**Mr. Kaddoumi**:

1. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
2. We are confident that you will conduct the proceedings of this session with great competence, thanks to your outstanding skills and qualities.
3. I should like to pay tribute also to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, who presided ably over the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.
4. Let me also express my deep appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General to harmonize international relations and to ensure respect for the principles of the Charter with a view to strengthening international peace and security.
5. I wish also to welcome Switzerland and Timor Leste to the United Nations.
6. **We have agreed to the American political initiative that was put forward in 1991.**
7. **At the Madrid Conference, several agreements were entered into by the Palestine Liberation Organization, representing the Palestinian people, and Israel.**
8. **The aim of those agreements was the commencement of negotiations between the two parties with a view to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.**
9. **They also called on Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories occupied since 1967.**
10. **A deadline of five years was set for those negotiations.**
11. **The clock began to run after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 in Washington, under the auspices of the previous United States President President Clinton.**
12. **However, successive Israeli Governments have refused to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories and have continued to deploy Israeli forces there.**
13. **This intransigence on the part of Israel highlights its goal: the continued occupation of Palestinian territories.**
14. **During the course of those negotiations, new settlements were built, 187 altogether, inhabited by some 370,000 settlers, most of them armed.**
15. **Recently, Israel began building a wall along the line of the 1967 truce.**
16. **Israel is continuing its cruel and barbaric acts and carrying out its scorched-earth policy, with a view to depriving the Palestinian people of their income and means of subsistence.**
17. **During the past two years of conflict, agricultural production has dropped by 80 per cent and industrial production by 60 per cent.**
18. **Unemployment has reached 65 per cent, and 63 per cent of the population is living in poverty.**
19. **Israel has destroyed public institutions, police stations, ports and airports.**
20. **More than 1,350 houses have been torn down, and more than 3,000 businesses and industrial concerns in the occupied territories and in Gaza have been demolished, an area of 5,800 square kilometres.**
21. **The taxes that Israel collects, about $850 million, which should have been paid to the Palestinian Authority, have been kept by the Israelis.**
22. **A total of 90,000 olive trees, out of 300,000, have been uprooted, and the Palestinian infrastructure has been demolished.**
23. **The occupied territories were divided into 227 separate cantons.**
24. **Trade was halted, measures were taken to curtail the freedom of movement of people and of goods, and borders with Arab countries were closed.**
25. **In addition, the Israeli authorities have placed President Arafat under house arrest.**
26. **These arbitrary measures have prompted the Palestinian people to pursue their heroic resistance, in the face of Israel's various lethal weapons, which are used to enforce the separation between the cantons.**
27. **In Bethlehem, in Gaza and in other cities, residential areas have been bombed.**
28. **Moreover, many Palestinians have been thrown into jail.**
29. **The fact-finding team set up by the Security Council was prevented from going into the field to witness first-hand the suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Nazi Israeli occupation.**
30. The United States is a great Power and bears an important responsibility vis- a-vis the maintenance of international peace and security and the prevention of regional conflict.
31. Moreover, the United States has committed itself to working with the former Soviet Union, through the United Nations, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and to eliminate their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.
32. This is a very important approach that enables the United Nations to enhance fruitful international cooperation among States.
33. Should that approach be abandoned, the United Nations will fail to develop international cooperation and to maintain international peace and security.
34. The use of force in the context of intra-State relations to resolve problems does not help us in any way to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
35. On the contrary; it only gives rise to fear and doubt among the States Members of the United Nations, especially developing countries, which have always turned to the Organization to protect them.
36. The peoples of the world are looking to the United States in the hope that that major Power will play a positive and neutral role in international relations and in the hope that it will always be a source of technological and economic assistance.
37. It goes without saying that the commitment of the United States to the strict implementation of United Nations resolutions, in particular those of the Security Council, without the use of a double standard strengthens our trust in the United Nations and reinforces its credibility as a forum for the resolution of international problems.
38. Thus we are justified in asking ourselves whether these humanitarian and political responsibilities are incumbent on the United States in this era of globalization.
39. We might ask ourselves why the United States is threatening to use force against Iraq, when sanctions have been imposed on that country for more than 10 years.
40. Why does the United States not speak of the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction possessed by Israel, which threaten the Arab States, as was noted previously?
41. Israel could destroy the Egyptian high dam, even though a peace agreement was signed between Israel and Egypt more than 24 years ago.
