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By Richard J. Pera

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Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica regions of Libya. (Source: Juan Valdes, "Cyrenaica, Libya: Part I," *Changing Planet* (blog), *National Geographic*, March 15, 2012, https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2012/03/15/cyrenaica-libya-part-i/.)

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By Dr. Stephanie M. Burchard

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Plan for Vision City, Kigali, Rwanda. (Source: "Vision city is a premium residential development in Kigali city, with an exceptional neighborhood and fabulous properties," Twitter, May 9, 2018, https://twitter.com/thevisioncity?lang=en.)

One potential solution is the adoption of "smart city" initiatives, which several African countries have already begun to undertake. Are smart cities the answer to Africa's urbanizing population? *more...*

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IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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What Was Achieved in Paris and What Challenges Lie Ahead

French President Emmanuel Macron convened a one-day "International Conference on Libya" at the Elysée Palace on May 29. In addition to representatives from the United Nations (UN) and 20 countries, participants included leaders of Libya's rival factions: two from Western Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and two from Eastern Libya's LNA and House of Representatives.

Calling the agreement "historic" and a "crucial step" toward stabilizing the country, Macron said the conference forged a political roadmap that set a December 10 date for presidential and parliamentary elections. The legal underpinning of the elections, which is to be set by September 16, could entail a new constitution. The leaders agreed to provide "strong security arrangements" for the elections. They also committed to work on "phasing out parallel government and institutions" and unifying the central bank and armed forces. None of the leaders actually signed the agreement, however. Macron explained that trust was a foundational issue: "Each [leader] denied the existence of the institutions that the others represented and their legitimacy."

Several contentious issues must be addressed. Libya's existing constitution would need to be replaced, a requirement foreseen by the UN, whose experts have been working on a draft with GNA authorities. It is not clear if a constitutional plebiscite would need to be held before elections. Nor is it clear if presidential elections would be held in advance of parliamentary voting or if parliamentary voting would happen first. The International Crisis Group warned, "setting a deadline for elections without due preparation and at least the parties' public commitment to respect the results is certain to raise tensions." Security is also a major issue: Islamic State suicide attackers bombed the electoral commission in Tripoli last month, killing 12 people. There is no impartial apparatus to ensure the integrity of the process, including safety at polling sites.

Although the Paris agreement did not seriously address security issues or call for a cease-fire, it did reiterate support for an Egypt-led effort to unify Libya's fragmented military—the only security track in the peace process. Some question how this process can be fair, given Cairo's alliance with Haftar, the 75-year-old LNA chief and former military leader under Qaddafi.

LNA Strength and Military Operations

Current and potential military operations by Haftar's LNA will almost certainly affect negotiations to stabilize Libya. While other leaders exercise political authority, Haftar's impressive military capabilities enable him to dictate the situation on the ground. Haftar's LNA draws strength from a web of tribal alliances that have established regular military units, supported by armed militias, totaling 75,000 fighters. The LNA boasts impressive ground and aviation equipment, and it has employed air power especially well. Haftar has also fostered highly beneficial alliances with Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Russia. From its airbase east of Benghazi, the UAE air force has flown strike missions in support of the LNA, and Egyptian aircraft have flown similar missions—both in violation of the UN arms embargo. As *Africa Watch* has reported, Russia has provided Haftar with MIG-23s. Today, the LNA claims to control 90 percent of Libya, though this may be exaggerated. What is certain is that the LNA controls nearly all of Cyrenaica (Eastern Libya) and parts of Fezzan (Southwestern Libya). It does not control Tripolitania (Western Libya).

After the LNA secured Eastern Libya's "Oil Crescent" earlier this year, the main oil terminals of Ras Lanuf and as-Sidra were attacked by a local militia in early June. The LNA quickly retook the terminals, which constitute the majority of Libya's oil wealth. The fighting caused heavy infrastructure losses and could cut oil output for an extended period. "Libya's economy relies heavily on oil," and "this new surge of violence around the oil crescent casts a shadow on the . . . scenario established . . . at the end of May in Paris."

Haftar's mid-May renewal of the LNA's year-long assault on Islamist groups in Derna—the last major bastion of opposition to the LNA in Eastern Libya—overshadowed the conference in Paris. The assault may have been intended to signal to rivals and international actors that events on the ground, controlled by him, will drive diplomacy. Aircraft from Egypt and the UAE supported the assault, and French intelligence reportedly provided a Beechcraft 350 surveillance aircraft. The LNA claimed to have captured 75 percent of the city.

The LNA has also established a presence in Sabha (in Fezzan), where the LNA has opposed GNA allies. Haftar may believe that controlling Sabha is key to controlling the South and its oil fields. As one observer put it: "These two issues are going to be important cards to hold in any future negotiations." With UAE financial support, Haftar has reportedly arranged for two Darfuri (Sudanese) rebel groups to intervene in Libya's South, including Sabha. Haftar's use of foreign militias to control Libyan territory may make it even more difficult to unify Libya's armed forces.

A spokesman for Haftar stated on June 10 that the LNA was about to "liberate" Derna from terrorism, and Tripoli and Misrata would be next. An LNA advance into Tripolitania likely would nullify political efforts to unify the country. A battle for Misrata, which supports the Tripoli-based GNA with military manpower, likely would cost many lives.

Conclusion

Although the Paris conference was a political windfall for President Macron, some observers were concerned that it had supplanted or even subverted the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), which the UN called "the only viable framework to end the . . . crisis." The conference's most important potential achievement—December elections—raises more questions than it answers.

