Opinion
Guest Voices
U.S. President-elect Donald Trump speaks after a meeting with Republicans in Congress at th

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump speaks after a meeting with Republicans in Congress at the U.S. Capitol building in Washington Jan. 8, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Jeenah Moon)



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It is an axiom of life that it is easier to destroy than to build.

As a result, in a few hours, terrorists from the Islamic State group can destroy mosques, churches and ancient monuments that took years, even decades, to build.

In days, weapons of war can destroy towns and cities that took generations to build. In seconds, a single bullet can kill a child who was nourished by scores of people over many years.

At first blush, these destroyers appear very powerful, but in fact, their destructiveness shows their weakness. They are incapable of creativity, they lack a commitment to long-term goals, they are threatened by the success of others.

President Donald Trump is the epitome of a destroyer who knows what he hates but has no idea how to build anything beautiful. He has greater joy in firing people than mentoring them.

He is like the developer who tears down a historic building and puts up a flashy monstrosity. He fills in wetlands rich with life for a golf course. When he is finished, he doesn’t pay his subcontractors. And if the project loses money, he declares bankruptcy and walks away. No wonder no American bank will loan him money.

The truly powerful are creators not destroyers, builders not demolishers, life-givers not killers, fixers not complainers, nurturers not bullies.

The responsibility of government is for the common good, but Trump can only see what he wants to destroy. He is a political terrorist, a destroyer of worlds. He has no plan. Nothing to replace the programs he destroys. No experts to replace those he fires.

If you believe the government is inherently bad, then you don’t need a positive plan. Simple destruction is your plan. Extremists on the left and right meet in anarchism because they fear and hate big government.

The Republican Party has always had an anti-government bias. It hates taxes and government regulations. Traditionally, Republicans have been a check on the excesses of the Democrats, but today, they are simply lashing out with no thought of consequences. Republican politicians are so enamored or fearful of Trump that they sacrifice their principles and independence for his support in their reelections.

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By executive order, Trump “paused” spending on government programs legislated and funded by Congress. Medicaid, Meals on Wheels, cancer research and hundreds of other programs were affected. His actions were challenged in court and in the court of public opinion, and he canceled his pause.

The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is suspended, without concern about the cost in lives and restarting the AIDS epidemic. Although the administration was forced to restore relief aid, compassionate conservatism is clearly dead.

If you hate government programs, then there is no need to fix them. Make it impossible for the programs to function. Cut funding; freeze hires; fire people; put loyalists not experts in charge.

Even if you don’t have the authority to do any of this, do it anyway because the chaos it causes will make it impossible to function and will encourage people to quit. The chaos of the Trump administration is not a bug, it is a feature.

This destructive pattern goes beyond domestic programs and affects national security. He has exiled national security experts from the White House, relying on ideologues rather than people with expertise.

Establishing and maintaining good relations with NATO, Canada, Panama and Mexico took generations, but Trump thinks he can bully them into submission just as he did his subcontractors.

It worked with his subcontractors because he never had to do business with them again. But sacrificing goodwill with nation-states for one quick deal is a recipe for disaster. They are not going away. We may need them tomorrow.

This is not an argument that everything is perfect in the federal government. Continued budget deficits are unsustainable. Health care costs are out of control, contributing to unsustainable Medicare and Medicaid costs. People are living longer, creating challenges for Social Security.

The 2008 financial crisis destroyed the lives and fortunes of millions of people, but bankers who caused the crisis escaped punishment. The opioid crisis killed hundreds of thousands of people, but pharmaceutical executives and owners who caused the epidemic did not go to jail.

Computer systems in government are antiquated, and there have been spectacular failures in updating them. Positive uses of artificial intelligence must also be found. Red tape and paperwork must be streamlined.

Cost overruns in the Defense Department budget are a disgrace. Big-ticket items in the defense budget, like aircraft carriers and expensive tanks, must be rethought considering the success of drones in the Ukraine war. Europeans should pay more for their defense. China cheats in business and steals technology.

The list of problems is extensive, but Trump’s approach is not reform, it is destruction. He does not make things better; he causes chaos.

Elections have consequences, and we are seeing them.

The question remains: How long will the American people put up with the chaos? My guess is that people won’t care until it affects their lives with higher prices, lost jobs or a disaster Trump cannot blame on others. I have no doubt it will come — but at what cost?