42. Mr. Hans Blix has stated that he had no evidence that Iraq had any weapons of mass destruction.
43. When the political negotiations began, the Arab countries took a neutral position.
44. **Israeli Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres visited certain Arab States and an attempt was made to normalize Israeli-Arab relations.**
45. **When Yitzhak Rabin was killed in 1995 and authority was handed over to Mr. Netanyahu, progress towards peace was impeded.**
46. **The Arab countries halted the process of normalizing relations with Israel.**
47. **Nevertheless, at the 1996 Arab Summit they said that peace was an Arab strategy that would not be abandoned.**
48. **Despite five years of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, however, expectations were not fulfilled.**
49. **Great sacrifices were made on our part.**
50. **During the Camp David summit, an aide to President Clinton denied that Barak wanted to give the Palestinians a large part of Palestinian territory.**
51. **Israel was to keep 10 per cent of the territory along the Jordanian border, with three early-warning systems in the West Bank and the establishment of a mutilated Palestinian State with no sovereignty.**
52. The events of 11 September 2001 led to a humanitarian catastrophe that shook the conscience of the world.
53. All countries of the world, including Arab and Muslim countries, stood in solidarity with the American people and expressed their intention to combat terrorism in all its forms.
54. We were surprised, however, that the United States Administration refused to acknowledge that the Sharon Government was perpetrating acts of State terrorism.
55. **The Arabs put forward a political initiative at the Arab Summit in March, in the hope that they would be able to make an effective contribution to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict with a view to ratifying a peace agreement with Israel.**
56. **This Arab initiative, which provided for a withdrawal by Israel from lands occupied since 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital, was endorsed and welcomed by the United States and the European States.**
57. **It is not enough, however, to merely welcome the initiative.**
58. **We believe that implementing it would make a political settlement possible.**
59. **Expressions of compassion and sympathy are welcome but they must be supported by concrete actions if a settlement is to be achieved.**
60. **The Arab initiative includes all the essential principles necessary for a settlement, in accordance with the provisions of the Madrid Agreement and the principle of land for peace.**
61. **Security Council resolution 1397 went even further in supporting the establishment of a Palestinian State that would be recognized by Israel.**
62. **This was accompanied by an American proposal.**
63. **If Israel rejects this comprehensive and fair proposal, how much longer can it expect to continue in this climate of animosity towards Arabs and constant threats to their security?**
64. **How long can Israel continue to occupy Arab territory and prevent Palestinian refugees from returning home?**
65. The question of Palestine cannot be separated from the situation of the Arab States, given all that the issue represents for them and for their future.
66. **Israel must end the acts of aggression that it continues to perpetrate against Palestinians and their towns.**
67. **The Israeli army is continuing to assassinate civilians and police and security officers.**
68. **Sharon has been described as a man of peace, and it has been said that Israel has a right to self-defence, even as it continues to occupy Arab territories and commit massacres.**
69. **The situation on the ground defies the imagination;**
70. **it is very difficult to find a way to justify the American policy.**
71. If the threat of terrorism is allowed to rule our lives, the world will become a battlefield.
72. **In conclusion, we and the other Arab countries welcomed the American statement on the establishment of a Palestinian State.**
73. **We reaffirm, however, that the borders of that State should be based on the demarcation line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Council resolutions.**
74. **Its sovereignty must be assured, and Israeli forces must be withdrawn from all the territory.**
75. **We cannot agree to any temporary borders.**
76. **We want a lasting settlement in keeping with the Arab initiative put forward by Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia an initiative that is in keeping with relevant Security Council resolutions and with the principles of the peace process.**
77. **We appreciate the role that the Quartet is playing in the peace process.**
78. **No party should call upon the Palestinians alone to meet their demands.**
79. **The Israeli forces must be called upon to revise their strategy and the Israeli side must end its assassinations and attacks against citizens and refrain from using collective economic sanctions, occupation and terrorism as a tool.**
80. **Israel must halt its ongoing assault, lift the siege that has been imposed upon the Palestinian people and withdraw completely from the occupied territories so that the Palestinian Authority can implement the promised reforms and hold elections in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Al-Quds, under international auspices.**
81. **There should be an international presence to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people.**
82. **This is a matter of urgency; the siege that is impeding the daily life of our citizens must be lifted.**

**Mr. Peres**:

1. I would like to congratulate my friend Mr. Jan Kavan on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to wish him success.
2. I also thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and his dedication to right what is wrong and to light the lamps of hope.
