

Quid Pro Presidency

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President Trump with Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad al Thani at the Amiri Diwan on May 14, 2025, in Doha, Qatar. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Nations that have bestowed lavish gifts to President Trump — or enriched Trump and his family by striking business deals with Trump-connected companies — have later received extraordinary benefits from the Trump administration. The apparent link between personal benefits and official acts has fundamentally changed the nature of the most powerful political office on Earth.

For example, on May 21, Qatar gifted the United States government a luxury 747 jet, which originally cost over \$400 million, for Trump to use as Air Force One. The plane was [designed](#) by “famed French interior design firm Alberto Pinto Cabinet, and boasts gold-colored walls and gold furnishings, reminiscent of the president’s opulent home in Trump Tower.” The cabin “is decked out with winding staircases, plush carpeting, leather couches and more.” After Trump leaves office, the plane will reportedly be transferred to the Trump Presidential Library, making [it available for Trump’s personal use](#).

In 2017, during his first term, Trump described Qatar as “[a funder of terrorism at a very high level](#).” Since the gift of the plane, however, Trump’s posture toward Qatar has changed dramatically.

In a September 29 [executive order](#), Trump describes Qatar as “a steadfast ally in pursuit of peace, stability, and prosperity, both in the Middle East and abroad.” Trump states that it is now “the policy of the United States to guarantee the security and territorial integrity of the State of Qatar against external attack.” Specifically, the “United States shall regard any armed attack on the territory, sovereignty, or critical infrastructure of the State of Qatar as a threat to the peace and security of the United States.” Such an expansive security guarantee was previously extended only to NATO members.

But Trump did not stop there. On October 10, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced that the government will [permit Qatar to establish a military presence on U.S. soil](#). The Qatari government thanked Hegseth for allowing the creation of “a Qatar Emiri Air Force facility at Mountain Home Air Base in Idaho.” The facility “will host Qatari F-15 fighter jets and pilots who will train alongside U.S. troops.”

In 2024, a few months before Trump won the presidency, the Qatari government was one of two investors in a [\\$1.5 billion funding round](#) for Affinity Partners, an investment firm founded by Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Although Kushner had pledged not to be involved in policy-making in Trump’s second term, he has reemerged as one of Trump’s top foreign policy advisors.

Several other countries have replicated Qatar’s financial approach to Trump and his family. It has paid off.

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