

than Great Britain. During the Civil War, England was producing six times as much steel as we were, but when the railroad was complete, 42 percent of all steel was being produced in the United States—much of that going to the railroad.

During the Civil War, there were only 30,000 miles of railroad track in America. But when the system was complete, there was 167,000 miles crisscrossing this country. Today we still have more railroad track than any other country, 39 percent more than the number two country of Russia, and more than the rest of the top 10, which include in order China, India, Canada, Germany, Australia, Argentina, and France and Belgium combined, even more than nation number 139 on that list, the country of Lichtenstein, which has all of 5½ miles of railroad track.

The railroad made our economic explosion possible. The railroad made us an industrial giant. Before the railroad came, it was difficult to move goods or even transport people. But once the spike was driven, that was the kickstart to what we were going to do. Now, 150 years later, we are celebrating the coming of the Central Pacific's Jupiter with the Union Pacific's Engine 119 meeting together in Utah's backyard. The railroads still move goods, and they also provide passenger service.

□ 1215

I still remember as a kid my parents taking me to the Ogden train depot for a trip somewhere into Idaho, probably Boise. I was in my Sunday best. As we went up to the observation car, I could look out and see the beauty of this America passing us by.

It is an American national historical park. It is a place where the American story is without equal.

In LaRue County, Kentucky, there is the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park.

In Seneca, New York, there is the Women's Rights National Historical Park.

In Ohio, you can visit the Dayton Aviation National Historical Park where you can walk into the bicycle shop where Orville and Wilbur Wright first started to conquer the skies.

The Golden Spike National Historical Park is going to recognize in Promontory Summit in Utah, the place where the world changed, where not only was history made that day, but also the Herculean efforts of those who organized this, as well as the immigrant manpower of Irish coming from the east and Chinese from the west, who provided the muscle to accomplish this project.

A national historical park is accomplished by an act of Congress, but the Spike 150 Commission, chaired by Doug Foxley and Spencer Stokes, has mobilized a literal army of history lovers who will host a series of events befitting this historic moment.

It has already started with a horse parade in Brigham City, a hoedown in

Tremonton, and a country church service on Sunday. It will also culminate this Friday when we invite all of you to come to Utah to see the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike, which encouraged the pioneering of both the spirit and economy of America. When that Golden Spike was driven, America welcomed a new frontier.

HONORING LINNIE "PAPA" DARDEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Linnie "Papa" Darden, who is being honored at the Legends, Leaders, and Life Well Lived Award luncheon on May 9.

Well deserving of this honor, he should be an inspiration to us all about how to constantly strive to make the world a better place to live. Mr. Darden has dedicated much of his life to young people, teaching deaf children in Ethiopia and counseling teenagers on life skills and drug education here in the United States.

At the young age of 80, he earned a Ph.D. in religious counseling with a thesis on at-risk youth.

Along with serving youth at home and abroad, he served in our Nation's Armed Forces.

I couldn't be prouder to have him in the First Congressional District of Georgia. I thank Mr. Darden for his service, both in the military and in our communities. He continues to truly exemplify a life well lived.

HONORING RICHARD ECKBURG

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Richard "Dick" Eckburg, who is being honored at the Legends, Leaders, and Life Well Lived Award luncheon on May 9.

Well deserving of this honor, he should be an inspiration to us all about how to constantly strive to make the world a better place to live.

A Korean war veteran, Dick worked at UPS for 32 years, eventually becoming the vice president of public affairs. Since then, he has dedicated countless time and resources to numerous charitable organizations around the Savannah area, including the Telfair Museum, the Lucas Theatre, the Bethesda Academy, and many more.

Dick's work with each of these organizations, along with that of his wonderful wife, Judy, has changed the face of Savannah and improved the lives of many in our community.

I couldn't be prouder to have him in the First Congressional District of Georgia. I thank Dick for his service in the military and especially for his service to our community. He continues to truly exemplify a life well lived.

HONORING DR. LES WILKES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Les

Wilkes, who is being honored at the Legends, Leaders, and Life Well Lived Award luncheon on May 9.

Well deserving of this honor, he should be an inspiration to us all about how to constantly strive to make the world a better place to live.

Dr. Wilkes practiced orthopedic surgery in Savannah for over 40 years. Before that, he served in the United States Navy as an orthopedic surgeon.

After his retirement, he partnered with Hospice Savannah to provide photographs for the clients. He continues his work with our veterans by serving in Honor Flights, escorting veterans to Washington, D.C.

Dr. Wilkes is also the unofficial photographer for Wesley United Methodist Church in downtown Savannah where he and his wife, Ge-Juan, and their son, Lee, and his family have worshipped for many years.

I couldn't be prouder to have him in the First Congressional District of Georgia. I thank Dr. Wilkes for his service, both in the military and in our communities. He continues to truly exemplify a life well lived.

RECOGNIZING SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Savannah College of Art and Design on its 40th anniversary.

