

Bismillah Irr Rehman Irr Raheem!

Honourable President of the brotherly Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Joko Widodo!

And Fellow Parliamentarians!

Asslam-o-Alikum!

On behalf of the Majilis-e-Shoora, the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome Your Excellency Mr. Joko Widodo, the democratically elected seventh President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Excellency!

Your visit and address to this Parliament is of immense historic importance to us. Dr. Ahmed Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia addressed the National Assembly of Pakistan on June 26, 1963.

And now --- after fifty-five years --- this House cherishes the presence in its midst, the democratically elected President of the largest Muslim population country in the world. As the representative of the free will of its 200 million people, this Parliament is, therefore, proud of your presence.

Excellency!

Our two nations cherish deep bonds of history, religion and culture.

These fraternal relations even precede the birth of our two countries as we stood by each other during our respective freedom struggles.

On August 17, 1945, when the Founding Father of Indonesia, Dr. Ahmed Sukarno declared his nation's freedom from the Dutch, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, then as President of the All India Muslim League, called upon the Muslim troops of the British Colonial Army, stationed in the Far East to join hands with their Indonesian brethren against the Dutch colonial aggression.

It remains a glowing chapter of our two countries' history that some 600 Muslim troops from the Indo-Pak Sub-Continent joined the Indonesian Freedom War. Of them, 500 embraced martyrdom. These fine 600 men are the joint heroes of our two nations and we jointly salute them.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's personal attachment to the Indonesian freedom struggle is further manifested from the fact that he ordered to detain the Dutch planes on Karachi Airport, which were carrying supplies for their Army in Jakarta.

Pakistan is proud of the fact that when in 1995, Indonesia celebrated the golden jubilee of its independence; it never forgot its Pakistani comrades and decorated Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with the highest Civil Award of “ADI-PURA”.

Mr. President!

On their part, the Indonesian brothers and sisters have also never left Pakistan alone in its hours of crisis. They stood shoulder to shoulder with us during the Indo-Pak War of 1965 and did not hesitate for a minute in handing over whatever military resources Indonesia had at that critical time.

It goes without saying that the 1948, 1965, 1971 and the later conflicts in South Asia had their genesis in the seven-decade old Kashmir dispute.

An everlasting peace in South Asia requires a just and peaceful solution of this unresolved issue in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and in light of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Pakistan hopes that friends like Indonesia will continue helping Pakistan in this regard.

Excellency!

The historical association of our two people has diversified over the period of time and has helped our two governments to build a strong network of cooperation on all fronts.

As members of the United Nations, the OIC, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States and other international and regional forums, we have been supporting each other on all issues of common concern and interest.

The Parliaments of our two countries have also been constantly engaged in a mutually beneficial cooperation. I'm pleased to report that the Pak-Indonesian Friendship Groups have been constituted in both Houses of our Parliament, which represent all political shades present in this House.

Mr. President!

The recent years have seen enhanced people-to-people contacts between our two countries, which have opened new avenues of cooperation in higher education, cultural exchanges, bilateral trade and investment opportunities on both sides.

However, there is still potential of expansion in these imperative fields for our common good. While the executive leaderships of both countries are pursuing this path, we must also use the dictums of Parliamentary Diplomacy to expand the scope of our friendship.

Parliaments of the two countries can play a meaningful role by jointly working to achieve ever-growing and sustainable partnership.

Mr. President!

The House that you will shortly be addressing is a true reflection of the hopes and aspirations of our people. Through its debates and legislation, it has endeavoured to provide workable solutions to the problems of present-day Pakistan.

In this regard, our daunting challenge has been our fight against global terrorism, in which Pakistan has paid the heaviest price by rendering over Sixty-Five Thousand lives and bearing a loss of over One Hundred& Twenty Billion US Dollars to its economy.

In fact, our two nations, the two largest Muslim countries, are threatened by this same menace --- be it the 2002 Bali bombings or the 2009 and 2016 Jakarta attacks or the gruesome 2016's Army Public School attack in Peshawar. Terrorism and extremism are our common enemies.

You are truly regarded as a reformer President and a visionary who has had his hands on the pulse of the people. I am reminded of one of your interviews to a News Channel in which you said and I quote:

“Islam in Indonesia is a tolerant Islam, Islam in Indonesia is moderate, and we will continue to push for this: that our diversity, our pluralism in Indonesia will continue, that our people are united, that our country will continue to be developed and improve itself so that we will get better and better and better.”

This is the kind of wisdom that the entire Muslim World requires to steer it out from the challenges and this is the kind of acumen this House wishes to draw from you.

With these words, Mr. President, I once again whole-heartedly thank you for your visit to Pakistan and welcome you to our Parliament.

Pakistan-Indonesia Friendship Zindabad.