**Mr. Kaddoumi**:

1. It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.
2. We trust that you will guide the deliberations of this session with great efficiency, skill and wisdom.
3. I also pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, for having successfully led the deliberations of that session.
4. In addition, we should like to express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan,
5. and for his commitment to the Charter of the United Nations with a view to enhancing international peace and security.
6. **After the 1980s, Israel began unilaterally to delineate borders through the Seven Star Settlement Plan, initiated by Mr. Sharon when he was Housing Minister.**
7. **The plan involves building Israeli settlements along the Green Line — the line of the old armistice — in order to obliterate the Line, which separates the territories occupied in 1967.**
8. **Israel has used agreements as an opportunity to build more settlements, which now total 187 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.**
9. **The holy city, Jerusalem, has been subjected to an extensive Judaization campaign with a view to implementing the Greater Jerusalem plan to increase the number of settlers within Palestinian areas.**
10. **Under that plan, land has been confiscated**
11. **and a wall isolating Jerusalem from neighbouring areas is being built.**
12. **Israeli settlers have occupied Palestinian homes in many Palestinian neighbourhoods.**
13. **In Jerusalem, Israel has confiscated 70 kilometres of land in order to build bypass roads in the West Bank under the pretext of redeployment.**
14. **Therefore, Israel has taken the first steps in implementing a plan aimed at establishing cantons, which, Mr. Sharon had planned long ago to isolate Palestinian cities and villages by building settlements and bypass roads to prevent any geographic contiguity among population centres in Palestinian areas.**
15. **The building of the wall is part of the Israeli policy of imposing a fait accompli, of exploiting security conditions to attain certain objectives by creating bantustans and enclaves and by isolating Palestinian villages from their surroundings, including separating such villages from Jerusalem.**
16. **Thus the separation wall has isolated the cities of Eizariya and Abu Dis on all sides.**
17. **All entry and exit into and out of these two cities is through Israeli military checkpoints.**
18. **We condemn you, Israel, for such actions.**
19. **An article in the 10 August 2003 edition of *Haaretz* reads:**
20. **“The Palestinian children who will be the next generation are being raised under extremely difficult circumstances in comparison with those who preceded them.**
21. **They see only the ugly face of Israel;**
22. **therefore, they will be consumed by blind hatred and a desperate desire for revenge.”**
23. **Another article in the same newspaper this month notes:**
24. **“Israel lays the blame on Arafat, after it forced him to win the chairmanship of the Palestinian Authority by democratic means in accordance with the Oslo Agreement, ignoring the fact that it must, first and foremost, do its part to alleviate the tension by giving up the occupied territories.”**
25. **The article continues:**
26. **“Can Israel ignore the regrettable fact that the European Union was among the majority that supported the General Assembly resolution?**
27. **Israel’s diplomatic defeat at the United Nations is the inordinate price that Israel paid as a result of a stupid decision by its Government — a decision that was no more than a declaration of its intentions.**
28. **Its hope to eliminate Mr. Arafat is a stark embodiment of Israel’s inclination to shirk responsibility and then to blame fictitious developments on the Palestinian side for the problem.**
29. **Instead of taking the necessary action to calm the situation, Israel uses the working plans of its adversary as a pretext and then, should it fall short of meeting its goals, complains that there is no party to negotiate with on the other side.”**
30. **First of all, Israel must contribute its share to settling the dispute — that is, it should make every possible effort to defuse the tension.**
31. **According to *Haaretz,* there is a Palestinian ceasefire proposal, but the Israeli Government has refused thus far to respond positively to the offer.**
32. **It continues to repeat its hackneyed position that an agreement is not possible while Arafat is in power and as long as the Authority fails to dismantle the terrorist organizations.**
33. **Israel imposes those conditions without making any change in the general conditions surrounding the conflict.**
34. ***Haaretz* continues to say that the world has despaired and wrung its hands in frustration.**
35. **The Israelis do not express condolences when our sons are killed;**
36. **they do not denounce such killings, nor do they even establish any contacts.**