In 1978, an elementary school teacher, Ms. Paula Wallace, wanted to start a college in her hometown dedicated to the arts. Beginning with 71 students, SCAD now has over 55,000.

The school has four campuses, in Savannah, Atlanta, Hong Kong, and Lacoste, France. It has countless alumni who have gone on to successful careers in photography, abstract art, film, interior design, and so much more.

In addition to providing college students with an exceptional art-centered education, they have given back to our community 10 times over, hosting art festivals, public concerts, and fashion shows.

Locations important to our city's history and culture have been restored by its students: the Flannery O'Connor Childhood Home, the Victory Drive corridor, and the Massie Heritage Center.

I thank everyone at SCAD—the faculty, administrators, and students alike—for their contributions to our area. As a native Savannahian, I have always said that SCAD was the catalyst for the renovation of downtown Savannah.

I thank Paula Wallace for bringing SCAD to Savannah and leading its success over the last four decades, and I congratulate it on its 40th anniversary.

UNDERSTANDING RISKS OF U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, after meeting with President Trump yesterday regarding the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, I rise to praise the Trump administration for its mindful and strategic response to conditions in that country.

All options must be on the table, including military force.

My constituents would likely be among the first in that fight. I am incredibly proud of them. If asked, they will successfully execute any mission that they are called to do.

Policymakers have an obligation not to send any of America's sons and daughters into any ill-advised conflict. The Trump administration clearly understands the risks associated with military intervention in Venezuela at this time. They include a few things.

First, if the United States military were to have troops on the ground in Venezuela today, it is very likely that the Maduro regime would scapegoat their own failures.

The people of Venezuela voted their way into socialism, and now it appears they have to fight their way out of it. While this should be a lesson to us all, military intervention should not be presented as an opportunity for the Maduro regime to explain away why people in Venezuela have no medicine, have no food, are starving, and at times see their own countrymen turning tanks and weapons against them.

Those failures belong to the Maduro regime. Those failures belong to the socialist dictatorship.

Were we to intervene in an unwise way, potentially, that would create confusion about the conditions that led to these terrible circumstances.

Second, if the United States military were to intervene at this time, it is my concern that it would allow the Maduro regime to externalize their conflict.

It is no surprise to any in this Chamber or many in the Trump administration that there remains some latent resentment within pockets of Latin America regarding U.S. intervention, regime change, and nation-building.

At a time when we are seeing democratic successes and governments stood up that are beginning to provide for their citizens, it would be deeply unwise to stoke any anti-American resentment with ill-advised conflict.

Right now, Maduro functionally lacks material support from the forward-thinking countries in the Western Hemisphere, and we would not want to create any opportunity for there to be a call to the new Bolivarian alliance.

Ultimately, that is what a lot of these transnational criminal organizations want in Venezuela. They want to erode nation-states and borders. They want to end nationalism in our hemisphere so that they have a more permissive environment for their illicit activities.

Third, the Trump administration clearly understands that, if the United States were deemed to be too involved

in the popular uprising in Venezuela, Maduro would potentially have the opportunity to deny the organic desires of Venezuelans to fight for their own freedom.

The reason people are rising up in Venezuela right now is not a consequence of the United States Government. It is a consequence of the failures of their own government and their passionate desire for freedom, one that we should stand with the people of Venezuela to execute.

Despite these conditions and despite the challenges, I remain hopeful that there is a brighter future for Venezuela. As we meet and gather now, Juan Guaido is able to go about the country freely. Despite not having a military, despite not having staff, he is able to rally thousands of his fellow countrymen in public squares and make the argument for freedom.

Meanwhile, the coward Maduro remains huddled up in a military base, unable to move around and unsure who will turn on him next.

If the last quarter century has taught our country anything about the nature of freedom, it is that freedom has to be fought for hardest by those who yearn to live it. Freedom cannot be the gift that America gives other countries, purchased solely with the currency of the blood of U.S. servicemembers.

People have to fight for freedom and earn it. They have to die for it. They have to bury their relatives over it. Then they have to love it and care for it so much that they will never let another strongman take it away from them and so that they will never fall victim to the passions that led Venezuela down this dark path to socialism, dictatorship, starvation, and desperation.

We stand with the people of Venezuela, and they must stand now to fight for a better future for their country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You look upon our world: men and women being born and being laid to rest, some getting married and others

getting divorced, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the happy and the sad, so many people aimless, despairing, hateful, and killing, so many undernourished, sick, and dying, so many struggling with life and blind to any meaning.

Send us Your spirit, that the issues of our day might be met with compassion by the Members of this House and all who serve to improve the conditions of our shared humanity.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNIZING FREDERICK WILLIAM RUSTEBERG

(Mr. VELA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Frederick William Rusteberg of Brownsville, Texas.

Mr. Rusteberg served the majority of his professional career as the original founding CEO and president of International Bank of Commerce in Brownsville until his retirement on October 27, 2016.

In the early 1970s, Mr. Rusteberg served his country as an officer in the United States Army.