



Torsten Schack Pedersens tale ved markeringen af 80-året for atombomben i Hiroshima

Taler

Torsten Schack Pedersen
Minister, samfundssikkerhed og
beredskab

Dato

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Sted

REGAN vest

Omstændigheder

I anledningen af 80-års dagen for atombomben over Hiroshima, blev Torsten Schack Pedersen inviteret til at holde tale på engelsk, på koldkrigsmuseet REGAN vest i Skørping.

1 Thank you for the invitation.

It is a great honour to stand before you today.

5 At the same time – I do this with a great deal of humility.

The 6th of August 1945 will forever be remembered.

10 A morning that changed our history. And a brief moment of sudden brightness that turned into darkness.

But I would like to begin at midnight – the night before the 6th of august.

15 These personal accounts are based on writer and journalist John Hersey's interviews with survivors from Hiroshima...

The local radio station had just reported around 200 B-29 bombers approaching.

20 A Hiroshima local – a widow by the name of Mrs. Nakamura – heard the report in the radio.

25 Like she had been instructed to – she took her three children with her to a designated “safe area”.

A long walk – that she had taken many times before. With her two young girls and their 10-year-old brother.

30 At around 2:30 AM they reached their home again. Nothing had happened. Like so many times before.

She looked at her three children. They were exhausted. She therefore decided – she could not do it again. It was simply too stressful.

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Monday morning came. And Mrs. Nakamura was woken up by the sirens. She rushed out to find the neighbourhood association leader. But he told her to stay at home – unless she heard a more urgent warning.

40 Later that morning – she was staring out her window. She watched her neighbour – who was working outside. Then suddenly – “everything flashed whiter than any white she had ever seen”. And the blast threw her across the room.

45 Parts of the house had collapsed on her. Everything became dark. Mrs. Nakamura was partly covered. But she was able to free herself.

As any parent would do, she immediately turned to her children.

50 To dig them out from fallen debris. They had all made it – by a miracle. At least for now.

As we know – many of the survivors would suffer physically and mentally years-and-years after the explosion.

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Many of the citizens of Hiroshima were not as fortunate as Mrs. Nakamura.

Citizens later described what they saw as “a flash of light across the sky”, “a brilliant yellow”, “a blinding light” or a “gigantic photographic flash”.

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It brought buildings crashing down. It left muffled screams for help beneath the ruins. And it had caused unimaginable injuries and devastation.

By reading the stories from Hiroshima – we can try to imagine. Imagine the

horrors that people went through.

But it will probably never match what the eyes of Hiroshima really saw. And what Nagasaki witnessed – only a few days later.

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Adding to the already terrible situation. Most of the hospitals were gone. And only a limited number of doctors and nurses were able to save lives and treat patients.

75 A young surgeon later described his day as “all he could hope was to stop people from bleeding to death”.

But as the darkness covered Hiroshima and its people – the light of humanity rose within.

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3 kilometres from the explosion – a pastor from Hiroshima, was busy moving valuables away from the church – to a safe place outside the city. In fear of an attack.

85 When the bomb exploded and he saw the “blinding white flash” – he threw himself to the ground.

When he got up – he saw a city of fire and ruin.

90 He immediately ran back to check on his church, his home, and his family. On his way – he witnessed crushed houses and fleeing people who all seemed to be hurt.

In the hours and days that followed – the pastor carried the wounded,
95 comforted the dying, and ferried survivors across the river to escape fires.

He paddled a small boat back and forth – and against the stream – to pull people from the water — many too weak to move or speak.

100 And because of the extent of some people’s wounds. He had to repeat to himself, “These are human beings”.

Like so many others – in spite of the extreme situation – he stood up. And put

105 his needs aside and helped his countrymen in a time of need.

As we remember the fallen and those who had to live the consequences – we should also remember the rescuers. Those who put others before themselves.

110 Both on the 6th of august and the next days. And the years that followed.

The humanity within the horror.

115 Why are these stories important? Because – as the first-hand witnesses become fewer – we have an obligation to keep their voices alive. Even those who lived with their memories in silence.

80 years is a lifetime. And the world sure looks a lot different than it did in the 1940s.

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Out of the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – Japan took a different path. And by the mid-50s – experienced a significant economic growth and eventually became one of the strongest economies globally.

125 A once-ruined land rebuilt itself through the resilience of its people. New industries rose from the ashes. Factories were modernized. Innovation thrived.

130 Already by the 1960s, Japan had become one of the world's leading economies – known for its technology, its cars, its electronics – and its commitment to peace.

Japan had joined our democratic family. It became an engine of global growth. Today – Japan stands not only as an economic power – but as a partner for peace, stability, and cooperation in our world.

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The words of another Hiroshima survivor sum up this journey.

“I prefer not to look back. I shall keep moving forward”.

140 This years' EXPO in Osaka is a testimony to the success of Japan's journey. From the ruins of 1945 to a modern world leader in 2025.

145 In April, His Majesty the King visited Japan with a large delegation of ministers and business people. His Majesty was left with a deep impression from both a visit to Hiroshima and the EXPO in Osaka.

As for Japan and Denmark – we have strong economic ties and fruitful collaborations. We share democratic values and principles.

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And our diplomatic relations are over 150 years-old. Dating back to "Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between Japan and Denmark" in 1867

155 Hiroshima and Nagasaki taught us that even the darkest tragedies can give rise to new light. And that a nation can heal – and lead.

But as we stand here today – we must also acknowledge that darkness is once again rising in parts of our world.

160 The security situation has become more uncertain. There is a war in Europe. Cyber threats. Critical infrastructure is under increasing risk of attack.

At the same time, we are experiencing extreme weather events more often – and with greater intensity.

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Old threats have returned – and new challenges have emerged.

This calls for strengthened civil preparedness and resilience across our societies.

170 And we need preparedness and strength not to wage war, but to maintain peace.

175 From a Danish perspective we see threats and risks – especially with regard to hybrid threats and cyberattack. These threats can affect all levels of society – citizens as well as the public and private sector

We face a more uncertain, more dangerous world – where the lessons of history must guide us more than ever.

180 In this changing world – we must stand together.

Democratic nations. Free people. Allies and friends.

185 This is why we at the NATO summit in June committed to invest 5 pct. of GDP annually to ensure we have the forces, capabilities, resources, infrastructure, warfighting readiness, and resilience to deter and defend our Alliance.

190 And this is why it is of utmost importance and significance that Japan is one of NATO's four partners in the Indo-Pacific region. That Japan since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has been steadfast in supporting Ukraine's right to self-defence.

195 To quote the word His Majesty the King wrote in the guest book at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum few months ago:

"I hope, trust, and believe that the wisdom of humanity ensures that such a tragedy is never repeated."

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May we never forget what happened on that August morning.

Those that vanished. Those who suffered. And those who rose to the occasion to help their fellow human beings.

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Their stories shall never be forgotten.

And may we always remember the courage that followed – and the resilience that rebuilt a nation

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Thank you.

Kilde

Manuskript tilsendt af taler og udgivet af Danske Taler med tilladelse fra taler

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Kildetype

Digitalt manuskript

Tags

Mindetale, Venstre

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