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**CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS AN INTERNAL EVALUATION OF AMIDEAST'S
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (IDP)
WEST BANK AND GAZA**

PREPARED FOR:

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PREFACE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contributes to an internal informal evaluation of the Institutional Development Project/Cooperative Agreement HNE-0012-A-00-4095-00. As stipulated in the Cooperative Grant Agreement signed by USAID and AMIDEAST in September 1994, a collaborative evaluation for the project will be conducted in month 14 effective upon the signing of the Agreement. The findings of the evaluation will determine to what extent the project has met benchmarks agreed to and whether it should receive further funding for the next two years.

This evaluation examines the merit of the Grant activities conducted, whether these activities reflected the needs of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and the actual impact of the Project itself. Recommendations to sharpen the focus of the Project are developed with consideration of the USAID Mission's redefined democracy and governance strategic objective. The attached scope of work for this evaluation also creates an opportunity to clarify and to refine program performance objectives, and to make recommendations for modifications in the focus of the project to ensure both the greatest demonstrable project impact as well as correspondence to the USAID Mission's strategy.

The Grant Agreement maintains that USAID and AMIDEAST " will collaboratively develop...objectively verifiable indicators to measure project success". However to date, measurable performance indicators have neither been developed nor agreed upon by either party, making precise evaluation of the accomplishment of project benchmarks problematic. This assessment is largely based on data collected through interviews of key project beneficiaries and project staff, in addition to an extensive review of relevant AMIDEAST/Institutional Development Project (AMIDEAST/IDP) documentation.

This project impact evaluation was conducted between December 23 -January 11, 1996 at which time the Country Project Director and one of two Senior Technical Advisors were out of the country. Border closures were instituted during this period, which limited access to AMIDEAST Project staff and key Palestinian beneficiaries.

Project Background

The Palestinian Authority is building for the first time a public administration that will act as the foundation for a unified government for Gaza and the West Bank. While there exists concentrations of capacity with a few ministries, the institutions of the PA

are largely embryonic and require attention in defining their roles, functions and structures in addition to establishing basic administrative procedures and policies. Consequently there is a critical need for training and experience in public sector management and institutional strengthening. The Cooperative Grant Agreement emphasized the critical importance of addressing these needs of the PA. As a result, the AMIDEAST/IDP overall mandate and project design is intended "to strengthen the managerial capacity of selected Palestinian institutions".

This was reflected in the original 3 objectives identified in the project proposal.

Objective 1. Al Ahzar University was to counterpart with AMIDEAST/IDP to develop an indigenous delivery system for policy, planning and management skills for civil servants. However AMIDEAST/IDP soon determined that this institution lacked internal management capacity

Objective 2. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) was originally assessed as a key PA public sector player whose activities would impact almost all ministries. Unfortunately the PCBS was interested in counterparting with AMIDEAST/IDP only to pay for its recurrent costs. This was not acceptable and the counterparting relationship was withdrawn.

Objective 3. Short-term training and technical advisory services were to be provided, that is, training in critical management areas of public administration principles, information management, internal control, financial management, supervisory skills, monitoring, and control techniques etc. Of the three original project objectives only this objective continues to remain the same.

The AMIDEAST Country Project Director arrived on-site for project start-up in February 1995, (month 5 after the Grant Agreement was signed) and other expatriate and Palestinian staff were identified and mobilized soon after his arrival. Five months later (July 1995) the Amideast Country Director and IDP (Institutional Development Project) staff determined that 2 of 3 original project objectives had very low potential of successful implementation. This was clearly due to an initial identification of inappropriate counterpart institutions indicated in the project proposal.

With the lack of suitable institutional counterparts to work with, AMIDEAST/IDP was required to reevaluate the Project's strategy. The Project objectives were revised, and continue to correspond to the overall mandate of the Project. These include:

- 1) To establish organizational entities which will strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to train civil servants as demonstrated by a functioning training unit for public management via a consortium of local training institutions and universities.

2) To strengthen organizational structures of specific ministries Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Civil Service Authority (CSA) as demonstrated by coherent organizational structures, personnel procedures, budget systems, and unified personnel management procedures.

3) To strengthen the management and institutional capacity of selected ministries by designing and delivering needed training programs for senior/ mid-level managers, including training in implementation of systems.

Summary of AMIDEAST/IDP's Grant Activities

The following section summarizes the findings and impact of technical assistance and other activities provided by AMIDEAST/IDP to support the institutional development efforts of its client PA ministries and authorities.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC)

1-Conference Planning

AMIDEAST/IDP in close collaboration with MOPIC have begun to develop capacity in the Ministry to plan and facilitate conferences and workshops. This was initiated as a consequence of assisting MOPIC in organizing the first in a series of three major conferences for the PA focusing on the identification of development strategies for the PA. Four hundred participants attended this two day conference (Sept. 1995) and produced an exhaustive list of development recommendations for consideration by MOPIC.

Although broadly structured, this activity has demonstrated tangible results. The recommendations that were developed in the conference were subsequently used as the basis for MOPIC's producing a policy framework document for presentation at the Donor's meeting in Paris in January 1996. Palestinian open forums of this nature are very rare, and data from interviews of several key ministry beneficiaries suggest they were strongly encouraged by the "democratic" or at least plural atmosphere of the conference.

The second conference is currently being planned with a more sharpened focus on the formulation of sector-specific strategic plans produced by selected ministries. In an effort to build substantive skill in strategic planning in the PA, this second conference can be used as a vehicle for AMIDEAST/IDP to provide practical and empirically-based training for MOPIC and for the other ministries now tasked to produce these documents for presentation at the second conference.

2-Production of a Palestinian Authority Directory

AMIDEAST responded to a request by MOPIC to assist in the compilation of a Palestinian Authority Directory identifying mission statements, functional responsibilities, and organizational charts for all PA ministries and authorities. The document was produced on time under the direction of MOPIC, and substantially strengthened IDP's working relationship with this key PA client.

Unfortunately, the document is conceptually flawed because ministry mission statements and functional responsibilities were defined only by the ministries themselves. Conflicts in mission statements, operational ambiguities and overlapping jurisdictions were not reconciled. Given the time constraints this reconciliation was not possible. Concern exists that such a document if distributed could add credibility to ill-conceived notions of a particular ministry's or authority's portfolio and functional responsibilities.

However, there is still considerable value in conducting this exercise. The Directory provides a "cognitive map" and valuable baseline data regarding the degree of structural cohesion within the PA. The Directory also creates a very useful platform for AMIDEAST/IDP to proceed with this process of defining the operational boundaries of PA public organizations. IDP should use the Directory as a reference document to actively proceed, in the first instance, with its client ministries in providing organizational development assistance and institutional support consistent with the Project mandate.

3- Public Management Training Workshops

Two workshops were conducted (Aug.1995) to clarify the utility of public management training, to identify both public administration training needs, and also the appropriate institutional models for the coordination and delivery of PA public management training. Participants included representatives from ministries, authorities, and local training institutions and universities. The workshops strengthened AMIDEAST/IDP's informal network by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders involved in public management training. For this reason they were strategically useful.

The reports from the workshops suggest that agreement was readily established concerning the utility of public management training. The workshops were marginally instrumental in validating AMIDEAST/IDP preconceived notions of what generic training would be most required. An institutional plan was proposed by the participants for delivering public management training to the PA. The model involved a consortium of local universities and training institutions. This approach was cost-effective for the short and medium term while clearly reflecting stakeholder interests of the workshop participants. There was merit to this consortium idea - however the model was rejected summarily by the PA and instead MOPIC created a Public

Administration Human Resource Center (PAHRDC). This decision provides case evidence suggesting institutional decisions taken by the PA are determined on political rather than technical administrative considerations, and AMIDEAST/IDP despite wanting to broker these institutional decisions, was not directly influential.

4- Creation of the Public Administration Human Resource Development Center (PAHRDC)

Following the PA decision to reject a consortium model of local institutions and universities to provide training for the PA, and instead created a training coordination unit known as the Public Administration Human Resource Development Center in MOPIC, AMIDEAST/IDP began to collaborate with MOPIC and the Center's Director.

The Center is a new entity with virtually no internal capacity to meet its Director's ambitious notions of delivering and coordinating training for the PA. At present, the Center is tasked to contract out both public administration training for the PA as a whole, and also institutional development assistance for the ministries and authorities of the PA. The Center adopted an IDP recommendation to establish a coordinated approach to donor training activities. The Center as a newly created organization needs to clarify its mission and realistically match its objectives with its capacity in the short and medium term. Significant benefits will be achieved if the Center is a recipient of similar IDP organizational/institutional development efforts, as undertaken for its other clients.

AMIDEAST/IDP currently provides welcomed and essential advisory services and minor capital support to the Center, constituting appropriate institutional assistance to one of IDP's clients. The fluid structural nature of the PA results in an institutionally uncertain environment. To optimize Grant activity effectiveness, IDP must strategically balance its involvement between clarification of major institutional issues, such as the role and functions and organizational location of the PAHRDC (which will be on-going), and the actual delivery of immediately needed public management training for the PA .