3. The eleventh of September gave rise to a new world.
4. We find ourselves facing a new confrontation: borderless, merciless, indiscriminate and inhumane.
5. The target this time was the United States — a United States that in the past helped so many nations defend their freedoms and their liberty.
6. Now the United States has been challenged again to defend our freedom by protecting its own and to safeguard our lives by securing its own.
7. The attack on the World Trade Center precipitated a new division in our epoch and in the years to come — a divide created by groups that preach and cause death and agony.
8. On the wrong side of the divide are those who are trying to destroy the free world, which is diversified and heterogeneous, cherishing the right to every thought and religion as well as the principle that every human being has the right to be different and yet to prosper and live in security.
9. The front from Bin Laden to Saddam Hussein is a menace to us all.
10. It will not enable peace, nor will it permit freedom — for all people or for their own people.
11. In countries that harbour terror, women are discriminated against, men are oppressed, civil and human rights are violated, and the poor cannot escape from their poverty.
12. They force us to defend our inalienable right to look ahead with hope.
13. They imposed on us a war of self-defence — the defence of pluralism and of the promise of science.
14. They reject the incredible technologies that may carry us from the limits of land to the discovery of uncharted provinces.
15. The culture of death forces us to defend the culture of life, to win battles that we did not initiate, to triumph in this uninvited war.
16. We never imagined that it could be dangerous to walk our streets, to fly our skies, to breathe the air or to drink the water.
17. We cannot agree to this.
18. We cannot allow dark forces — which, as we are aware, could destroy the lives of innocent people on a whim — to possess weapons of mass destruction.
19. We shall not turn our lives into a series of sleepless nights and nightmarish days.
20. We do not have the right to ignore the danger.
21. We do not have the option to postpone it;
22. it is imminent.
23. We have to win as soon as possible.
24. Terror is destined to lose.
25. It will be defeated because it carries no hope.
26. It respects neither human beings nor the values of humanity.
27. Science and technology made the economy global, and science and technology globalized terror as well.
28. Now strategy also is globalized, because ballistic ranges have replaced geographic distances, because non-conventional warheads have replaced measurable explosives, because terrorism transcends frontiers and fronts.
29. Terrorists do not respect the rule of law.
30. They do not answer to independent judges or relate to elected leaders.
31. They mock international lines.
32. They destroy universal norms.
33. They shed blood.
34. They introduced dullness and stopped affluence.
35. Nothing is to be expected from them but death.
36. Terror creates poverty more than poverty creates terror.
37. Terror leads to backwardness.
38. We have to offer the economic potential to open prospects and horizons for all nations, poor and rich.
39. New opportunities can bring enfranchisement.
40. We have to close ranks to prevent distorted dreams from becoming a raging typhoon that reaches all four corners of the globe.
41. **We have experienced in our own country the terrible effects of terrorism.**
42. **Babies were shot in the arms of their mothers.**
43. **People at prayer were killed while praying.**
44. **Yes, it hurt us, but it did not change our goals.**
45. **We mourn, but we did not bury peace.**
46. **It harmed the Palestinians in the United States and in other countries.**
47. **It prevented the occupation from ending.**
48. **It introduced additional problems and did not solve a single existing problem.**
49. **Alas, the Middle East is still replete with national, religious and territorial disputes.**
50. **The land is small;**
51. **the agony is great.**
52. **But the real tragedy is that without terror we could already have resolved these disputes.**
53. **Terror entrenched them.**
54. **Terror changed priorities — security before policy.**
55. **It affected resources — arming young men, for example, instead of desalinating vital water.**
56. **If it continues, battlefields will create deserts of sorrow and days of darkness.**
57. **Campuses of learning will be replaced by camps of violence.**
58. **But this is neither a decree of heaven nor the verdict of man.**
59. **It can, it should, it will be different.**
60. South Africa, Ireland, Yugoslavia and the Congo achieved more by talking than by shooting, more by dialogue than by dispute.
