

ART FORTUNE POLITICS

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INTERVIEW - JAMES E. FANELL



Captain James E. Fanell concluded a near 30-year career as a naval intelligence officer specializing in Indo-Pacific security affairs. His most recent assignment was the Director of Intelligence and Information Operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Throughout his career in the Navy, he served in an unprecedented series of afloat and ashore assignments focused on China, as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence for the U.S. Seventh Fleet aboard the USS Blue Ridge as well as the USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier strike group both forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan. Ashore he was the U.S. Navy & China Senior Intelligence Officer at the Office of Naval Intelligence. In addition to these assignments, he was a National Security Affairs Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and is currently a Government Fellow with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in Switzerland. He is an accomplished international public speaker and has an extensive list of published works regarding China. He is also the creator and manager of the Indo-Pacific Security forum Red Star Risen/Rising since 2005.

Q : China has one of the top navy capabilities and also it is building more nuclear warheads. But, if China invades Taiwan it has to absorb the deaths, economic hardships and other costs of war. The United States senior defence official said the Defense Department does not see an imminent threat of the invasion of Taiwan, instead, China is establishing a new normal of increased intimidation. While others say the contrary. What is your opinion?

Despite statements from the Defense Depart of not seeing an imminent threat of a PRC invasion of Taiwan, there is overwhelming evidence the PRC is prepared to conduct such an operation. First, there are a large number of statements from senior U.S. and foreign government officials that an invasion by the PRC is something is increasingly likely to happen, in what I characterized as the "Decade of Concern" (the period from 2020 to 2030) as early as 2012 while in uniform and publicly in 2017.

For other such statements, recall the former Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Davidson, indicating that 2027 was a likely date for when the PRC could launch an invasion of Taiwan. Most recently the head of the U.S. Air Mobility Command, General Minihan, stated Xi Jinping and his "war council" would likely launch an invasion in 2025. That statement matched similar statements by Taiwan's Minister of Defense indicating that 2025 would most likely be the best year for the PRC to conduct such an operation.

The imminency of the threat of a PLA invasion of Taiwan was made even clearer by the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gilday, in August 2022 when he stated that an invasion could occur this year (2022) or next.

While there is no question that a PLA invasion of Taiwan would be a very costly, in terms of human life and economic stability, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has put the CCP's regime survival on political platform called the "Great Rejuvenation of China", which implicitly includes the "restoration" of territory the CCP believes is China's.

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Politics

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ART FORTUNE POLITICS
February 2023 Page 4

MORE PICTURES FROM OUR VISIT TO POLAND - WARSAW



Clockwise from top :

At the Palace of Science and Culture

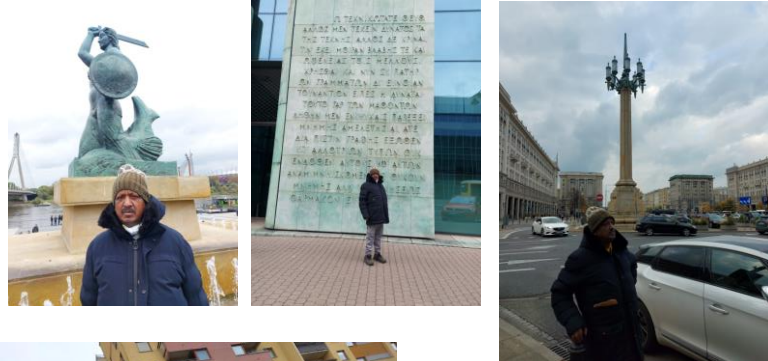
Soviet Military Cemetery, Warsaw

In Metro Politechnika

At the famous plac Konstytucji

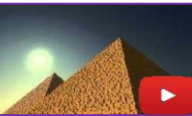
In front of Warsaw University Library.

Warsaw Mermaid Statue



Our Editor in front of (Ulica) Indira Gandhi street in Warsaw Poland. It is said that this street was supposed to be named after Jawaharlal Nehu during his visit to Warsaw but was advised by him to name it after his Daughter.

Location on the map of Warsaw (click to the map of Warsaw)



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INTERVIEW - JAMES E. FANELL (cont from page 1)

As we've seen over the past two decades, the PRC has prioritized spending on the PLA and has already begun the process of acquiring some of those territories. For instance, the PRC seized Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and has also taken direct control over Hong Kong, breaking their treaty obligations with the United Kingdom.

Additionally, the PRC has built seven military installations in the disputed waters of the South China Sea. Three of these bases are the same size as Pearl Harbor) and have been militarized, again breaking international agreements as articulated in the 2000 Code of Conduct.

While the PRC would prefer to use non-kinetic power to "restore" these territories, they have prepared themselves for the use of kinetic force. As was ordered by previous leader Hu Jintao as well as current leader Xi Jinping.