IDP should continue to support the capacity-building efforts for the PAHRDC. It remains the only tangible institutional vehicle with the responsibility for coordinating public sector training for the PA. Questions exist regarding the equity and transparency of the Center's decision-making, which IDP should address strategically when conducting organizational development activities for the Center itself.

5- Training

Training is a major component of the IDP capacity-building strategy for PA institutions.

It is reflected in both the original proposal and the Project's revised objectives. However to date the Project has delivered only one public management-related training course.

AMIDEAST/IDP has conducted formal training for 40 administrative assistants (executive secretaries) in organizational behavior and communication skills. Self-reported participant evaluations indicate the course was well-received but its actual impact has yet to be followed-up by AMIDEAST/IDP and assessed by the direct supervisors of the participants.

This sole IDP training activity raises concerns regarding IDP's focus on one of its primary objectives; PA capacity-building through training. Interview data suggests that while the Project was re-establishing its objectives, it responded almost exclusively to ad-hoc requests of clients and other ministries. Given the wide scope of PA training needs, it remains problematic why the IDP elected to conduct only this executive secretary course. A clear framework for establishing PA training priorities should be clearly articulated, and be used as a guide to direct future IDP training resources.

The institutional issues concerned with developing an organization to manage and coordinate training for the PA were overemphasized by IDP and the actual delivery of training was minimal. Shifting the Project focus from concern with broad institutional issues to a substantial increase in the frequency of public management training is critical. It is the single most important change in its Grant activities that the IDP can implement in order to effectively produce meaningful institutional impacts. The PA as an emerging political structure has virtually no experience in public sector management; training in a wide array of topics is critically needed. This is a central focus and intent of the IDP mandate. In view of this, IDP must first re-evaluate the efficacy of other non-training activities and then establish the delivery of public management training to the PA as the major function of the Project. This has been acknowledged by the senior staff of AMIDEAST/IDP and a senior-level public management training proposal has been approved by MOPIC in late December 1995. It is anticipated that this training will commence late February 1996.

6- Assistance in drafting Civil Service legislation

AMIDEAST/IDP has provided technical advisory services to assist the PA in reconciling its dual civil service systems from Gaza and the West Bank. Two comprehensive reports were submitted to the PA by the IDP. Their purpose was to contribute towards the development of a single unitary Civil Service law. This task was delegated to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). While MOJ might have technical expertise in drafting legislation, it lacked an understanding of civil service administration. This decision stalled the development of a civil service law for 3-4 months until the PA recently decided (Dec.1995) to convene an Executive Committee (comprised of MOPIC, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Civil Service Authority (CSA), and

MOJ to technically review the recommendations of the IDP reports, and to produce implementable, indigenous, and sustainable civil service legislation.

The technical assistance provided by the IDP has assisted the PA in understanding the complexities of civil service administration and has highlighted the areas of necessary decisions to be taken. A proposal to assist the Civil Service Authority in the creation of a Civil Service Manual was submitted by IDP to the PA. This work can only proceed once the civil service law is formulated.

7-Other Grant Activities

Ministry of Finance

During the first year of implementation, AMIDEAST/IDP developed several assistance proposals for other client ministries that are still pending decisions by the PA. Two in particular deserve mention. One proposal by the IDP to the Ministry of Finance was designed to assist in the implementation of IMF recommendations. The IDP's plan for technical assistance to MOF is a broad one, encompassing: a) varied institutional development support (e.g.) defining the functions of the Ministry and the structure of its organization, staffing issues and preparation of job descriptions; and b) finance-specific technical support such as assisting in the development of a PA chart of accounts, and development of a budget formulation process and manual. The wide scope of assistance that IDP is proposing is consistent with the level of need in the MOF and in part corresponds closely to the institutional strengthening component of IDP objectives. Some questions exist regarding the level of expertise IDP can provide in technical finance areas identified by the IMF. These specialized areas which IDP has proposed providing assistance should be re-evaluated in view the increasing levels of donor activity, especially to MOF.

Ministry of Justice

In response to a request by the Ministry of Justice, IDP formulated a plan for strengthening the capacity of the Diwan of Fatwa (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation). This is a unit currently within the MOJ, responsible for a range of legal services for the PA. These services include providing legal opinion regarding laws decrees and legislation, preparation of new laws and legislation, acting as General Counsel for the PA, and drafting of bi-lateral agreements and international contracts. The IDP proposal has two components to be implemented simultaneously. The first focuses on unification of the West Bank and Gaza Laws and the second, on the establishment and strengthening of the capacity of the Office. Originally IDP had intended to assist MOJ by developing a proposal for other donor funding. However given the centrality of the functional responsibilities of the Diwan of Fatwa, and the USAID Mission's redefined democracy and governance strategy, IDP should re-evaluate its position and consider committing to implementing the plan itself.

Note: USAID is not generally perceived as contributing to public administration capacity-building in the PA. Yet AMIDEAST/IDP was among the first technical assistance projects to target the strengthening of PA public management capacity.

Aside from specific impacts derived from IDP grant activities, AMIDEAST/IDP deserves credit for assuming a lead role in public sector institutional development for the PA. As a "front-runner", the AMIDEAST/IDP has had to deal with a constantly shifting political environment where decision makers are reluctant to take major steps in operationally defining a system of public administration for the PA.

In spite of this, interview data with key IDP beneficiaries consistently indicate the Project has established excellent operational working relationships with the majority of their PA clients. Senior PA beneficiaries unanimously praised the collaborative approach employed by the AMIDEAST/IDP. PA clients characterized the Project staff as "working shoulder to shoulder" to support the institutional development of their respective ministries. This successful approach for providing technical assistance should not be minimized especially where it is essential in sensitive areas of organizational and institutional development. In forging working relationships with the PA, AMIDEAST/IDP is well positioned to continue and build upon its effective access to key senior managers of the PA.

Critical Conditions Characterizing the IDP's Task Environment

It requires noting that the task environment of the IDP is characterized by particular constraints that continue to have substantial impact in the manner in which project activities are designed, implemented and upon the results achieved. At the same time, these organizational and operational factors also constitute a set of symptoms of the specific institutional conditions that the IDP is ostensibly designed to address. Constraints include:

- The transitional nature of the recently formed Palestinian public sector institutions which comprise the primary target clients of the IDP. Organizational mandates, functional responsibilities and structure are fluid, politically influenced and subject to rapid change.
- It has been politically premature to pursue the definition of clear functional responsibilities of the ministries. (The chairman shows no signs of altering the delicate balance between key actors in MOPIC, MOF etc.) No meaningful decisions altering structures or roles of PA organizations will be taken before the Palestinian elections mid-January 1996.

- An organizational culture of the PA which is hierarchical, and whose senior-level recruitment is heavily determined by family ties. The influence of the written word is weak, resulting in information sharing minimized or flowing upwards with very few formal decisions taken in response to proposals. There is an absence of effective senior and middle level management capacity within PA public sector organizations. As a result, there is an inadequate delegation of authority by senior executives, little documentation of decisions taken, and no formal or codified procedures clarifying operational issues.

- Restrictions on the movements of project staff caused by border closures which create serious impact on the ability of staff to effectively program their activities and which sharply restricted access to their clients.

Recommendations for future focus of the AMIDEAST/IDP

This section is divided into three parts: The first deals with general overarching observations and recommendations. The second section presents substantive recommendations which are intended to a) sharpen the focus and goals of the AMIDEAST/IDP b) ensure closer correspondence between Grant activities and the Mission's re-engineered strategic objectives. The third section provides recommendations towards strengthening the management of the Project.

1. General Recommendations

During the first 6 months of project implementation, AMIDEAST/IDP determined that its originally designated counterpart organizations were not effective sites for technical assistance. During this time IDP engaged in a process of formulating new project objectives and project activities. The documented evidence suggests that in an effort to establish its identity and a raison d'être IDP responded to a very broad scope of requests for assistance. This resulted in a project portfolio that was untargeted, not tied to specific project objectives, and was beyond the technical expertise of the Project.

Recommendation 1A. The Semi Annual Report (SAR) submitted Oct.1 1995 indicated that the AMIDEAST/IDP had made substantive progress in clarifying its objectives. However the accompanying workplan suggests AMIDEAST/IDP must still establish clear operational boundaries regarding the character and type of specialized technical advisory support it will provide to its client ministries. IDP continues to assume too broad a portfolio and risks raising expectations in client ministries that will be unmet.

Recommendation 1B. AMIDEAST should continue its direct assistance in support of the institutional development requirements of its client ministries and authorities:

MOPIC, The Center, MOJ, MOF, and the CSA - especially with regard to operationally clarifying their mission statements, their functional responsibilities, their organizational structures and "harmonizing" their internal systems. It is further recommended that IDP training activities be structured with the goal of institutionalizing this capacity within MOPIC's PAHRDC. PA staff should be trained in these organizational development techniques in order that these activities can continue be delivered by PA staff and be available to PA public organizations as required after the life of AMIDEAST/IDP.

