



Palestinians make their way past the rubble of destroyed houses and buildings in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, Jan. 21, 2025, following a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas reached Jan. 17. (OSV News/Reuters/Dawoud Abu Alkas)



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"Why didn't I think of that?" This is the question that came to mind, almost spontaneously and universally, when President Donald Trump announced [his plan](#) to turn the Gaza Strip into a high-class resort, a "Riviera of the Middle East." Throughout the world, foreign ministers, professors of diplomatic history, students of Mideast politics, all had the same reaction: Why didn't I think of that?

Gaza needed massive development aid before the war broke out in late 2023, and the subsequent devastation that has been wrought in that narrow strip of land has only increased the need. Who better than a New York real estate developer to tackle such a big development project? How different can reconstructing a nation's infrastructure be from taming the swamps of Miami for a golf course?

The people of Gaza, all 2 million of them, will need to relocate "permanently" according to Trump's stated objective. I suppose he thinks that after months of war, a little more displacement won't be much of a burden. Perhaps he sees a business opportunity and thinks they could visit some of his other properties? [Trump National Bedminster](#) couldn't host all of them, and besides, the U.S. isn't accepting refugees at the moment. Maybe the Palestinian people could visit [Trump International Scotland](#)? How many rooms are there?

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The president seems not to recognize that ownership of the land is the underlying issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and removing yet more Palestinians from their land is unlikely to lead to peace. But, hey, isn't it time we all move past such geopolitical realities and go play some golf?

Secretary of State Marco Rubio stepped in to clear up any confusion occasioned by the president's surprise announcement. "No other country in the world has stepped up," Rubio [noted](#), which is true but not exculpatory. He assured the Palestinian

people that the president's offer was "not meant as a hostile move." Rubio did not mention how Gaza's Arab neighbors could be persuaded to take in the surplus population. Nor how he would separate the civilians from the remaining Hamas terrorists.

Trump and his team know there will be hurdles. If only the U.S. government had an agency that was dedicated to development! If only we had experience sending aid to desperate people, helping them confront famine and disease! If only someone would invent such a government program! I know. We could call it the United States Agency for International Development. For short, we could call it USAID. The acronym suggests the very nature of the work! How cool is that?

King Frederik X of Denmark and his government breathed a sigh of relief at the news of Trump's Gaza plan. They had been [worrying](#) about how to respond to Trump's desire to purchase Greenland. Surely the frozen tundra of that vast island will lose its luster as Trump contemplates the sunny shores of the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

The president and people of [Panama](#) are also pleased with the postponement of their day of reckoning with the emperor, I mean, the president of the United States. Trump had warned that "something very powerful" would happen if they did not return control of the Panama Canal to the U.S. The man who promised to keep American troops out of endless wars surely can't deploy troops to the Mideast and to Central America, could he?

All of this really would be funny if it were not for the fact that real people, many of them already destitute, will be harmed by Trump's idiocy.

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People scoff at Trump, especially establishment types. I am sure that they secretly envy his ability to think outside the box. Look at the recent showdown over tariffs with Mexico and Canada. Trump threatened 25% tariffs against both countries and, in [response](#), both countries agreed to do things they were already doing. Amazing. Getting people to do what they are already doing. Those are the kinds of concessions that happen when you think outside the box. The art of the deal, indeed.

All of this really would be funny if it were not for the fact that real people, many of them already destitute, will be harmed by Trump's idiocy. The people of Gaza need real help to rebuild their homes, schools and hospitals. Those with HIV really do need the medical supplies brought to them through USAID. Victims of earthquakes and wars really do need the basic necessities of food, water and medicine that [Catholic Relief Services](#) brings to them. Millions of people who have very little are supported by what amounts to a sliver of the federal budget, and all of that support is at risk from Elon Musk's social Darwinism combined with Trump's basic ignorance.

That is why this is not funny. It is frightening and it is immoral.

And somebody needs to warn Pope Francis that when Trump comes to visit, don't bring him to Castel Gandolfo or the president will want to turn it into lakeside condos.