

Afro-Mediterranean Revolutionary Project

by Hussein Askary

May 28—The following article is based on a preliminary study (no feasibility studies are conducted yet) presented publicly by Egyptian engineer Aiman Rsheed in the months following the Egyptian revolution of January 2011. The original study is in Arabic, and parts of it have been translated into English by this author and included in this article.

Born in 1964, Rsheed is a member of a generation that grew up between the generation of Egyptian independence from British colonialism and the generation of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, on the one hand, and the young generation that has now revolted against the social and political injustice imposed on Egypt and the rest of Africa by the IMF-World Bank with the support of the EU and the United States, and implemented brutally inside Egypt by the regime of Hosni Mubarak.

The Africa Pass project (**Figure 1**) shows the great human potential in this ancient but young nation. According to Rsheed, there are today more than 470,000 Egyptian engineers. Each year 20,000 graduates are added to this enormous army of engineers. Egypt's population is at 80 million, but lives on a narrow strip of land on the banks of the Nile River and Delta. Africa Pass will open the desert in the west of the country for development and population. The project will also revolutionize the economies of Sub-Saharan and North Africa and relations within the continent and across the Mediterranean into Europe.

Rsheed presented a draft of this project to the office of Prime Minister Kamal Al-Ganzouri in February 2012. It has recently garnered the support of thousands

FIGURE 1

Artist's Depiction of the Africa Pass Project



Source: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/aiman.rsheed>

of engineers, university professors, and the public at large. Rsheed has been interviewed on many Egyptian television channels to present his idea to a nation which has been hungry for a solution for the deep poverty and social injustice, which still oppresses the people even after the fall of the Mubarak regime. The IMF is desperate to come back into Egypt, but a strong resistance movement is not letting the leadership of the country make compromises.

Aiman Rsheed served in the Egyptian Military and Air Forces as Colonel, specializing in aviation engineering, disaster relief, and planning. He ended his military service in 2008, and went to complete his PhD in mechanical engineering in Ain Shams University. He studied at the Institute of the Air Force and worked there as chief engineer for planning and maintenance workshops. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in

أيمن رشيد
رقم (٣)



مرشح لمقعد نقيب المهندسين
برنامج بمخطط زمني وآليات تنفيذ
يمكنكم من الحاسبة

Source: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/aiman.rsheed>

Africa Pass author Aiman Rsheed's campaign poster for Chairman of the Egyptian Engineers' Union, 2012

1986, graduating from the Military Technical College.

Rsheed is a candidate for the chairmanship of the Egyptian Engineers Union, whose 470,000 members he regards as the army which will support and carry out this mega-project. Rsheed is politically independent and not a member of any political party.

Presently, he is working as planning manager at Misr Training and Technical Consultation firm in Cairo.

Summary of the Project

The Africa Pass will include two major components:

A. Transport: In the first phase, it includes the building of a major modern seaport in Sidi Barrani in north-western Egypt near the border with Libya, which will be connected to the Great Lakes nations (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South and North Sudan) by high-

speed rail and modern auto highways (**Map 1**). In the second phase Somalia and Ethiopia will be connected. In the third, Egypt will be connected to Asia through a tunnel underneath the Suez Canal and a bridge from south Sinai to Saudi Arabia across the Tiran Island in the south of the Gulf of Aqaba. In the fourth a high-speed rail network across North Africa westward will connect to Europe through the planned Gibraltar tunnel.

Inside Egypt alone and along the Africa Pass corridor, five large cities are envisioned to be constructed like a string of beads with 250 km between each city, in an area that is practically only desert now. That will alleviate the demographic pressure on the Egyptian cities and help make the desert bloom with life and activity again, with the help of the canal bringing water from the Congo (see below).

The building of the Sidi Barrani port, a modern container-handling and industrial center on the Mediterranean with a large international airport, is the first and easiest part of the project to accomplish, according to the study. The large industrial zone and tourist zone in the area will attract industries, skilled Egyptian labor, and investors, and immediately provide work for large numbers of Egyptians, who are currently unemployed.

B. Water: The more impressive water project presented by Rsheed is similar to the Transaqua Canal Project (presented thoroughly by *EIR* and the Schiller Institute based on the work of Italian engineer Marcello Vichi). An irrigation canal, 40 meters wide and 15 meters deep and about 3,800 kilometers long, will extend from the highlands in eastern Congo, where the mighty Congo River originates, and flow northward through the Central Africa Republic, South and North Sudan, into Egypt to fill the Qattara Depression west of Cairo with fresh water (**Map 2**). Seven hydropower stations will harvest the power of the flow of water from a height of 1,500 meters above sea level in the south and down into the Qattara Depression, which lies 80 meters below sea level. The study does not specify whether this canal would be navigable. It is obvious that bulk transport can become cheaper and more easily transported, shipping it by canal, as compared to by rail or road.

