Press Clippings
قصاصات صحافية

- **Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions-and peace (Interview with ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary Abdallah Al Dardari and reporting on Sketch for Syria)**

1. **The Associated Press**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace
2. **The New York Times**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace
3. **The Washington Post**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace
4. **ABC News**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace
5. **The Daily Star**: In war-ravaged Aleppo, few answers on how to rebuild Syria’s second city
6. **NP Telegraph**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace
7. **660 News:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace

8. **680 News:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace

9. **1310 News:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will Take Billions- And Peace

10. **Asian Tribune:** In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild

11. **Atlantic Broadband:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

12. **Chronicle Journal:** In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild

13. **Columbia Missourian:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

14. **Federal News Radio:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

15. **Frederiksborg:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

16. **The Greeneville Sun:** Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

17. **KCRA:** After the Destruction: How will Aleppo Rise from the Ashes
18. Madison: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
19. My McMurray: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
20. New Delhi Times: In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild
21. News 95.7: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
22. News Oklahoma: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
23. News Talk 650 CKOM: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
24. Newser: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
25. The New Zealand Herald: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
27. Seattle Pi: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
28. SFGate: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
29. Star Tribune: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
30. **Stripes**: In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild

31. **Tampa Bay Times**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

32. **The Coeur D’Alene**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

33. **The Daily Astorian**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

34. **The Daily Times**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

35. **The Grand Island Independent**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

36. **The Seattle Times**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

37. **The Spokesman-Review**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

38. **Times union**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

39. **Top News**: In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild
40. **Townhall**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

41. **Waco Trib**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

42. **Journal Gazette and Times-Courier**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

43. **Yahoo**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

44. **The Messenger**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace

45. **LethbridgeNews**: Rebuilding Shattered Aleppo will take billions- and peace
ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria’s largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria’s civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad’s allies: Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.
The fear among some is that Assad's government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government's capture of the entire city, pertain to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, 'Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?' And my reaction was, 'It is already too late,'" said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia's warplanes helped Assad's forces recapture east Aleppo, the government's greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo's share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and...
helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordinance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels' graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city's center, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wrecked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 percent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters' tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses; said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated $1 billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said AlHakam Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppan who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest. That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.
But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia’s province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo’s Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarablus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy’s University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a “Sketch for Syria.”

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria’s future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

—

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.
In Syria’s Ravaged Aleppo, Few Answers on How to Rebuild

Diego Ross 02-Feb, 01:32 9

World

Middle East

Israel’s Netanyahu to meet May in Downing Street

James Martin reveals life sacrifices as celebrity

Nonsense & downright Mexico denies Trump
threatened to send troopers against ‘bad hombres’
Aleppo has been scarred beyond recognition. Weeks after fighting stopped, a pall of dust covers its eastern districts, where streets are lined for blocks with buildings smashed to metal and brick rubble in scenes reminiscent of cities devastated in World War II.

The destruction is the worst wreaked on any city in Syria’s six-year war. No one has any quick answers on how to rebuild Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, much less the rest of a country that has seen appalling devastation.

Costs for reconstruction in Aleppo, once Syria’s economic hub, could run in the tens of billions of dollars, far beyond the country’s capabilities. Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad’s allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

And there is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the war. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines. The fear among some is that Assad’s government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. It wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

“I remember people were telling us, ‘Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?’ And my reaction was, ‘It is already too late,’” said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

“One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning.”

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad’s forces recapture east Aleppo, the government’s greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo’s share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

“The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment,” Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East.

“There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it.”

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can’t move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels’ graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city’s center, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wrecked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 percent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.


Lakers hire Magic Johr advise ownership (http://topnews.one/index.php?newsid=39455)

Govt ‘needs to raise it: on cyber security (http://topnews.one/index.php?newsid=39631)

US Defence Sec warns on nuclear attacks (http://topnews.one/index.php?newsid=39643)
"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Sadour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters' tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said Al-Hakam Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppo who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest. That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who was aware of the discussions. He spoke about behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarabulus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus archiitect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria contributed to this report.
ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria’s largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria’s civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad’s allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.
There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.

The fear among some is that Assad’s government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government’s capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, ‘Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?’ And my reaction was, ‘It is already too late,’” said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

**Townhall**

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad’s forces recapture east Aleppo, the government’s greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo’s share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.
"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can’t penetrate the area, the site of some of the worst fighting.

seriously damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters' tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get...
the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other areas after the war likely to happen.

**Townhall**

Thank you, Thomas Sowell!

Sign our card to show your appreciation for Thomas Sowell's 22 years of columns on Townhall.

