

# NARENDRA TANEJA

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Okay, we may move to another point of view. Narendra Taneja is the Chairman of the Independent Policy Institute, which is a New Delhi think tank. I leave you the floor to discuss the governance.

## Narendra Taneja

Thank you very much. The last couple of hours, there has been a very different color and mood in the room, so I do not know.

The global energy gravity center is no longer in Europe or the Atlantic, it is in Asia. The 4.5 billion energy consumers in Asia are consuming maximum energy and that is where the future lies, whether you are a western company or eastern company, you are from Europe or Russia or America. If you want to secure your future, you have to look at Asia. That is the reality.

However, when I travel to conferences like this, it is a conference that actually takes place in the global south, in Abu Dhabi, in Asia, but since yesterday morning, I have been feeling I am in Europe somewhere and 70% of the time, I feel I am in an echo chamber. You are talking to each other, so why did I travel from Delhi? Why, for instance, did people travel from Africa?

You have got this habit. You have got to understand the world has changed. In the global north, there are only 1.4 billion people. In the global south, there are 6.7 billion people, including people in Abu Dhabi. This is the global south. We have got to understand and acknowledge it.

I travel to Europe almost every month and it is so suffocating to go to conferences because the world is changing. Somebody mentioned BRICS today. BRICS' total GDP on a PPP basis, actually, from 1<sup>st</sup> January, is bigger than the G7's. Why do people not realize that in Europe and the rest of the world? It is one small planet and the world has changed.

In this room, we are discussing energy and, going by the Q&A, it seems that the only region that matters is Europe and maybe the United States. That is the beginning and the end. My friends, the world has changed.

You have already spoken for two hours, so allow me 10 minutes now because this is where the heart of the global energy is. I am representing the heart. I am going to focus on energy governance and the global energy order and, therefore, of course, security.

The fact is half of the world today is not even talking to each other – because you are Russian, because you are Chinese, because you are Hamas, because you are Israeli or because you are African, you are very poor. You do not deserve to be at the top table.

Somebody mentioned yesterday that the richest continent on the planet is Africa, so we have got to understand that, whether it is energy or climate, we need to engage the whole world. Unless the discussion or the conversation is truly global, we will actually end up reaching the wrong conclusions and, when the conclusions are wrong, solutions that we propose to the world, or to the people of Europe, will not produce any results.

For instance, look at climate. Climate, for us in India – we are 1.4 billion people, a densely populated country – climate for us is science. How do we go forward? On the one hand, we have to eradicate energy poverty and, at the same time, we have to mobilize sufficient energy for our people. How do we do that? It is science.

However, for many in the global north – I am not targeting anybody, I love Europe, I spent nine years of my life in Europe, I went to university there – but, for many, climate has become a religion. You just cannot have a conversation on this matter.

If you say, 'Look, there are three billion energy-poor people on the planet. We need to engage with them. We need to do something', it is a religion. How can you question it? I am not saying everybody, but there are many. That has become a problem.

At the same time, when you look at the global narratives – whether on energy or climate – because the West has experience, you have good think tanks, you have diplomats, you know how to articulate in the English language and the French language and all that, all these narratives are dominated by the West. I am sorry to use that expression, but that is the reality.

Therefore, the result is what we have seen in this room, for instance, and we have seen in the conference since yesterday, that has become a challenge. The result is, until very recently, energy and climate were always talked about in the same breath. Now, the global north, or if I may use the expression 'the West', has decoupled it. Now, energy is solved in a different world to climate. If you are talking about climate, you cannot talk about energy. With energy, you can only talk about renewables.

This climate extremism is actually bad for climate security because, if we cannot have conversations, how can we find a solution? It is bad for climate security and for energy security.

This climate radicalization that we see in quarters in the global north is, today, the biggest threat to energy transition because, unless we have honest conversations where the interests of everyone are taken care of, how do we move forward?

I will give you an example. In my city, I live in New Delhi, we recently hosted the G20 Summit. You know one thing? In G20, we have tracks on everything – tracks means conversations. We had tracks on agriculture, on medical sciences, on dams – everything, you name it and it was there. However, not a single track on traditional energy or fossil fuels. They were completely kept out of the room. Energy, green energy, there were many tracks. In the final declaration, there was no mention and this is G20.



I asked some people, because we hosted it and the host does mean that you control the narrative but the narrative is still controlled by the West, and they said, 'Oh, they do not want it'.