Recommendation 1C. To date, AMIDEAST/IDP has only conducted formal training for 40 executive secretaries in the PA. This is a critical issue, requiring immediate attention, that is understood to be in the planning stages. The comparative advantage AMIDEAST brings to this project is its strengths in the area of education and training. It is understood that many ambiguities regarding the institutional setting for delivering training have existed and continue to exist. Too much time has been devoted to sorting these institutional issues out, and not enough effort devoted to the profound training needs of the PA at hand. Although professionally engaging, decisions addressing the lack of a clear institutional framework for delivering and coordinating training are outside the direct scope of influence of AMIDEAST/IDP.

2. Substantive Recommendations

In this section, specific recommendations are provided that are intended to strengthen the focus of the Project while more closely corresponding to the Mission's strategic democracy and governance objective. These recommendations are categorized according to the individual client ministry concerned and developed in greater detail in this Report.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC)

Recommendation 2A. With AMIDEAST/IDP support, MOPIC is planning this next conference, which will feature presentations of strategic plans by specific sectors. Designated ministries will therefore be required to formulate well-considered plans. This creates a unique opportunity for AMIDEAST/IDP to provide a practical empirically-based training in strategic planning for MOPIC and other ministries. The outcomes of these symposia is consistent with the democracy and governance strategic result of (3.2.2). Increased participation of advocacy groups in public policy formulation and implementation.

Recommendation 2B. To continue supporting the institutional development of MOPIC. In particular, to assist the ministry in practically examining its actual objectives and the organizational tasks required to achieve them, and then to define an effective organizational design that enables the Ministry to operate effectively and efficiently.

Recommendation 2C. AMIDEAST/IDP should provide technical assistance in support of building policy analysis capacity in the PA. This is clearly an important institutional development area - this need is critical and spans all sectors of the PA.

The overall approach consists of two components. The first activity is to develop a cadre of policy analysts within the ministries to enable the PA to develop effective and well analyzed policy plans. The second is to assist the PA in defining a transparent framework for the policy formulation, endorsement, and implementation process. Articulating this process increases transparency and access of Palestinians to the public sector decision-making process. This recommendation is in direct support of several Immediate Results as identified in the Mission's Strategic Objective 3: Improved Key Democratic Process and Practices. In particular: (3.3.3.) Strengthen analytic capability of executive branch to draft and review legislation (policy); and (3.3.2.) Strengthen analytical capacity of Council to draft, review, and approve legislation; and (3.2.2.) Increase participation of advocacy groups in public policy formulation and implementation.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation: Public Administration
Human Resource Development Center

Recommendation 2D. The assistance AMIDEAST/IDP is providing to the Center should continue especially in terms of providing advisory staff support towards strengthening the Center's ability to identify and manage the coordination of PA training needs with donor proposals. At present the PA has decided that this Center will be responsible for contracting out to local institutions and universities not only management training services for the PA, but also institutional development assistance to the ministries and authorities.

Recommendation 2E. AMIDEAST/IDP should assist the PA in reconsidering alternative, more cost-effective means by which it can obtain and maintain organizational and institutional development assistance. It is recommended as AMIDEAST/IDP conducts these activities with its designated client ministries, that it actively develop practical and indigenous training materials and manuals in these fields. These materials would be used by AMIDEAST/IDP to train a small group of PA staff (perhaps located in PAHRDC) who could then assist other ministries in pursuing the institutional development of the ministries. The overall objective would be to build institutionalized capacity within the PA to provide these technical services in a timely and responsive manner.

Ministry of Justice

Recommendation 2F. AMIDEAST/IDP should continue to support the organizational and institutional development of the Ministry of Justice. Emphasis should be placed

on assisting the Ministry in clarification of its objectives and tasks, and the means by which the ministry will achieve them. These organizational development activities are a prerequisite to further and necessary discussions related to the functional responsibilities and organizational structure of the Ministry.

Recommendation 2G. To actively pursue MOJ's request and the AMIDEAST/IDP proposal to build capacity in the Diwan of Fatwa (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation). This activity is targeted at a key unit within the PA which is responsible for preparing new laws and legislation, and for providing legal opinions regarding laws and legislation proposed by the President, ministries and authorities within the PA. This recommendation corresponds in particular to the Mission's democracy and governance strategy which target the strengthened capacity of the Council (3.3.2) and executive branch (3.3.3) to draft, review and approve legislation.

Civil Service Authority

Recommendation 2H. It is strongly recommended that AMIDEAST/IDP continue to pursue the CSA as a primary client given its central functions which will impact the productivity of other ministries. This Authority currently faces a critical need to establish its functional responsibilities and define its organizational framework. AMIDEAST/IDP has encountered resistance from key CSA personalities concerning the acceptance of the Project's technical support. It is hoped that AMIDEAST/IDP through sharpening its own objectives can clearly present to CSA the specific organizational and institutional development activities that will be of direct benefit to the CSA.

Ministry of Finance

Recommendation 2I. AMIDEAST/IDP should continue supporting the institutional development of MOF. In particular, to assist the ministry in practically examining its actual objectives and the organizational tasks required to achieve them, and then to define an effective organizational design that enables the Ministry to operate effectively and efficiently. This Grant activity support will advance the recommendations proposed by the IMF by promoting an organizational environment whose management will be skilled and poised to understand and develop specialized finance specific systems and procedures.

3. Recommendations for Improving the Management of the AMIDEAST/ IDP

It is observed that the AMIDEAST/IDP would benefit significantly if USAID assumes a more proactive role in managing AMIDEAST/IDP. This is especially true given the implementation problems the Project initially faced due to the inappropriate institutional counterparting arrangements originally proposed. This necessitated the subsequent

recasting of IDP objectives. These now must be reevaluated and linked to support USAID's recent refinements of its democracy and governance strategy. In order to ensure that IDP activities support the achievement of the DG strategic objective, USAID and AMIDEAST/IDP must share important management responsibilities.

In close collaboration, AMIDEAST/IDP and USAID must establish a clearer project focus with well-defined objectives. This activity should result in a) producing practical performance indicators, reflecting targeted project objectives that are measurable and observable; b) developing realistic workplans which directly respond to the IDP mandate; and c) establishing a system for the on-going monitoring and evaluation of IDP activities.

I. Introduction

Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation

The institutions of the Palestinian Authority (PA) are nascent and the civil service is under development. Ministries vary substantially in capacity, with the tendency of those more capable to over-extend their functional responsibilities. There are serious mission overlaps and jurisdictional ambiguities between ministries. The geographical separation of Palestine ministries and authorities severely weakens its organizational coherence and hinders the ability to communicate within this burgeoning public sector. This situation is further exacerbated by a fluid political environment which severely constrains decisions regarding major changes in institutional structures.

Practical experience and knowledge of public administration is critically needed to strengthen the civil service. There is a enormous requirement for public management training throughout the PA. In recognition of this, Cooperative Grant Agreement HNE-0012-A-00-4095-00 signed in September 1994 between USAID and AMIDEAST emphasized the importance of "strengthening the managerial capacity of selected PA institutions". USAID approved support of the AMIDEAST Institutional Development Project/ West Bank and Gaza (AMIDEAST/IDP).

The purpose of this report is to contribute to an internal informal evaluation of this Institutional Development Project (IDP) As stipulated in the Cooperative Grant Agreement, a collaborative evaluation of the project will be conducted in month 14 effective upon the signing of the Agreement. The findings of the evaluation will determine to what extent the project has met benchmarks agreed to and whether it should receive further funding for the next two years.

Pursuant to the "Substantial Involvement Understanding" contained in the Grant Agreement, USAID and AMIDEAST "will collaboratively develop objectively verifiable indicators to measure project success". Measurable performance indicators were not developed, making precise evaluation of the accomplishment of project benchmarks problematic. However it is intended that this evaluation be regarded as a valuable opportunity: first, to evaluate the value and merits of the Grant activities conducted; to determine to what extent these activities reflect actual needs of the PA; and the impact of the project to date; and second, to make recommendations for changes in project focus, considering the USAID Mission's draft democracy and governance strategy and the need to ensure the greatest impact

In carrying out the scope of work interviews were conducted with key PA clients and beneficiaries to determine the impact of AMIDEAST assistance to date. Interviews were also conducted with all available IDP staff and a thorough review made of relevant Project documentation. This project evaluation was conducted between

23 Dec. 95 - 9 Jan 96 at which time the AMIDEAST Country Project Director and one of two Senior Technical Advisors were out of the country. Border closures during this time moderately limited access to PA clients of the IDP and AMIDEAST project staff.

Overview of the AMIDEAST West Bank /Gaza Institutional Development Project (AMIDEAST/IDP)

In order to fully understand the current focus and impact of the project to date, a brief history of the project will be presented highlighting original IDP objectives and the factors contributing to their current reformulation.

The original project design detailing the AMIDEAST Institutional Development Project (IDP) focused on objectives believed to build and sustain effective management capacity of emerging Palestinian public sector organizations.

1- Comprehensive long-term institution strengthening assistance to Al Azhar University's Center for Public Management, to enable it to provide training and management advisory services to public sector institutions in Gaza;

2- long-term comprehensive management, policy and technical assistance to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics based in Jerusalem, or to another public organization as agreed to by USAID, to improve its capability to provide services to other Palestinian Authority organizations: and

3- short-term management training and possibly technical assistance to a selected number of public ministries, departments and agencies to assist them to develop management systems and procedures.