Enter your Email Address Sign the card

By signing the card, you agree to receive updates from Townhall.com

No thanks

**Townhall**

Construction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

---

**Most Popular**

**Ben Shapiro Crushes Clock Boy in Court**


Katie Pavlich

**Black Rifle Coffee Company Takes on Starbucks: We're Hiring 10,000 Veterans**

[https://townhall.com/katieavlich/2017/02/02/black-rifle-coffee-takes-on-starbucks-were-hiring-10000-veterans-n2277594](https://townhall.com/katieavlich/2017/02/02/black-rifle-coffee-takes-on-starbucks-were-hiring-10000-veterans-n2277594)

Katie Pavlich

**Let's Hope the Loony Left Keeps Exposing Itself**

[https://townhall.com/columnists/davidlimbaugh/2017/02/03/lets-hope-the-loony-left-keeps-exposing-itself-n2280551](https://townhall.com/columnists/davidlimbaugh/2017/02/03/lets-hope-the-loony-left-keeps-exposing-itself-n2280551)

David Limbaugh

---

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarabulus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

**Townhall**

Thank you, Thomas Sowell!

Sign our card to show your appreciation for Thomas Sowell's 22 years of columns on Townhall.

Enter your Email Address

Sign the card

By signing the card, you agree to receive updates from Townhall.com

No thanks

**Townhall**

(1)

Share this on Facebook (2)

Tweet

Share

Most Popular

Ben Shapiro Crushes Clock Boy in Court

(http://thesheet/katiesavlich/2017/02/02/ben-shapiro-crushes-clock-boy-in-court-n2280520)

Katie Pavlich

Black Rifle Coffee Company Takes on Starbucks: We're Hiring 10,000 Veterans

(http://thesheet/katiesavlich/2017/02/02/black-rifle-coffee-takes-on-starbucks-were-hiring-10000-veterans-n2279945)

Katie Pavlich

Let's Hope the Loony Left Keeps Exposing Itself

(https://columnists/davidlimbaugh/2017/02/03/lets-hope-the-loony-left-keeps-exposing-itself-n2280551)

David Limbaugh

Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

In this Jan. 21, 2017 photo, Syrians walk amid the destruction, in the Old City of Aleppo, Syria. Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, was widely brought to ruin by years of war, and now with Russia and Turkey leading peace efforts, international officials say it is time to start talking about rebuilding Aleppo and other cities. But there are few answers on how to do it, with the world reluctant to donate the billions needed and a political settlement in the war still uncertain and far off. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

In this Jan. 21, 2017 photo, Syrians walk amid the destruction, in the Old City of Aleppo, Syria. Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, was widely brought to ruin by years of war, and now with Russia and Turkey leading peace efforts, international officials say it is time to start talking about rebuilding Aleppo and other cities. But there are few answers on how to do it, with the world reluctant to donate the billions needed and a political settlement in the war still uncertain and far off. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

Associated Press

ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria’s largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation.

The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria’s civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad’s allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages.

Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.
The fear among some is that Assad’s government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government’s capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, 'Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?' And my reaction was, 'It is already too late,'" said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad’s forces recapture east Aleppo, the government’s greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo’s share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.
Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can't move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels' graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city's center, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wrecked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 percent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters' tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said AliHamam Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppan who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest. That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.
International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarablus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

___

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

More about General News

- Berkeley campus chaos spurs questions at free-speech bastion
- Berkeley campus chaos spurs questions at free-speech bastion
- Berkeley campus chaos spurs questions at free-speech bastion

http://www.wacotrib.com/news/ap_nation/headlines/rebuilding-shattered-aleppo-will-take-billions---and-peace/article_e1d231a6-f8d1-54e2-954a-a01443e6dab4...
Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

By BASSEM MROJE and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press   Feb 2, 2017 Updated 4 hrs ago

ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria's largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria's civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad's allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.

The fear among some is that Assad's government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government's capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, 'Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?' And my reaction was, 'It is already too late,'" said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.
"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really need for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad’s forces recapture east Aleppo, the government’s greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo’s share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

“The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment,” Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. “There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it.”

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can’t move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels’ graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city’s center, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wrecked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 percent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

“My heart bleeds every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do,” said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters’ tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can’t afford.

