

Mr. James Baker, Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mr. Boris Pankin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure, in the name of the President of the Republic of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hrawi, and on behalf of the Government of Lebanon, to extend my deepest thanks to Spain, to His Majesty the King, to His Majesty's Government, and to the Spanish people for hosting this Conference on this land steeped in history.

I would also like to convey my thanks to the Spanish authorities and administration for their meticulous organization and for the effective arrangements which they have successfully implemented in a very short space of time, responding thereby to the unanimity of all concerned to hold this Conference in this beautiful capital, Madrid.

Such unanimity and warm greeting are but a proof of the trust placed by the world and by us in this great country, the seat of a rich civilization of which visible evidence abounds.

This unanimity embodies everyone's desire that Spain be the place where the hopes of the peoples of the world converge and that the triumph over instinct, the upholding of right, justice, and reason, and the search for peace be the loftiest standards of civilization.

This Conference held under the title of Peace is, without any doubt, of paramount importance and can become possibly the most important gathering since the Second World War.

Peace is the aspiration of humanity, the end sought by peoples the world over, the purpose for which all religions, philosophies, and ideologies strive.

Conscious of the importance of this Conference, it is our duty to express our deep gratitude to the United States of America and the Soviet Union for their unstinting efforts to hold this Conference. We also appreciate the efforts made by states and other parties who supported the convening of the Conference and are sincerely contributing to its success.

Our praise is due to the efforts pursued by Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev to convene this Conference and for the time they devoted to it in spite of numerous other problems in the world. I would like to mention particularly Minister Boris Pankin, who followed and lent his support to the efforts aimed at holding the Conference, and to Secretary James Baker, who devoted his exceptional skills and capacities to the achievement of this major accomplishment, thus demonstrating rare determination and ability.

I would like also to extend my thanks to Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez for his valued speech, and the European Community for being here with us and for its firm position which was expressed by Minister van den Broek, Acting President of its Council of Ministers.

Lebanon, a country which believed in the message of peace, tolerance, and coexistence, a country which practiced openness and understanding and nurtured the exchange of ideas and knowledge, welcomes this historic opportunity to let peace prevail in a region whence religions, laws, and civilizations emanated and which gave birth to thought and philosophies,

witnessed the pharaohs and the advent of Abraham, Jesus Christ, and Mohammed, the sons, companions, prophets, and imams. Pyramids, sanctuaries, temples, churches, mosques were erected, to which Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mecca, and Najaf bear witness. It is a land where civilizations interacted, the Sumerian, Phoenician, Pharaonic, Babylonian, Greek, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Arab, and where the outlines of temples intermingled with the pillars of sanctuaries and the engravings in churches.

This is where the history of the world and its conscience lie. It contains for every man, wherever he may be, an element of his identity. It is the patrimony of humanity and we are but guardians of its sanctuaries and protectors of its heritage. From here springs our glory. We are its custodians as generations go by. Lebanon is proud of its Arab identity which binds it to countries with which it has a common history, language, culture, and destiny.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we have come from a land small in size, modest in terms of population, not particularly endowed with natural resources, but large in the aspirations of its people, rich in civilization, great in terms of its contribution to the world to whom it gave the alphabet, also culture and knowledge.

We have come to you today from a land which was and still remains a beacon of science to the world in all its dimensions, such as the Beirut Roman school of law, Justinian and Papinian, and up to our universities, our writers, our poets, and our thinkers to this day.

We have come to you today from a land whose sons have crossed seas and deserts towards the five continents and distant lands, where they integrated into other societies, formed friendships with their fellow men, built, and prospered.

We have come from a land coveted by greed, where doctrines and policies went into conflict, where cultures and philosophies collided, so much so that it was said that the country had vanished forever.

Wars tore it asunder, wars waged by others on its soil. For 16 years our country bled. Some said it had died. The number of mourners increased. The concept of Lebanization was born to mean countries agonizing and peoples being torn apart. Here is Lebanon, like the phoenix, rising from its ashes, belying those who betted on its demise and played the card of its annihilation.

