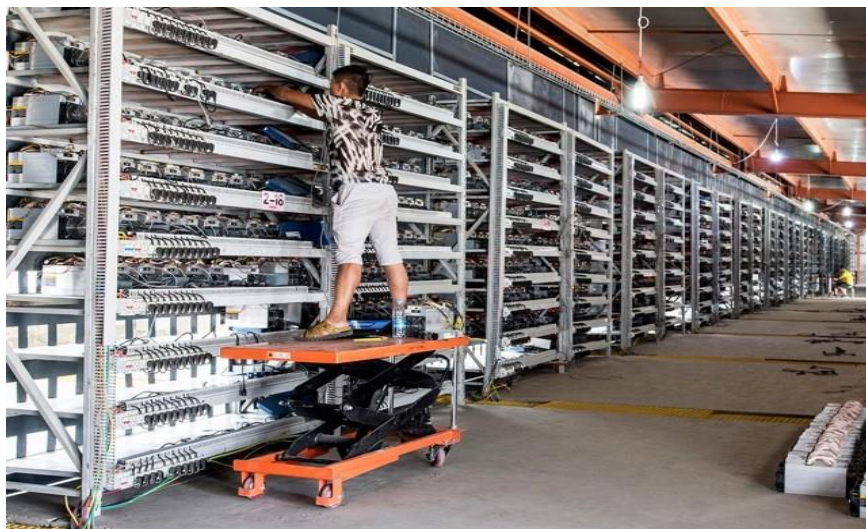


CHINA BANS CRYPTOCURRENCY OPERATIONS DUE TO FUTURE DIGITAL YUAN ADOPTION



A Technician in China's Cryptocurrency Mining Locations (Inner Mongolia)
Image Credit: IEEE Spectrum

By Conrad Kodjanian, Asia Desk

On September 24, The People's Bank of China (PBoC) banned all transactions involving cryptocurrency. The PBoC claimed that China's crypto ban is due to money laundering and gambling fraud concerns. The ban is countrywide and includes the activities of mining, trading, and investing in cryptocurrency, as well as holding cryptocurrency as an asset and operating crypto-related businesses. Previously, China was responsible for 46 percent of the world's cryptocurrency mining production, but with the newly instated ban, the United States is now the world leader, having previously followed behind China at 16.85 percent.

China's ruling party, the Chinese Communist Party, is known to run the nation's economy through complete control of domestic transactions. While money laundering is a legitimate threat with cryptocurrencies, it is likely not the true reason for the ban. With the launch of the Chinese Digital Yuan coming in early 2022, it is likely China does not want decentralized currencies like Bitcoin to compete with the Chinese Digital Yuan.

It can be assessed with high confidence that the PBoC has banned cryptocurrency due to the launch of the Chinese Digital Yuan. It is likely that bitcoin mining will continue illegally in China, with the creation of a new black market. Additionally, many bitcoin miners will likely head overseas to places where bitcoin mining is legal. Lastly, it is unlikely that cryptocurrencies will become legal again in China due to its government's skepticism of decentralized assets.

Editor-in-chief:
Hannah Clegg

Associate Editors:
Morgan-Mckay Hoppmann
Jackson Hauf
Lukas Delaney

Death of Top ELN Commander Heightens Risk of Terror in Colombia

By Cole Hancock, Latin America Desk

On September 17, the Colombian military conducted a bombing on a left-wing terror group known as the National Liberation Army (ELN), targeting an ELN stronghold in the Choco Province. This operation resulted in the incapacitation of “Fabian,” the leader of ELN’s western front. He was found badly wounded by Colombian authorities on September 27 before being transported to a hospital in Cali, where he was pronounced dead on September 28. Shortly after the announcement of Fabian’s death on September 30, the ELN warned that there would be reprisals for the attack. While leaders of the ELN did not mention any specific targets, they did state that the rebels were authorized to “disproportionately” use force and explosives in order to exact revenge.

According to Colombian President Ivan Duque, the bombing of the ELN stronghold was one of the most successful operations against the ELN in recent years. President Duque stated that the government will not give in to threats made by the ELN and will continue the fight against all criminal groups.

It can be said with high confidence that the ELN will conduct an attack against Colombian critical infrastructure or security forces within the next six months.



*A Member of the ELN Wearing ELN Paraphernalia
Image Credit: Aljazeera*

MAXAR **TECHNOLOGIES**

*Logo of Maxar Technologies
Image Credit: Maxar Technologies*

National Geospatial Intelligence Agency to Renew its Contract with Maxar Technologies **Sarah Gabriel, Special Topics Desk**

On October 4, the National Geospatial Agency (NGA) announced its plan to renew its contract with Maxar Technologies, a private technology innovator in Earth Intelligence and Space Infrastructure. This contract, valued at \$44 million, will provide over 400,000 U.S. government users with open-source access to high-resolution commercial imagery from Maxar and other commercial data providers around the world. This is the second of a three-part contract with a total potential value of \$176 million. Its renewal means that Maxar will extend access of its 125-petabyte historical imagery library to first-responders, intelligence analysts, and civil government, in addition to Maxar’s daily imagery data for high priority missions.

The contract renewal came after the NGA announced its strategy executive summary to allow agencies to use commercial services, prior to using the NGA and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) for projects. With regards to the renewal of the contract, Dan Jablonsky, CEO of Maxar, put out a statement saying that it “is proud to continue supporting warfighters and analysts with the information and insight to make confident decisions.”

In light of these recent events, we can predict with high confidence that stocks in commercial space technology companies will increase, leading to the finalization of the third part of the NGA and Maxar's contract as well as to an increase in contracts between the private sector and intelligence agencies in the United States.