

How Trump's most jaw-dropping promises stand a year into his second term

BY WILL WEISSERT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — From toppling Venezuela's leader to ordering mass deportations, from turning once independent government entities into rubber stamps to demolishing the East Wing for a White House ballroom, President Donald Trump spent his first year back in office trampling political norms and testing institutional checks and balances.

Some of his ideas that once seemed implausible, if not outright fanciful, are now reality. But there are other things that Trump could not deliver on.

"I've kept all my promises and much more," Trump insisted during a speech this week in Detroit.

With his administration nearing the one-year mark, here's a look at where some of his most jaw-dropping promises stand:

IN PROGRESS: A NEW QATAR AIR FORCE ONE

U.S. defense officials in May accepted a luxury Boeing 747 jet from Qatar for Trump to eventually use as Air Force One, brushing aside ethical and legal questions and even anti-bribery constitutional provisions. The aircraft is being retrofitted in Texas to meet U.S. security and communications standards that are likely to cost about \$400 million, the Air Force says. Outside experts estimate costs could approach \$1 billion. Despite Trump's boasts that the work would be done in six months, completion may not actually occur until after he leaves office in January 2029.

WHAT'S IN PROGRESS: ANNEXING GREENLAND

After the U.S. military's removal of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Trump renewed his calls to take over the semi-autonomous Danish territory, insisting the United States will "have" Greenland "one way or another." The president also tapped Gov. Jeff Landry, R-La., as the special U.S. envoy to Greenland, with a nod to the 1803 Louisiana Purchase from France that doubled the size of the U.S. Denmark says it is not ceding the world's largest island and that any invasion could have geopolitical implications given that Denmark is a NATO ally.

AUTOPEN INVESTIGATION

Trump has tried to denigrate his predecessor, Joe Biden, by accusing the Democrat of overreliance on the autopen to sign presidential pardons, legislation and other key documents, despite the fact that Trump and other presidents have also used the tool. In October, a GOP-controlled House committee released a report alleging misuse of the autopen by the Biden administration. Trump's Department of Justice is investigating.

REOPENING ALCATRAZ

The president has said he wants to reopen an "expanded and rebuilt" Alcatraz, the notorious San Francisco Bay prison that has been closed for six-plus decades, to house immigration detainees. William K. Marshall III, the director of the Bureau of Prisons, toured the island in July. His agency announced that engineers and planners were developing design concepts, preliminary budgets and logistical models.

50-YEAR HOME MORTGAGES

Trump has posted on social media about extending traditional home mortgages repayments from 30 years to 50 years, suggesting that this could ease concerns about housing affordability. Economists say the switch would make it harder to build wealth through home ownership. Nonetheless, the White House has pledged to push the change. Officials have made little headway since, however, and Trump

instead has looked to reduce mortgage rates by having the federal government buy \$200 billion in mortgage bonds.

SEEKING A THIRD TERM

Trump has frequently toyed with the idea of a third term, despite the Constitution stating that no one can be elected president "more than twice." He acknowledged in October, "I would say that if you read it, it's pretty clear I'm not allowed to run. It's too bad." White House chief of staff Susie Wiles also told Vanity Fair that Trump "knows he can't run again." Still, Trump mused this month, "I'm not allowed to run? I'm not sure," and suggested there could be "a constitutional movement" to make that happen.

WHAT'S FADED AWAY: MAKING CANADA THE 51ST STATE

Despite it being far-fetched, Trump has talked about making America's northern neighbor the "Great State of Canada" since before his second term started. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney assured Trump during a subsequent White House visit that his country "won't be for sale, ever." Carney suggested in June that Trump had lost interest. Trump has continued to bring up the idea, though, including during a September speech to military personnel in Virginia.

TOURING FORT KNOX

Trump suggested in February that billionaire Elon Musk would be checking out Fort Knox in Kentucky to ensure that U.S. gold reserves were still there. The president even floated the notion of tagging along. Nothing came of that, however, and Musk has left the administration.

SENDING THOUSANDS OF MIGRANTS TO GUANTANAMO

The president pledged to ship up to 30,000 of the "worst criminal aliens" to a U.S. Navy lockup in Cuba, and between February and June, about 500 immigrants were held there. But those numbers have since declined and sometimes reached zero. Housing migrants at Guantanamo is more expensive than in traditional detention centers, and doing so has drawn legal challenges.

GAZA STRIP AS A MEDITERRANEAN SEA RESORT

Trump repeatedly suggested that the U.S. would take over war-torn Gaza and move out the Palestinians living there, and that U.S. developers could turn the area into a "Riviera of the Middle East," after the war between Israel and Hamas.

Gaza's reconstruction is a key question amid a Trump administration-brokered ceasefire, but Arab nations have rejected the idea of it being a vacation spot. Trump no longer mentions it.

TARIFF REVENUE CHECKS

The president says his tariffs could raise enough revenue for most Americans to get \$2,000 payments. But he also has pledged to spend that same money on plugging deficits created by tax cuts, reducing the national debt, keeping a key nutrition program for low-income mothers and children funded during last year's government shutdown, aiding farmers and adding to defense spending for 2027. The U.S. collected about \$289 billion in tariff revenue last year, which would be well short of what rebate checks would cost, even without the other promised earmarks. Trump also promised that slashing the size of federal government would give Americans rebate checks, but those never materialized.

