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Introduction

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There was no let-up in the rest of the Council's business. The Middle East was a major priority. After failing to reach agreement on a number of draft resolutions in the early part of the period, the Council agreed on a total of four resolutions, most adopted unanimously, from March 2002 onwards. This, together with more regular briefings, allowed the Council to engage more regularly and pointedly with Middle East issues, although most of its resolutions remain to be implemented in full.

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The Council made progress on Iraq, approving a reformed "oil-for-food" mechanism in May 2002 and supporting a renewed dialogue led by the Secretary-General. The peacekeeping operations in the Middle East (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)) continued their excellent work. After lengthy discussions on the question of Western Sahara, the Council was able to adopt resolution 1429 (2002), by which it extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 January 2003. By adopting that resolution, the Council invited the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, James A. Baker III to continue their efforts to find a political solution to this long-standing dispute.

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Middle East

Israel/Palestine

The Council discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, with growing frequency during this period. Several open debates were held for all Member States to express their views. At the beginning of 2002 Council members agreed to start regular monthly informal briefings on the situation. The aim was to keep members up to date with developments in the region and to ensure a more regular exchange of views, including with the Secretary-General.

On 12 March the Council adopted resolution [1397 \(2002\)](#), which for the first time affirmed the Council's vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, existed side by side within secure and recognized borders. That resolution, as well as resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#) and the Arab Peace Initiative, initiated by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and adopted by the Arab Summit in March 2002, have become widely accepted as the foundation for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Implementation of these concepts, however, has remained fraught with difficulties and plagued by continuing violence on the ground.

As the violence escalated early in 2002, the Council adopted three resolutions ([1402 \(2002\)](#), [1403 \(2002\)](#) and [1405 \(2002\)](#)) and agreed on presidential statements in April and July 2002. The Council's principal demands were an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, an end to all acts of violence, cooperation with the special envoys of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the European Union ("the Quartet") and others and the implementation of the Tenet and Mitchell plans. The Council, in its resolution 1405 (2002), expressed its concern at the dire humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population, in particular in the Jenin refugee camp following operations by the Israel Defence Forces. It welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to instigate a fact-finding exercise on what had happened in the Jenin refugee camp. The Secretary-General had to disband his fact-finding team after less than two weeks in the face of Israeli difficulties with the deployment of the team. Council members regretted this development but continued to support fully the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard.

The Council renewed the mandates of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon and UNDOF in the Golan on a six- and seven-monthly basis, respectively. The operation in southern Lebanon was marked by violations of the Blue Line from both sides. Council members recalled that the Blue Line was not an international boundary but drawn for the purpose of establishing whether Israel had withdrawn from southern Lebanon and therefore implemented its

obligations under resolution [425 \(1978\)](#). The Council also recalled that the Secretary-General had concluded that Israel had withdrawn in accordance with that resolution. The Council called on the parties fully to respect the Blue Line and urged them to put an end to all violations of it. The Council called on the parties to ensure that UNIFIL was accorded full freedom of movement in the discharge of its mandate throughout its area of operations, as outlined in the Secretary-General's [report](#) of 12 July 2002. The Council commended the Government of Lebanon for taking steps to ensure the return of its effective authority throughout the south, including the deployment of Lebanese armed forces, and called on it to continue those measures. Council members demanded that the parties respect the safety of UNIFIL personnel.

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