

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In November 1947 this General Assembly gathered and decided upon the creation of a Jewish State. Only a few hundred thousand Jews lived in Israel at the time, in hostile surroundings, shocked and devastated after the Holocaust in which six million of our people were murdered.

75 years later, Israel is a strong liberal democracy. Proud and prosperous. The Start-Up Nation that invented Waze and Iron Dome, Medicines for Alzheimers and Parkinsons and a robot which can perform spinal surgery. A world leader in water and food-tech, cyber defense and renewable energy. With 13 Nobel prize winners in literature and chemistry, economics and peace.

How did this happen?

It happened because we decided not to be a victim.

We chose not to dwell on the pain of the past.
But rather to focus on the hope of the future.
We chose to invest our energies into building a nation.
Into building a happy society, optimistic and creative.

We didn't only reach the Promised Land, we are building the Promised Land.

History is determined by people. We need to understand history, respect it and learn from it.
But also to be willing and able to change it.
To choose the future over the past.
Peace over war.
Partnership over seclusion and isolation.

A few months ago we convened the historic Negev Summit.
We sat at dinner, not far from the grave of David Ben Gurion, the founding father of the State of Israel.
There were six of us.
The Secretary of State of the United States, Foreign Ministers of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Israel.
A dinner that only two years ago no-one would have believed was possible.

And then the door opened, someone came in and said, "I'm sorry to disturb you, but there was a terror attack not far from Tel Aviv. Two Israelis were murdered."
In an instant we all understood that the goal of the attack was to destroy the summit.

To create anger among us, to cause us to argue and to divide this new partnership between us.

I said to the Foreign Ministers, "We have to condemn this terror attack, right now, together. We have to show the world that terror will not triumph."

The room fell silent.

And then one of the Arab Foreign Ministers said, "We are always against terror, that's why we are here."

And five minutes later we put out a joint statement from the six of us condemning the attack and sanctifying life, cooperation and our belief that there is a different way.

The summit continued.

Agreements were signed.

Working groups were formed to deal with issues of technology, food security, energy, water, education and infrastructure.

Those working groups are changing the face of the Middle East as we speak.

The people of the Middle East, the people of the entire world, should look around and ask themselves:

Who is doing better?

Those who chose the path of peace, or those who chose the way of war?

Those who chose to invest in their people and country, or those who chose to invest in the destruction of others?

Those who believe in education, tolerance and technology, or those who believe in bigotry and violence?

Whenever I meet someone who has criticism of Israel, I always have the same answer:

Come and visit us.

Come and meet the real Israel. You will fall in love.

A country which combines breathtaking innovation with a deep sense of history.

Great people, great food, Great spirit.

A vibrant democracy.

A country in which Jews, Muslims and Christians live together with full civic equality.

In the government which I lead, there are Arab Ministers.

There is an Arab party as a member of our coalition.

We have Arab judges in our Supreme Court.

Arab doctors saving lives in our hospitals.

Israeli Arabs are not our enemies, they are our partners in life.

Come and visit us.

You will discover that Israel is an incredible, cultural mosaic.

From the white snowy mountains of the Golan to the white desert sand of the Negev.

From Tel Aviv, the high-tech capital, a non-stop party on the Mediterranean Sea.

To Jerusalem, our eternal capital, the holy city for three religions, in whose beautiful streets the past meets the future every single day.

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There are however two major threats hanging over the head of our wonderful country.

They also hang over your heads, even though you may try to deny them. The first is the nuclear threat. The fear that terrorist states and terrorist organizations will get their hands on nuclear weapons. The second threat is the demise of truth.

Our democracies are slowly being poisoned by lies and fake news. Reckless politicians, totalitarian states and radical organizations are undermining our perception of reality.

We should know, there is no country in the world that faces this phenomenon more than Israel. There is no country that has come under a greater attack of lies, with such a vast amount of money and effort being invested in spreading disinformation about it.

Last May, the picture of Malak al-Tanani, a Three-year-old Palestinian girl, was published all over the world, with the terrible news that she was killed with her parents in an attack by the Israeli Air Force.

It was a heartbreaking image, but Malak Al Tanani doesn't exist. The photo was taken from Instagram.

It is of a girl from Russia.

I can give you thousands more examples of similar fake news about Israel. The anti-Israel movement has been spreading these lies for years. In the media, on college campuses and on social media. The question is not why they do it, but why are you willing to listen.

Why are you listening to people who have invested billions of dollars in distorting the truth?

Why do you side with Islamic extremists who hang gay people from cranes, oppress women, and fire rockets at civilians from kindergartens and hospitals?

I am not a guest in this building.
Israel is a proud sovereign nation, and an equal member of the United Nations.
We will not be silent when those who wish to harm us, use this very stage to spread lies about us.

Antisemitism is the willingness to believe the worst about the Jews, without questioning.
Antisemitism is judging Israel by a different standard than any other country.
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Conducting this orchestra of hate, is Iran.
For more than forty years now, in the town squares and on the streets of Iran, demonstrators have been photographed burning Israeli and American flags.
Ask yourselves: Where are the flags coming from? How did they get so many of our flags?

The answer is: They are manufacturing them especially.
Just so they can burn them.
This is what an industry of hate looks like.
This is a regime that systematically deals with hatred.

They even hate their own people.
Young Iranians are suffering and struggling from the shackles of Iran's regime, and the world is silent.
They cry for help on social media.
They pay for their desire to live a life of freedom — with their lives.

Iran's regime hates Jews,
hates women,
hates gay people,
hates the West.
They hate and kill Muslims who think differently, like Salman Rushdie and Mahsa Amini.
Their hate is a way of life.
It is a way to preserve their oppressive rule.

