

## The Tony Blair Institute, Labour and Gaza

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I am aware that the FT is not keen on anyone quoting more than about 100 words of an article that they publish, but this is too important not to share. The public interest justifies doing so. [This article was published by the FT](#) late yesterday afternoon:

The Tony Blair Institute participated in a project to develop a postwar Gaza plan that envisaged kick-starting the enclave's economy with a "Trump Riviera" and an "Elon Musk Smart Manufacturing Zone".

The plan outlined in a slide deck, seen by the Financial Times, was led by Israeli businessmen and used financial models developed inside Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to reimagine Gaza as a thriving trading hub.

Titled the "Great Trust" and shared with the Trump administration, it proposed paying half a million Palestinians to leave the area and attracting private investors to develop Gaza.

While the Tony Blair Institute (TBI) did not author or endorse the final slide deck, two staff members at the former UK prime minister's institute participated in message groups and calls as the project developed, according to people familiar with the work.

One lengthy document on postwar Gaza, written by a TBI staff member, was shared within the group for consideration. This included the idea of a "Gaza Riviera" with artificial islands off the coast akin to those in Dubai, blockchain-based trade initiatives, a deep water port to tie Gaza into the India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor, and low-tax "special economic zones".

As the FT notes, the Tony Blair Institute (TBI) initially pushed back at suggestions of their involvement, but when presented with evidence that they were, they tried to downplay their contribution. That said, as the FT has made clear, the TBI had an agenda for Gaza, which implied that the Palestinian people of that territory were seen as mere suppliers of labour to what a business community unrelated to the area might want to achieve.

This is shocking. It aligns the TBI with extreme neoliberalism, and with the Trump agenda for Gaza, which is essentially to use the territory to create a giant business opportunity for US and other commercial operators, regardless of what Palestinians

want and regardless of their right to be recognised as a state.

As is well known, there are significant personnel and policy ties between Starmer's government and the TBI. [AI is one major link](#), but Jonathon Powell's role in government and his close relationship with Blair and others with similar links reinforce the relationship.

So the obvious question is, where does the UK stand on this, and how serious is its commitment to ever recognise Palestine, which it says it will, but never gets round to doing. Is the TBI letting us know why?