ELIMINATING THE FEDERAL INCOME TAX

Trump has frequently said that steep import tariffs "will be enough to cut all of the income tax," long suggesting that the U.S. was better off during the Gilded Age, when there was no income tax and federal revenue came largely from tariffs. "If you go back to the 1800s, 1887," he said Friday, "We had money, so much money, we didn't know what to do with it." Lately, however, his administration has more often been promoting how much his tax and spending law might reduce 2026 tax bills for many Americans.

CHANGING NFL KICKOFF RULES

Trump hates the dynamic kickoff, calling it a "demeaning" and "unromantic" affront to football's "pageantry." By November, Trump was suggesting the NFL didn't "have the right to do that to the game" while acknowledging, "I don't think they'll change."

What's been accomplished: Bringing back the War Department

Trump signed an executive order in September aiming to rename the Department of Defense as the Department of War. It will take an act of Congress to make the change lawful.

KENNEDY CENTER RENAMING

The board of trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts,

stocked with Trump loyalists, voted in December to add Trump's name to Washington's premier performing arts venue, memorializing the 35th president. The move drew show cancellations and a lawsuit. The Kennedy Center is named by statute and would need Congress' approval for a legal change.

REDUCING CHINESE INFLUENCE ON THE PANAMA CANAL

Trump suggested before his second term that the U.S. might retake control of the Panama Canal because Panama had failed to check Chinese influence over the waterway. His administration then pressured China to have the Hong Kong-based operator of ports at both ends of the canal sell those interests to a U.S. consortium, though that process faced delays. Panama withdrew from China's Belt and Road investment program in Latin America, and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited Panama in April and agreed to bolster security coordination.

TRUMP GOLD CARDS

The president announced in December that his long-promised "gold card" was going on sale. It offers legal status, and an eventual pathway to U.S. citizenship, for individuals paying \$1 million and corporations ponying up twice that per foreign-born employee, plus an upfront \$15,000 fee to cover screening costs. The program is meant to replace EB-5 visas, which offered permanent U.S. residency in exchange for foreign investors spending a bit more than \$1 million on a business that creates at least 10 full-time jobs for American workers.

WHITE HOUSE BALLROOM

Since tearing down the East Wing, construction crews have worked into the night, hustling to finish the massive

ballroom before Trump's term ends. The president initially said the structure, set to be bigger than the White House itself, would cost \$200 million but he now says \$400 million. He has promised that it will be paid for by himself and private donors. The White House has released only a partial list of who is actually contributing and has argued that parts of the project's plans are "top secret."

More to watch: Possible US military action in Colombia, Mexico and Iran

Following the U.S. operation in Venezuela, Trump accused Colombian President Gustavo Petro of "making cocaine and selling it to the United States" and said U.S. intervention in that country "sounds good to me."

After a friendly call with Petro, however, Trump suggested that "the situation of drugs and other disagreements" had been defused. Trump, though, also maintains that Mexico is "run" by drug cartels and says, "You have to do something with Mexico."

He's warned Iran that if that country starts "killing people like they have in the past" during a recent round of sweeping, anti-government protests, then "they are going to get hit very hard by the United States." Killings have run into the thousands, but by Friday, Trump appeared to be backing off those threats.

CUBA COLLAPSING WITH OR WITHOUT US INTERVENTION

Trump has repeatedly noted Cuba's weakened position since the U.S. captured Maduro, whose country was a major ally of the communist-run island. Trump has said Cuba "only survives because of Venezuela" and is "ready to fall" without the U.S. intervening. Venezuela's economic and social chaos and Maduro's ouster have raised questions about Cuba's

future. But Trump has also suggested Cuba "make a deal, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE," without saying what that means.

GOLDEN DOME

Trump says he wants a Golden Dome missile defense program — a multilayered, \$175 billion system that would put U.S. weapons in space for the first time — to be fully operational by January 2029. Defense officials say more likely all that will be achieved by then is some initial capability for the system. It is envisioned to include ground- and space-based capabilities that can detect and stop missiles at various stages of attack.

PETE ROSE AS A HALL OF FAMER

Trump said he talked to Rob Manfred before Major League Baseball's commissioner reinstated Cincinnati Reds slugger Pete Rose in May. Rose died in 2024 but still faced a baseball ban over betting on the game, despite having a record 4,256 career hits. Trump now wants Rose in the Hall of Fame, but that's up to the Hall's Classic Baseball Committee, which likely will not meet at least December 2027.

'RUSH HOUR 4'

The fourth installment of the cop buddy-comedy series starring Chris Tucker and Jackie Chan will be coming out after a reported request from Trump. Paramount, which is co-owned by David Ellison, son of Oracle co-founder and Trump megadonor Larry Ellison, is set to distribute the film. Semafor reported that Trump had asked Ellison to help revive the franchise. Warner Bros. released the first three "Rush Hour" films, but eschewed the fourth after earlier sexual misconduct allegations against its director, Brett Ratner. Ratner also made a documentary on first lady Melania Trump.

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