areas.

3. Harmonization: Some issues, such as "closures", cut across the IMVM Teams and Sub-committees of the International Implementation Mission. Such multifaceted problems can be ultimately implemented by the establishment of specialized Task Committees, including the participation of members from more than one Sub-Committee. Monitoring the implementation of such tasks will equally require a combined approach with participation from more than one IMVM Team. To be effective in their role, Palestinian observers in the three teams will need to develop a harmonized approach to these kinds of issues, and an MSC would provide the means to facilitating an integrated strategy for the achievement of this objective.

4. Safeguarding Against Compromise: It is not unlikely that the ideal IMVM will be narrowed, watered down, minimized or altered in key ways as a result of negotiations. As an additional strategy to calling for the ideal IMVM, an MSC may provide a means to work with whatever structural result, without entirely losing the desired outcome. An MSC can be a center of gravity for information that can then be submitted to the compromised structure for it to respond to, check and formally report on, rather than relying entirely on the monitoring body to discover itself all information necessary.

The IMVM will not have the kinds of numbers that would result in a permanent and pervasive deployment. It will need to be mobile and respond to incidents. For this, reason, some have argued, such as in the security arena, that the IMVM should not bother to respond to violent incidents, but only oversee Palestinian arrests. They argue that visiting a site of an incident would provide predictable results in terms of two unreconcilable sides of a story with no means of independent verification. However, with an effective MSC, the information the Palestinian side would like to convey can be better formulated and communicated--drawn from its own sources, and delivered through the Palestinian observers of the Security Team.

If Israel manages to ensure that the numbers of the IMVM are very small, thus neutering it in terms of its scope of geographical coverage as well as its capacity to analyze information, then some of the resulting gap can be essentially filled by an effective MSC that provides comprehensive reporting of its own.