

MAGA, indicative of the demise of US' superiority

By Aart G. Broek

“Never, ever underestimate a people’s pride, no matter how broken they might be. Tap into people’s dignity and they will do anything for you. Ignore it, and they won’t lift a finger.” [Thomas Friedman NYT, 2003, Nov. 9]

President Trump hasn’t polished up the doctrines and imperialist practices of the past. His country is busy salvaging what remains of that cherished omnipotence of the past.

No country has been so thoroughly humiliated since “the fall of the Wall” in 1989—the collapse of the communist Soviet Union—as the United States. The expectation that the entire world would embrace a liberal-democratic system as “paradise” has come to little or nothing in the ensuing thirty-five years; quite the opposite.



Russia selectively appropriated the capitalism it had despised

for decades, subjected its people to the dictatorship of an oligarchy, and infiltrated countries like Ukraine and Venezuela, both with and without military force. China developed into an imperial power as large and threatening as the hallowed United States itself, but without the consent—and certainly no dissent—of its people, let alone those of Tibet or Hong Kong. Europe refused to actively defend the paradise built and protected by the US, systematically insulted the US with fierce criticism and by selling, among other things, sensitive IT knowledge to the aforementioned “Satans”. Many Islamic-backed dictatorships proved to be a desert for the US to hopelessly lose its way in, and numerous extremist Muslims managed to violently pierce the heart of the US. All of this has been very detrimental to the once-almighty United States.

There appeared to be no “end to history” at all, as Francis Fukuyama put it, the dominant idea in the American world these past three decades. On the contrary, history was being rewritten. This occurred primarily by “worlds” that – however different – each had to process a shameful past and accompanying feelings of shame: Russia, China, Islamic dictatorships, as well as Europe. Where shame roams, aggression wanders in its wake. Clearly, the demise of US’ superiority has been perceived as such: hence the success – in the US – of the slogan “Make America Great Again”.

In this “rewritten” history, Europe lacks the power to assert a robust autonomy. It will have to settle for a less attractive – ideally and ideologically – but practically feasible option for survival. It will have to take the lesser of two evils and remember Thomas Friedman’s wise words (quoted above), which are applicable to his own nation just as well.