The canal will be constructed parallel to the rail lines and roadways. Electrical and electronic communication lines will accompany the Africa Pass to allow for building agricultural and urban centers along it. Oil pipelines can be added to the corridor to allow the landlocked countries to export their oil.

Around the Qattara Depression alone, millions of acres of agricultural land can be created, turning Egypt into a breadbasket, rather than being, as is the case now, dependent on imports of food. The freshwater Qattara lake and the green areas around it will have enormous hydrological effects, moderating the weather in the desert and increasing the hydrological cycle in the region with ever greater rainfall, diminishing the size of the desert.

Objectives of the Project

1. Development of nine African nations through real economic development projects.

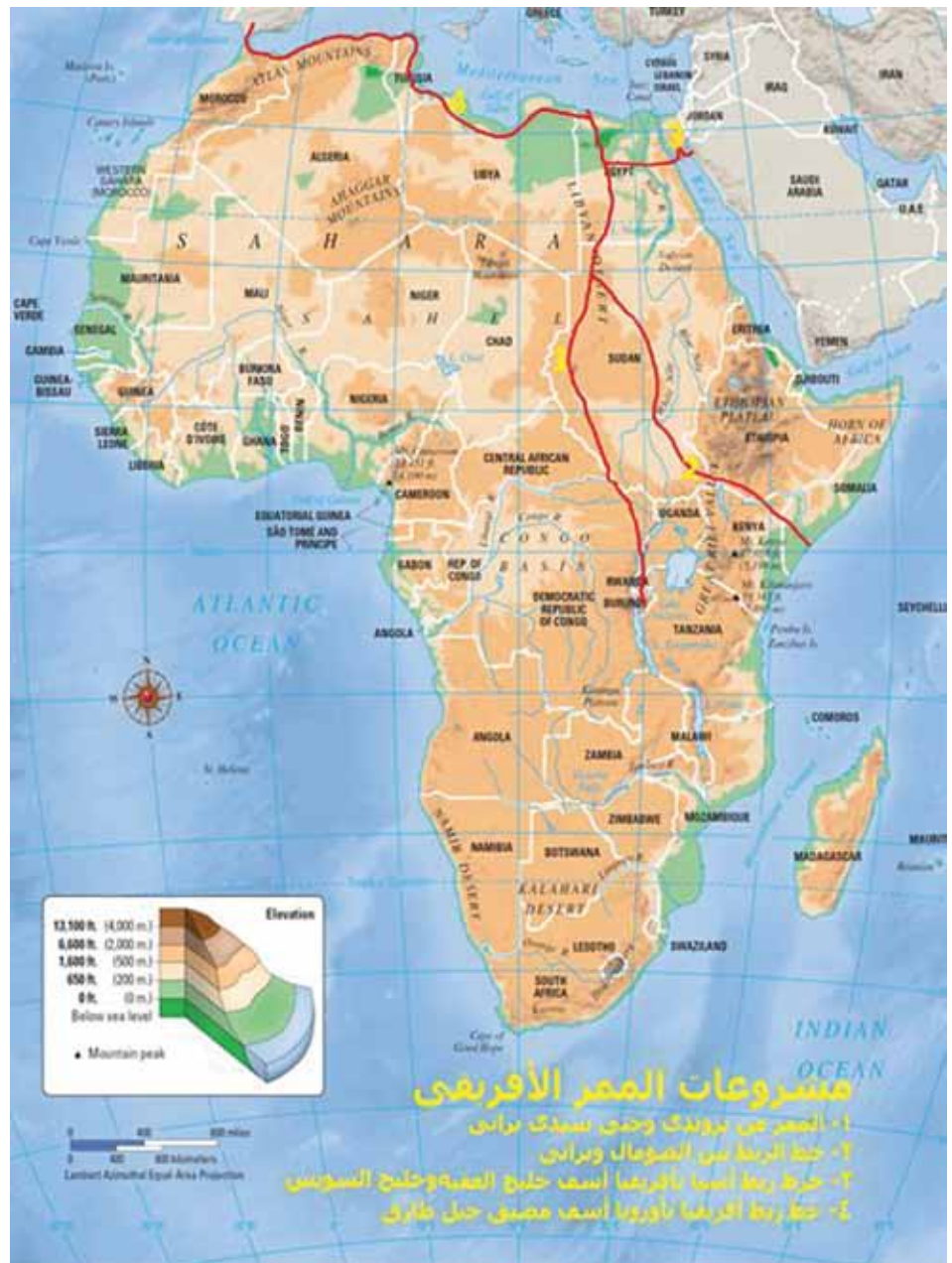
2. Turning Egypt and the other African nations through which the project passes, into industrial, labor-attracting centers instead of labor-flight disaster areas.