37. **Before the road map was announced, the Palestinian Authority had been called upon to undertake certain reforms, such as drafting a constitution, creating the post of premier and transferring certain powers from the President of the Palestinian State and the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority to the Prime Minister.**
38. **Chairman Arafat made many concessions to assist the Palestinian Government in carrying out its duties.**
39. **The Government of Israel made several attempts, under various pretexts, to delay the declaration of the road map:**
40. **first, it was holding the Israeli elections at the beginning of the year;**
41. **then it was establishing the Cabinet;**
42. **then it was waiting for the Iraq war.**
43. **Finally, when Israel hesitantly accepted the road map, it rejected 14 of its provisions.**
44. **At the Sharm al-Shaikh Summit and at the Aqaba Summit of 6 June, the representative of the Palestinian Authority — who at that time was Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas — committed himself to implementing the road map, pledging to meet its requirements before President Bush of the United States, King Abdullah of Jordan, the King of Bahrain, and President Mubarak of Egypt.**
45. **He announced the Palestinian Authority’s commitment to a ceasefire and its readiness to recognize Israel within secure borders.**
46. **However, in his statement Mr. Sharon refused to mention Israel’s commitment under the road map to the vision of two States — the establishment of an independent Palestinian State that is viable and sovereign, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, as expressed by President Bush.**
47. **Mr. Sharon did not accept the immediate cessation of all acts of violence against the Palestinians.**
48. **All that Mr. Sharon said were a few words regarding a Palestinian State without any mention of an independent, viable and sovereign State of Palestine.**
49. **Nor did he declare an immediate cessation of Israel’s acts of violence.**
50. **Despite that, the Palestinian Authority, together with all other resistance factions, declared a ceasefire on 26 June.**
51. **That ceasefire was to remain in place for three months.**
52. **Regrettably, Israel continued its terrorist practices,**
53. **and the Israeli army of occupation assassinated 86 Palestinians.**
54. **To sabotage the declared ceasefire, Israel assassinated the political leaders of the resistance factions.**
55. **The situation then slipped into tension and confrontation, one month after the ceasefire had been announced.**
56. **International reports state that the majority of Palestinians in the occupied territories now depend to some extent on food rations.**
57. **In May of this year, the World Bank reported that the volume of international contributions to the Palestinian territories had grown:**
58. **since the beginning of the Palestinian intifada, external contributions accounted for more than $1 billion of the budget of the Palestinian Authority.**
59. **They have therefore provided sustenance to more than half a million people — the families of the employees of the Palestinian Authority.**
60. **Those contributions staved off an enormous, acute humanitarian crisis.**
61. **Donors who hoped for reconciliation had no choice but to make contributions because the Palestinian Authority’s network of services collapsed and the living conditions of Palestinian citizens deteriorated.**
62. **It is not strange, then, that the Palestinians persevere through international assistance.**
63. **However, this generosity on the part of the international community ultimately profited the Israeli enemy.**
64. **International support provided a protective network through which Israel was able to afford an expensive occupation of the West Bank.**
65. **Israel controls the areas militarily for free, without assuming any responsibility for the lives of the citizens there.**
66. **Fighting terrorism is an arduous task.**
67. **However, we do not see anyone keenly seeking the root causes of or motivations for terrorism, nor even concerned about the international isolation that Israel is suffering because of its practice of State terrorism.**
68. **It is as if the stifling Israeli economic crisis were a predestined, divinely ordained phenomenon.**
69. **In the search for the culprits, Arabs and the resistance are held to be the cause of the crisis.**
70. There was a real chance for the United States to embrace all the peoples of the world, not only through the compassion of those peoples for the people of the United States but also through the unified effort to fight terrorism.
71. The United Nations should have seized that opportunity through a programme objectively and reasonably implemented, not by using cannons or fighter jets or by mobilizing huge forces to destroy a hated regime.
72. The real reason for that was well known political and economic ambitions.
73. The world was outraged at the military action, but it stood idly by, observing the consequences of the misuse of force.
