

Chinese Imperialism

China's president seems determined to bring new territory under Chinese rule. Sometimes he easily achieves this goal – like when China built several man-made islands in the South China Sea and promptly turned them into military bases. Other nations did not put up enough of a fuss to deter China's island building.

Other times, President Xi thought gaining new territory would be difficult so he waited until he thought the timing was right. For instance, it looked like bringing Hong Kong into China's fold would be difficult. The city has over seven million people who were used to living in a free society and were deemed unlikely to give up these freedoms without a struggle. But the expected fierce resistance to China's rule never occurred – mostly because China waited to take over Hong Kong until the covid-19 pandemic made many of the city's residents unwilling to participate in mass demonstrations. Without this opposition, China successfully brought Hong Kong under its control.

Many pundits think that China is waiting for an opportune time to seize Taiwan and they think that this time may come soon. They point to the events that are currently soaking up U.S. resources and making the U.S. less able to

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help Taiwan resist a Chinese invasion. These other events include Russia's war in Ukraine and Israel's fight with Hamas in the Gaza strip. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the U.S. has sent over \$75 billion in aid to Ukraine since the start of its war with Russia. Sixty-one percent of that aid was in the form of military aid. Further, President Biden made it clear that the U.S. will provide substantial aid to Israel. The pundits fear that these two events may deplete the U.S.'s inventory of military wares, leaving the U.S. with insufficient stocks of military goods to successfully help Taiwan defend itself from a Chinese attack.

But it would be a mistake for China to count on the U.S.'s involvement in the Ukrainian and Israeli conflicts as a sufficient distraction to give them a chance to seize Taiwan. Yes, the U.S. has depleted some of its military inventories. It is low on 155 mm howitzer shells, Himars, Javelin missiles, and Stinger missiles. But a more important event is occurring. The U.S. industry is ramping up to produce more military goods. New assembly lines are

being set up. Long term contracts are being signed with defense contractors.

The U.S. is following a familiar pattern. It starts off wars and strategic conflicts with paltry inventories of military hardware. Then once the conflict gets going, the U.S. redirects its production to produce a massive amount of war goods, which it can produce at levels that allow the U.S. to outgun any of its adversaries.

The U.S. is like a hibernating grizzly bear. The bear is vulnerable while it is sleeping and perhaps after it just wakes up. Likewise, the U.S. may be vulnerable before it readjusts its production to meet war-time demands. The two current conflicts may have caused the U.S. to begin producing massive amounts of war material. This extra production capacity is now available to help Taiwan resist a Chinese invasion. Now the U.S. economy is like a fully engaged grizzly bear. It is no longer like a sleeping grizzly. China would be foolish to invade Taiwan now. The Ukrainian and Israeli wars have awakened the sleeping giant and the timing would not be right for China to be successful with its invasion of Taiwan.

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