“The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don’t start, it will not resume,” he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo’s industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadid Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city’s airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east’s Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.
The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said Ali Hakan Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppan who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest. That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarabuls, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

—

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aj in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.
Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

SSEM MROUE and SARAH EL DEEB

In this Jan. 21, 2017 photo, Syrians walk amid the destruction, in the Old City of Aleppo, Syria. Aleppo, Syria's largest city, was widely brought to ruin by years of war, and

ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria's largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria's civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar even Assad's allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape
Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government’s capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria in its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, ‘Are you mad? start planning for rebuilding now?’ And my reaction was, ‘It is already too late,’” said Abdullah Al Dardar, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad forces recapture east Aleppo, the government's greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.
at $350 billion, including physical damage amid lost economic activity. Aleppo's share is about 15 percent or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littering the ground. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can't move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body likely of a rebel fighter—still lay outside a bombed-out hospital. Rebels' graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.
destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters' tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $80 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industry and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport work again as well as water and power facilities. Authoritati may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.
"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions.

He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding.

Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarablus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria,"

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed
of the project, said the focus is on Syria’s future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'

—

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.
Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

By BASSEM MROUE and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press  Feb 2, 2017 Updated 1 hr ago

Hassan Ammar
In this Friday, Jan. 20, 2017 photo, mounds of rubble remain from what used to be high rise apartment buildings in the once rebel-held Ansar neighborhood of eastern Aleppo, Syria. Aleppo, Syria's largest city, was widely brought to ruin by years of war, and now with Russia and Turkey leading peace efforts, international officials say it is time to start talking about rebuilding Aleppo and other cities. But there are few answers on how to do it, with the world reluctant to donate the billions needed and a political settlement in the war still uncertain and far off. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

ALEPPO, Syria (AP) — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria's largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities,

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria's civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad's allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages, Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.

The fear among some is that Assad's government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.
Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government’s capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, 'Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?' And my reaction was, 'It is already too late,'" said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia’s warplanes helped Assad’s forces recapture east Aleppo, the government’s greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo’s share is about 15 percent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.

"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs, The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can’t move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels’ graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city’s center, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wicked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 percent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 percent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them;"

Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters’ tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can’t afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don’t start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.
The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities, Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said AlHakam Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppan who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest, That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support. Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarabulus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the coordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

—

El Deeb reported from Beirut, Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.
Rebuilding shattered Aleppo will take billions - and peace

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ALEPPO, Syria — Fighting has ended in Aleppo, and now talk is beginning to turn to the question of how to rebuild Syria's largest city, where entire blocks have been smashed to rubble in scenes reminiscent of World War II devastation. The task will take tens of billions of dollars.

But hopes for rebuilding collide with daunting realities.

Without a comprehensive peace deal to Syria's civil war, Western nations are unlikely to give funds to the government of President Bashar Assad, which remains under U.S., European, and Arab sanctions that bar aid. Even Assad's allies, Russia and Iran, which are bankrolling his rule, show little enthusiasm to shoulder rebuilding costs.

There is the question of how to discuss reconstruction while the war still rages. Much depends on the shape of any eventual political settlement ending the conflict. Rebuilding
without a deal may only entrench demographic changes caused by the war — which have run along sectarian lines.

The fear among some is that Assad's government will rebuild opposition areas like east Aleppo for its supporters and do little to draw back millions of refugees, most from parts of the country that joined the rebellion.

Still, the European Union, where nearly 1 million Syrians are seeking asylum, says planning must start now. The questions surrounding Aleppo, where fighting ended last month with the government's capture of the entire city, point to the wider problems that will be faced in rebuilding the appalling destruction across Syria from its six-year civil war.

The EU wants to host a conference in the spring on the future of Syria with a focus on reconstruction. U.N. officials are scrambling to form a vision for a future Syria and find ways to tackle financing.

"I remember people were telling us, 'Are you mad? You start planning for rebuilding now?' And my reaction was, 'It is already too late,'" said Abdullah Al Dardari, deputy executive secretary for the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

"One day soon, hopefully, when there is a peace agreement of some sort and we need to deliver to the people of Syria on basic services and housing and schooling and all this, you will see how much time we really needed for planning."

The EU move may in part be aimed at gaining a voice in Syria — and a carrot of reconstruction aid to dangle before Assad — at a time when Moscow dominates the political process. Russia's warplanes helped Assad's forces recapture east Aleppo, the government's greatest victory of the war, and now Russia along with opposition-backer Turkey is pushing to jumpstart negotiations.

A comprehensive political solution remains far off. But any settlement in current circumstances would no doubt leave Assad in office and therefore running rebuilding efforts.

Al Dardari estimated war damages across Syria so far at $350 billion, including physical damage amid loss of economic activity. Aleppo's share is about 15 per cent, or over $52 billion, he said, though others put the estimate at nearly double that.
"The economic damage is beyond calculation at the moment," Al Dardari said, who later this month will move to the World Bank as an adviser on reconstruction efforts in the Middle East. "There is no number on earth that can be put on the loss (of) the historical, archaeological and cultural and also the business aspect of it."

