



# China's Technocrat Belt And Road Expansion Breeds Local Anger

Wherever China gets its Technocratic hooks into a nation and then local economy, sparks begin to fly as they take over development, planning and social practices. Locals seldom win and concern is building everywhere. □ TN Editor

When I returned to Xigang after five years, I couldn't recognize it. What had been a small but generally well-maintained beach town had become a sprawling mess of a city; construction, mud, and piles of garbage were seemingly everywhere. The Han Chinese with whom I spoke trumpeted the new opportunities that Beijing was bringing to the local Gaomian ethnic minority in this frontier outpost. The Gaomian people, they told me, didn't know how to develop their land and resources. Xigang may be a mess now, but, they assured me, it would emerge looking like a modern Chinese city.

Yet Xigang isn't a Chinese city, at least in the geographic sense. *Xigang* itself is the Chinese name for the Cambodian port of

Sihanoukville. Local Gaomian people—known in English as Khmer—have watched their home on the Gulf of Thailand change from a pleasant (if not entirely safe) place frequented by Western gap-year backpackers and beer-swilling sexpats, to what many consider a colonial settlement. A Chinese military presence appears more and more plausible.

With its inclusion in Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative, Sihanoukville now finds itself firmly in Beijing’s embrace, one that is facilitated by Xi and China’s growing role as benefactor of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. It is an embrace that looks likely to tighten. Last summer, Beijing announced that a [new consulate](#) would be opened in the city, and *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that the two countries had signed a deal to allow Chinese vessels access to the nearby Ream naval base. In mid-October, China’s ambassador to Cambodia, Wang Wentian, helped establish a [Chinese chamber of commerce office](#) in Sihanoukville. And it has plenty of potential members: According to local statistics, more than 90 percent of businesses in the city are now Chinese-owned. Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge officer and one of the world’s longest-serving leaders, has maintained his position by deftly playing different patrons as needed: first Vietnam, then international aid organizations, and now China.

The rapid change in Sihanoukville illustrates the risks of that approach, both for Hun Sen and for Beijing. China’s move into this city, at remarkable speed and scale, has fostered resentment among Cambodians toward new arrivals who, locals complain, flaunt laws and treat long-time residents with contempt. The changes here illustrate the costs to China—tangible and intangible—of its hefty outward expansion, both through its Belt and Road initiative, and with the huge numbers of Chinese who are moving to fast-developing places such as Sihanoukville to capitalize.

Many Cambodians I spoke with voiced concerns about Sihanoukville turning into a de facto Chinese colony, and the consensus was that they were being treated like second-class citizens in their own homeland. At one restaurant, when I told a Cambodian employee that I was visiting from Taiwan, he referenced the opposition in other locales where Beijing has sought to impose its will. “Taiwan says no to China, Hong Kong says

no to China,” he told me, “but Hun Sen only says yes to China.”

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## **ASU Leads Nation In Unconstitutional ‘Smart Region’ Scheme**

Regional governance is the arch-enemy and destroyer of a “republican form of government” as guaranteed to the states by the U.S. Constitution. ASU started the “Smart Region Initiative” that will impose Smart City policies throughout the region.

The president of Arizona State University, [Dr. Michael Crow](#), is also [Chairman of the Board of Trustees](#) of the CIA’s private venture capital firm, In-Q-Tel. SRI is essentially modeled after In-Q-Tel to provide tech ‘incubators’ and ‘sandboxes’ to advance experimental Smart City technology and policies throughout the Phoenix region. SRI is also

partnered with the [Maricopa Association of Governments](#) to help impose its policies upon 22 cities and 4.2 million people while bypassing duly elected city councils.

To say that SRI is a swarm of unelected and unaccountable Technocrats is an understatement. Furthermore, SRI is attracting other Technocrat companies from all over the world. □ TN Editor

[Arizona State University](#) (ASU) and [Alteryx](#) (NYSE: [AYX](#)), revolutionizing business through data science and analytics, today announced a collaboration to accelerate Smart City program development in the Phoenix Metro area via advanced analytic solutions. Dean Stoecker, CEO of Alteryx, discussed the partnership during his keynote address at the [ASU Smart Region Summit](#), hosted today in Phoenix.

“Higher education institutions are at the forefront of technical innovation and have an immense responsibility to empower the success of our future workforce,” said Stoecker. “Today’s summit and the university’s Smart City Cloud Innovation Center are indicative of ASU’s leadership in both areas. Alteryx has a proven track record of enabling Smart City solutions across the globe and we are proud to partner with an organization equally dedicated to driving remarkable social outcomes. Together, we are putting our powerful analytics platform in the hands of those capable of creating the cities and economies of tomorrow with data science and analytics.”

ASU, recognized by U.S. News and World Report as the most innovative university for the fifth consecutive year, opened the Smart City Cloud Innovation Center (CIC) in March 2019, designed to improve digital experiences for smart city designers, expand technology alternatives and spur economic development. As part of the CIC (pronounced “kick”), ASU faculty and students can leverage the Alteryx Platform to solve submitted challenges that will help enable smarter communities in Phoenix, preparing students to solve real-world business issues and driving social impact.

“It is rare to find industry-leading companies like Alteryx who are

passionate about aiding higher education institutes like ASU in our mission of social embeddedness,” said Lev Gonick, chief information officer at ASU. “Through this collaboration, our students will gain access to a modern, end-to-end data analytics platform that will not only allow them to discover and implement smart city solutions, but will also set them up for success as they graduate college and enter the workforce. We’re excited to explore additional possibilities with Alteryx as we partner across the private and public sectors to accelerate innovation and drive social good.”

