



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Third presidential term—Motive, Means, Opportunity



The change would be straightforward; "twice" would become "three times." Everything afterward would be complicated: American democracy would become an autocracy, and much of the world would likely follow.

Donald Trump keeps flirting with the possibility that he will fight for a third term as president in 2028, despite the constitution. The last time he did so was at the Republican governors dinner last Thursday, when he **said** that he had raised more than \$600 million and that he could use it to support the candidacy of "some of his friends" for re-election in the 2026 midterm elections.

"So we've got that money and I got to spend it somewhere, and they tell me I'm not allowed to run. I'm not sure: Is that true? I'm not sure," said Trump.

And then he pretended to be naïve and helpless against the power of the constitutional ban on the third presidential term. But at the same time, he asked for the assistance of his supporters to lift the ban.

In a private meeting with House Republicans last November, immediately after defeating Kamala Harris in the presidential election, he **used** the same "helpless" but mobilising tone: "I suspect I won't be running again, unless you say, 'He's so good we've got to figure something else out.'"

An identical performance took place last May before members of the National Rifle Association, at a time when he had already secured the Republican presidential nomination: "I don't know, are we going to be considered three-term or two-term? Are we three-term or two-term if we win?"

It is very difficult to imagine that Trump has held up the issue of a third term for so long and persistently without being serious about it. The way he is portraying the issue in public makes it even more difficult to believe that he is treating it as a joke.

A difficult path to changing the

constitution

His intention to at least try to set a precedent and a third presidential term is very serious. His supporters also take him seriously. So, the motive is there, and that is quite enough to begin a journey that, if successful, would mean the end of a quarter-millennium-old American democracy.

Besides motive, are there two other requirements necessary to commit a crime—means and opportunity?

A Republican representative in the House, Andy Ogles of Tennessee, made an attempt to provide means just days after Trump's inauguration. He **proposed** a resolution to amend the 22nd amendment to the Constitution to allow a third presidential term.

A change is by no means simple; it is almost impossible

"No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than three times," the proposal by Rep. Ogles, which would replace the current 22nd amendment to the US Constitution, which reads, "No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice."

However, a change is by no means simple; it is almost impossible. To change the constitution, the proposal needs a two-thirds majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Before the amendment becomes part of the constitution, three-quarters of the states—38—must approve it.

The Republicans have a **majority** in both houses of Congress, but it is pretty slim. Assuming that Democratic Party Congress members and independents will not accept the introduction of a third presidential term, this initiative has no chance of success.

But will that discourage Trump and his supporters? The president is demonstrating the opposite, much to the delight of his supporters, who are cheering the possibility of

their leader being re-elected in 2028.

Opportunity

As for the third aspect, opportunity, i.e., the chances that the one who intends to actually commit a criminal act, things depend almost entirely on the environment that allows a crime against democracy to be committed or not. From this perspective, Trump's intent is the weakest. For now.

With that in mind, the "Third Term Project" was **promoted** at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) this week. It was intended as an action in support of Rep. Ogles' proposal to amend the 22nd amendment, but Republican activists want this to have a much broader impact.

It should have a mobilising effect on the public and, over the next four years, de-taboo the issue of a third presidential term and make it a legitimate political issue.

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The opportunity for such action is certainly there when we consider that Donald Trump achieved the current presidential term despite a felony court conviction and three other indictments.

His election victory was clear proof that the majority of voters can choose the latter between the rule of law and following a leader with authoritarian ambitions.

Enough time for a change

After all, Trump has confirmed that he wants to continue this course of supremacy of personal leadership over the law with last week's **post** on social media, "He who saves his Country does not violate any Law."

He thus joins the infamous historical ranks of autocratic leaders such as Franco, Mussolini, and Hitler, who—with slight linguistic variations—said the same thing.



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Rep. Ogles uses the same "argument" to explain the only institutional initiative to date that paves the way for the third presidential term: "Trump has proven himself to be the only figure in modern history capable of reversing our nation's decay and restoring America to greatness, and he must be given the time necessary to accomplish that goal."

The project to undermine American democracy already possesses a clear motive, available means, and a favourable opportunity, with nearly four years to complete the task. To ridicule this attempt would be the greatest disservice to America as we know it.