

Sustainable Reconstruction in War-Torn Societies

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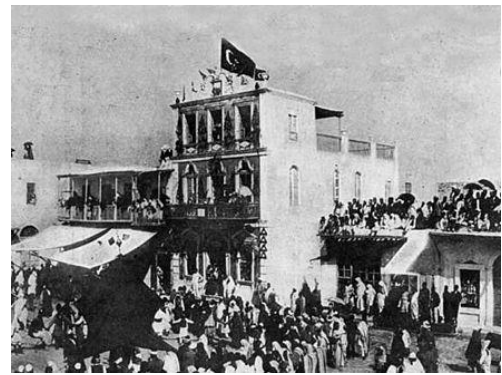
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ABSTRACT

History of a City:

Benghazi, an ancient Greek colony, founded around 525 BC [before Christ] known as Cyrenaica and ruled by a council of elders the city became known as Berenice after the name of the daughter of a Greek governor at the time [3rd century BC]. Cyrenaica then became a Roman province together with Crete [78 BC]. The city suffered tremendous damage during an invasion by Germanic people from Europe. In about the year 642 AD Amr ibn Alas annexed Cyrenaica to become a province of Egypt.

Othman rule, Benghazi became an Othman province until 1911. Under their rule the city became the most impoverished of the Othman provinces, the Greeks and Italians took advantage of the situation to exploited the shores of sponge abundance.



Italian invasion, 1911 Italy invaded Benghazi and became a colony by 1912, under the fanciest Mussolini, Cyrenaica suffered ruthless oppression even though the resistance under the leadership of Omar El Muktar lasted 20 years, not until their defeat in world war II that the Italian occupation ceased.



Post-world war II, Libya was then portioned to 3 provinces, Tripolitania [under Italian rule], Cyrenaica [under British/Egyptian rule] and the Fezzan [under French rule].

Libya Independence, Libya came to be independent on December 24, 1951 and in 1964 Libya was united under King Idris. Libya lost its independence under a one-man rule from 1969 until 2011 when the regime was overthrown and the rest is history.



Introduction:

Benghazi is well and alive dynamic and resilient

History has taught us that following a violent conflict, war-torn societies face tremendous challenges such as:

- Disarmament of armed militias (BBC report October 19, 2012),
- Demobilization of Armed Militias,
- Resettlement and reintegration and return of refugees;

The UN defines **reintegration** as: “the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income” [Libyans have to hold the UN responsible for a chaotic outcome of international interference]

- Peacebuilding based on reconciliation (south Africa/Ireland)
 - Campaign to combat the effect of physical damage and psychological damage to communities specially children
 - Compact slavery and human right abuse
 - Finally, sustainable physical reconstruction/infrastructure rebuilding
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To Implement such tasks, emphasis is made to the following:

Engage local stakeholders, NGOs,

Implement a “Marshal Plan” type solution supported by International Peace building NGOs, donors and the World Bank, it is regarded as inhumane to leave societies vulnerable to further violence, kidnapping and killings,

Implementation of clear strategy where assistance is funneled to local and international institutions that are and willing to make a difference in transforming violence into a peaceful process and positive/dynamic reconstruction thinking,

Implementation of the United Nations’ strategy for resolutions of [armed] conflicts consist of 4 components which is recommended in this paper to have a nonlinear approach meaning all to be implemented in parallel:

1. Preventive diplomacy
2. Peacekeeping based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter

3. Peacekeeping based on deployment of peacekeeping “forces”
4. Post-conflict peacebuilding by appropriately building the State and other institutions to insure a sustainable solution to the problem of War and Peace.

Physical Reconstruction:

Benghazi became an icon [in Libya] for a city destroyed by civil war, but it’s not the only city. 50% of countries and cities that start a program of transition to peace end up back in war while the other 50% end up relying on external aid, we should not fall in that trap and make sure that reconstruction is built on solid economic and away from traditional redevelopment. The War-torn Benghazi has a dual image, one as a damaged city and another as ambitious to rebuild not only the physical aspect but the human element. The brutal damage caused by the war will make the reconstruction a heavy task [but can be done, others did]. All projects should aim at crating conditions of economic, social and physical development [none of this can be achieved prior to disarming militia, I say this with emphasis and with convections].

Recommendations for Reconstruction:

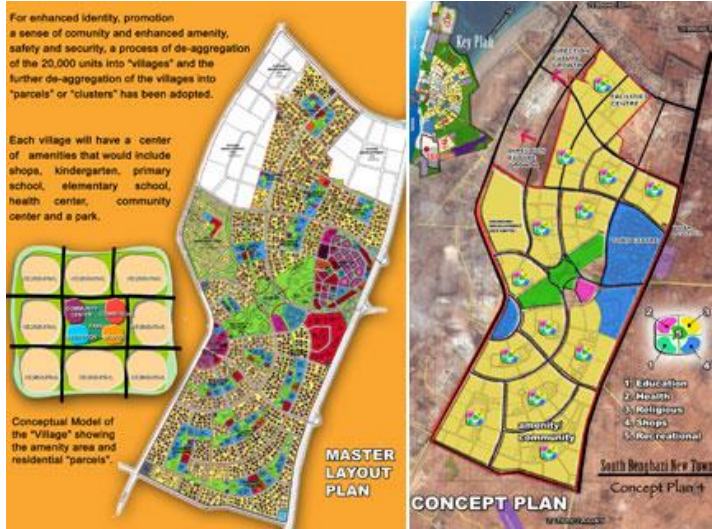
1. Develop a comprehensive Master Plan, without such a plan we will be moving in a vacuum.
2. Establish a consortium of technical cadre including phycologist, educators, economists and of course architects and engineers and healthcare professionals
3. Lessons learned from other cities/countries that went through similar situations [Germany, Japan, the Baltics states, etc...]
4. Create a Cyrenaica Office of Emergency Services to assess the damage and compensate owners of damaged properties.
5. Optimal restoration of buildings that can be salvaged [municipality square, soug elhout, el sabri and maidan el shagara, etc...]
6. Establish a citizen oversight committee to eliminate corruption and misuse of funds

Outline of a Master Plan:

A typical Master Plan contains the following:

- I. Transportation and Traffic studies and planning
- II. Infrastructure needs
- III. Facilities, public schools, hospitals, libraries, community center
- IV. Open spaces
- V. Neighborhood/housing
- VI. Economic development/business centers, airport, harbor
- VII. Land use based on environmental and physical condition and impact
- VIII. Zoning laws

Notice that not all master plans can be implemented in parallel.



Conceptual Master Planning [example, ajc consulting 20 thousand housing project west of Benghazi]