

ENCLOSURE B3

Andreas Bøje Forsby: "Is it still a unipolar world? Yes, the US is still the world's only superpower despite the rise of China".

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If the 20th century belonged to the Americans, China will dominate the 21st century. This widespread assumption has been nourished in step with Donald Trump's systematic sabotage of the foundations of the liberal world order that the US has been at the forefront of since WWII. And while "Pax Americana" is speedily eroding from the inside, the Chinese have abandoned decades of restraint. China's speedy advance on the world stage is without precedent in world history, and Denmark has managed to build an extensive strategic partnership with the Chinese, a partnership that is in many ways extremely lucrative for Danish businesses. In this jubilee decade of signing the partnership, it is worth keeping in mind that China is still far behind the US on a number of important power parameters.

The polarity debate furthermore makes it very clear that there is an important distinction between the capacity of power and the exercise of power. Since Donald Trump entered the White House, US leadership has been hastily dismantled in step with the Trump-administration reneging on its obligations in a wide range of areas. This is the case for areas such as international free trade, global climate policies, liberal human rights, membership of UNESCO, the Iran nuclear deal, and the matter of the placement of the capital of Israel. The main point here is that even though the implications hereof are extensive in terms of the US leadership role, Trump's presidency will not fundamentally shake the overwhelming capacity of power of the US.

On the international stage, Trump's presidency has created a void of leadership, which has thrown the liberal world order into an existential crisis. The tectonic plates may be shifting, but "Pax Americana" does not stand and fall with Trump's presidency. Even though China is skilfully taking advantage of the void, we are not witnessing the accession of a new ruler. The unipolar era continues as long as the US upholds its absolute lead in hard power capabilities. Conversely, the US risks squandering its equally unique position in terms of wielding soft power, i.e. the ability to attract others based on your own values, culture and civil society.