

City of Xi'an and Why the New Chinese Silk Road Terrifies the West?

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Global Research, February 25, 2019

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Snow is falling on the wide sidewalks of the historic city of Xi'an, but people don't seem to be troubled by the bitter cold.

One of the oldest cities in China, Xi'an, is now vibrant, optimistic and stunningly beautiful. Sidewalks are paved with expensive stones and have more than enough space for pedestrians, electric bicycles, plants, trees and bus shelters.

Attempts by the Communist Party to turn China into an 'Ecological Civilization' are visible at every step: trees are revered and protected, comfortable walking is encouraged, while heavy duty, efficient and super modern public transportation is extremely cheap and ecological: the metro, and electric buses. All scooters are also electric, and so are the tricycles that are intended to transport passengers between the metro stations.



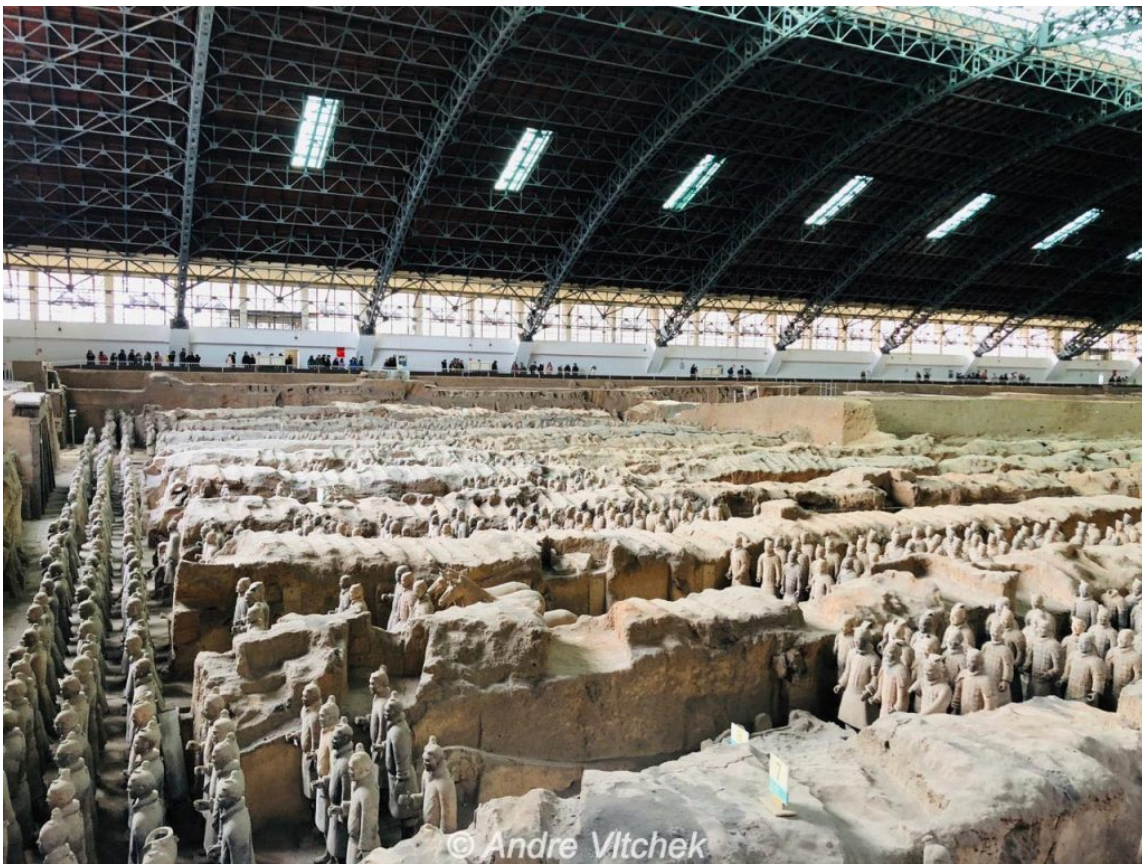
Endless line of Xi'an electric public buses

Compared to most Asian cities, but even to those in the United States and Europe, Chinese metropolises, including Xi'an, look like sort of urban areas of the future. But they are not 'impersonal', nor atomized. They are built for the people, not against them.