Now, imagine you are at G20 and you are talking about securing the future but you have no discussion on that. The biggest challenge today, basically, the way I see it, is that no conversation is allowed on this. We need to recouple energy and climate. There is absolutely no other way.

My second point is, this tendency on the part of the global north to have conversations on the roadmap on energy transition, which is basically the way they want it, not realizing energy and climate go together. Go to any village in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America – these are highly emotional issues and local issues.

People worship trees. People worship local sources of energy. For many, energy and climate are very deeply integrated in the way they live, the way they breathe. However, if you think the West has the solution and they have the template, you either accept it or we are going to make your life difficult. If you are a smaller developing country, we will punish you one way or another. If you are a big giant like India, well, we cannot punish you but, still, we will see.

That is not how we work. Energy transition for different countries means different characteristics.

The third point I want to make here is that Ukraine happened. The Prime Minister of Senegal spoke yesterday and used the words – I am quoting her, these are not my words – 'Ukraine is a white man's war'.

Now, the result was that energy has been weaponized and you know who has suffered the most? Yes, in Europe, you build a fortress. You replaced your Russian energy with American energy and Australian and so forth, but do you realize that there are three billion energy-poor people in the rest of the world? Do you realize they are the ones who have paid the price? Do you realize how many children might have died because of that? How many family budgets might have been disrupted and actually people? How many people realize that?

Can you have a discussion about this in Europe? I have tried, trust me. It does not work. They do not want to listen to you because what they love the most is an echo chamber. They love to talk with each other. They have the right because they have money, they have technology, they have everything – but, if we are really looking for solutions, that is not the way to do it.

The question is, on a positive note, what do we do? I think, when it comes to climate conversations – Abu Dhabi is going to host the next COP Summit – I am not too optimistic. I am very bland. We need to basically reset the button on climate. Climate and energy transition used to be at the very top of the global agenda until two or three years ago. Honestly tell me, is climate now at the top of the global agenda? It is not, it is Ukraine and the crisis in the Middle East. It is Taiwan and, tomorrow, it will be something else.

However, when it comes to climate, if you want to have results, if you are really worried about the global climate, you have to reset the button. We need to go back to the table. We need to really rework.



The second thing is, we need to democratize all these discussions and conversations on climate and energy transition. Obviously, the process is not democratic. It is mostly top-down from the global north to the global south. Yes, countries like India and China, we assert ourselves because we can but what about those 54 countries in Africa? How many countries in Africa can actually assert themselves? There can be sanctions against them without calling them sanctions.

Now, at the same time, there are many other things to do – de-weaponize oil and gas. You are playing with the lives of people, the future of the children and the future of the economies of smaller countries, more vulnerable economies. 80% of countries in the world are in energy deficit, they import energy. The biggest trade in the world is actually oil. Oil is number one. It roughly accounts for 60% of the total global trade.

The point here is that, at the same time, when it comes to issues like technology, green finance and all of that, again, we need to reset the button there and recouple again, as I said earlier, energy and climate.

Is there any global energy order in the world? Where is the order? The world is all united. We are basically the polarization that is happening. If Russian oil and gas is banned, if it is sanctioned, Russians will have to find a way to sell it to whoever can buy it. That means you are actually creating a parallel order.

In India, there was a question on this to us. If Russians offer us a better discount, we will buy it from Russia. If the US offers, we will buy it from the US. If it is offered by Rwanda, we will buy it from Rwanda. Oil has no nationality. Molecules have no nationality. We will just buy it from there. What is wrong with that? That is how it works.

The important point is everybody is now talking about ‘rule-based international energy order’, but who makes the rules? Who has made these rules? The West and, if you do not follow, then you are questioned and, if you follow, then you have to become subservient. What kind of world are we talking about?

Just in closing, you can understand that I am giving a different perspective and many of you are not used to listening to this kind of thing and you will say, ‘Who is this man? Where does he come from? We were enjoying this echo chamber’. However, this echo chamber has been punctured.

Sorry for that if that is how you feel, but the fact is we need a new international energy order. Number two, we need new international energy governance and, number three, we ideally need a new global organization which can play some role in situations or circumstances like this.

My final point is that, for God’s sake, de-weaponize oil, gas and energy. It is important. There are many other things you can play with – weaponize them if that is important – but not this. Three billion energy-poor people on the planet need it. For their sake, if you have any love for humanity – and the West talks about humanity and whatnot – de-weaponize it. Let oil and gas and all these commodities flow so that people can at least survive. Until they survive, how can they really worry about things like climate?



Thank you very much. Thank you for your patience.

**Olivier Appert**

Thank you.