Since 2012, Aleppo was divided between a government-held west and opposition-held east, with constant battling between the two sides. The east bore the brunt, under bombardment by government artillery, airstrikes and helicopter-dropped barrel bombs. The Russian-backed siege last year brought months of intense barrages until the rebel enclave collapsed in December.

Eastern Aleppo, home to nearly 1.5 million before the war, now lies largely empty. While theoretically residents are allowed to return, many will not in the absence of a reconciliation deal, fearing retaliation or military conscription.

Still, dozens of residents have filtered in to inspect their properties, climbing over debris to reach hollowed-out, punctured buildings with unexploded ordnance littered around. Entire apartment blocks are now rubble. Vehicles can't move through most streets because of debris and bomb craters.

During an Associated Press tour in January, a body — likely of a rebel fighter — still lay outside a bombed hospital. Rebels’ graffiti was covered over with black paint, adding to the haunted feel of streets largely empty of life.

In the city’s centre, the historic old quarters — which were largely held by the opposition and stood on the dividing line — are a wrecked shadow of their glorious past. UNESCO estimated that 60 per cent of the old city has been severely damaged and 30 per cent destroyed. Among the casualties are the heavily damaged centuries-old Umayyad Mosque and historic bazaar.

"My heart burns every time I come to the market and see the destruction. I cry every day but there is nothing I can do," said Abdul-Qadir Homsi, owner of a shoe shop. Inside his shop, three cylinders — perhaps homemade bombs — nearly blocked the door.

"I informed the authorities two weeks ago but so far they have not come to remove them."
Mohammed Saddour, who sold carts, found his shop had been used by rebels as an operations room near the front lines. He spoke as workers poured sand into a fighters’ tunnel underneath his shop. He estimated he would need $1,200 to get the shop running plus $800 for a generator — an amount that the 52-year-old merchant can't afford.

"The economic cycle in Aleppo will not start unless the big and small business owners begin working. If they don't start, it will not resume," he said.

On some streets, municipal workers were fixing electricity poles, a sign of the first steps by Syrian authorities.

The government says its priority is to rebuild infrastructure with a goal of reviving Aleppo's industries and businesses, said Abdul-Qadder Azzouz, an economy professor at Damascus University. That alone could cost an estimated half billion dollars, he said.

At the top of the list is getting the city's airport working again as well as water and power facilities. Authorities may try to quickly rehabilitate the east's Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, Azzouz said.

The most pressing challenge is to bring home the people of Aleppo and other cities, said AlHakam Shaar, a 30-year-old Aleppan who fled soon after the war began to avoid the draft and now lives in Budapest. That is unlikely to happen without a peace deal.

"Any rushed reconstruction is dangerous and is likely to cut out the owners or the ex-residents as well," said Shaar, who is a member of the "Aleppo Project," a team documenting the city's recent history.

International officials are informally discussing whether to pursue country-by-country reconstruction or a regional Marshall Plan-type project.

But the money being discussed currently is "small, incremental," suitable for some stabilization projects but not reconstruction on a scale "that is going to bring 12 million displaced people back to their homes," said a Syrian urban planner who is aware of the discussions. He spoke about the behind-the-scenes talks on condition of anonymity.

Officials in Russia — in the midst of a two-year recession — have not commented on rebuilding. Moscow may instead encourage companies and other entities to lend support.
Russia's province of Chechnya said it will help restore Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque.

With no overall peace deal, Turkey, a major ally of the opposition, may take a role in reconstruction in areas under its sphere. It has begun restoration work in Jarablus, a town captured in the campaign its military has waged alongside Syrian fighters against the Islamic State group and the Kurds in northern Syria.

Without a large-scale campaign, rebuilding will likely come through financing smaller, local efforts.

In Beirut, the U.N. and Italy's University of Venezia organized a gathering of Syrian architects and artists with others from Europe to put together a "Sketch for Syria."

They brainstormed ideas, including using energy efficient methods, recycling scrap metal from destroyed buildings, and speeding construction so that residents can move back into homes while building continues on upper floors. They drew up proposals for decentralizing governance.

Luna Rajab, a Damascus architect and the co-ordinator of the project, said the focus is on Syria's future, not the conflict.

"We are not forgetting there is a war," she said. "But I can choose to sit under the ruins and ashes or I can choose to climb on top of the mountain and scream as loud as I can: 'I want to rebuild.'"

---

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Andrea Rosa in Beirut, Hassan Ammar in Aleppo and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed to this report.

Bassem Mroue And Sarah El Deeb, The Associated Press