



Bill Clintons tale til københavnere

Taler

Bill Clinton
USA's præsident

Dato

12. juli 1997

Sted

Nytorv

Omstændigheder

Clinton var den første siddende præsident, der besøgte Danmark, og dermed er dette den første tale af en amerikansk præsident på dansk jord. Han talte kl. 16 på Nytorv i København. I talen refererede han til daværende statsminister Poul Nyrup Rasmussens kone, Lone Dybkjær (B); vicesstatsminister og økonomiminister, Marianne Jelved (B) og hendes mand, Jan Jelved, samt Jens Kramer Mikkelsen (S), daværende Overborgmester i København og Bodil Jensen (S), formand for Københavns Borgerrepræsentation.

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister and Lone and Madam Vice Prime Minister and Mr. Jelved, Lord Mayor, Madam Chair of the Council. Ladies and gentlemen of Denmark, thank you for the wonderful welcome. I would also like to express my thanks for all of those who entertained you with music before we began. Thank you all very much.

Let me say I am delighted to be the first sitting American President ever to visit Denmark. I had planned to come earlier, as some of you know, but I injured my leg. And I thank you for allowing me to wait until my leg healed, so the first sitting American President could also be a standing American President. When I first visited Copenhagen in 1969, I was just one student among many who were traveling here. But in all the years since, I have never forgotten the beauty of this city or the warmth of the Danish people. And it is very good to be back.

We gather today at the end of what will long be remembered as a week in which a new era of promise was launched for all Europe. It is the bond between our two nations and the bond of the alliance of all nations in the North Atlantic alliance that has brought us to this moment of hope and possibility at the dawn of a new century.

This week in Madrid, we adapted NATO to meet the new security challenges of the 21st century. They will face us all: ethnic hatreds, the weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, drug running, things that cross national borders. We invited three new nations from Central Europe to join NATO. We opened the door to all the region's new democracies. We forged closer ties with our partners throughout the continent. Together we have now moved closer to realizing our 50-year-old dream: a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace for the very first time since nation-states arose on this continent. And I thank the Government and the people of Denmark for their leadership in realizing this vision.

America's unbroken ties with the Kingdom of Denmark are the oldest we have with any nation in the world. The American people have benefited beyond measure, in the stories of Danish writers like Karen Blixen and Peter Hoeg; in the philosophy of Kierkegaard, who I am told once lived on this very square; in the fables of Hans Christian Andersen who teaches our children that emperors sometimes have no clothes but that ugly ducklings can turn into swans. [Laughter] It is said that every Dane has a relative in America. Today I can tell you, all Americans know they have a friend in Denmark.

Above all, I want to thank Denmark for the extraordinary example you have set for being a force for good far beyond your numbers. Denmark may be a small nation, but you are a very large reason why I believe we're on the verge of a great new age of possibility.

First, Denmark has been a pioneer in showing the world how a nation can succeed, both in creating a strong economy and a good society that provides opportunity for all its citizens and supports those in need, a society bound together by shared values and respect for real differences. We can all learn from your efforts to educate your people for a lifetime, to give them the tools

necessary to make the most of their own lives in a time of global, economic, and technological change.

Second, you have shown us the power of a nation to act with compassion and humanity. During World War II, Denmark's rescue of its Jewish citizens from deportation and death camps set a standard for moral courage that will stir the hearts of free people forever.

Denmark has always made overcoming barriers a national mission, and that is the third point I want to make. A thousand years ago, your seafaring ancestors pushed back the barriers of the known world. You are still doing that. Just as Tycho Brahe mapped the structure of the heavens and Niels Bohr charted the inner workings of the atom, the Danish people time and time again reach beyond borders and go on.

Over the last half century, you have looked past the borders of this prosperous land and made the freedom and well-being of others your concern: leading the global effort to lift people out of poverty far away from here, standing up for human rights around the world, as the Prime Minister said, sometimes almost alone-standing against those who would practice terror against the innocent. Denmark provides more peacekeepers proportionally than any other nation in the entire world, and I hope you are all very proud of that.

You were among the first to heed Bosnia's call. Despite the loss of brave Danish soldiers while the war raged, you have never wavered. For your unshakable commitment to peace and for all you do, I have come here to say on behalf of the American people, we thank you.

Now we must draw on your example to finish the work of overcoming one of the greatest barriers of our time, the division of Europe. And this past week we have shown we can do it not by force of arms but by the power of peace. This week we have seen the face of the new Europe. In Madrid, during our NATO Summit, we saw 44 countries from all corners of the continent come together to forge a common future. We saw the most successful defensive alliance in history reach out its hand to new members and extend its hand to Ukraine and to Russia, now our partners in building a bright future.

We saw nations large and small, new democracies and old ones, join to clear away the debris of old blocs of nations to build new bonds of partnership. In Poland, one of three nations invited to join the alliance, we saw the joy of a people at last secure in their freedom and sure of their place in Europe, people who seized their moment and changed the course of their history and who now sound ready to guarantee a future of freedom to others. Yesterday in Bucharest, Romania, a nation we believe that will soon be ready to join our alliance, we saw the faces of a people-over 100,000 of them-who freed themselves from yesterday's tyranny and are just as determined to seize the promise of tomorrow.

I thank Denmark for rising to this moment; especially I thank you for reaching out to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, for helping them to fortify their economies, to strengthen their democracies, to establish their Baltic Battalion, and to take their place in the new Europe. By bridging the expanse of the Baltic Sea, you helped to close a great gap in history.

Throughout the nations of our alliance, there is a Europe of visionary leaders with a profound sense of mission and a unity some said could not be sustained. NATO has succeeded beyond any expectations. Today, America is grateful to our 15 remarkable allies for their perseverance and friendship, for their leadership in turning the bloodiest continent of the 20th century into a continent free, undivided, at peace, and full of hope for the young people in this audience and far beyond these borders in the 21st century.

Today I ask all of you assembled here, throughout this land, across Europe, and in America, let us all keep freedom's bright light and advance the work of the extraordinary Atlantic community. Let us bring down the barriers to a better future for all people on this continent. Let us close history's divide. Let us create a 21st century of opportunity, security, peace, and freedom for the children of Denmark, Europe, and the United States. It can be the greatest time in all human history. We must follow your past example into the future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Kilde

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Dokumentation på online medie

Tags

Festtale, NATO, Politisk tale

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