Xi'an is where the old Silk Road used to begin, connecting China to India, Central Asia and the Middle East.

It has a special significance and deep symbolism in Chinese history, and it is essential for China's present and future.

Xi'an is the oldest of the four ancient capitals, and home to the Terracotta Army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. This tremendous world heritage site is a titanic symbol of loyalty, endurance and optimism. According to the legend, the entire tremendous army followed its commander to the other life, ready to defend him, to fight for him and if necessary, to offer the ultimate sacrifice. What does it all really mean? Is it just an emperor that these brave warriors are ready to sacrifice their lives for, with smiles on their faces? Or is it the nation, or perhaps even the entire humanity they are determined to defend?



Terracotta soldiers outside Xi'an

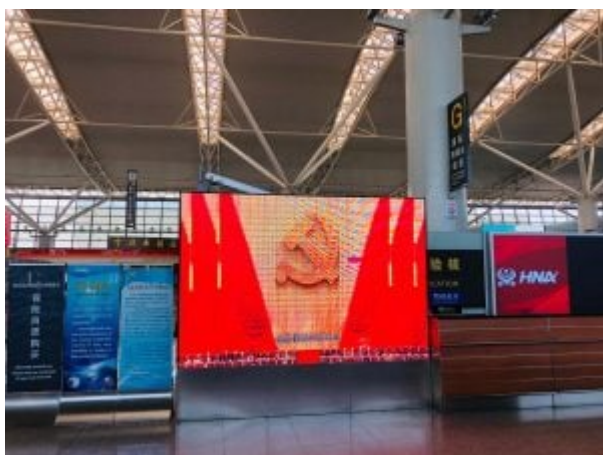
Whatever it is, it is enormous, and seeing the sheer size of the monument sends shivers all over my body.

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Some fifty kilometers away, at the North Station of Xi'an City, an army of the fastest trains on earth is lined up at countless platforms. These beautiful bullet trains connect Xi'an with Beijing, Shanghai and soon, Hong Kong. Some of them are already speeding towards the city of Zhangye, which is the first step on the new rail Silk Road that will soon continue all the way towards the north-western tip of China, at Kashgar. And Kashgar is only 100 kilometers from the border with Kyrgyzstan, and 150 kilometers from Tajikistan.

If someone thinks that China is simply a north Asian country, far away from the rest of the

world, they should think twice. In the center of Xi'an, there is a bustling neighborhood, similar to those found in any bustling city of the Middle East. There is a Grand Mosque, a bazaar, and endless lanes of colorful stalls, jewelry workshops, restaurants and *halal* eateries. Many women here wear colorful clothes and headscarves, while men cover their heads with skullcaps.



The western part of China is a vibrant mix of cultures from the north, as well as Central Asia. And the ancient capital of China - Xi'an - is well known and admired for its multi-cultural identity. Like the former Soviet Union, Communist China is an enormous and diverse country.

