



Opening Remarks of the 10th Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum Honolulu, Hawaii

**These remarks
were delivered by**

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issues affecting Asia, the
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a wider audience.*

Many things in the world have changed since September 11, 2001, when a sworn enemy — an enemy that dared not confront us in the open — attacked the United States in the most cowardly fashion — by targeting innocent citizens.

And make no mistake. It was not just an attack on America, it was an attack on all of us. It was an attack on the values of freedom and democracy that are embodied in each of the parliaments represented in this forum.

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting held this past October in Shanghai, APEC leaders were quick to unite in opposition to this terrorism.

They unequivocally condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in the United States. They went on to say “we consider the murderous deeds as well as other terrorist acts in all forms and manifestations, committed wherever, whenever and by whomsoever as a profound threat to the peace, prosperity and security of all people, of all faiths, of all nations. Terrorism is also a direct challenge to APEC’s vision of free, open and prosperous economies, and to the fundamental values that APEC members hold.”

When one considers that this joint statement was issued by our leaders, whose governments represent 60% of world GDP and one quarter of the world’s Muslim population, it is a powerful manifestation of unity and resolve.

Now, four months later, we continue our allied efforts to destroy this evil. While much remains to be achieved, we are having considerable success.

■ We have liberated the people of Afghanistan from the Taliban’s cruel grip. Today, Afghan women can be seen in public; little girls can attend school. To ensure that Afghanistan never slips back into the dark days of intolerance, all nations must respond to the urgent economic and social needs of the fledgling Afghan government.

■ We have placed in custody hundreds of al-Qaida operatives and benefactors who for years

have spun this web of hate around the world.

From South America to Europe and Asia, al-Qaida cells have been dismantled, reducing the possibility of future attacks on all our countries.

■ And through our concerted efforts, we have begun to cut the financial links that bankroll these acts of evil. It is estimated that the attackers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon spent less than \$500,000 to undertake an operation whose economic toll is expected to be in excess of \$100 billion. There should be no question of the significant economic consequences that terrorism holds for the global economy.

While the grim images from New York and Washington and a field in Pennsylvania will forever be seared in our minds, I am heartened by the support America received following these attacks.

Within hours, my office had received letters of condolence and support from governments and parliaments worldwide, including governments from each of the nations represented in this room.

My fellow parliamentarians, on behalf of the United States Congress, and all Americans, I come before you to say thank you. Thank you for your condolences. Thank you for your solidarity. And thank you for your enduring support. These acts of kindness and solidarity — and the thousands of others in every nation represented here today, have moved our hearts and given strength to the American people.

Let me also tell you that Americans know that other nations, too, are crying out in pain. For the terrorists did not simply attack America that day, they assaulted the world.

Citizens from more than 60 nations perished. Among the dead are Japanese, Koreans, Canadians, and Mexicans. Gone too are Chinese, Peruvians, Australians, and others.

And let me hasten to add that this utterly evil act did not differentiate among religions. Alongside Christians, Sikhs, and Jews, the terrorists killed Muslims from Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, America, and many other nations.

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At their summit in October, the APEC leaders committed to specific steps to stem the flow of funds to terrorists, to ensure aviation and maritime security, to strengthen energy security, and to enhance border security and customs enforcement.

And while the heads of state conduct the appropriate diplomatic, political, and military response to terrorism, we — as legislators — can and must work in tandem to fight these terrorists. Because it is the job of the legislative branch — and each of us as parliamentarians — to work to enact or modify laws that make these commitments a reality.

These are difficult, complicated issues. But we know how to sort them out. Writing laws is our profession — and we are good at it. But we must not get bogged down in indecision and let the perfect become the enemy of the good. We must not become complacent or allow ourselves to be distracted by other urgent needs. We simply need to get the job done or the horror that visited my nation on September 11 will be repeated, perhaps in your nation.

For the U.S. Congress, this means drastic and immediate action.

Within days of the attacks, the United States Congress convened for a solemn debate to authorize our President to use “all necessary and appropriate force” to respond to the attacks and to deter future ones. Congress approved a \$40 billion emergency spending package to begin rebuilding what the terrorists destroyed, to lend assistance for our slowing economy, and to buttress our homeland security and our intelligence efforts. And we enacted new, stringent laws giving our judicial system and law enforcement the tools necessary to fight this new war on terrorism.

But what exactly is to be done next?

At the outset, our parliaments must continue to protect the freedoms and liberties that each of our nations hold sacred. The civilized and free world must do as much to embody the principles we proclaim, as we do to protect them.

Next, each of us who serves in a parliament must rethink our level of defense, security, and

intelligence expenditures and we must strengthen collective security arrangements. The U.S. Congress just approved legislation increasing America’s defense budget by \$33 billion — an 11% increase above 2001. Much of this increase will be dedicated to enhanced intelligence-gathering programs and to counter-terrorism and homeland security.

Finally, we must take steps to guarantee our economic security, both as individual nations and as global economic partners. Without question, the national and international economic ripple effect of September 11 will continue to be felt for some time. But we cannot allow these events to allow us to close our borders to both people and goods.

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives approved Trade Promotion Authority, which grants the President broad latitude in negotiating free trade agreements. Today, 130 free trade agreements exist among nations — but the United States is party to only two. I look forward to the day when America enjoys completely free and open trade with every nation represented here today. Tearing down trade barriers and reducing tariffs, strengthens the American economy as well as the economies of those with whom we trade.

When I hear President Bush speak of our cause as “justice itself,” I am reminded of the words of one of his predecessors, from my own home state of Illinois, the sixteenth President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Although he was speaking almost 150 years ago, his words still ring true today as we struggle to preserve for the future our sacred values. Abraham Lincoln said, “Let all Americans — let all lovers of liberty everywhere — join in the great and good work. If we do this...succeeding millions of free, happy people, the world over, shall rise up, and call us blessed....”

My fellow Parliamentarians, as the world community greets 2002, we have been awakened to a new and horrible threat. But we are strong. And we are determined. And I have no doubt that we in America — and all the nations that pursue freedom, democracy, and peace — will be the victors.

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