While Haftar lacks the imprimatur of the international community, his stable of alliances, both internally and reaching across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, will carry his LNA far, though probably not all the way to Tripoli—an outcome that would almost certainly be rejected by the United Nations. Internally, Haftar's stock is rising because Libyans want stability: areas under his control have seen less fighting, and oil is flowing. He has delivered an appreciable level of governance, though critics, especially the GNA, accuse him of being autocratic. Haftar's endgame is not known, but one thing seems certain: because of his military strength, Haftar will drive the outcome of any political settlement. It remains to be seen if he is able to transform military success into achievement at the negotiating table.

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Population Pressure and Smart Cities

Global population projections over the next 30 years have Africa overtaking Asia as the world's fastest urbanizing region. Such dramatic population growth in African cities promises to add strain to the continent's already stressed infrastructure. Roads and public transportation are frequently found lacking. Traffic congestion is an ongoing problem. Housing shortages are also extremely common, resulting in a proliferation of informal settlements, or slums, as they are more colloquially known. How will African cities respond to population pressures?

Urban and peri-urban planned "smart city" developments, that is, the incorporation of information and communication technology (ICT) and clean energy to improve efficiency of land use and services, have been announced in recent years in several countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia. Many of these cities are designed to be all-inclusive live, work, play concepts that incorporate extensive ICT infrastructure in their design and management.

Smart cities are designed with "data-led management and planning processes." Clean energy and efficient living are key attributes associated with smart cities. Smart cities may provide free Wi-Fi, solar-powered street lamps and roads, remote-sensing traffic control, smart meters for electricity that track usage in real time, and smart parking structures with automatic lifts. Because of the lack of legacy infrastructure in many African countries, it will not be necessary to remove existing traffic lights, roads, utility grids, and the like, rendering overall expenses comparatively less expensive than in other regions.

Rwanda Leads the Way

Rwanda is helping to spearhead many of the most recent smart-city initiatives. In May 2017, at the Transform Africa Summit, the Rwandan government announced the Smart Cities Blueprint, a 10-point agenda for incorporating technology into urban development. Rwanda also authored the "Smart Africa Alliance," a pact that has now been signed by 20 additional countries to ensure that technology is a part of national development planning. The Rwandan government has been an early adopter of e-government services. Irembo, the government's online service, allows citizens to access 50 different services from 10 different government agencies. The service facilitates the collection of taxes and fees to help offset the costs of government investments in ICT and infrastructure.

Vision City, located just outside of the Rwandan capital, Kigali, is a planned community of 22,000 homes. Wi-Fi will be available free of charge, street lamps will be solar-powered, and residential electricity will be installed with motion-

sensors. The government of Rwanda is also planning the Kigali Innovation City, a $1.9 billion initiative, likened to Silicon Valley, that is envisioned to offer industrial, retail, leisure, health care, and housing facilities.

In Nigeria, Eko Atlantic City is a private-public partnership that, when completed, will house around 250,000 in Lagos, the country's commercial capital. Private investors are funding the development, and both the state and federal government are considered "strategic partners." Close to four square miles of land bordering the Atlantic Ocean are being reclaimed through dredging and the erection of a sea wall. A mix of industry, retail, and luxury housing is envisioned for the space. Fiber-optic cables will ensure easy internet access, and the development is securing its own power and water supplies. Completion is not anticipated for at least another five years.

In South Africa Waterfall City, located midway between Johannesburg and Pretoria, began construction in 2012. Close to 35 percent of the planned housing (18,500 units) and commercial developments have already been constructed. Home prices will be at the mid and luxury ranges, with some more affordable high-density housing. The development should be completed by 2025. Attacq, one of the developers, announced a smart-city competition in September 2017. The contest calls for the submission of proposals for innovations focused on geolocation, transportation, and security technologies, among others, that could be adopted for use specifically in Waterfall City.

Criticisms

Vision City has been criticized for being too heavily reliant on foreign investment and foreign developers. It has also been criticized for its cost—the price of the average housing unit is estimated at $160,000. The average Rwandan makes a little over $2000 per year. In 2017, the developer reduced costs by 30 percent in an effort to increase sales. In Nigeria's Eko City, the unit costs are even higher. Homes are estimated to be priced close to $1 million. Without adequate planning, an increase in the supply of luxury homes will not address Nigeria's (or Rwanda's) larger housing issues.

An additional concern is the tendency for governments to overpromise and under-deliver. John Mahama, the former president of Ghana, announced the creation of Hope City in 2013. Costing an estimated $10 billion, Hope City was another planned mixed-use community that would house 300,000 and employ at least 50,000 in the ICT fields. Very little progress, however, has been made since 2013. Konza Technological City in Kenya may be suffering a similar fate. Although plans were formally approved in 2013, only a half-constructed building has thus far been erected. The government of Kenya recently allocated new funds to the project, but it is not expected to be completed until 2030.

Conclusion

Smart cities are exciting and attractive options for countries facing mounting population pressures. But it remains to be seen if these types of cities will meet the needs of Africa's expanding populations. Smart-city projects in Africa have so far focused on elite housing and business needs. Several planned developments have not reached fruition. In addition, all the above planned cities are public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships are a means of reducing costs for governments, but to maximize profit, developers tend to focus on higher end residents. Unless governments demand the inclusion of affordable-housing options, African smart cities will not address the core problems of informal housing and slum dwelling.

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