The best example of this preparation was made during the August 4-7, 2022, Taiwan invasion dress rehearsal where the PLA bracketed Taiwan with ballistic missiles and surrounded the island of Taiwan with air and naval forces. Most specifically, PLA air forces have now begun to cross the centerline in waves that have never been observed before. All in all, it seems increasingly likely that the PRC is inching itself closer to an invasion of Taiwan.

Q: Can China be called a "benign hegemon" specifically in the Asia Pacific region?

No, the PRC cannot be called a "benign hegemon". By every measure the CCP led PRC is best characterized as an authoritarian bully. In the economic realm, we have seen the CCP use economic warfare to penalize smaller nations that don't conform to Beijing's directives. For example, the PRC boycotted South Korea over their acceptance of an American Theater High-Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system.

The PRC has also imposed economic sanctions on Australia simply because former Australian Prime Minister Morrison asked the United Nations to examine the origins of the SARS CoV-2 virus. In the diplomatic arena, the CCP has called and used their diplomats as "wolf warriors" where they badger and harass smaller and medium nations to comply with Beijing wishes. And in the military arena it is clear the PRC is not a benign hegemon. A prime example is the invasion that PLA soldiers made into Indian territory in 2020, killing 20 or more Indian soldiers. These are not the actions of a benign nation.

Q: Given India being the largest buyer of Russian oil and a member of the BRICS- an organisation trying to break the status quo of the dollar as the dominant reserve currency. Will the QUAD endure in the long run with all its members embedded?

The QUAD alliance is a very important to checking the expansionist intentions and actions of the PRC. While India has a history of being a leader of the non-aligned movement, due to the PRC's threatening military buildup along the Indian border, it seems clear that it is in Delhi's best interest to make the QUAD work. Will it? That's hard to say, but my assessment is that if the QUAD is not attended to and cared for it fall apart. If that were to happen, then I assess India's national security will be weakened. However, it is my assessment that the Indian people will understand the importance of the QUAD and will continue to help it mature and expand. It need not be an Indo-Pacific version of Europe's NATO alliance, but there is no question that the benefits of the QUAD are greater than their weaknesses.

'The QUAD alliance is a very important to checking the expansionist intentions and actions of the PRC.'

'GAIN'

UNDERWORLD'S POLITICAL WAR HAS DESTROYED ADANI'S BUSINESS

INTERVIEW - JAMES E. FANELL (cont from page 2)

Q: North Korea has carried out missile tests for almost four decades. Is North Korea truly a threat to its neighbours or is the DPRK just intimidating so as to affect businesses and investments in the neighbouring countries?

During my career in naval intelligence in the Pacific, I had the opportunity to monitor North Korea very closely. It is my assessment that Kim Jong-Un (KJU) and the ruling communist party are a very real threat, one that seems to have increased in the past two years as we see unprecedented levels of ballistic missile tests. While there was a period of calm during the Trump administration, it appears North Korea is once again on a trajectory to build a viable nuclear ballistic missile capability. KJU believes he can use a nuclear ICBM capability to hold the region hostage to his demands for food and aid. Most importantly, KJU does not want to see a reunification of the Korean Peninsula. So, in summation, North Korea is a very real threat to its neighbors, but not from an invasion, like I believe the PRC is prepared to do over Taiwan, but instead to do as you state, to intimidate and blackmail the nations around its borders into giving it aid.

Q: China's Foreign vice-minister Le Yucheng has said that China is not scared of isolation or sanctions if they are to invade Taiwan. Also, China has the largest navy and its military is the third strongest in the world. Are military operations and sanctions sufficient to counteract China, if there is an invasion of the island nation?

'the U.S. Navy, is now smaller than the PLA Navy, it also is deficient in terms of supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles'

This is the key question. While the U.S. and its allies have tools to be used to deter the PRC from aggression against Taiwan and other nations, they need to be enhanced and enlarged. For instance, the U.S. Navy, is now smaller than the PLA Navy, it also is deficient in terms of supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles, which the PLA Navy has in abundance. In terms of economic levers of power, unlike the sanctions being used by the EU and America against Russia, the same levers do not exist against the PRC, at least not without having severe economic consequences on their own economies. As such, the US and its allies need to "bolster" their military and economic levers of power. In the military realm, the U.S. needs many, many more ships that can deploy these long-range supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles. The same can be said for US air forces. In the economic realm, the only real solution for strengthening the effectiveness of sanctions is for the rest of the world to "decouple" from the PRC. By decoupling, these free nations will improve their own self-sufficiency, while also increasing their leverage over Beijing. All in all, the rest of the world has a lot of work to be done to increase the effectiveness of their levers of power over the PRC and its own aggressive and expansionist world view.

- Vadamalai Muthu Meenakshi