The AMIDEAST Country Project Director arrived on-site for project start-up in February 1995 (month 5) and other expatriate advisors and Palestinian staff were mobilized soon after his arrival. Within 5 months (July 1995), the Country Director determined that counterpart institutions identified in objectives 1 and 2 were not appropriate. With regards to the first objective, the counterpart institution identified in the original proposal, Al Azhar University, was determined to lack the capacity to implement plans for a "Center" for public management. A later revised objective promoting PA training to be coordinated and delivered via a consortium of local university and training institutions was summarily rejected by the PA. Recently it has been reasoned that the newly developed Public Administration and Human Resource Development Center in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), presented a more cost-effective approach to identifying, coordinating, and delivering appropriate public sector management training.

The counterpart institution in the second objective, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, was believed to serve a key role in the Palestinian Authority. However after six months of negotiation it declined to enter into a technical assistance relationship with AMIDEAST. There were several reasons for this decision, the most important of which was that PCBS wanted AMIDEAST to assume the recurrent costs of the organization. They desired a direct transfer of funds from AMIDEAST/IDP to pay for staff salaries - a condition that was in principle unacceptable and in direct contradiction to the terms of the Grant Agreement. In addition it was also observed that the PCBS, was not responding to requests for information of PA ministries, was generally overextended, and was primarily concerned with how to increase its staff. As a result AMIDEAST/IDP decided to seek other institutional counterparts.

In the absence of having clear working counterpart relationships with PA institutions, AMIDEAST/IDP opted to focus its energies to essentially pursue its third objective by providing technical advisory support to interested PA public sector organizations while providing a modicum of training.

The lack of clear counterparting arrangements with PA institutions resulted in a significant loss of momentum and Project impact early in its implementation. The interview data suggests the original proposal was in part ill-conceived, and reflects a lack of attention by those responsible for the project proposal. While these institutions were in fact contacted during the formulation of the proposal, considerable inattention was given to the details. It appears that while the proposed counterpart institutions were contacted, little or no substantive discussions were held regarding the scope and specific technical assistance relationships to be implemented. There was no agreements regarding the character of the planned technical assistance. This indicates that the proposal writers did not adequately research or clarify IDP objectives with these organizations to assess their suitability. This was unfortunate and very possibly avoidable, nevertheless it created considerable limitations on the ability of the IDP to make an early and credible impact within PA public organizations. This also meant that IDP staff now had to recast its activities and begin to investigate other institutional development strategies consistent with the Project mandate.

Another problem impacting the implementation of Grant activities deserves noting. Two senior staff were determined to be unsuitable by the AMIDEAST Country Project Director within 6 months of project start-up. The Chief Technical Advisor and Assistant Project Director were replaced by two Senior Technical Advisors. These new members of the project team bring to bear more specific technical expertise (in planning and training/ finance and management) consistent with the operational objectives of the project. To his credit the Country Director was able to identify staff inadequacies rather rapidly and respond decisively without long-term critical impact to the overall project outputs. Regrettably these personnel problems coupled with the task of identifying new institutional counterparts and renegotiating work plans weakened IDP's ability to make a rapid impact within Palestinian institutions.

Revised Objectives

Given the rapidly changing public institutional environment of the Palestinian Authority, the IDP was required to identify and establish a new set of counterparts and client beneficiaries and reformulate its objectives. This was done while still adhering to the overall mandate and goal of the IDP: "to provide assistance to specific public sector institutions within the Palestinian Authority in order to ensure their sustainability as well as accountability to their respective constituents".

The IDP goal continues to correspond to the original Grant Agreement which emphasizes the need "to strengthen managerial and institutional capacity of target institutions and contribute to the establishment of public sector organizational structures resulting in transparent, accountable and merit-based systems".

Three detailed objectives were identified by IDP in its SAR, OCT.1,1995.

1- "To establish organizational entities which strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to train civil servants as demonstrated by functioning public management training units within the government and via a consortium of educational institutions given the capacity to deliver public management training programs.

2- To strengthen the organizational structures of specific ministries including: Planning and International Cooperation; Finance; Justice; Economy and Trade, and the Civil Service Authority as demonstrated by the use of: a unified system of personnel management procedures, a unified budgeting system, a project management and evaluation system, and coherent organization structures.

3- To strengthen the management and institutional capacity of the development of the selected ministries by designing and delivering needed training programs for senior and mid-level managers as well as training in implementation of systems".

II. Observations and Findings: Assessing the Impact of AMIDEAST/IDP Grant Activities

This section of the report will identify specific IDP outputs generated as direct results of Grant activity during 1995. Attention will also be devoted to examining on-going work with identified Project client beneficiaries.

Project Results to Date

A. Strategic Planning Symposium for the Palestinian Authority/September 1995 Co-sponsored by MOPIC and AMIDEAST/IDP

This activity was the first conference reflecting IDP's direct support to improve MOPIC's capacity to plan, organize and facilitate conferences. It was planned as the first of a series of three national development symposia. They are designed to bring together a broad spectrum of key Palestinian opinion leaders to focus on central development issues facing the Palestinian Authority. This first conference, entitled "Paving the Way Toward a Development Strategy for Palestine", convened 400 participants at the Rashad Shawwa Center, Gaza, for two days. During the conference 30 presentations were made and the participants were divided into 6 groups each focused on a particular topic and the participants were asked to offer recommendations. These included: the establishment of short and long term priorities during the interim period, 1994-1999; a vision of the Palestinian development model; recommendations for a medium and long term strategy for development; recommendations on the investment in people; issues of Palestinian identity, present and future; and strategies for regional and international cooperation.

The Symposium participants generated 68 recommendations which were documented and circulated. Palestinian open-forums of this nature are rare. Interview data with IDP clients were enthusiastic regarding the democratic and participatory climate during the Conference. Dr. Ali Sha'at, Assistant Deputy Minister of MOPIC commended AMIDEAST/IDP for its direct support in organizing the Symposium. He further stated that the formulation of a Palestinian Authority policy framework document entitled "A Preliminary Statement on Palestinian Development Strategy" was the direct result of the Symposium. He commented that AMIDEAST/IDP's contribution played a key role in the PA's ability to develop the document. It will be presented to the Conference on Assistance to the Palestinians in Paris, 9 Jan 1996.

The development of this document is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it may play a key role in structuring the dialogue with donors in Paris. Second, institutionally speaking, its production was self-initiated by MOPIC which took responsibility for extrapolating the contributions from the Symposium and organized its internal

resources to create the policy framework.

In addition, Dr. Sha'at discussed the next Symposium, describing it as a direct follow-up of the first. It is planned that the next Conference will be structured using specific sectoral strategic plans which will soon be formulated by respective ministries. Several senior PA respondents mentioned that the Symposium provided a unique opportunity for participants to express themselves in an open plural environment. Such conferences model behavior consistent with good governance and should be replicated when opportunities exist. The outcome of this Symposium is consistent with and supports the USAID democracy and governance Immediate Result (3.2.2): Increased participation of advocacy groups in public policy formulation and implementation.

This Symposium, and the remaining two in the sequence which are planned, are being used as a vehicle towards institutionalizing conference organizing capacity in MOPIC which is important given its functional responsibilities. Dr. Sha'at also stated that a Conference Planning Unit had been recently formed in MOPIC and is under his direction.

B. Production of a Palestinian Authority Directory (Dec.1995)

AMIDEAST/IDP was specifically asked by the PA to assist in the creation of a PA document, "Directory: Palestine National Authority, Organizational Structure of the Government", (December 1995). It was intended by the PA to present this document at the Donors Conference in December 1995. The Project's technical input for this document was quite varied. Depending on the ministry's capacity, AMIDEAST/IDP staff assisted the ministry in the articulation of its mission statements, identification of its functional responsibilities, and construction of its organizational chart. Ministries with substantial internal capacity defined these issues for themselves and submitted them to AMIDEAST/IDP who then was responsible for ensuring they were presented in a consistent and coherent manner.

The PA decision not to distribute the Directory created an inadvertent best-case scenario for the Project. First, the MOPIC-driven process of defining ministry functional responsibilities and mission was flawed insofar as it was done primarily by each ministry independent of each other. Time constraints prevented reconciliation of ambiguities, duplication or overlapping jurisdictions. Consequently the Directory that was produced, although stressed to be in draft form, if distributed, risked conferring a level of legitimacy and credibility upon a structure of the PA that was premature, inaccurate, hastily produced, and a potential liability if perceived as a controlling document. It also was an incomplete document with basic information regarding the structures of key ministries missing (e.g. Finance, Justice), and many PA authorities unrepresented.

Surprisingly from AMIDEAST/IDP's perspective, some success was achieved. The document was prepared and presented to the PA within the requested timeframe. The Director General of MOPIC observed that although the PA eventually decided not to submit the Directory to the Donors, its production and the process undertaken by AMIDEAST/IDP evidenced a strong working relationship with the PA and the Project. This project activity enabled staff to begin to work closely with many Ministries in support of increasing their individual understanding and clarity concerning their mission, functional responsibilities, and structures.

