

Madame La Présidente,
Heads of Government and State,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this Assembly for the seventh time as Prime Minister of Greece.

This year carries special weight as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Eighty years of hope, struggle, and progress.

This milestone coincides with an important moment for Greece: our third tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

We accept this responsibility with honor and with a deep sense of duty, as a nation that stood at the birth of this Organization. Like so many other nations, my country came here devastated by the horrors of World War II.

The Charter of the United Nations was not just a legal document. It was a commitment that never again should force prevail over the rule of law.

For eight decades, the UN has defended peace, advanced human rights, and expanded access to health, education, and equality for all.

It has stood as the custodian of international law, safeguarding the rules and principles that make international cooperation possible.

The United Nations was at the epicenter of a historic turning point. It gave voice to the aspirations of peoples long denied freedom.

Decolonization brought new nations into this Assembly. They brought their histories, their cultures, their aspirations. Their participation helped redress historical injustices and transformed the Organization into a true reflection of our world's diversity.

These achievements are real progress. They have made our world safer, fairer, and more prosperous. But they should never be taken for granted. They were won through effort and sacrifice. And they remain fragile.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A new global order is on the rise. Multilateralism is under strain and fundamental tenets of the post-1945 world are being questioned.

We witness attempts to revive the imperial ambitions of previous centuries. Revisionist narratives are resurging. Some leaders remain trapped in the past, chasing illusions of bygone glory.

“Might over right” risks once again becoming the norm in international relations. A norm the international community has sought to overcome for more than eighty years.

And this trend is strengthening at a time when global challenges continue to multiply. Climate change. Migration. The advent of artificial intelligence.

Our world is changing. We must meet this change with courage and responsibility, but never at the expense of the principles that form the very fabric of the international community represented in this assembly: respect for territorial integrity and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Being situated at the crossroads of three continents, Greece is a pillar of stability and a reliable broker in a turbulent region.

Our stance is principled. We uphold the principles international law. We seek dialogue and peaceful coexistence with our neighbors.

Some claim that principles are naïve in today’s world. We believe the opposite: they are the source of strength and the only path to lasting peace.

We are certainly not naïve. We remain fully aware of the threats and the risks of instability in our wider neighborhood.

That is why we are strengthening our economy, enhancing our deterrence capabilities, and deepening our alliance. So that we stand ready to defend and uphold our values.

This is not just words: Greece is already allocating over 3% of its GDP to defence and we are ready to do more. Security is the very foundation of prosperity. After all, our paramount obligation as leaders is to keep our people safe.

And we do this not in isolation. We are firmly anchored in the European Union, the most successful multilateral project of our age. Born from the ashes of the Second World War, the European Union has secured peace and prosperity in Europe for generations.

But today, we must go further. And in the European Union we are determined to take on a stronger role in our own defence. With war returning to our continent there is simply no other option.

Greece has long and consistently advocated for strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy. We firmly believe that the time has come for joint European borrowing to finance critical European defense projects such as missile and drone defense.

Beyond that it is imperative that we make Article 42.7 on the mutual assistance clause truly operational.

Jean Monnet famously said that Europe was forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises. He was right. What started as a project of economic cooperation needs to evolve into a Union that safeguards our citizens' security and safety.

Colleagues,

Today we are witnessing the highest number of armed conflicts since the end of the Second World War.

Conflicts that claim tens of thousands of civilian lives each year.

Conflicts that leave behind mass destruction, shattered societies, and displaced millions. And the prospects, if we fail to act, are even grimmer. A future of escalating violence and deepening instability.

Nowhere is this urgency more evident than in Gaza.

Greece has from the first day after the heinous attacks of October 7th, 2023 advocated for Israel's right to defend itself, against a terrorist organization that rejects Israel's right to exist.

We have called for the immediate release of all hostages and a comprehensive cease fire.

But we have at the same time made very clear that no military targets, no matter how valuable they are, can justify the death of thousands of children, the forced displacement of over a million Palestinians within the Gaza strip, and the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people.

Greece maintains a strategic partnership with Israel. But this does not prevent us from speaking openly and frankly.

The continuation of this course of action will ultimately harm Israel's own interests, leading to an erosion of international support.

I tell my Israeli friends that they risk alienating all their remaining friends if they persist on a path that is shattering the potential of a two-state solution.

Greece will continue to advocate for a two-state solution which envisions the creation of a sovereign, democratic and viable State of Palestine, building its future in peace and security alongside the State of Israel.

But we should be lucid about the roadmap towards achieving that elusive goal. Israel's actions in the West Bank risk creating irreversible situations on the ground.

