**An interview with Tim Danks, VP, Risk Management & Partner Relations at Huawei Technologies**

*I recently had the opportunity to interview Tim Danks, VP, Risk Management and Partner Relations at Huawei Technologies about the current conditions between Huawei and Washington. The interview is very telling, and it provides some insight into how Huawei is dealing with the data coming from the White House, much of it untrue.*



Ernest: The has been, and still is, an exaggerated anti-China atmosphere in Washington, spear headed by the President. Can you elaborate on that a bit?

Tim: Well, I agree with you. It should be noted that this is not just an administration issue. This is basically a bipartisan kind of anti-China sentiment. You have legislators on both sides of the aisle that are against China in every way, shape or form, and against Huawei by association. It's something that we have we have to understand and acknowledge.

Ernest: I think he was the catalyst that got a bunch of China hawks fired up. I say this a lot, that I don't think our legislators really understand technology, in general. I think they are being fed bounded data that, while certainly has some truth to it, is being spun with a lot of fear mongering.

Tim: I agree. Most of our policymakers are out of touch with technology. If you recall the Zuckerberg Facebook hearings, some of the questions posed by the legislators were just plain embarrassing.

For example, the simplistic approach to saying Huawei, or others have placed back doors in networks, and they can simply access networks and cause havoc, or steal data anytime is not at all realistic. Telecom networks don't work that way. They are just fundamentally too complex and built with layers upon layers of security. As example, most telecom operators, in fact, I'm pretty sure all of them today, don't allow automatic, unknown, random upgrades remotely. That may happen with smartphones; however, these networks are much more complex than a smartphone.

Ernest: Thanks, Tim. Let’s shift gears for a moment and talk about Covid 19. Tell me a bit about how Huawei is operating coming out of the pandemic.

Tim: we have been working to manage and diversify supply chains and have various different business continuity plans in place plus many of our factories are highly automated. We were one of the first companies in China to push working from home and identifying what we needed to do to protect employees. After the initial wave in China, we put into place some rigorous safeguards on our campuses and factories, to keep employees safe and keep vigilant for new outbreaks.

Some of the things we have done externally has been to provide medical supplies around the world to areas that needed it. In New York City, as an example, we provided medical supplies. We did the same for the Netherlands as well as several other nations.

Ernest: OK, great. Now let’s talk about 5G for a bit.

Tim: As is well documented, Huawei is a leader in 5G technology. We have invested about $4 billion in the technology over the last 10, or so years in developing standards, and technology, etc. As you know, we are just at the starting line of the 5G rollout. As we are past the worst of the pandemic, we are ramping up 5G in a variety of directions. We will continue to develop, sell, and deploy 5G technology and share our knowledge with the nations that want to work with us.

AI is another area that is especially important in 5G, especially with new services AI can play a huge role in supporting and addressing concerns and issues in society such as COVID-19. Huawei recently launched the Atlas 900, which is the world's fastest AI training cluster to help transform scientific research and innovation in business.

Some examples of what we have done, and are doing, is in China. At the height of the pandemic there were several hospitals that were struggling with the overflow of patients. Huawei helped several of the operators in China push 5G coverage in these hospitals within the three days. They used 5G platforms to do telemedicine for remotely diagnose, for example and ease the crunch.

We are also doing work with 5G in other areas. In Thailand, again, during the height of the pandemic, we provided telemedicine video conferencing solutions to help them connect a variety of different areas. We donated conferencing systems which gave them the ability to connect many areas and share data and solutions.

In Italy, we helped to bring fiber, 5G, and Wi Fi 6 to various parts of the healthcare system.

In Pakistan, Huawei helped deploy a video conferencing system to aid them in their fight with COVID-19. One of the things that's really interesting is we developed a system using the AI cloud to take CT scans, review them and provide a diagnosis and analysis of the CT scanned patient with COVID-19 within less than two minutes. This was made possible with the combination of AI and 5G, which would not have been possible with current legacy systems.

Ernest: Excellent. Let’s drill down on AI for a moment.

Tim: Well, one Huawei application is in Argentina’s airports. We helped them install an AI-based system that can read the temperature of 20 people simultaneously, without contact or having to be right on top of them. That worked out to be about 1000 people per hour being checked on their way through an airport and catching people that might be ill.

Ernest: what do you think will happen now that that we have some experience with a situation such as Covid 19 How are things going to shift?

Tim: For one thing, working from home will be a new normal. 5G development and deployment will be accelerated. We have already ramped up production and doing a lot of research. It will be part of a new, underlying architecture that can support a variety of new services. Use cases for 5G will include applications that require ultra-low latency massive machine-type communication that 5G will support. Telemedicine will be accelerated. All this because 5G technologies, much of it in new spectrum, are ramping up again.

Ernest: What is your take on how the relationship with the U.S. will go?

Tim: The relationship with the U.S. is certainly challenging. However, much of what is publicized is media sensationalism. Have we had issues, of course, we have acknowledged areas where we need to improve. But, on the other hand we have had vendor continuity and supply chain risk management practices in place for many years now.

In spite of what it all around us, we have managed to maintain growth momentum. Like every company, everywhere. We are looking hard at cost containment and optimization of resources. Sourcing will be challenging with businesses closing, high unemployment, and the economic and the societal impacts are going to be felt around the world.

Tim: So, I come from a service background and risk management is kind of my focus. I have also added cybersecurity and privacy to my areas of expertise over the past 10 years. One thing this is teaching us is that we need to diversify more. No company or country should be completely dependent on a single other company or country for their supply chain. When I look at it, it makes sense to diversify and not be 100 percent reliant on one single source supply chain.

We actually started to look at supply chain risk management back in 2011 and that is one reason we are doing as well as we are under the circumstances. We always had suppliers that were, for the most part, alternatives to others. Now, of course, that is not the case for every single part or component, but for a lot we have what we call “second-tier” suppliers that we would still buy product from to maintain connection. They maybe were not as mature, or they didn't have the volume capability or capacity of primary suppliers or maybe they still had a few quality issues. However, we always kept them on the channel and helped keep them in business.

As this unfolded, we spent a lot of effort helping them improve their quality, production and ramp up to operate on a larger scale. So, this diversification has worked to our advantage. In this global economy, nations have to work together. I think the isolationist direction this administration is pursuing will not benefit them as they seem to think it will.

Ernest: Overall, what you see as the landscape say, a couple of years down the road?

Tim: I believe that this can go one of two ways. If the political landscape changes in November, I hope the U.S. and China tension will ease. While there is a China Hawk segment in Congress, most in Washington realize that some sort of relationship with China is beneficial to both countries. So if that occurs, there should be movement to disarm the current tensions.

If the current administration remains, it is likely the rift will widen, and I really think the U.S. will start to slip, in leadership, in many areas. China will reinvent itself to adapt to the situation. Realize that China is a huge, global, economic power and has many, many nations as customers and many nations have China as a customer. Granted the U.S. was a large part of that, however, China will survive, even thrive, even if there is total decoupling between the two countries.

In the end, if the worst scenario happens, I think the U.S. will have a much harder time with advancing technology than the current administration believes.