



# Nikolaj Malchow-Møllers tale i anledning af den amerikanske ambassadørs besøg

**Taler**

Nikolaj Malchow-Møller  
Rektor på CBS

**Dato**

7. november 2023

**Sted**

Copenhagen Business School,  
Frederiksberg

**Omstændigheder**

Besøget fra den amerikanske ambassadør til Danmark, Alan Leventhal, vakte opsigt og protest i lyset af den igangværende konflikt i Israel/Palæstina.

Dear ambassador, dear students

The United States of America and Denmark go back a long time. Sometimes we forget how long.

Through the 19th century, one tenth of the Danish population emigrated. And the majority travelled to America. 200 years later, those Danes have almost 1.5 million descendants across the United States, this is equivalent to the current number of inhabitants in the Greater Copenhagen area. Or a quarter of the total population of Denmark.

In that sense, Denmark and the United States share historical bonds. Both nations are also considered Western democracies. We are both members of NATO. And there is a long tradition for trade and intercultural exchange between our two nations. CBS for instance has 42 partner universities in the US.

But even though the United States and Denmark are close, I know that sometimes it doesn't seem like it. Issues like the liberal gun regulations and the anti-abortion movement make people in Denmark wonder about the American way.

When we announced this event last week, we also received a lot of criticism. How can we welcome an American ambassador when Israel is attacking Gaza with the support of the US? More than 1.400 people apparently have signed a

statement asking us to cancel the event. Some of them might be CBS students.

As citizens in a western democracy, you have a constitutional right to express your political views and concerns. This includes publicly criticizing a foreign state visiting your school. And it includes your right to publicly criticize CBS and me for hosting this event. In that sense the critique is a democratic act in itself. But it would not be a democratic act to cancel this event.

This is a university. Where we treasure freedom of expression, public debate, and diversity of thought. And that is why we cannot and will not cancel this event. That would be to shut down the free debate – and your opportunity to express your criticism or your support.

It would also be bad for society and for our joint future. Only through curious dialogue and through the difficult conversations can we find the best way forward together. This is something, I strongly believe in. And this event is an opportunity to do exactly that. To ask and to listen.

I know the ambassador shares this view. And he is here to answer your questions. Including the critical ones. There will be no censorship today, except if you try to prevent the dialogue.

That comes with the territory of democracy. And this is one of the historical values, we share with America.

On that note I will leave the floor to the ambassador.

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