Alteryx is helping ASU further accelerate data literacy and development of the future workforce via the Alteryx for Good (AFG) university program, which allows educators to incorporate data science and analytics into curricula and engage students in predictive, statistical and spatial analytics. Learn more about the AFG program and higher education opportunities [here](#).

### **About Arizona State University**

Arizona State University has developed a new model for the American Research University, creating an institution that is committed to access, excellence and impact. ASU measures itself by those it includes, not by those it excludes. As the prototype for a New American University, ASU pursues research that contributes to the public good, and ASU assumes major responsibility for the economic, social and cultural vitality of the communities that surround it.

### **About Alteryx**

Revolutionizing business through data science and analytics, Alteryx offers an end-to-end analytics platform that empowers data analysts and scientists alike to break data barriers, deliver insights and experience the thrill of getting to the answer faster. Organizations all over the world rely on Alteryx daily to deliver actionable insights. For more information visit <https://www.alteryx.com>.

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# Trump Admin Will Approve Massive Alternative Energy Projects For Federal Land

Since President Trump has put the brakes on climate change policies, it is incongruous that the administration will now approve massive alternative energy projects on public lands, all of which will involve Public-Private-Partnerships. □ TN Editor

The Trump administration is poised this year to do what congressional Democrats and other critics of the president's "energy dominance" campaign have been demanding for months: advance large-scale renewable energy projects on federal lands.

By summer, the Bureau of Land Management plans to have issued records of decision (RODs) approving five commercial-scale solar and wind projects, as well as a major proposal to open 21,000 acres in Southern California for geothermal energy leasing, according to a BLM state-by-state priority project list obtained by E&E News.

To be sure, the priority list includes plenty of high-profile fossil fuel and

mining projects, including issuing an ROD by April for a revised management plan that could open up sensitive wildlife habitat within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to oil drilling.

But the priority list under President Trump also includes target dates to issue final approvals for:

- The Gemini Solar Project in Nevada, which would have the capacity to produce 690 megawatts of electricity, ranking it among the world's largest photovoltaic power plants. Projected to sit on roughly 7,100 acres of BLM-managed lands about 33 miles northeast of Las Vegas, the project also includes a large solar storage capacity that would allow it to feed power to the energy grid after sundown. BLM in December published a final environmental impact statement (EIS) and proposed resource management plan amendment for the project in the *Federal Register*, kicking off a 30-day public protest period running through Jan. 27.
- The Crimson Solar Project in California, which would have a capacity to produce 350 MW of electricity, or enough to power more than 100,000 homes. Proposed to be built on about 2,700 acres of federal lands in Riverside County, it also is projected to include a battery storage component allowing it to supply power after the sun goes down. It's set for an ROD as early as February.
- The Haiwee Geothermal Leasing Area, which would offer more than 21,000 acres in California for utility-scale geothermal power development. BLM has estimated that the proposed leasing area could spur \$1 billion in investment in geothermal power projects capable of producing enough electricity to power about 117,000 homes. An ROD is expected in February.
- The Walker Ridge Wind Energy Project in Northern California, which would string together about 42 wind turbines across 2,270 acres of federal lands and have the capacity to power about 145,000 homes. BLM is expected to approve the project by June.
- The Borderlands Wind Project in New Mexico. The project in Catron County would have a capacity to produce up to 100 MW of electricity. The priority list forecasts issuing a final EIS for the

project in March and an ROD approving it in July.

- The Yellow Pine Solar Project in Nevada, which would have the capacity to produce up to 250 MW of electricity. It's proposed to be built on roughly 9,000 acres of federal lands about 32 miles west of Las Vegas, and BLM withdrew the area from new mining claims for as long as two years while it conducts an EIS of the proposal. Yellow Pine is not as far along in the federal review process as the other projects on the list. A draft EIS is expected in January, followed by a final EIS in May. The project list forecasts issuing an ROD in July.

The projected approval dates come as conservation groups and congressional Democrats have criticized Trump's focus on oil and gas drilling and mining on federal lands.

To date, BLM under Trump has approved only two solar power projects on federal lands, and no wind or geothermal projects.

BLM, as it has done for months, insists that solar, wind and geothermal energy have always been a part of the administration's "all-of-the-above energy approach," though the bureau added in an emailed statement that what projects get done are "subject to free markets."

"The number of pending proposals for any type of energy development, including renewables, is driven by the number of applications we receive — which in turn is driven by market forces beyond our control," the statement says.

## **BLM 'caught in their own little box'**

The list of renewable energy projects set for approval, though unusual, does not point to a sudden change of heart in the Trump administration's views of renewable energy, said Scott Sklar, director of the George Washington University Solar Institute in Washington.

Rather, Sklar suggested the administration doesn't have any choice but to make at least some effort to advance renewable energy projects, especially solar, now that "the industry is starting to get up to scale."



If the Trump administration is going to conduct an American “energy dominance” campaign, he said, it can’t push to increase offshore oil production, for example, and not support offshore wind energy.

“Not that it’s in their hearts, but they can’t deny it,” he said of renewables’ place in the energy market.

“They’ve supported oil and gas development on federal lands, so why would you not support renewable energy? In the end, they’re caught in their own little box,” he said.

He added, “They are just sort of stuck, even though they probably wish [renewable energy] would just go away.”

The administration’s motivation is less important to congressional Democrats than the fact that solar, wind and geothermal power project applications are being processed.

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