Here is Lebanon today in spite of the deep wounds and the bitter trial, returning to the family of nations, reaffirming that it is too strong to be liquidated and too large to be struck off the map or forgotten, more steadfast than a mere transitional or temporary state. Here it is to stay and to watch the ramparts of the will of its sons rebuff wave after wave. It is here in spite of all predictions, calculations, pessimistic analysis as if it alone knows that its fate is to live and its mission to continue.

The message, if at all, of the Lebanese war is that the Lebanese formula will not fade away because it is founded upon inevitability of conviviality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have heard a great deal about Lebanon. No doubt you know that this small country has practiced and lived the great human experiment which the international community is about to enter into.

You know that all divine religions, their sects and ramifications exist in Lebanon, which presented an ideal opportunity for all ideas and doctrines, be they political, philosophical, or social, to meet and interact. The prevailing climate of democracy and individual and social freedom was the real guarantee enabling one to live and to practice these experiences. From this viewpoint, we in Lebanon are in a position to enrich the concept of the new world order and to consolidate its foundations. This we say in the light of our bitter experience, which has shown that the various ideas, doctrines, and religions cannot but live together.

The concept of the new world order, although not clearly defined as yet, would derive benefit from our experience and will be based on the unshakable realities of the societies it seeks to encompass and on the necessity of coexistence.

Having paid the price of the international and regional conflicts which were reflected on our soil, we have set out on the path to internal peace and have succeeded in carrying out a number of essential and important tasks, thereby surprising every one. The challenge and the dream came together. We first set up a government of national unity which adopted and applied the Taif agreement. We also introduced a number of Constitutional amendments to ensure a wider and more globally based political participation of all the components of the Lebanese formula. The state undertook to dissolve the militias and collect their weapons, artificial barriers which had split areas, sects, and parties were dismantled and the Lebanese were assimilated again into society, thus rejecting the separation which had been forced upon them.

The State then started rebuilding its national, security, and administrative institutions, the army regained its unity and began to deploy, spreading the authority of the Lebanese State on most of its territory, thus paving the way for Lebanese sovereignty to be exercised on Lebanese soil.

All this took place in a brief span of time with modest means, compensated only by the support of some of our brothers and friends. Lebanon proved once again it was capable of overcoming its trials and tribulations and astonish[ing] the world. Miracles are easy when destiny is at stake. The State did all it could on the homefront and frustrated a number of claims, such as: Lebanon cannot be unified or cannot take a national decision. But our great endeavor will not totally succeed as long as there are pending questions which go beyond our internal borders and touch upon regional as well as international factors.

Events have shown that Lebanon is whole and cannot be fragmented. The South and the North, the Bekaa, Beirut, and the mountains are all part of it. Deprived of any of its areas, it would lose a vital limb, bleed forever, struggle and vent its rage on every part of the world. This rage often turning into resistance against occupation.

Violent acts increased, their victims were to be found among the Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike. This violence, though painful at times, was nothing but an anguished expression of passionate determination to let justice prevail.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Events have proved that South Lebanon, in particular, can detonate a conflagration of the entire situation, that its sons would express their wrath as long as they have to suffer the yoke of occupation, and as long as United Nations resolutions and international laws which guarantee a solution to the problem are ignored and not respected.

This occupation and the accompanying events and developments have cost Lebanon and the world dearly.

Every country has, one way or the other, paid the price of Israeli occupation of the South.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lebanon was and still is a peace-loving country, co-founder of the United Nations Organization, president of one of the sessions of the General Assembly, and contributor to the establishment of several international organizations, namely, the International Court of Justice, of which it was a member. It also took part in the drafting of the International Covenant of Human Rights.

Lebanon adheres to international legitimacy, and abides by U.N. Security Council and General Assembly resolutions as well as the rules of international law.

Lebanon calls for a new international order, where principles of law, rejection of aggression, and peaceful settlement of disputes prevail. Lebanon attaches great importance to the implementation of Resolution 425, since the Armistice Agreement of 1949 still governs the situation with Israel. Article 8 provides "that this agreement shall remain in force until both parties reach a peaceful settlement."

It is for all these reasons that Lebanon has sought and still seeks to apply Security Council Resolution 425 of 19 March 1978, which calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

It also calls upon Israel to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese lands.