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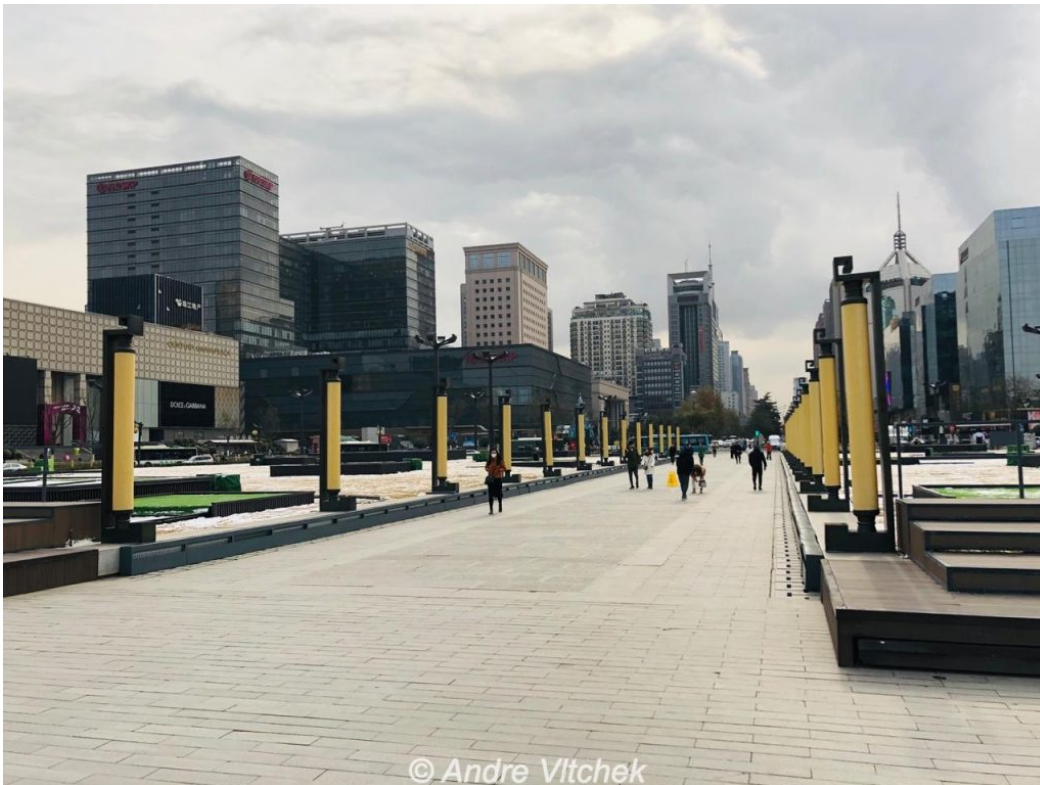
And the West doesn't like what it sees.

It hates those super high-speed trains, which, at tremendous speed, as well as cheaply and comfortably, cover distances of thousands of kilometers. It hates where they are going: towards the former Soviet Central Asian republics, and soon, hopefully, towards Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and one day, maybe even India.

It hates the optimistic spirit of the people of Xi'an, as well as the wise and at the same time, *avant-garde* environmental policies of China.

It hates that in cities like Xi'an, there are no slums, no homeless people, and almost no beggars: that instead of advertisements, there are beautiful paintings with messages highlighting socialist virtues, including equality, patriotism, respect for each other, democracy and freedom. It hates that most of the people here look determined, healthy, in good spirits, and optimistic.

The West passionately hates the fact that China is essentially Communist, with a centrally planned economy and tremendously successful social policies (by 2020, China will eliminate the last pockets of extreme poverty), even strive for the ecological civilization.



Elegant new avenues of Xi'an

China defies Western propaganda, which hammers into the brains of the people that any socialist society has to be drab, uniform and infinitely boring. Compared to such a city as Xi'an, even the European capitals look dull, depressing, dirty and backward.

Yet China is not rich, not yet. At least on paper, (read: using statistics produced and controlled predominantly by the countries and by the organizations controlled by Washington, London and Paris), its HDI (Human Development Index, compiled by UNDP), is the same as Thailand's. While the contrast between two countries is striking. Thailand, a feudal society glorified by the West, because of its staunch support during the Vietnam War and because of its anti-Communist drive, is suffering from collapsed infrastructure (no public transportation outside Bangkok, awful airports and train system), monstrous, almost 'Indonesian-style' city planning (or lack of it), urban slums, endless traffic jams and basically no control of the government over business. In Thailand, frustration is everywhere, and the murder rate is consequently even higher than in the United States (per capita, according to INTERPOL data), while in China it is one of the lowest on earth.

But above all, the West hates China's growing influence on the world, particularly among the countries that have been for centuries brutalized and plundered by European and North American corporations and governments. And it is scared that they will, eventually, fully understand that China is determined to stop all forms of imperialism, and to eradicate poverty in all corners of the world.

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Xi'an is where the old and new Silk Roads have their starting points. The new one is called the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), and very soon it will account for tens of thousands of kilometers of railroads and roads connecting and crisscrossing Asia, Africa and Europe, pulling out of misery billions of men, women and children. Once completed, everybody will

benefit.