With all its weaknesses, the Directory does act as an effective starting point in a PA process to clarify fundamental organizational and operational issues. As a draft document, it allows senior PA officials to get "a big picture" by providing a window into the thinking of all the individual PA ministries. This represents an important source of baseline data for those tasked to create an efficient and effective PA. This data will be of particular utility for AMIDEAST/IDP as it increasingly serves the organizational and institutional development needs of its client ministries. The document creates a platform for the IDP to further this essential process of defining the boundaries of PA public organizations.

C. Public Management Training Workshops (August 1995)

Two workshops were conducted whose objectives included: 1) to obtain agreement among participants regarding the utility of public management training for the PA; 2) to identify specific public sector management training needs; and 3) to consider models of appropriate mechanisms for the coordination and delivery of training. Participants included representatives from PA ministries, authorities, local universities and training institutions. Several organizing topics were used to guide the participant's comments. These focused on personnel of public organizations, budgets and financial management, procurement and bidding, public management training needs of the PA and the mechanisms to ensure providing them. Two workshops were required due to border closures, one in Gaza conducted at Islamic University, the other at Birzeit University, Continuing Education Department in the West Bank.

The workshops developed a series of recommendations: a) Identifying a wide variety of topics to be addressed by public management training; b) Setting up an overall framework for development and training of human resources in public sector institutions; c) Designing a certified comprehensive training program for managerial development; and d) Establishing cooperative relationships between academic and training institutions as a means to provide the training detailed for the above program.

These workshops were marginally useful in validating AMIDEAST/IDP's preconceived notions concerning what types of training would be appropriate to conduct for PA public sector organizations. Participants provided examples of a wide variety of public

management weaknesses drawn from their own experiences. Training topics were identified to address these organizational, procedural and public management weaknesses. Convening these Workshops strengthened the IDP's informal network among local public management training providers, by bringing them together to begin to establish a framework for setting PA training priorities, and mechanisms to coordinate and deliver training.

The institutional model the workshops developed for providing training to PA included variations of a joint PA /local training institution/university "consortium". This idea was stressed in terms of its short and medium term cost-effectiveness by using training resources already on the ground to serve the PA. In principle this may be correct, yet serious accountability and stakeholder interests exist.

D. Assistance to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) to create a Public Administration Human Resource Center (PAHRDC)

The Training Workshop's recommendation of developing a consortium of local training institutions and universities to provide public management training was summarily rejected by the PA. Rather MOPIC decided that a unit of MOPIC called the Public Administration Human Resource Development Center (PAHRDC) be formed. This Center is formally tasked to identify PA public management training requirements and either identify "appropriate" local institutions to respond to these needs or deliver the training itself. However, this Center as it is presently conceived, according to Mr. Magdi Kaldi, Director General of MOPIC, is primarily responsible for coordinating training activities for the PA and not currently expected to be responsible for delivering training. There exists substantial disagreement between the Director General of MOPIC and the Director of the Center regarding its mission. This undoubtedly requires clarification which should be usefully facilitated by the IDP.

The Center is a newly created organization with virtually no internal capacity to meet its present functional responsibilities. The IDP currently provides essential advisory services and minor capital support to the Center. It is an appropriate use of its technical support to a PA client.

This lack of training management capacity results in the Center's plan to essentially "contract out" public management training programs to approved local training institutions which have responded to a notice in the newspaper. Those institutions which have responded to the advertisement have been rank-ordered by PAHRDC according to specific criteria that was not made available to the evaluator nor has it been available to AMIDEAST/IDP. This necessarily raises concerns regarding the transparency of the decision process to award contracts to local training institutions. This is an issue that deserves careful monitoring by AMIDEAST and USAID if project resources are to be made available to support PA management training coordinated

through the Center.

In addition, the Center intends to also "contract out" institutional development support to PA organizations as well using the same approved training institutions. Concerns about the quality and effectiveness of institutional development services provided by these institutions exist. This situation warrants that an alternative be considered. Namely that AMIDEAST/IDP assist the PA in building institutional development support capability in the PAHRDC itself, while providing such services to its client PA organizations.

E. Training for Administrative Assistants

This training provided by AMIDEAST/IDP was conducted in collaboration with Birzeit University's Center of Continuing Education. The modules for the training were developed by senior staff of IDP.

A total of forty (40) participants, primarily executive secretaries, underwent this training in communication skills, and administrative procedures. Exhaustive training evaluations accompanied the training report suggesting a very favorable response by the workshop participants. However, this type of self-evaluation by participants themselves tends to be positively biased and often sheds little light on the actual effectiveness of the training. Training evaluations, to be meaningful, should include site visits with managers of the workshop participants to determine whether their work-related skills have in fact improved. This has not been done by AMIDEAST/IDP staff but should be included in future IDP workplans. It is therefore difficult to assess the value and impact of this particular training towards strengthening the institutional capacity of the PA.

Training is a major component of the IDP capacity-building strategy for PA institutions as evidenced in both the original and revised project objectives. AMIDEAST/IDP has consistently stressed the importance of training as a primary means towards promoting institutional capacity-building. The IDP's objective #3 stresses the need " to strengthen the management and institutional capacity of the selected ministries by designing and delivering needed training programs for senior-and mid-level managers as well as training in implementation of systems." (Revised Project Description Oct.1995).

However to date, the IDP has delivered only this one public-management training course for the PA raising several concerns. This reflects a serious lack of achievement of a key benchmark of the project regarding the provision of training to the PA. This is surprising given that the specific comparative advantage that AMIDEAST brings to these public management issues is principally in the organization's expertise and experience to coordinate, and deliver a wide range of training in the region.

It still remains unclear, given the wide range of public management training priorities of the PA, on what basis this training for executive secretaries was chosen first? What was the institutional training framework that conducting this particular training would support? There is no evidence that a formal training needs assessment was conducted for the PA. How does this training fit within an overall PA training plan? This administrative assistant training lacked coherence with any overall training objective either of the IDP itself or the PA.

For purposes of assessing the impact of activities to date, it is important to take note of the lack of training activities conducted by the IDP. Institutional issues concerning the location and functions of an organizational unit in the PA responsible for training needs identification, training delivery, and donor coordination took priority. Project staff determined that these institutional issues required PA decisions prior to full-scale targeted training being conducted. In retrospect, this decision was strategically flawed and became a self-imposed constraint of the IDP resulting in virtually no training delivered. This overemphasis on institutional training issues, while professionally engaging, ultimately acted as a distraction from focusing on a primary objective of the IDP- to provide management training to selected PA organizations. As a result, actual training efforts were minimized. Primary emphasis on providing public management training to the PA is the single most important shift in its Grant activities that AMIDEAST/IDP can implement in order to effectively produce meaningful institutional impact for the PA.

It should be noted that the staff of the AMIDEAST/IDP is very aware of this lack of training to address the specific management needs of the PA. Building on the types of training that were identified in the two Training Workshops (August 1995), the AMIDEAST/IDP developed a generic senior level management training program and in late December received official approval from MOPIC to conduct the training. It is planned to commence late February 1996. Participants will be drawn from all ministries and be delivered in collaboration with local universities and training institutions.

F. Development of the Civil Service Law: Assistance with the Drafting of Civil Service Legislation

In accordance with the Project's established criteria for selection of clients for Project technical assistance, the IDP identified the PA Civil Service Authority (CSA) as an important potential recipient of the Project's technical advisory support. The CSA faces fundamental challenges that significantly impact the character and speed of its own institutional development as well as that of entire PA. It is geographically divided, with the CSA represented in both the West Bank and Gaza, making internal communication extremely problematic. The CSA presently operates a dual system of personnel laws and regulations each of which reflects their unique histories. This has

resulted in a lack of organizational and procedural clarity that fosters internal turf disputes exacerbated by senior managers whose authority is based on incumbency rather than technical expertise.

AMIDEAST/IDP responded to a request by the PA in June 1995 to assist the CSA in formulating its policies and procedures, functional responsibilities and organizational structure. Several approaches were taken by IDP. The first was to develop a dialogue with senior CSA managers in both the West Bank and Gaza. The project staff experienced considerable resistance and reluctance from CSA senior executives. In spite of this, AMIDEAST/IDP fielded a consultant, Robert Mitchell, in June 1995 to assess the current status of civil service procedures, identify issues that require codification, and create a work plan for the development of new manuals and other supporting materials.

In his report "Actions to Strengthen Civil Service Administration in the Palestine National Authority", Mitchell sets out an institutional assessment of the PA and highlights; the need for recruiting highly-qualified technical, professional, and managerial personnel, as well as the need for instituting performance evaluation procedures and training programs to support skill development among these civil servants. The Report is careful to point out the institutional prerequisites necessary to enable real organizational development in the CSA to take place. Foremost is the need to establish a clear legal basis for the civil service, followed by laws that establish and foster merit principles in recruitment and management of civil servants, a unified personnel procedures manual, clearly defined organizational structures charged with personnel administration functions, and standards, rules, and procedures for articulating clear chains of command and occupational roles for the civil service workforce.

