



# NARENDRA TANEJA

Chairman, Energy Security Group of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

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We stay in Asia with a prominent Indian voice. Narendra, you have the floor.

**Narendra TANEJA, Chairman, Energy Security Group of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**

It is an interesting conference and an interesting discussion, particularly on Europe and the Middle East. I sometimes wonder, while talking about the West, Atlantic, Europe and the region, if we can pay attention to some other equally important regions at the same time. Close to 70%, if not more than 70%, of the global gravity centre, particularly the economic global gravity centre, has already moved to the East. Maybe it is more than 70%, as some experts claim. In a way, this is now already an Asian Century, they insist.

Of course, there can be arguments about whether there is one Asia or many Asias. I myself believe there are many Asias.

Anyway, when we look at the East, whether we call it Asia or by any other names, the reality is that things are developing there very fast. When you look at the global governance, it will only be fair that we look at Asia, too, comprehensively. This includes aspirations of the people, the ground realities there, security concerns there and so on.

Look at the changing face of Asia. My own assessment is that China will probably peak by 2040. India will peak by 2050, and we will still have 50 long years left of this century. I do not go by this idea that this can be an Asian century alone. These major powers in Asia will peak by 2050, and they will then be looking for new markets, new roles and new future opportunities. Where will they go? They will go to Africa.

In my opinion, this will be Africa's century, and countries like India, China, Japan, South Korea and Indonesia will play a big role in helping that happen. Therefore, my view is that countries like India, Japan and others in Asia should be joining hands and cooperating with democracies of Western Europe and elsewhere in order to build a modern Africa. In my view, by 2080, the African continent, or Africa as a whole, will probably be the most liveable part of the world. This is in terms of quality of life, climate, education, job opportunities and economic growth. Democracies from Asia and Europe need to collaborate and join hands. It is I know is thinking a little bit too far ahead, but I thought I would bring this point up here.

I will quickly touch upon now two more points. The first is about the Middle East. To us, the Middle East is not a remote region. We have been interacting with the Middle East for centuries. Our languages have been influenced by the languages of the Middle East, particularly Persian and Arabic, and there are long standing civilisational bonds.

I travel to the Middle East a lot, and in my view it will help the Middle Eastern countries if they engaged with fellow Asian countries even more. We know the Middle East and Islam better than most other countries.

Very briefly, while we are still on Asia, there is a point about the Indian Ocean. Today, we see a new great game unfolding in the Indian Ocean. There are different theories, but some people think it is like the maritime Middle East in making. Some people say it is the maritime Central Asia in making and so on and so forth. All democracies should



join hands for a stable and prosperous Indian Ocean region. This is for economic cooperation and collaboration, because if we succeed and focus on that, it is good for all the countries of the region, including Africa.

I have a brief, final point to make. There have been discussions here on many issues and regions. Let us not forget about the country which is very crucial to all the discussions we have had here since the opening. We must handle that country and all the problems and issues there with all the sensitivity needed - and the name of that country is Afghanistan.