



ADDRESS

BY

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
OF LEBANON,
H.E. MR. ISSAM FARES

AT THE
59TH SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY. 10017

The President of the General Assembly
Members of the Assembly
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

As the head of Lebanon's Delegation to the General Assembly, I am pleased to congratulate you for your election as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations for its 59th session. As I wish you success in your presidency I want to express our gratitude for the support your country, Gabon gives to our large Lebanese community working there and enjoying its hospitality.

I also wish to thank your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunt for his leadership as president of the 58th Assembly.

As for His Excellency the Secretary General, Mr. Kofee Anan, he has earned our respect and appreciation for the efforts he has invested in furthering the goals of the United Nations, namely: working for a just, stable, and peaceful world.

Mr President

In past years, we in Lebanon, used to come to this forum, seeking United Nations help. The United Nations has always come to our support, adopting resolutions affirming Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We must express our gratitude to the United Nations for dispatching the UNIFIL forces, stationed on our frontiers with Israel, and for the continuing and effective aid we get from the United Nations Specialized Agencies.

Today, we come to this forum with different objective. Our country is in good shape. It has regained its position in the region. We have moved:

From destruction to construction
From rule by the militias to the rule of law
From anarchy to stability
From division to unity.

In the 1970s and 1980s of the past century, "Lebanonization" became a bad word. It stood for anarchy, infighting, total conflict. Now, however, "Lebanonization" has regained its pure, original meaning as a term standing for democracy, freedom, pluralism, consensus, and the acceptance of other.

Mr. President

Early this month, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1559 concerning Lebanon. The Resolution has two dimensions, one regional, the other internal. As for the regional dimension, the Resolution calls for the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces still in Lebanon!

There are Israeli forces occupying part of Lebanon (Shebâ farms and their surroundings).

We call with you for immediate withdrawal of these forces. We also call from this forum for Israel to stop its daily violations of our air space. There are Syrian forces in Lebanon. These forces are on our territory upon the request of the Lebanese Government. Lebanon considers the presence of these troops dependent on security conditions in the Region.

It is the policy of Lebanon that not a single non-Lebanese soldier should remain on its soil. Our disagreement with the United Nations concerning the withdrawal of the Syrian Forces is one of timing. And timing is in the hands of the Lebanese and Syrian governments in continuing discussions in light of regional needs, as determined by the two States.

It is also the policy of Lebanon to support the National Resistance Movement which has played an important role in forcing Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

As for the internal dimension of the Resolution, relating to the amendment of our Constitution, we consider it an inappropriate and unacceptable intervention in our internal affairs. Our Constitution promulgated in 1926 may be the oldest democratic constitution in the entire Middle East.

Successive Lebanese Parliaments have amended it many times, always in accordance with its own stipulations and with absolute majorities in both the Council of Ministers and in Parliament.

Lebanon is a liberal democratic country. It abides by international law and reveres the moral principles on which it is based. My country was a founding member of the United Nations in 1945. It contributed greatly to the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. And from this forum Lebanon exposed and opposed all destructive ideologies and movements that we felt impeded the course of civilization and the future of mankind.

Thus, we stand today by the side of the United Nations in opposing international terrorism in all its forms. Lebanon had witnessed terrorism on its soil; it was a witness to innocents being kidnapped, tortured, and killed. It knows what terrorism is all about, and from knowledge first hand, it condemns it in strongest terms. We also condemn those who willfully mix between terrorism on the one hand and struggle for national liberation on the other.

There are those who exploit the universal revulsion against terrorism to smear national liberation movements by branding these movements as terrorists. National liberation is legitimate, terrorism is reprehensible.

Mr. President

Lebanon is fine. It is not here to ask anything specific for itself. It does, however, ask for United Nations attention to our region. The region is in turmoil, and it looks to the United Nations for the resolution of its problems. As the body granted legitimacy by all nations to ensure peace, the United Nations has the responsibility to work for peace in our region.

From Lebanese perspectives on the Region we ask the United Nations:

First. to multiply its efforts to solve the Middle East problem. It should do so by implementing its resolutions concerning Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1976; by giving the Palestinians an independent sovereign state, and by ensuring the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland. The more the Middle East Conflict is allowed to fester, the more difficult it is to resolve, the greater the danger to regional and world peace.

Second. to assume more responsibility in resolving the violent conflict in Iraq and in restoring peace, stability and unity to the Iraqis. The Iraqis have suffered greatly and deserve strong and continuing support from the United Nations, that they may build a free democratic order.

Third. to help the Middle East Region attain a new order based on just and equitable solutions. The new order should stop the arms race and make the Region free of weapons of mass destruction. The Region is the birthplace of the Three Monotheistic Religions and deserves in this capacity special consideration.

Fourth. to encourage civic organizations as a first and necessary step in the process of reform and democratization. Democracy will neither rise nor long endure without civic organizations — Political parties, syndicates, clubs, women's organizations, and associations of all types. These are the cornerstones of the democratic system;

Mr President,

Lebanon is regional, and it has clear ideas about the future of the Region and its future civilization. This civilization should be based on the deepest principles of Christianity and of Islam

Lebanon is international through its emigrants who inhabit every nook and cranny of the world. And wherever they settle they serve as emissaries of peace, of progress, and of creativity. Others may take pride in exporting weapons and deploying armies. Lebanon, however, takes pride in exporting, since the dawn of history, the best that it has, its own youth, who tend to hold top posts in universities, research centers, industries, and commercial enterprises throughout the Globe.

Lebanon supports the United Nations because of its universal views on man and his future. My country may have suffered in the past, precisely because of its universalism, its openness, and its freedom. Because Lebanon gave a lot, Lebanon deserves a lot.

Finally, I wish the General Assembly and its Specialized Agencies success in addressing the many important items on their agenda. Lebanon will participate rigorously in all these proceedings and in whichever way that will realize the objectives of the United Nations and further the cause of freedom and of peace.