61. **We offered the Palestinians a comprehensive solution without the terror — a solution that was close to their national aspirations.**
62. **We related to their desire to be free, to be equal, to be independent.**
63. **We agreed that they would have their land in accordance with United Nations resolutions.**
64. **But terror postponed their destiny.**
65. **Terror postponed our willingness to end control over their lives.**
66. **Smoking guns replaced the torches of peace.**
67. **Now we are following the profound debate taking place among the Palestinians.**
68. **We respect it, because debate is the beginning of democracy.**
69. **When democracy prevails, peace undoubtedly will arrive.**
70. **The Fatah organization apparently issued a call that contains some new approaches.**
71. **I shall quote one of them:**
72. **“We will build an independent State of Palestine and a political system in accordance with the principles of democracy, the rule of law, with an independent judicial system, separation of power, respect for human rights, civil liberties and a market economy.”**
73. **We look upon these words as the dawn of a different season; we hope that it is spring.**
74. **Reducing violence will shorten political distances.**
75. **Political horizons are, in my judgement, within reach.**
76. **Israel accepts President Bush’s vision.**
77. **That vision is supported by the Quartet;**
78. **it is endorsed by Arab countries;**
79. **it outlines a political goal and a timetable.**
80. **It can be considered as both a road map and a calendar.**
81. **What is needed now are wheels to propel the vehicles of peace.**
82. An economic wheel is needed in order for us to move to a global market economy that leads to science-based industry.
83. A market economy can open gates and skies.
84. An ecological wheel is needed to let air and water flow cleanly.
85. Pollution is not national;
86. we have to work together to control it.
87. Ecology has changed history.
88. In the past, bloodshed was about real estate, and real estate created divisions, demarcation and, unfortunately, wars as well.
89. In our era, the battle is not for real estate but for air, for water and for energy; it is about the fertility of the land, rather than its size.
90. “Non-real” estate is not marked, nor can it be divided.
91. Either we respect it unanimously, or we will be victimized by its loss.
92. Then there is the cultural wheel.
93. Three civilizations were born in the Middle East.
94. They were made manifest in the Bible, in the New Testament and in the Koran.
95. We read them in different languages, yet we pray to the same heavens.
96. **The descendants of Abraham should behave like a family — with tolerance and solidarity.**
97. **Spiritual leaders should pray for peace, but they also need to preach it, call upon it and contribute to it.**
98. **The political wheel should not rotate in the same misguided orbit as in the past.**
99. **We have been through five wars in five decades — Palestinians, Egyptians and Jordanians lost generations of young people.**
100. **We paid heavily with young blood as a result of three terror campaigns.**
101. **The time has come to comprehend that the real triumph is in the harvest of peace, not in the seeds of another war.**
102. **When we replace the war maps with peace maps, we will discover that the differences were minimal.**
103. **The wars were appalling.**
104. **We shall see that the promised land could have become the land of promise a long time ago.**
105. **Without wars, our region will be able to bloom again.**
106. **We can separate politically into two States and coordinate one economy.**
107. That will enable us to take advantage of the exceptional invitation that came from both the United States and a united Europe to partake in their economic opportunities.
108. **Tourism can flourish when terrorism has ended.**
109. **Islands of high-tech excellence can be established.**
110. **Millions of trees can be planted to produce a new climate.**
111. **We can make green our arid lands.**
112. **We can become contributors, not dependants.**
113. **The call of the future cannot be harmonized with the voices of the past.**
114. **Only new solutions can evoke a grandeur equal to the past.**
115. **We do not have the right to suspend it in the face of our children.**
116. **Young Israelis and young Palestinians are entitled to a new life — a life of their own.**
117. **While fighting terror, let us not fight people.**
118. **While seeking freedom, let us not extend subjugation.**
119. I should like to direct a comment to Syria.
120. The same principle that enabled us both to participate in the Madrid conference a decade ago is still valid.
121. A word to Lebanon: Israel is committed to the territorial integrity of Lebanon.
122. Israel respects its need for real political independence.
123. Lebanon should not permit Hezbollah to destroy its own country.
124. Hezbollah is not a party, it is a dangerous agenda.
125. Lebanon should immediately free Israeli prisoners and prisoners of war.
126. The people of the Middle East should let bygones be bygones.
127. Let us return to our traditions, where prophets, not terrorists, told the future.
128. Let us return to our landscape, where the blue skies did not surrender to the heavy clouds of despair, to a time when justice promised equal opportunities for individuals and for nations.
129. Let us join, together, the march of mankind towards new discoveries that will make life more purposeful and may bring security to posterity.
130. We were born in the cradles of hope, not in the tombs of despair.
131. We guard our spiritual heritage, and it is not antithetical to building a new Middle East.
132. The world is new.
133. I should like to conclude with an old verse from our scriptures:
134. “The Lord led Adam through the Garden of Eden and said to him, ‘All I created, I created for you.
135. Beware lest you spoil and destroy my world, for if you spoil it, there is no one to repair it after you’.”
136. We are here to repair.