74. **The United States Administration expressed its keen interest in implementing the road map and establishing an independent Palestinian State.**
75. **Regrettably, it did not, as a sponsor of peace, address the crisis with the required effort and effectiveness.**
76. **It is not enough to stress the vision of President Bush or the commitment of his Administration to such a vision, while continuing to employ a policy of double standards.**
77. **That Administration continues to blame and warn the Palestinian Authority.**
78. **It continues to urge the Authority to combat the resistance, which they can see only as terrorism against the Israeli occupation, despite the fact that all international norms stress the right of occupied and colonized people to self-determination by whatever means.**
79. **The United States Administration overlooks the Israeli leader’s terroristic practices and Israel’s failure to implement its commitments in accordance with the road map.**
80. **The shortcomings of the United States role reflect negatively on the peace process.**
81. **They obstruct the process and make success very difficult, such as by refusing to deal with President Arafat, the legitimate, elected President of the Palestinians.**
82. **Mr. Arafat is the only leader who has shown conviction and flexibility with respect to the peace process.**
83. **As a result of that, Mr. Arafat shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated by dirty hands in Israel in order to prevent the continuation of the peace process, spreading anxiety and doubts among Palestinian and Israeli citizens alike.**
84. **The Arab side accepted the initiative of His Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz for the establishment of comprehensive peace with Israel after its total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories.**
85. **The Crown Prince carried that initiative to Washington, D.C., in his historic meeting with President Bush in April 2002.**
86. **The initiative was based on the agreed terms of reference for the road map, along with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace.**
87. **In conclusion, peace in itself is not an objective for Israel.**
88. **That will be true as long as Israel continues to receive all forms of assistance from major Powers trying to maintain their strategic interests in the Middle East region, and opts to settle issues militarily, outside the framework of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council.**
89. **Israel has laid siege to the Palestinian people.**
90. **It has paralysed the apparatus of the Palestinian Authority, preventing it from operating.**
91. **The Israeli army assumed responsibility for security.**
92. **But how did it do that?**
93. **By killing, assassination and destruction.**
94. **What is required first is the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied territories to the borders of 28 September 2002.**
95. **The Security Council should adopt the road map and work to implement it through the Quartet.**
96. **The siege against the Palestinian people and their elected President Yasser Arafat must be lifted.**
97. **The United States must cooperate positively and effectively to facilitate the task of the Quartet and to warn Israel of the consequences of obstructing its tasks.**
98. **Deploying international forces into a buffer zone created between the two sides will facilitate implementation of the road map and the Palestinian Authority’s task of maintaining security in the area from which the Israeli forces will withdraw.**
99. **Those forces will receive complete cooperation from the citizens of Palestine.**

**Mr. Shalom** (Israel):

1. I would like to congratulate His Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Saint Lucia, upon his assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly, and wish him much success.
2. **Until just one month ago, every person in this hall and every Member of this Organization joined us in the hope that the Middle East peace process might finally be back on track, and that a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might be on the horizon.**
3. **The establishment of a new Palestinian Government promised an end to terror and a new beginning.**
4. **This glimmer of hope was darkened on 19 August by the extremists who blew up a bus full of Jewish families on their way home from prayers at the Western Wall, the holiest site in the Jewish religion.**
5. **Twenty-three people, young and old, mothers and babies in their cradles, were slaughtered in that attack.**
6. **That attack was carried out by Hamas, a terrorist organization, which, under the road map, should have been dismantled by the Palestinian Authority.**
7. **Failure to dismantle Hamas and other extremist organizations has brought our diplomatic efforts to a standstill.**
8. **Rather than acting to fulfil its obligation, the Palestinian Authority has chosen the route of inaction, and complicity in terror.**
9. **We cannot allow this to continue.**
10. **We must restore hope that we can build a better future for our children.**
11. **The infrastructure of terror must be dismantled so that we can put our peace efforts back on track.**
12. **There is no time other than now.**
13. **There is no other way.**
14. **For many years it was thought that terrorism in the Middle East was Israel’s problem, not the world’s.**
15. **Today, the world knows otherwise.**
16. **Today, it is not only Israel that mourns the loss of its loved ones, including women and children and babies, at the hands of the terrorists.**
17. Sadly, we have been joined by peoples from across the globe — from Mombassa to Casablanca and from Moscow to Bali.
18. Even the United Nations, which for so many has been a symbol of peace and goodwill, is not immune.
19. Gathered here today in New York, just two short years after 11 September, the community of nations knows that those who seek to advance their political agendas through killing innocents are ready to strike at anyone or anything that represents the values of freedom and human life.
20. Terrorism has declared war on us all.
21. Israel has often stood alone in this battle.
22. A country that has suffered more than any other from terrorism,
23. we have always understood the danger it poses to democracy and freedom everywhere, even when others refused to see this, and condemned us for our actions.