This Report addressed these issues comprehensively and clearly, and was used by AMIDEAST/IDP to develop their workplan with the CSA. Unfortunately interview data indicates that this report does not appear to have had the impact or distribution within the PA that it could have had. In spite of the fact many sections of the report were translated into Arabic, senior officials in the PA (especially in the CSA) who were interviewed were unfamiliar with its findings and recommendations. Information provided by Project staff suggests that the present administrative culture does not encourage the reviewing of submitted documents, reading materials, documenting decisions nor sharing information laterally within the PA.

As a follow-up activity to the Mitchell Report, AMIDEAST/IDP prepared a report "Review of the West Bank and Gaza Civil Service Laws: Development of a single unified Civil Service Law, Policy and Procedures Manual to serve the Palestine Authority in both Gaza and the West Bank". (August 1995). This report prepared by a Senior Technical Advisor of AMIDEAST/IDP drew heavily upon the Mitchell Report in providing recommendations to the PA regarding the nature and scope of an organic

civil service law, its policy dimensions, and required codification of procedures. This was coupled by a proposed detailed workplan establishing the steps required to develop and implement a personnel procedures manual.

All of these IDP recommendations were presented to the PA in order that decisions regarding their implementation be taken. However the PA decided that these matters would be turned over to the Ministry of Justice specifically the Diwan of Fatwa (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation). Some confusion existed regarding the specific expertise that MOJ brought to this problem beyond legislative formatting issues. This mismatched task assignment to MOJ resulted in no real institutional progress being made regarding CSA between October-December 1995.

The Director General of MOPIC informed the evaluator that a decision was just taken to convene an "Executive Technical Committee" to review the findings and recommendations of AMIDEAST/IDP's proposals. The creation of such a technical committee was among those recommendations presented in the Mitchell Report. Membership on this Committee will include representatives from MOPIC, MOF, CSA, and the Diwan of Fatwa. This committee is a more technically appropriate venue for these civil service matters to be addressed and provides an opportunity for the IDP to fully present the rationale and recommendations within the reports.

To further support the CSA, the IDP is planning to field a salary administration consultant (Feb.1996) to develop a unified salary scale for the West Bank and Gaza.

G. Other Grant Activities:

There are several IDP activities that deserve mention, reflecting substantial use of Project staff resources.

Ministry of Finance: Workplan to implement IMF recommendations

AMIDEAST/IDP submitted a proposed workplan to one of its client ministries, MOF in November 1995. The purpose of the proposal was to develop a MOF/IDP workplan to implement a series of recently identified IMF recommendations. These included: a) institutional development activities such as reviewing Ministry tasks; b) clarifying functional responsibilities of its offices (e.g) Revenues, Budget and Treasury; and c) defining appropriate organizational structures to enable MOF to operate productively and efficiently. In addition IDP also proposed to assist the MOF in finance-specific areas such as the developing a budget formulation process and a supporting manual, and establishing a microeconomics framework.

The MOF has not yet responded to this detailed workplan. However this proposal should be actively pursued for it identifies clear targets for institutional development support of a PA client- consistent with the mandate and expertise of the IDP. Other

more finance-specific areas such as the formulation of a budget formulation process and establishing a microeconomics framework stretch the limits of expertise and mandate of the AMIDEAST/IDP.

This identifies an internal management requirement for AMIDEAST/IDP to first clarify for itself what kinds of institutional development issues it is equipped to tackle and which are outside the areas of expertise of the Project staff. To be effective, IDP cannot address all needs of its clients. With rapidly increasing levels of donor support available, AMIDEAST/IDP can assist the MOF in articulating its technical needs and in identifying other donors who can mobilize financial management technical assistance with greater expertise. There exists a clear role for the IDP in supporting the institutional development of the MOF, but this is an issue requiring that the Project's technical public management boundaries be clarified.

Ministry of Justice: Proposal to Establish the Diwan of Fatwa

Another client ministry, the Ministry of Justice made a request of AMIDEAST/IDP to develop a proposal to assist the Diwan of Fatwa, (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation) to establish itself, and strengthen its capacity to provide key legal services to the PA. The proposal was prepared by AMIDEAST/IDP and submitted in September 1995. MOJ did not respond to the proposal. Initial interviews with the Director of the Diwan of Fatwa indicated disappointment in the IDP for not delivering what they promise. It was his contention that AMIDEAST/IDP never responded to MOJ's request for a proposal. Documents in the Director's file indicated receipt of the proposal but it was never read. He assured the interviewer that he will now follow-up the proposal quickly. Clearly there was some misunderstanding regarding the extent of IDP's contribution in implementing this proposal.

The proposal IDP formulated was a plan for strengthening the capacity of the Diwan of Fatwa (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation). This is a unit currently within the MOJ responsible for a range of legal services for the PA. They include; providing legal opinion regarding laws decrees and legislation, preparation of new laws and legislation, acting as General Counsel for the PA, and drafting of bi-lateral agreements and international contracts. The IDP proposal has two components to be implemented simultaneously. The first focuses on unification of the West Bank and Gaza Laws and the second, the establishment and strengthening the capacity of the Office. Originally IDP had intended to only assist MOJ in developing a proposal for other donor funding. However given the centrality of the functional responsibilities of the Diwan of Fatwa, and the USAID Mission's redefined democracy and governance strategy, IDP should re-evaluate its position and consider committing to implementing the plan itself.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF AMIDEAST/ IDP

The USAID Mission has recently undertaken a review of all its strategic objectives. This has resulted in a shift and greater clarity in the Mission's understanding of the expected results to be achieved through its program for assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

With donor support increasing and functional roles of the PA undergoing rapid change, USAID has sought to target specific results with respect to its strategic democracy and governance objective. AMIDEAST/IDP is conceptually linked to this objective. IDP's emphasis on institutional development and managerial capacity-building for the PA is intended to establish a foundation for effective public sector operations - a prerequisite for good governance.

Internal evaluations of this nature provide a valuable opportunity to examine what have been the positive impacts of the Grant activities and what implementation problems have occurred. This has been done with the intentions of proposing the following recommendations designed to sharpen the operational focus of the AMIDEAST/IDP; and of linking the IDP objectives and grant activities to targeted results outlined in the draft USAID Democracy and Governance Post- Election Strategy for the West Bank and Gaza.

This section is divided into three parts: the first deals with general observations and recommendations; the second presents substantive recommendations; and the third provides recommendations to strengthen the management of the AMIDEAST/IDP.

I) General Recommendations Regarding Project Focus

A. AMIDEAST/IDP renegotiated with the PA to identify new and more appropriate public sector institutions as clients within six months of project start-up (Feb.- July 1995). During this time the IDP responded to a very broad set of requirements of the developing PA. Clearly there exists an enormous institutional need of all types of advisory services in the emerging public sector organizations of the PA. AMIDEAST/IDP while trying to establish its own identity and objectives responded to these needs; however its operational mandate lacked clarity. IDP continues to assume too broad a portfolio and risks raising expectations in client ministries that will be unmet. Specific suggestions regarding work in each client public sector organization are discussed below; however three overall recommendations for the IDP are proposed.

Recommendation 1A. AMIDEAST/IDP must establish clear operational boundaries regarding the character and type of technical advisory support it can provide. It needs to define a realistic scope of technical expertise it can offer the PA . IDP must also specify necessary expertise that may not exist internally but may either be sought under the mandate of the Project, or addressed more effectively by other donors.

B. The lack of clear technical boundaries results in the IDP acting as a general reservoir of PA institutional support. To increase the impacts of its Grant activities, it is important that the Project inventory the range of support it can actually provide to the PA and for which it has the mandate to meet. In view of this it, is recommended that Project assistance to IDP clients should primarily be within the fields of organizational development and institutional design, and secondarily in the development of technical procedures and systems.

Briefly, a useful distinction exists between activities considered to be organizational development (OD), and institutional development. These concepts while mutually supporting and linked, refer to separate sets of activities and outputs. "Organizational development (as a subset of institutional development) is a process of planned systems change in which behavioral science practices are used to achieve greater effectiveness, including attainment of short and long-term objectives, improved quality of work life and increased productivity". For example, OD activities are directed at problem-solving and decision-making, communications, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, management, action-planning, motivation, leadership, negotiation and conflict resolution. In contrast, "institutional development is a process of improving the ability of institutions to make effective use of human and financial resources. Activities that are typically associated with institutional development deal with organizational structure, design and policies and procedures that promote organizational productivity. Given the scope of organizational development activities, they are oftentimes used as a precursor to detailing structural design and internal systems and procedures development . The complimentary characteristics of OD and institutional development activities allows these procedures to be implemented sequentially or simultaneously.

Although in the future, AMIDEAST/IDP should not emphasize technical assistance for developing specialized technical systems where other donors may have greater expertise, it can and should address an undeniable need to build management capacity in its client ministries. This support should take two forms: a) direct advisory assistance to the IDP client ministries, which can be substantially strengthened by b) gradually building in-house PA capacity (through training), with the ministries to eventually conducting these support services themselves.

