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THEMATIC SPEECH

of

HON'BLE RAJA ZAFAR UL HAQ

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE
IN THE SENATE OF PAKISTAN**

- **Excellency Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari,**
President Asian Parliamentary Assembly,
- **Honourable Speakers, Presiding Officers,
Members and Representatives of APA
Member Parliaments and Observer
Parliamentary Forums.**
- **Dr. Masoud Eslami,**
 - Deputy Secretary General, Asian Parliamentary
Assembly,
 - **Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed,**
Chairman of the Organising Committee,
 - **Excellencies, Dignitaries.**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

Welcome - you all - on behalf of Pakistan.

I deem it a great privilege to share my views with a very worthy and discerning audience on the theme of “Quest for Asian Parliament in the Asian Century” at this important 7th Plenary Session of Asian Parliamentary Assembly here in Lahore.

The relevance and importance of this theme cannot be overemphasized, at a time when, Asia is gearing up to play an important role on the world stage, as the global economic, technological and cultural hub.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Endorse all the draft resolutions and by word, item by item.

How to push forward steady and continuous cooperation among Asian countries, which are still divided on numerous issues. It is a question that must be resolved by regional states with patience and experience.

The success of European countries, which once differed from each other on many issues, in advancing and realizing integration on their continent, serve as a case in point for Asian countries, as it is a doable human experience, during our own life times.

We must also realize that Aspirations to overcome various crises in the wake of World War II, to look for a path to peace and prosperity, and to rebuild a powerful Europe not controlled by the former Soviet Union or the United States, have explained the success of Europeans in integrating themselves.

However, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, this noble role that Asia yearns, demands paradigm shifts, reformations, transformation and prompt set of actions across a wide range of issues and fronts, demanding immediate and sustained attention by leaders of Asia.

Combating the rising wave of terrorism and extremism, eliminating weapons of mass destruction, conserving environment and biodiversity by

promoting sustainable development, safeguarding fundamental human rights including right of self determination, especially for the people of J & K having the only peaceful & democratic way of resolving the issue and personal liberties against violence, conflicts, coercion, exploitation and meeting gaping energy deficit are some of the challenges must meet through cooperation to make integration work.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

With economic globalization rapidly sweeping every corner of the global village, the world has irreversibly entered a new era in which peace, development and cooperation remain the mainstream.

And on the other hand, the process also makes it possible that crises and risks within one country rapidly spread beyond their borders.

Pressing global issues and non-traditional security threats have also played a role in pushing Asian countries to accelerate cooperation and integration efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It has become an undeniable fact that in a globalized era, the number of terrorists activities, financial and cyber crimes, drug trafficking, which are all non-traditional issues that any individual country cannot effectively curb and resolve, have been on the increase.

Establishing a Parliament, representative of the 4.4 billion people of Asia is a prerequisite on many counts, out of which I deem the following ones of key significance:

- **Health, Education, poverty alleviation, fostering political dialogue, reinforcing cooperation, and promoting synergies and all areas of economic and social uplift by prioritizing human dimension.**
- **Towards creating an environment that is mutually beneficial and conducive for the common good of the nations of this very important region of the world.**

The quest for an Asian Parliament is also important because parliaments embody the will of the people, and also play a vital role in conflict prevention and dispute resolution that our region direly needs.

As for the composition and contours of the envisaged Asian Parliament, I see equal country representation – irrespective of the demographic considerations – in the main body of the parliament.

The main body may be further supported by regional chapters such as South, North East, West and Central Asian chapters, each mandated to work on different agendas and objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

With these words, allow me to say that by joining hands, we parliamentarians can effect a potent struggle at both the country and the regional level to usher in an era of prosperity and peace for our people.

- **Let us join hands to rid our region of terrorism and religious extremism to make possible mutually-beneficial trade, investment, technology transfer and industrial cooperation.**

I am confident that APA can play a crucial role towards achieving all these ideals and more, by promoting political as well as inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue, and inter-state harmony, and also respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of

member states to for a strong basis to build upon a potent and effective Asian Parliament.

Before leaving we must eulogize all those who played the pioneering role, provided intellectual and political leadership, supported the idea, whole heartedly, and successfully nurtured it during the last ten years.