The resolution decided to establish immediately an interim force for South Lebanon under the authority of the United Nations for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.

Although Resolution 425 met obstacles which prevented its immediate, total, and unconditional implementation, in keeping with the letter of its text, due to the persistent refusal by Israel to implement it, these have only redoubled Lebanon's insistence on its

literal application. Lebanon views the implementation of this resolution as a challenge to and a test of the sincerity of the international community, which must demonstrate seriousness in complying with its own resolutions and in finding the necessary elements to implement both letter and spirit of that document.

The implementation of this resolution would show clearly that the international community does not apply double standards, that what is true of its compliance with international law and its respect of the sovereignty exercised by independent states on their territory extends to all regions and all cases without any discrimination.

I must, in this respect, remind you that Lebanon was the first Arab country to condemn the aggression on Kuwait. Lebanon never faltered one instant throughout the crisis. Its position was based on the principle of the sovereignty and independence of states, even though Lebanon found it difficult to apply international law by force to a fraternal Arab country, albeit an aggressor.

The Lebanese government, who wishes this Conference total success, would like to assure you that it will spare no effort to have Resolution 425 implemented, whatever path this Conference may follow and whatever its final results may be. We have notified the two co-sponsors of this Conference, the United Nations [sic] and the Soviet Union, that our acceptance of the invitation to attend was predicated on this position. Here I would like to praise the numerous friendly countries which have supported our position, namely the United States of America, which has notified us in writing of its firm position, which is that the total implementation of Resolution 425 does not depend upon a comprehensive solution in the region nor is it linked to it, even though such a solution would enhance peace and stability in Lebanon.

Resolution 425 is a separate and complete resolution, comprising an inherent detailed mechanism for its implementation. It is in no way linked to any of the efforts being pursued to apply the international resolutions related to the question of the Arab territories occupied in 1967, namely, Resolutions 242 and 338.

We wish these efforts to come to a successful, rapid, and total conclusion, but as we do so, we reiterate that Lebanon is concerned above all with the total liberation of its territory. Lebanon accepts no substitute to Resolution 425, and expects that the search for peace and the emerging signs of the new international order will contribute towards eliminating the obstacles which stand in the way of its implementation and will overcome once and for all the procrastination experienced in enforcing it.

Upon implementation of Resolution 425, Lebanon will firmly undertake to control the security on its internationally recognized borders and will preempt any security breaches, thereby removing any justification for acts of resistance against the occupation.

The borders themselves are covered by Resolution 425, which is based on the Armistice Agreement of 1949. They are internationally recognized and can in no way be the subject of negotiations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lebanon is situated in the Middle East. It has embraced the region's thoughts, beliefs, creeds, and philosophies. It has also suffered from the conflicts which have swept it. More than others, the Lebanese are aware, their country being at the crossroads of East and West, where land meets sea, that there can be no real peace if peace is not comprehensive and does not encompass all its peoples and parts. Peace will be enjoyed by no one in the region if volcanoes are still erupting on our borders, if peoples are still oppressed and rights are still violated.

Lebanon, co-founder and active member of the League of Arab States, is committed to the Arab cause and in particular to the cause of the Palestinian people, its right to self-determination, to return to its land, to free the Arab occupied territories, and to establish a just peace in the region.

Lebanon is keen to ascertain its solidarity with the Arab position calling for the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which form the basis for this Conference in the sense of the formula "land for peace." The pursuance of the settlement policy will definitely have an adverse effect on all peace efforts in the region. As for the Palestinian problem, which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict, its global and just solution would allow the region to enjoy what it deserves in terms of stability, security, and tranquility.

This applies particularly to our country, Lebanon, which has paid the highest price because of the expulsion of the Palestinian people from its homeland. Lebanon itself was the target of two large-scale Israeli invasions in 1978 and 1982, which have taken an enormous toll in human life and property. I regret to remind you that Israeli attacks on my country, Lebanon, have not ceased, but rather continued until yesterday and are perhaps being carried out now as I speak to you.