At present, the most necessary is to stop the unnecessary killing and ensure the large-scale and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Greece remains committed to working with all our partners towards a roadmap that will achieve this goal and will revive a peace process, offering hope to a region which has suffered so much.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The war in Ukraine is already in its 4th year. Ukraine's courageous resistance to Russia's aggression stands as a testimony of unparalleled bravery and remarkable resilience.

The war in Ukraine is not another regional European conflict. It is a fight for freedom, for democracy, and for dignity itself. It is, above all, a defense of the rules-based global order.

We stand firmly and unconditionally with Ukraine in this struggle. And we will continue our unwavering support to the Ukrainian people who have the right to live in peace, in security, and freely determine their own future.

We appreciate President Trump's efforts to reach peace and we reiterate that a genuine peace process cannot begin without an immediate ceasefire.

And let us be even clearer: there can be no peace formula without Ukraine at the table and there can be no acceptance, under any circumstances, of borders redrawn by force.

Gaza and Ukraine have monopolized the interest of this assembly but another humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding and, unfortunately, does not receive the attention it deserves.

I am referring to Sudan. Two and half years into a devastating war, civilians are paying the highest price. Millions are left without safety, dignity, or protection.

The figures are horrifying: Almost 12 million people have been forced from their homes, creating the world's largest displacement crisis. More than 30 million require humanitarian aid. Famine is spreading.

Civilians must be protected. Humanitarian aid must flow freely and without obstruction. And those responsible for atrocities and war crimes must be held to account.

There is only one path forward: silence the guns, and renew a coordinated political process.

The world must not forget the people of Sudan. We owe them nothing less than peace, and the chance of a future built on hope, not despair.

As Europeans it is also in our interest to take an active role in resolving the Sudan crisis. Otherwise we risk facing a migration crisis of unimaginable proportions.

Dear Friends,

The Eastern Mediterranean is an area of strategic importance. Europe's southeastern frontier, a vital crossroads of trade and energy routes.

Greece, at the heart of this region, holds a key geostrategic position. We aspire to becoming an energy security provider, linking Europe with North Africa and the Middle East.

By exercising our sovereign rights, always in full respect of International Law, we are strengthening our footprint and shaping developments in the area.

Connectivity projects such as the Great Sea Interconnector and the GREGY project between Greece and Egypt are projects of mutual benefit, advancing stability and ensuring that our electricity grids are better connected.

They will diversify Europe's energy supply, accelerate the green transition and, above all, bring our region closer together.

Renewables are the future, and in Greece we have already made significant strides in this field. But we also remain pragmatic: fossil fuels will continue to play a role in our energy mix, with natural gas serving as the bridge in the transition.

That is why we are investing in the infrastructure that will make Greece an LNG hub. And at the same time, together with our American partners, we are advancing the exploration and potential exploitation of our offshore gas reserves, a resource of strategic value for Greece and Europe.

Yet the Eastern Mediterranean also faces profound challenges: climate change, migration, persistent conflict. The only way to meet them is through cooperation, built on leadership, political will, and a shared sense of responsibility.

In all our relations with our neighbors, Greece is guided by a single, unwavering compass: respect for international law. This is the cornerstone of our foreign policy, and the basis upon which we seek dialogue and genuine cooperation.

Let me begin with our relations with Türkiye. Greece seeks peaceful coexistence with our neighbor. In recent years, we have succeeded in maintaining low tensions, and this is a positive development that we should not underestimate.

However, the calm seas we have witnessed over the past 2 years must not be fleeting. They must allow us to build trust, find common ground, and pursue solutions in the interest of both our peoples.

The way forward lies in dialogue, in respect for international law, and in the vision of a region defined not by rivalry, but by shared prosperity.

As I have repeatedly stressed from this podium, we are ready to work toward settling the only outstanding issue between us: the delimitation of the continental shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Türkiye must remove the threat of war that still hangs as a dark cloud over our relations. After thirty years, the casus belli has to be revoked. It has no place in relations between friendly neighbors. Our path forward must be one of diplomacy, not the language of weapons.

For 51 years, Cyprus has endured the consequences of Türkiye's illegal invasion and continued military occupation. A blatant violation of international law and a constant strain to regional peace and security.

Our commitment to Cyprus' sovereignty, territorial integrity and the solution of one state based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation is steadfast. It is a matter of credibility and determination to defend the core values and principles upon which the United Nations are based.

Greece fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to give new impetus to the resumption of negotiations.

A just and viable settlement will serve the interests of the Cypriot people and contribute decisively to the stability of the wider region.

Turning to Libya, our two countries share maritime borders. It is therefore in our common interest to reach a fair and lawful delimitation agreement, in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Yet true stability in our neighborhood also depends on Libya itself being united and sovereign.