Recommendation 1B. AMIDEAST should continue its direct assistance in support of the institutional development requirements of its client ministries and authorities: MOPIC, The Center, MOJ, MOF, and the CSA - especially with regard to operationally

clarifying their mission statements, functional responsibilities, organizational structures and "harmonizing" internal systems. It is emphasized that this assistance should be primarily be within the fields of organizational development and institutional design, and secondarily in the development of technical procedures. Clarification of these activities operationally will enable IDP staff to specify the type and range of "institutional development interventions" it has the capacity to meet. AMIDEAST/IDP will then be in an effective position to accurately market itself to its clients.

It is further recommended that IDP training activities be structured with the goal of institutionalizing this capacity within MOPIC's PAHRDC. PA staff should be trained in these organizational development techniques in order that these activities can continue be delivered by PA staff and be available to PA public organizations as required, after the project life of the IDP.

C. To date, AMIDEAST/IDP has only conducted formal training for 40 executive secretaries in the PA. This is a critical issue requiring immediate attention that is understood to be in the planning stages. The comparative advantage AMIDEAST brings to this project is its strengths in the area of education and training. It is understood that many ambiguities regarding the institutional setting for delivering training have existed and continue to exist. Too much time has been devoted to sorting these institutional issues out, and not enough effort devoted to the profound training needs of the PA at hand. Although professionally engaging, decisions addressing the lack of a clear institutional framework for delivering training in the PA are outside the direct influence of AMIDEAST.

Two training workshops held in August 1995 provided the basis and validation for establishing good directions for generic management training needs (mid-level and executive) of the PA. The lack of a clear institutional framework for providing training should no longer be a constraint. It is recommended that AMIDEAST/IDP first go to its client ministries and authorities with whom it has already built working relationships and begin to conduct public management training in the areas already identified. This should be pursued rapidly, even if this means strategically circumventing the PAHRDC while still supporting the Center's own institutional development. Conducting this training for clients will necessitate developing a training plan for each ministry. It will also create a vehicle for needed and specific curriculum development, which once developed, can be used to assist other beneficiaries - thus increasing the multiplier effect of this effort. This training will be of significant value to AMIDEAST/IDP clients and produce results that are both observable and measurable.

Recommendation 1C. AMIDEAST/IDP must place greater emphasis on providing short-term skill-based public management training to the PA. AMIDEAST/IDP devoted a disproportionate amount of time concerning institutional issues revolving around the establishment of a mechanism of identifying training needs, training delivery, and its

ministerial location. Client ministries and other key authorities should be served. Ideally in-house training should support the acquisition of skills to support the implementation of specific systems and procedures. However in the absence of such systems, generic training in public management topics should be delivered as rapidly as possible. IDP has recently obtained approval from MOPIC to commence implementation of a senior level public management training program in March 1996.

B. Substantive Recommendations

In this section, specific recommendations are presented that are intended to strengthen the focus of the Project while more closely corresponding to USAID's Democracy and Governance Post-Election Strategy. These recommendations are presented in terms of the individual client ministry concerned.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

MOPIC with AMIDEAST/IDP support is planning the second in a series of development-oriented conferences. It is planned that the next conference will feature presentations of selected sector specific strategic plans by the relevant ministries. Designated ministries will therefore be required to formulate well-considered plans. This creates a unique opportunity for AMIDEAST/IDP to use this specific task as a vehicle to provide a practical empirically-based training in strategic planning for MOPIC and other ministries. The incentive and expectation to produce a document for presentation at the Second Symposium increases the potential for participant ministries to be seriously engaged and task-oriented. The outcomes of these symposia is consistent with the democracy and governance strategic result of (3.2.2). Increased participation of advocacy groups in public policy formulation and implementation.

Recommendation 2A. It is suggested that the process of constructing these strategic sector plans should be a very useful focus for IDP to use to promote skill-based strategic planning training in the ministries concerned. This will create an opportunity of linking both the symposium planning with much needed strategic planning training in the ministries.

Recommendation 2B. AMIDEAST/IDP should continue supporting the institutional development of MOPIC. Specifically, the IDP should assist the ministry in practically examining: its actual objectives and the organizational tasks required to achieve them, and then to define an accurate and effective organizational design that enables the Ministry to operate productively and efficiently. This support is of particular importance given the current tendency of MOPIC to centralize a wide array of PA functions within its own portfolio.

C. MOPIC is the key ministry tasked to provide policy analysis support and strategic planning capability for the executive branch of the PA. The need for building and strengthening PA capacities in policy analysis is critical. It therefore is of central importance to establish (over the short and medium term) a critical mass of competent policy analysts within the PA. Establishing capacity in effective policy analysis and strategic planning depends on the ability to identify and measure the impact of well-considered choices and present them in a systematic presentation to key decision-makers, ministry executives and managers who have implementation responsibilities.

Oftentimes the focus of primary technical assistance in policy analysis and its management and coordination are focused solely on economic policy development. This is a restricted view of the potential benefits to be derived - these technical assistance efforts should target all sectors. Rigorous policy analysis, coupled with effective strategic planning capacity, will support progress in every sector. The formulation of sound PA policies in themselves are a necessary but not a sufficient condition to ensure national development will proceed as planned. Such policies to be effective require that they are coordinated, well-managed, implemented as designed, and monitored and evaluated on an on-going basis.

This focus on strengthening PA policy analysis capacity should be considered comprehensively. AMIDEAST/IDP policy-related assistance can be envisioned to comprise 4 specific activity areas:

- 1) Provision of training in policy analysis for MOPIC and other ministries insofar as most policy will originate at the sector specific ministry level and then probably be reviewed by MOPIC;
- 2) Assistance in the establishment of a Policy Unit in MOPIC to ensure policies from sectoral ministries are rigorously analyzed;
- 3) Facilitate the PA's articulation of a policy formulation process which to be effective would encompass a) formulation of policy at the individual ministry level and interministerial consultations to strengthen implementation planning; b) establish a quality control mechanism to ensure the content of analysis is of high quality; and c) clarification of the means by which policy will be reviewed and considered by Ministers and other appropriate political actors; and
- 4) Develop policy management and coordination capacity in an appropriate executive unit to ensure that once policy is politically endorsed it is implemented in accordance with the policy decision. Such a unit would be responsible for on-going monitoring and evaluation of policy decisions of the PA and be structurally located above the political fray, in for instance, a support unit to the Secretary General of the Council or possibly the functional equivalent of a professional cabinet office.

This proposed grant activity contains two key components:

- a) The identification of a well-articulated policy formulation process emphasizing the

linkage between technical formulation and political endorsement. Such a system should be constructed that would ensure that many policy alternatives are considered. In designing policy the PA should be able to seek the views not only of public sector organizations, but also of many groups within Palestinian society.

b) The creation of a PA Policy Unit is a crucial link in the policy development chain. Such a unit can perform critical roles in the review, filtering and acceptance of new policy. It can also provide the PA with the internal capacity to engage in substantive and meaningful policy discussion with donors. AMIDEAST/IDP can serve a vital need by offering to assist the PA in building a small policy/strategic planning unit with highly competent analysts in MOPIC.

AMIDEAST/IDP support should be responsive and flexible to address PA policy assistance. This could include: a) providing technical support to design and conduct relevant training to build the analytic capacity of a policy unit in MOPIC; and b) assisting in the institutional development of a well-articulated policy identification, endorsement and implementation process. This must be done in close collaboration with key PA decision-makers representing both the a public sector and political arena. To be effective, the design of this process must strive to produce a policy process that is both accessible by a wide range of PA and non PA groups and also be transparent.

This recommendation is in direct support of several Immediate Results identified in USAID's Strategic Objective 3: Improved Key Democratic Process and Practices. In particular: (3.3.3.) Strengthen analytic capability of executive branch to draft and review legislation (policy); (3.3.2) Strengthened analytical capacity of Council to draft, review and approve legislation; and (3.2.2) Increased participation of advocacy groups in public policy formulation and implementation.

Recommendation 2C AMIDEAST/IDP can provide technical assistance in support of building policy analysis capacity in the PA. This is clearly an important institutional development area - this need is critical and spans all sectors of the PA. The overall approach is two fold: The first is to develop a cadre of policy analysts to enable the PA to develop effective and well analyzed policy plans and to assist the PA in defining a transparent framework for the policy formulation, endorsement and implementation and increases access of all Palestinians to the public sector decision-making process.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation: Public Administration Human Resource Development Center

Recommendation 2D. The assistance AMIDEAST/IDP is providing the Center should continue, especially in terms of providing advisory staff support towards strengthening the Center's ability to identify and to manage the coordination of PA training needs with donor proposals. At present the PA has decided that this Center will be responsible for contracting out to local institutions and universities both management

training services for the PA and also institutional development assistance to the ministries and authorities. There is considerable risk attached to giving this work to institutions situated outside of the PA who may pull products off the shelf and provide "artificial results" that reflect how similar organizational issues were addressed in some other foreign context. Such outputs (especially when dealing with OD that stresses the process of arriving at organizational decisions), will have little meaning for client ministries. This concern is compounded by the lack of accountability for the products produced given that the providers are "outside" the PA.