Lebanon, with its small territory not exceeding 10,450 square kilometers, with its social, political, and economic structure and its modest natural resources, was able, with difficulty, to shelter displaced Palestinians while awaiting the settlement of their cause. But Lebanon will not be able to provide them with the basic necessities of a decent life, nor include them without suffering a negative impact on its internal situation. This would, in turn, lead to conflict and struggle in order to satisfy basic social, economic, and even political requirements on its land.

This is why Lebanon cautions against any attempt to solve the Palestinian problem by settling the Palestinians on a narrow strip of land where a large population is living within a delicate and sensitive balance. There the struggle for survival would become dangerous, it will not give Palestine back to its people and would lead to the very loss of Lebanon. Settlement projects ignore the fact that peoples belong to their land and are attached to it. In this region of the world, the land is the source of identity, love for the homeland is an article of faith, and authenticity is rooted in the land.

The land for the Lebanese, Palestinian, and Arab peoples is intimately linked to their identity, heritage, authenticity, and origin. Relinquishing this will forever be in the minds of these peoples a justification for rancor, frustration, and revolt.

The situation is further exacerbated when citizens are uprooted from their homeland, their birthplace, under various unrealistic slogans, cut off from their environment, their culture, the soil they tilled, their achievements, to be forced in their hundreds of thousands to leave wide expanses of land and faraway continents in order to be settled on a narrow bank of territory which is the object of contention and fighting, a country they did not know and to which they are not realistically linked. By this I mean the Soviet citizens who are being pushed into emigration and are being uprooted from their natural environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The time has come for the Middle East to become part of the New World Order. The time has come for the peoples of this region of the world to know what peace and a happy life can mean.

The time has come for this region where religions, civilizations, cultures, and peoples coexisted in peace to find its authenticity. The time has come for individual and collective energies to be set free in order to serve development and prosperity.

The time has come for the peoples of the region to become an active component of the international order rather than being a burden for it and a source of anxiety for its members.

The time has come for this region to be the rule of international law rather than its exception.

The time has come for this region to be again a bridge between continents instead of being a barrier to their coming together.

The time has come for the peoples of the region with their authenticity and their heritage to re discover and to play their historic role in reaching out for human horizons and shaping their future.

The time has come for the peoples of this region to free themselves from the ruthless state of permanent mobilization which was imposed on them and which has undermined their natural development and wasted their potential on wars and armies.

The time has come for the peoples of the region to provide the means of their own development rather than rely on precarious and transient foreign sources for survival.

The time has come for all to see that the balance of power is transient and can be altered.

The time has come to seize upon historic opportunities and to replace sterile assessments with healthy analysis.

The peoples of the region, we assure you, are faced today with an historic opportunity which will not always present itself. Before them lies the chance to come out of their introversion, a chance brought about by exceptional, favorable, and rare circumstances, as well as considerable efforts and perhaps even fate.

The conflict was so long and so acute that people became accustomed to the logic of strife and discord and enclosed themselves in it. Any venture for peace by any leader deserves to be valued, praised, and supported in the face of refusal by rejectionists and outbidding of profiteers. Were we to lose this rare opportunity and were we to fail to respond to those who decided to seize upon it and chose to resist the easy temptation of extremism, the propension to aggression and to give in to instincts, we shall have to bear the responsibility of history and future generations will hold us to account. The alternative to success in our attempt to reach peace through this Conference is lurking behind the door. It lies in the conviction which will spread in the area that peace is impossible and openness sterile. It lies in the belief which will spread in the region that the failure of this historic endeavor will close the door to any new venture in the foreseeable future. It lies in the conviction which will prevail in that part of the world that political, religious, or sectarian extremism is the only way to resist oppression and injustice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us stand behind the rational and the wise, let us foil the stakes bid on despair, rancor, and hatred.

Lebanon has emerged from the hell of overlapping wars waged on its soil. Lebanon is recovering its health, sovereignty, and historical role. Lebanon is committed to the success of this Conference and to upholding justice. Lebanon would simply like to say to you the following:

No to the balance of terror.

Yes to the concerted forces of peace.

No to injustice and imbalance.

Yes to the triumph of peace.

May God guide our steps and inspire us.

Thank you.