But that is not how the West likes it. 'Everyone benefiting' is a totally foreign, even hostile concept, at least in the Western capitals. Only the West, plus those few 'chosen' and highly obedient countries (including Japan, South Korea and Singapore) have been, until now, allowed to prosper, forming a strictly 'by appointment only' club of nations.

China wants everyone to be rich, or at least not poor.

Most Asians love the idea. Africans love it even more. The new elegant train station in Nairobi, Kenya, is a new symbol, a promise of a better future. Tram lines in Addis Ababa, the construction of a high-speed train line that will go through Laos, all these are marvels unimaginable only a few years ago.

The world is changing, mainly thanks to the determined efforts of China and Russia to finally destroy Western colonialism (the 'project' that began so well right after WWII, but, except on paper, was never fully completed).

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Xi'an is rising. In the West, they used to say that life in China is improving, but only for Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong.

Later they said, for the Pacific coast, OK, life is better, but go further West... Xi'an, Chengdu, Kunming and other cities followed.

Then, the propagandists regrouped: 'Chinese cities are doing well, but the countryside is suffering'. Then came President Xi's brainchild - 'Ecological civilization', and decisive reforms aimed at improving the standards of living and quality of life all over the most populous country on earth. In 2018, for the first time in modern history, there was a reverse migration from Chinese cities, to the rural areas.

One has to repeat again and again, until it sinks into people's brains: After 2020, there will be no extreme misery in China.

In our upcoming book *"China and Ecological Civilization"*, a dialogue between me and leading philosopher John Cobb Jr, John who has been working very closely with the Chinese government on issues of environment and education, explained:

"As I compare China's success in giving serious attention to the well-being of its natural environment and needy citizens with that of European countries, my reason for betting on China is that I have some confidence that it will maintain governmental control of finance and of corporations generally. If it does this, it can also control the media. Thus, it has a chance of making financial and industrial corporations serve the national good as perceived by people not in their service. Less centralized governments are less able to control the financial and other corporations whose short-term interests may conflict with the common good."

That may be the main reason why the West is horrified, and trying to antagonize China by all means: If China succeeds, colonialism will collapse, but also corporatism, which, like a fairy-tale monster devours everything in its sight.

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Facing thousands of determined Terracotta soldiers, I felt the enormity of China.

I imagined hundreds of millions of men and women building the nation; millions of construction sites, not only in China itself, but also abroad. I recalled my neighbors in Nairobi, when I used to live in Africa – optimistic, well-natured but tough Chinese engineers, who used to power-walk, together, every night. I liked, I admired their spirit.

To me, they were like present-day Terracotta soldiers: brave, determined and loyal. Loyal not to the emperor, but to humanity. Not military men, but people who are constructing, building a much better world in all corners of the globe, often with their own hands. Despite the vitriolic spite and nihilism unleashed against them by the West.

In Xi'an, I stood in front of the old gate, where everything began, many centuries ago; the old Silk Road. Now, everything was returning here, in a grand circle. The new beginning.

It was cold. It was beginning to snow. But I was immensely happy to be here, and I felt alive and full of optimism for the future of humanity.

I made a few symbolic steps. Millions did before me. Millions will, again, soon.

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This article was originally published on New Eastern Outlook.

Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He has covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. Four of his latest books are [China and Ecological Civilization](#) with John B. Cobb, Jr., [Revolutionary Optimism](#), [Western Nihilism](#), a revolutionary novel "[Aurora](#)" and a bestselling work of political non-fiction: "[Exposing Lies Of The Empire](#)". View his other books [here](#). Watch [Rwanda Gambit](#), his groundbreaking documentary about Rwanda and DR Congo and his film/dialogue with Noam Chomsky "[On Western Terrorism](#)". Vltchek presently resides in East Asia and the Middle East, and continues to work around the world. He can be reached through his [website](#) and his [Twitter](#).

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Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. His latest books are: "Exposing Lies Of The Empire" and "Fighting Against Western Imperialism". Discussion with Noam Chomsky: On Western Terrorism. Point of No Return is his critically acclaimed political novel. Oceania - a book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific. His provocative book about Indonesia: "Indonesia - The Archipelago of Fear". Andre is making films for teleSUR and Press TV. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and the Middle East. He can be reached through his website or his Twitter.

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