Recommendation 2E. AMIDEAST/IDP should assist the PA in reconsidering the means by which it can obtain and maintain organizational and institutional development assistance. It is recommended as AMIDEAST/IDP is conducting these activities in its designated client ministries, that it actively develop practical and indigenous training materials and manuals in these fields. These materials would be used by AMIDEAST/IDP to train a small group of PA staff possibly in the PAHRDC who could then assist other ministries in defining their strategic objectives, functional responsibilities, the actual work required to meet these responsibilities and the structure of the organization that will facilitate accomplishment of necessary tasks. This approach is far more cost-effective than the current thinking of contracting out these services, has substantial mid-and long-term impact, and adds a greater level of accountability for the results that are produced.

Ministry of Justice

Recommendation 2F. AMIDEAST/IDP should continue to support the organizational and institutional development of the Ministry of Justice. Emphasis should be placed on assisting the Ministry in clarification of its objectives and tasks, and the means by which they will be achieved. These organizational development activities are a prerequisite to discussions related to the functional responsibilities and organizational structure of the Ministry.

Recommendation 2G. To actively pursue MOJ's request and the AMIDEAST/IDP proposal to build capacity in the Diwan of Fatwa (Office of Legal Opinion and Legislation). This activity is targeted at a key unit within the PA which is responsible for preparing new laws and legislation and providing legal opinions regarding laws and legislation proposed by the PA leadership, ministries and authorities within the PA. This recommendation is consistent with and in direct support of the Mission's democracy and governance strategy which targets the strengthened capacity of the Council (3.3.2) and executive branch (3.3.3) to draft, review, and approve legislation.

Civil Service Authority

Recommendation 2H. It is strongly recommended that AMIDEAST/IDP continue to

pursue the CSA as a primary client given its central functions which will impact the productivity of other ministries. This Authority currently faces a critical need to establish its functional responsibilities and define its organizational framework. AMIDEAST/IDP has encountered resistance from key CSA personalities concerning the acceptance of the Project's technical support. It is hoped that AMIDEAST/IDP through sharpening its own objectives can clearly present to the CSA specific organizational and institutional development activities that will be of direct benefit to the CSA.

C. Recommendations for Improving the Management of the AMIDEAST/IDP

In general it is observed that the AMIDEAST/IDP would benefit substantively if USAID assumes a more proactive role in managing the IDP. This is especially true given the discontinuities the Project initially faced with inappropriate institutional counterparts, the subsequent recasting of its objectives and USAID requirement for greater correspondence between the Project's Grant activities and the Missions recent refinements in its democracy and governance strategic objective. In order to ensure that IDP activities support the achievement of these strategic objectives, USAID and AMIDEAST/IDP share important management responsibilities.

In close collaboration, AMIDEAST/IDP and USAID must establish a clearer project focus with well-defined objectives. This activity should result in a) producing practical performance indicators reflecting targeted project objectives that are measurable and observable; b) developing realistic workplans which directly correspond to the IDP mandate; and c) establishing a system for the on-going monitoring and evaluation of IDP activities. Over and above issues of grant recipient accountability, these are elements of good project management and must be internally adopted by IDP as essential management tools contributing to effective IDP management.

The above recommendations signal the need for both USAID and AMIDEAST/IDP to closely observe the spirit and intent of the "Substantial Involvement Clause" in Attachment 2 of the original Grant Agreement. Other recommendations which require the commitment of both parties are implied. These include:

- a) the development of an implementation schedule of IDP activities;
- b) instituting monthly on-site meetings between USAID and AMIDEAST/IDP to assist in identifying IDP progress, implementation problems, outstanding issues and anticipated results of current activities;
- c) a substantive review of Semi-Annual Reports by USAID to provide necessary feedback to IDP managers regarding the degree to which measurable indicators have been achieved;
- d) the establishment of clear program indicators for both short-term training and for advisory services provided; and
- e) developing realistic performance indicators that are measurable and observable.

IV. Conclusion

The Palestinian Authority is facing the challenge of governing and fulfilling the needs of the Palestinian People. Interviews with key IDP beneficiaries in the PA acknowledged that they were engaged for the first time in building a system of public administration which when established will: lay the foundation for an indigenous unified governmental authority in West Bank and Gaza; and provide critically needed services to its people. The AMIDEAST Institutional Development Project is designed to address fundamental needs of the PA to build management capacity in its public institutions. Consequently, there is considerable merit in the intent of the USAID-supported AMIDEAST/IDP.

The AMIDEAST/IDP deserves credit for being a front-runner in building public management capacity in the PA. This is not without costs. The IDP has had to operate in a difficult project environment given problems with counterparting institutions, constantly shifting functional roles and lack of internal management capacity within PA institutions. Paradoxically, IDP has been subject to the same institutional weaknesses within the PA that it is designed to strengthen. This in part has contributed to low impact of some Grant activities. In spite of this, IDP has established credibility and access to key institutional players in the PA. This was evidenced through interviews with PA senior managers which highlighted IDP's positive approach of working collaboratively with its client PA ministries. This not to be minimized but rather built upon in order that meaningful IDP institutional capacity-building efforts progress.

The USAID Mission has recently articulated its democracy and governance strategy by defining results to be achieved in meeting the needs of the PA. These expected results reflect current political and administrative needs of the PA. They also create a valuable referent to be applied by AMIDEAST/IDP to realign and target its Grant activities in order that they support the achievement of USAID's strategic results and show demonstrable results in the short term.

The Project could benefit by an internal management and planning activity for its entire staff and appropriate USAID personnel including the General Development Officer and Program Development Specialist. Objectives of this effort might include: a) further specification of its operational objectives especially in view of USAID's Democracy and Governance Post-Election Strategy for the West Bank and Gaza, b) development of indicators to determine grant activity impact, and c) design the content of a IDP monitoring and evaluation plan. This activity should inventory the specific scope of expertise IDP can provide. Other supplemental sources of additional technical expertise could be identified and carefully coordinated to compliment on-going institutional development activities of IDP and other donors in the PA.

Grant activity impact will be substantially increased if AMIDEAST/IDP sharpens the operational focus of its objectives and targets. It is politically and administratively premature to realistically expect substantive decisions to be taken by the PA that might disrupt the delicate institutional balance brokered by its leadership. Given this situation, AMIDEAST/IDP's greatest potential and comparative advantage lies in primarily delivering skill-based capacity-building training in public management to its PA clients. It should also continue to provide essential institutional advisory support for its clients to operationally clarify their functions, tasks, mission and organizational structures. The provision of these specific technical assistance efforts is timely and will address immediate and fundamental public management needs of the Palestinian Authority.

Annexure 1

Scope of Work for Evaluation of the Institutional Development Project

The consultant will work under the supervision of and in coordination with USAID and AMIDEAST staff in conducting this evaluation. The consultant will concentrate on the following tasks:

1. Evaluate the impact of the Institutional Development Project to date, including an analysis of what was originally planned under the project and actual activities completed. The consultant will conduct this evaluation through interviews with key AMIDEAST, USAID and Palestinian contacts as well as a thorough review of project documentation. To the extent possible, the consultant will include a qualitative determination of the merit of the activities conducted and the extent to which the activities reflected needs identified by the Palestinian Authority.
2. Provide recommendations on areas of future focus for the Institutional Development Project, taking into account USAID's draft outline of its democracy and governance strategy, the need to show demonstrable impact, other donor's activities (to the extent known) and AMIDEAST's areas of expertise.

The consultant's report will form the basis for an internal evaluation conducted by AMIDEAST and USAID in the impact of the Institutional Development Project, which will be used to determine future areas of focus and funding levels.

The consultant will send a draft of the report to USAID by fax and will also send a copy of the document on a diskette.

Annexure 2

Key Informants Contacted During the Evaluation

AMIDEAST Headquarter Staff, Washington D.C.

Joseph Schechla, Director, Democratic Development
Sandra Samaan, Program Officer, IDP Project
Nagla El-Bassioni, Coordinator, Democratic Development

AMIDEAST Staff, Jerusalem

Azzedine Downes, Country Director (by telephone)
Michael Honegger, Senior Technical Advisor
Randy Keukjian, Senior Technical Advisor (by telephone)
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USAID

Christopher Crowley, USAID Mission Director, Tel Aviv
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Thomas Delaney, Executive Officer, Tel Aviv

Palestinian Authority

Majdi Khaldi, Director General, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
(MOPIC)
Dr. Ali Abdel Hamid Sha'at, Assistant Deputy Minister, (MOPIC)
Dr. Fathi Darwish, Coordinator of NGO's, MOPIC
Dr. Basil Shawwa Director, Public Administration and Human Resource Development
Center, (PAHRDC), MOPIC
Nehaia Abu Nahla, Project Advisor, PAHRDC, MOPIC
Ibrahim M. Aldaghma, Legal Consultant, Ministry of Justice, Gaza
Jabber Fadda, Director General, Civil Service Authority, Gaza

Others

Dr. M. Dajani, Chief Technical Advisor, Public Administration Development, UNDP
Ms. Amal Nashashibi, previous Assistant Country Director, AMIDEAST
Dr. Faris Abu Mouamer, Assistant Professor, Islamic University, Gaza

Annexure 3

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