There is only one member-state in the UN that openly states its wish to destroy another member-state.
Iran has declared time and time again that it is interested in the "total destruction" of the State of Israel.

And this building is silent.

What are you afraid of?

Has there ever been a time in human history where silence stopped violence?

The country that wants to destroy us, is also the country that founded the largest terrorist organization in the world, Hezbollah.

Iran funds Hamas and Islamic Jihad and is behind mass terrorist attacks from Bulgaria to Buenos Aires. It is a murderous dictatorship that is making every effort to get a nuclear weapon.

If the Iranian regime gets a nuclear weapon, they will use it.

The only way to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, is to put a credible military threat on the table.

And then – and only then – to negotiate a Longer and Stronger deal with them.

It needs to be made clear to Iran, that if it advances its nuclear program, the world will not respond with words, but with military force.

Every time a threat like that was put on the table in the past, Iran stopped, and retreated.

Today, the world is choosing the easy option.

It chooses not to believe the worst, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Israel does not have this privilege.

This time we are not standing empty-handed against those who want to destroy us.

The Jews today have a state.

We have an army.

We have great friendships,
first and foremost with the United States.

We have capabilities and we are not afraid to use them.

We will do whatever it takes:

Iran will not get a nuclear weapon.

We will not stand by while there are those who try to kill us. Not again. Never Again.

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Israel's economic and military strength allows us to protect ourselves but it also allows us something else:

To strive for peace with the entire Arab world.

And with our closest neighbors – the Palestinians.

An agreement with the Palestinians, based on two states for two peoples, is the right thing for Israel's security, for Israel's economy and for the future of our children.

Peace is not a compromise.

It is the most courageous decision we can make.

Peace is not weakness.

It embodies within it the entire might of human spirit.

War is surrender to all that is bad within us.

Peace is the victory of all that is good.

Despite all the obstacles, still today a large majority of Israelis support the vision of this two state solution. I am one of them.

We have only one condition:

That a future Palestinian state will be a peaceful one.

That it will not become another terror base from which to threaten the well-being, and the very existence of Israel.

That we will have the ability to protect the security of all the citizens of Israel, at all times.

If someone believes that demand is too much, then look at the neighbourhood in which we live:

Look at Lebanon, a collapsing state controlled by Hezbollah.

At Syria, where a murderous regime massacred half a million of its own people.

Look at Afghanistan.

At Libya.

At Iran.

You can ask us to live according to the values in the UN Charter, but you cannot ask us to die for them.

My father was a child in the Ghetto, my grandfather was murdered in a concentration camp.

We want to live in peace but only if it gives us security, not if it threatens us even more.

Look at Gaza.

Israel did everything the world asked of us, including from this very stage.

We left.

17 years ago we dismantled the settlements, took apart our military bases.

There is not a single Israeli soldier in Gaza.

We even left them 3,000 green houses so they could start to build an economy

for themselves.

What did they do in response?

In less than a year, Hamas, a murderous terror organization, came to power. They destroyed the greenhouses and replaced them with terrorist training camps and rocket launch sites.

Since we left Gaza, over 20,000 rockets and missiles have been fired at Israel. All of them at civilians. All of them at our children.

I have a child with special needs.

Her name is Yaeli.

She is autistic.

She doesn't speak.

In May last year I had to wake her at 3 o'clock in the morning and run down with her to the bomb shelter, because missiles were exploding above our home.

All those who preach about the importance of peace, are welcome to try running to a bomb shelter at 3am with a girl who does not speak.

To explain to her, without words, why there are those who want to kill her.

In this building, we've been asked more than once why we do not lift the restrictions on Gaza.

We're ready to do that, tomorrow morning.

We're ready to do more than that.

I say from here to the people of Gaza, we're ready to help you build a better life, to build an economy.

We presented a comprehensive plan to help rebuild Gaza.

We only have one condition:

Stop firing rockets and missiles at our children.

Put down your weapons, there will be no restrictions.

Put down your weapons, bring home our children who are being held in captivity – Hadar and Oron, may their memory be a blessing; Avera and Hisham, who are still alive – and we will build your economy together.

We can build your future together, both in Gaza and in the West Bank.

Put down your weapons and prove that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are not going to take over the Palestinian state you want to create.

Put down your weapons, and there will be peace.

That is the minimum I owe my grandfather, my father and my daughter.

The Jewish people have learnt the lessons of the past.

Our security is guaranteed by our military might, our economic ingenuity, our

democratic resilience.

Israel seeks peace with our neighbors.

All our neighbors.

We are not going anywhere.

The Middle East is our home.

We are here to stay. Forever.

And we call upon every Muslim country — from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia — to recognize that, and to come talk to us. Our hand is outstretched for peace.

Conflicts do not disappear on their own.

Hostility doesn't disappear on its own.

People create conflicts, people can also replace them with friendship, kindness and common good.

The burden of proof is not on us.

We have already proved our desire for peace.

Our peace treaty with Egypt has been fully implemented for 43 years now.

Our peace treaty with Jordan for 28 years.

We are a country that keeps its word and fulfills agreements.

We proved our desire for peace through the Abraham Accords, the Negev Summit, and the agreements we've signed with the Arab world.

In the book of Numbers, there is a verse that every Jew is familiar with:

"שלום לך וישם אליך פניו השם ישא."

"May the Lord raise His countenance toward you, and grant you peace."

The State of Israel is the only country in the world founded by a book. The Book of Books. The Tanach.

That book and the principles of liberal democracy require us to stretch out our hand in peace. Our history requires us to be clear-eyed and very careful.

That is how we've made peace in the past.

That is how we'll make peace in the future.

Thank you.