The Libyan people must be free to determine their future without foreign interference, and Greece stands ready to assist constructively in UN-led efforts to achieve a political solution and reunite the country.

When it comes to Syria, after fourteen years of bloodshed, last December brought a moment of change and a new hope for the Syrian people.

The future must be built on tolerance, dialogue, and full political representation for all religious and ethnic communities.

Only then can Syria's diverse society find peace and prosperity, free from sectarian violence and external interference.

I made it clear to the Syrian president that our support regarding Syria's rapprochement with Europe is conditional upon the protection of religious and ethnic communities, in particular the Christian Orthodox minority which has been repeatedly targeted by Muslim extremists.

At the same time, we expect the Syrian authorities to act in full accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Finally, let me turn to the Western Balkans, our immediate neighbors, strategic partners of the European Union, and candidate members of our common family. The region has made remarkable progress over the past decades. Yet the balance remains delicate with the risk of backsliding still present.

The future of the Western Balkans lies within the European Union. Greece has been a pioneer in this endeavor, through the Thessaloniki Agenda, which set the path for the region's European perspective.

This path must be grounded in full respect for international law, existing international agreements, the rule of law, human rights, and minority rights. It requires rejecting revisionist agendas and building trust among neighbors. The ghosts of Balkan nationalism had haunted the region for centuries. They must not be allowed to reemerge.

It is up to the leadership of the Western Balkans to assume their responsibilities and secure a future of peace and prosperity for their people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by returning to a topic I also addressed in my speech at the general assembly last year. Technology is both our greatest shared opportunity and one of the defining challenges for our future prosperity.

Last year, I spoke about Artificial Intelligence. and its extraordinary transformatory promise, but I also warned of the dangers it breeds. Today, Greece is pursuing a visionary yet practical AI strategy, through pilot programs in areas such as education, healthcare and natural disaster prevention.

Teachers and students will soon engage with custom-designed AI teaching assistants. Digital screenings, telemedicine and predictive diagnostics are already making care more personalized and accessible.

At the same, AI is also helping us detect and contain wildfires at their earliest stages. The promise of AI making governments more efficient in serving their citizens is materializing at breakneck speed.

However, AI in the wrong hands, and without safeguards, can become extremely dangerous. It can severely impact our children's mental health, flood our public square with disinformation, cause massive displacements in the job market and concentrate immense power in the hands of a few multinational corporations.

That is why I welcome the United Nations's establishment of the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. These institutions lay the foundations of a global architecture where AI can be steered by science and guided by cooperation.

The most urgent task is to protect the mental health of our children. The scientific evidence is damning. We are running a massive unsupervised experiment with the brains of our children and teenagers.

What was once envisioned as a space of connection and creativity has too often become a landscape of manipulation, where harmful content reaches even the youngest users. Addictive scrolling is addictive by design, not by accident.

Every time I talk to parents I hear the same story. We are scared about online bullying, adult content, unrealistic standards of beauty, promotion of self-harm. We feel powerless and helpless. We don't want our kids to share their intimate thoughts and feelings with an AI chatbot.

Greece has decided to do something. We have banned phones in our schools. But we have also launched Kids Wallett, the first government-backed application giving parents simple, effective controls over their kids' smartphone while enabling platforms to verify the age of their users.

Our proposal for a pan-European *Digital Age of Majority to access digital platforms* has already won the support of 13 EU Member States, and is examined by the European Commission.

But this is not a debate for governments and parents alone. Just as society once set firm rules for smoking, drinking, or wearing a seatbelt, we must now confront today's challenge with equal clarity: big platforms can no longer profit at the expense of our children's mental health. A business model built capturing our kids' attention through addictive algorithms that feed them what can justifiably be labeled as digital junk is simply not acceptable.

Let me repeat what I said last year. Digital technology is no different than any other industry that needs to operate under health and safety regulations. The overarching principle, the golden standard is one and the same: Do no harm.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking back to the foundation of the UN, means to recall, and acknowledge, that the need for effective multilateralism is as necessary in 2025, as it was in 1945.

There is no doubt: multilateralism must be reinvigorated. We must make it fit for the challenges of the third decade of the 21st century. But we must do it without disrupting its core, the rules-based order.

These rules were agreed for a reason. To save humanity. To ensure progress and prosperity for all.

Humanity paid a heavy toll through blood, destruction, and suffering to learn this lesson. We must assume our responsibilities to future generations.

Let us not be remembered as those who once again led the world to the brink. Let us not be the sleepwalkers of our time. For, this time, there may be no way back.

Instead, let us prove we have the vision, courage, and resolve to build a world of peace, security, and shared prosperity, worthy of the generations to come.

Thank you very much.