24. We have always understood that terrorism, no matter what cause it claims to serve, seeks only to destroy, rather than to build.
25. There can be no neutrality in the war against terrorism and there can be no immunity for those who engage in it.
26. Abstaining is not an option.
27. This is not a war of choice.
28. Terrorism will not be eliminated until the world unites against it.
29. Our only choice is to win.
30. Every member of the international community must take concrete and proactive measures to cut off all channels of financial, moral and political support to this common enemy.
31. States Members of this institution that sponsor terrorists and give them shelter are accomplices in the acts of terror themselves.
32. They must be held accountable for their crimes.
33. It is no coincidence that States that sponsor terrorism, like Iran and Syria, are also striving to acquire weapons of mass destruction.
34. Their hostility to freedom and the rule of law puts the very future of humanity in jeopardy.
35. **I know that many in this place see Yasser Arafat as the symbol of the Palestinian struggle.**
36. **Tragically, for his people and for ours, he is one of the world’s icons of terror.**
37. **In the 10 years since Arafat made a commitment to Israel and the world that he would no longer use terror, 1,126 Israelis have been killed and thousands wounded in 19,000 separate Palestinian terrorist attacks.**
38. **In relative numbers, this would be the same as 11,000 French or 56,000 Americans dying from terrorism in the same period of time.**
39. **This carnage must stop.**
40. **Its impact on both societies is devastating.**
41. **Yasser Arafat bears direct responsibility for this terrible suffering.**
42. **He has led his people along the path of terror — from hijackings to suicide bombings — for more than 30 years, always preferring Israeli pain over Palestinian gain.**
43. **He has been — and he remains — the greatest obstacle to peace between our peoples.**
44. **For as long as he controls the levers of power, no moderate leadership can emerge.**
45. **To vote for Arafat, like we saw in this Assembly just last week, is to vote against the Palestinian people.**
46. **When Arafat wins, terrorism wins, and we all lose.**
47. **Instead of rallying around Arafat, the international community must rally around the genuine interests of the Palestinian people.**
48. **They must do so now, before he leads them even further down the path of terror and destruction.**
49. **When a responsible and empowered Palestinian leadership finally emerges — a leadership ready to join the war on terror — it will find us a willing partner for peace.**
50. **Israel is committed to the vision for Middle East peace laid out by United States President George Bush on 24 June 2002.**
51. **Israel will not compromise on the safety of its citizens, but we will go the extra mile, as we have proven before, to bring peace and security to both our peoples.**
52. **We are ready to work with the Palestinians and with the international community to make this vision a reality.**
53. **For this to happen, the Palestinian leadership must take the moral and strategic decision to abandon terrorism once and for all, and make peacemaking possible.**
54. **They must guide their people to build their own society, rather than seek to destroy ours.**
55. **They, too, must understand that it is not poverty that breeds terror but terror that breeds poverty.**
56. **We cannot stop only at dismantling the infrastructure of terror.**
57. **We must also build an infrastructure of peace.**
58. **It is up to political and moral leaders everywhere to foster an environment which rejects extremism and empowers the peacemakers.**
59. **This is particularly so in the Arab and Muslim world, where incitement against Israel closes hearts and minds to the possibility of peace.**
60. **Leaders must guide their people away from the culture of hate, and replace it with a culture of tolerance.**
61. **Concrete expressions of cooperation and exchange must be built in media and government, education, science and business, to reinforce the message of tolerance and acceptance.**
62. **For the sake of our collective future, voices of moderation must be heard.**
63. **For the sake of our collective future, Israel and the Arab nations must learn to live together side by side, to overcome our conflicts just as the nations of Europe have learned to overcome theirs.**
64. **Israel is living among its Arab neighbours.**
65. **We believe in a common future of peace and prosperity with them.**
66. **My many meetings with Arab leaders over the last few days have encouraged me to believe that together we can make our region a better place.**
67. This culture of peace must permeate not only the borders of the Middle East, it must permeate the walls of the United Nations as well.
