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**BIPR Webinar**

**The New World Disorder: The Power Struggle between China, the US and Europe**  
*Part of the European and Eurasian Studies Series*

**Alexander Stubb:** Director of the School of Transnational Governance at the European University Institute in Fiesole; former Prime Minister of Finland

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“Are we in the process of creating digital democracies or digital dictatorships?” That, in short, is Alexander Stubb’s outlook on the unfolding power struggle for global technological – and with that political – dominance of the coming decades.

Alexander Stubb joined the Bologna Institute for Policy Research on Thursday, September 24 to share his insights on everything from the Covid-19 pandemic and global tech-competition to his own experiences in wielding the levers of governmental power. Having served – among others – as the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Finland and now as Professor at the European University Institute in Florence, few are better equipped for such a tour de force on contemporary affairs than Stubb.

While technological innovations are rapidly transforming the global economy and human life itself, a power struggle between the China, the United States and the European Union is unfolding over who will dominate the coming age of geotechnology, the former Prime Minister observed. In the early days of social media, many expected it to advance democratic causes around the world, as was seemingly the case in the Arab Spring. Today however, authoritarian governments seem to be on the advance once again, having harnessed the tools of technology to further suppress their citizens. Indeed, the accelerating pace of information sharing in the age of social media poses a serious challenge to the traditionally deliberative democratic process, Stubb cautioned.

Amid rapid technological transformations, the state has started to once again reassert itself and is now grappling with the question of how to regulate the tech sector, Stubb noted. In the long run the goal should be to foster what he considers a “human-centric approach” to Artificial Intelligence, in which AI serves an ethical purpose that respects fundamental rights, local regulatory frameworks and values.

Regardless of who will be the next US president, Stubb expects America to continue taking a hardline against China, further limiting the market access for its tech products. Should this scenario play out, he urged the EU to stand at America’s side. Both with its massive consumer market as well as with its regulatory prowess, the European Union has an important role to play in this unfolding struggle, Stubb observed.

Looking back on his own career as a politician, Stubb highlighted the importance of being a crisis manager. Whether it is the Greek bailout, the European migrant crisis or now the Covid-19 pandemic, the main task remains to provide security and welfare to the people you are elected to represent.