3. Opening an export outlet for the agricultural products of the nations of the Great Lakes region, which are now wasted for lack of storage and low-cost, rapid means of transport. It is estimated that agricultural and other products will be ready for shipping from their place of origin to the Mediterranean within two days, with the help of the high-speed rail and Sidi Barrani port. This project will open up new agricultural sectors in the region which have lain dormant and isolated, such as the enormous potential of livestock and dairy production in both parts of Sudan. It will also lead to the elimination of hunger and starvation in many parts of Africa, especially the Horn.

4. Redistributing the population, especially of Egypt, into new cities, towns, and service centers in a

MAP 1

Africa Pass: Four Phases of Transport Corridors



Source: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/aiman.rsheed>

fertile environment that is aspiring to grow.

5. Re-establishing Egypt's leading role and connection to Africa with renewed economic and diplomatic cooperation, which was launched by Egypt's new government and Foreign Ministry after the revolution. This project can contribute greatly to the conflict-resolution initiatives among the nations of this region, especially South and North Sudan, development of Darfur,

Africa Pass: Canal from Eastern Congo to the Qattara Depression



Source: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/aiman.rsheed>

and the opening of cooperation with Chad, which has become part of the conflict in Darfur.

6. Developing the water resources of all the nations included in the project and ensuring the production of

large amounts of clean hydroelectric power. Inside Egypt, the Africa Pass will be complementary to the New Nile Valley project, which will start at the Toshki Canal in the south near Aswan and run parallel to the

Nile northwards, opening new agro-industrial centers in the desert. Dr. Farouk Al-Baz, Egyptian-American scientist and former NASA expert, has pioneered this project, which he call the "Development Corridor." Africa Pass will create a third Nile Valley, but with regional and international connections.

7. The cultivation of millions of acres of land around the Qattara Depression, and generation of power.

Rsheed has called upon the Egyptian government, i.e., the Prime Minister, to hold a five-day conference, in which the idea of the project would be thoroughly presented with the participation of experts from the different Egyptian ministries, in order to give the project the character of a national mobilization. He also recommends that the Foreign Ministry should immediately start negotiations and hold conferences with the other nations that would benefit from the project. Rsheed suggests that the Egyptian Engineers Union be made the official consultant for the project, in order for it to benefit from the local capabilities of Egyptian engineers. According to him, the Sidi Barrani port/industrial zone should be launched immediately as a first shot, regardless of the fate of the rest of the Africa Pass, in order to give an example of the great potential that exists in the country and what can be done with it.

Although the very specific technical data and topographical difficulties will be assessed and dealt with through specialized studies by the different Egyptian ministries as recommended above, the general overview and intention provided by Rsheed is both sound and doable. There are in this study certain problems regarding the thinking about its financing, which stem

from the lack of sufficient knowledge and trust in a system of state-generated credit, after so many years of IMF policies and corrupt regime practices. However, this project will not be isolated from the solution provided by the LaRouche movement internationally for the current global financial/economic breakdown crisis.

Besides, there are misunderstandings and illusions regarding the feasibility of solar power in Africa. The Desertec project for solar power generation, which is a financial and scientific swindle imposed on Germany, the EU, and some partners in North Africa, is presented positively in this report. It has been definitively and clearly refuted in *EIR* and *21st Century Science & Technology* magazine. As most Africans actually realize, there is no other alternative for Africa's future development than nuclear power. The subsidy of solar power on a very small scale by the EU in Morocco, for example, is intended to both delay Morocco's decision to go nuclear and to brainwash Europeans who believe in this type of green utopianism.

Egypt's commitment to build four nuclear power stations by 2025 to generate 4 gigawatts of electricity did not end with the Mubarak regime. On Feb. 13, 2011, interim Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq reiterated that these plans will not be affected by the political developments in the country. Current Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzouri, on Jan. 16, 2012, informed ministers that the government will follow through with its plans to build Egypt's first nuclear power plant. The plant's construction site is located in Dabaa in Matrouh Governorate on the Mediterranean, in proximity with the same region where the Sidi Barrani port/industrial zone is proposed in the Africa Pass project. All leading companies from Japan, Russia, China, France, the U.S., and South Korea have expressed interest. Bidding for the projects was supposed to be presented this year, but has been postponed pending on the establishment of a new government after the current Presidential elections.

It is important, as the fight continues for a new and just world economic system, based on respecting the sovereignty of nations, that Europeans on the other side of the Mediterranean see the enormous human and natural potential in Africa through the eyes of such patriotic and passionately creative Africans as Aiman Rsheed. Bridging both the physical and socio-economic gap between Africa and Europe will depend on the realization of such ideas and aspirations as presented in this report.

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