68. In the past, the United Nations has shown us that it can play a positive role.
69. This Assembly was key to the founding of the State of Israel, 55 years ago.
70. **Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 are our guideposts to negotiations and peace.**
71. **To play such a constructive role in the future, the United Nations must reform.**
72. **It must move away from the partisan hostility that has taken over its Middle East agenda.**
73. **For more than three decades, this Assembly has passed every year a litany of resolutions designed to discredit Israel, challenge its interests, and promote the will of its greatest enemies.**
74. **In my hand I am holding a collection of the decisions of the fifty-seventh General Assembly on the Middle East — 175 pages filled not with hope, but with the negative agendas of the past.**
75. **No other country has suffered such unjustified attack and consistent discrimination within the United Nations system.**
76. **The time has come to end this campaign of diplomatic incitement.**
77. **For the sake of Israelis and Palestinians — for the sake of the United Nations and peace itself — I call on this body to rise above the tired politics of yesterday, and adopt a new, courageous agenda for tomorrow.**
78. I call on the General Assembly to abandon the automatic adoption of anti-Israel resolutions and to find ways of making itself relevant once again to the interests of the people it claims to serve.
79. I call on this Assembly to fulfil its historic mission and help promote what unites us, not what divides us.
80. On the morning of 1 February of this year, Israel lost its first astronaut in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster — a skilled and courageous pilot whom I knew personally, a child of Holocaust survivors, a national hero.
81. Colonel Ilan Ramon embodied the spirit of our nation.
82. He was a man of courage and action, dedicated to the well-being of his people.
83. Just as he sought to contribute to the advancement of his fellow man, he met his death, together with colleagues from the United States and India, on a scientific mission in the name of humanity as a whole.
84. Israel’s place in such endeavours of international cooperation and accomplishment is no coincidence.
85. In the 55 years since the State of Israel was established, recognized and welcomed into the family of nations, our achievements in the fields of science and technology, the arts and literature and agriculture and medicine have come to rank with the best in the world.
86. Our international cooperation programme is celebrated in over a hundred countries around the globe, sharing skills, experience and knowledge for the benefit of millions of people.
87. We extend this hand of friendship to all the nations of the world.
88. We welcome our improving relations with Europe, just as we remain committed to promoting closer ties with the nations of Africa, Asia and the Americas.
89. The Zionist vision of Israel’s founders was to bring into the world a State in our ancient homeland to serve as a haven from persecution for our people, a place where the Jewish people could fulfil its right to self-determination in the modern era and a bastion of democracy and opportunity for all its citizens.
90. Our founders also made a promise not just to the people of Israel, but also to the people of the Middle East as a whole — to pursue peace and to work for the common advancement of our region.
91. I know personally the profound meaning of this historic undertaking.
92. I came to Israel as a young refugee from Tunisia.
93. I serve as one of hundreds of thousands of immigrants to whom Israel has granted promise and protection, freedom and opportunity, through the values and institutions of democracy.
94. I stand here today to reaffirm, before the nations of the world, the commitment of my country to peace.
95. Peace for the people of Israel is both a moral and historic imperative.
96. “Shalom” — the word for peace in Hebrew — is central to our language and our heritage.
97. It is how we say “hello” and it is how we say “goodbye”.
98. It is a name we give to our children.
99. It is my own family name.
100. It was our prophet Isaiah, who brought this message of peace to the world centuries ago, when he said:
101. “And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
102. Nation shall not lift up sword against Nation, neither shall they learn war any more”.
103. Israel’s historic record is clear.
104. Whenever a true partner for peace has emerged, he has been met with Israel’s extended hand.
105. This was true when President Anwar Sadat of Egypt came to Jerusalem in 1977 and it was true when King Hussein of Jordan signed the Peace Treaty with us in 1994.
106. The same is true today.
107. **Israel stands ready to complete the circle of peace with all its neighbours — real peace, not just peace for the headlines, but peace which brings an end to violence and hostility and positive change for the citizens of our region.**
108. **From this great rostrum — a rostrum shared by all humanity — I call on the leaders of Syria and Lebanon, of Iran and of the Palestinian people to abandon once and for all their hostility towards us and to join us in building a better future for our children.**
109. This evening, I shall return to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people, to join with them in celebrating Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.
110. According to our tradition, this is a time when God determines the fate of each and every individual for the coming year.
111. These are days of reflection and prayer.
112. May all our prayers for peace and for life be answered,
113. and may the actions and deeds of all the States and peoples represented here in this Hall bring to mankind peace and all the blessings that life can offer.