



Humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist

Taler

Setsuko Thurlow

Dato

10 desember 2017

Sted

Oslo rådhus

Omstendigheter

Nobelforedrag (sammen med Beatrice Fihn) ved tildeling av Nobels Fredspris til ICAN

1 Your Majesties,
Distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee,
My fellow campaigners, here and throughout the world,
Ladies and gentlemen,

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It is a great privilege to accept this award, together with Beatrice, on behalf of all the remarkable human beings who form the ICAN movement. You each give me such tremendous hope that we can - and will - bring the era of nuclear weapons to an end.

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I speak as a member of the family of hibakusha - those of us who, by some miraculous chance, survived the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For more than seven decades, we have worked for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

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We have stood in solidarity with those harmed by the production and testing of these horrific weapons around the world. People from places with long-forgotten names, like Moruroa, Ekker, Semipalatinsk, Maralinga, Bikini. People whose lands and seas were irradiated, whose bodies were experimented upon,
20 whose cultures were forever disrupted.

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We were not content to be victims. We refused to wait for an immediate fiery end or the slow poisoning of our world. We refused to sit idly in terror as the so-called great powers took us past nuclear dusk and brought us recklessly close to nuclear midnight. We rose up. We shared our stories of survival. We said:
humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist.

Today, I want you to feel in this hall the presence of all those who perished in
30 Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I want you to feel, above and around us, a great cloud
of a quarter million souls. Each person had a name. Each person was loved by
someone. Let us ensure that their deaths were not in vain.

I was just 13 years old when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb,
35 on my city Hiroshima. I still vividly remember that morning. At 8:15, I saw a
blinding bluish-white flash from the window. I remember having the sensation
of floating in the air.

As I regained consciousness in the silence and darkness, I found myself pinned
40 by the collapsed building. I began to hear my classmates' faint cries: "Mother,
help me. God, help me."

Then, suddenly, I felt hands touching my left shoulder, and heard a man saying:
"Don't give up! Keep pushing! I am trying to free you. See the light coming
45 through that opening? Crawl towards it as quickly as you can." As I crawled
out, the ruins were on fire. Most of my classmates in that building were burned
to death alive. I saw all around me utter, unimaginable devastation.

Processions of ghostly figures shuffled by. Grotesquely wounded people, they
50 were bleeding, burnt, blackened and swollen. Parts of their bodies were missing.
Flesh and skin hung from their bones. Some with their eyeballs hanging in their
hands. Some with their bellies burst open, their intestines hanging out. The foul
stench of burnt human flesh filled the air.

Thus, with one bomb my beloved city was obliterated. Most of its residents
55 were civilians who were incinerated, vaporized, carbonized - among them,
members of my own family and 351 of my schoolmates.

In the weeks, months and years that followed, many thousands more would die,
60 often in random and mysterious ways, from the delayed effects of radiation.
Still to this day, radiation is killing survivors.

Whenever I remember Hiroshima, the first image that comes to mind is of my
four-year-old nephew, Eiji - his little body transformed into an unrecognizable
65 melted chunk of flesh. He kept begging for water in a faint voice until his death
released him from agony.

To me, he came to represent all the innocent children of the world, threatened
70 as they are at this very moment by nuclear weapons. Every second of every day,
nuclear weapons endanger everyone we love and everything we hold dear. We
must not tolerate this insanity any longer.

Through our agony and the sheer struggle to survive - and to rebuild our lives
75 from the ashes - we hibakusha became convinced that we must warn the world
about these apocalyptic weapons. Time and again, we shared our testimonies.

But still some refused to see Hiroshima and Nagasaki as atrocities - as war
crimes. They accepted the propaganda that these were "good bombs" that had
80 ended a "just war". It was this myth that led to the disastrous nuclear arms race -
a race that continues to this day.

Nine nations still threaten to incinerate entire cities, to destroy life on earth, to
make our beautiful world uninhabitable for future generations. The
85 development of nuclear weapons signifies not a country's elevation to greatness,
but its descent to the darkest depths of depravity. These weapons are not a
necessary evil; they are the ultimate evil.

On the seventh of July this year, I was overwhelmed with joy when a great
90 majority of the world's nations voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of
Nuclear Weapons. Having witnessed humanity at its worst, I witnessed, that
day, humanity at its best. We hibakusha had been waiting for the ban for
seventy-two years. Let this be the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons.

95 All responsible leaders will sign this treaty. And history will judge harshly those
who reject it. No longer shall their abstract theories mask the genocidal reality
of their practices. No longer shall "deterrence" be viewed as anything but a
deterrent to disarmament. No longer shall we live under a mushroom cloud of
fear.

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To the officials of nuclear-armed nations - and to their accomplices under the
so-called "nuclear umbrella" - I say this: Listen to our testimony. Heed our
warning. And know that your actions are consequential. You are each an
integral part of a system of violence that is endangering humankind. Let us all
105 be alert to the banality of evil.

To every president and prime minister of every nation of the world, I beseech you: Join this treaty; forever eradicate the threat of nuclear annihilation.

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When I was a 13-year-old girl, trapped in the smouldering rubble, I kept pushing. I kept moving toward the light. And I survived. Our light now is the ban treaty. To all in this hall and all listening around the world, I repeat those words that I heard called to me in the ruins of Hiroshima: "Don't give up! Keep pushing! See the light? Crawl towards it."

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Tonight, as we march through the streets of Oslo with torches aflame, let us follow each other out of the dark night of nuclear terror. No matter what obstacles we face, we will keep moving and keep pushing and keep sharing this light with others. This is our passion and commitment for our one precious world to survive.

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Kilde

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Emner

Andre verdenskrig, Atomvåpen, Foredrag, Hiroshima, Nobels fredspris

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