

Despite numerous allegations and counter-allegations of violations of the ceasefire agreements between Iran and Iraq, the mandate of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group was on February 8 extended until September 30, 1989.

In response to the escalation of conflict in Lebanon, the Security Council met in an informal session on March 31st to review the situation. The President (Ambassador Diallo of Senegal) made a statement on behalf of the Security Council in which she "express(ed) encouragement and support for all ongoing efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Lebanese crisis (and) urge(d) all the parties to put an end to the confrontations, to respond favorably to the appeals launched for an effective ceasefire and to avoid any action that might further heighten the tension."

The question of the continuing conflict in Afghanistan was brought to the attention of the Council in March at the request of the Afghan government, which charged Pakistan with interference in its internal affairs. When the Council debated the matter, in April, Canada reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the Secretary General in promoting a political solution to the Afghan dispute, and for humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees.

In summary, the first three months of Canada's membership on the Council have been active and challenging. We are most encouraged by the constructive spirit of cooperation evident on the Council. The Permanent Five have demonstrated uncommon solidarity on several issues, most notably Namibia. Major differences remain, particularly on matters related to the Middle East, but debates are less rancorous than in the past. While we are concerned by the continued existence of negotiating blocs, alliances appear more flexible and responsive to calls for pragmatic action on the issues of the day. We have been impressed by the commitment, hard work and competence of the successive Presidents of the Council.

In the months ahead the Security Council will likely be called upon to address security concerns in Central America, Cambodia and the Western Sahara. Canada has been asked to sustain our participation in the United Nations Good Offices Mission (UNGOMAP) in Afghanistan for its full 20 month mandate and to assist peacekeeping or observing efforts being planned for Central America and Cambodia. The transition process in Namibia will be a major challenge as the United Nations undertakes its largest operation since the Congo in 1960.