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No. 5

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WIED).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

January 8, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TONY WIED to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2026, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LESSONS FROM CARACAS

(Mr. MCCLINTOCK of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, there is much to unpack from the arrest of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro. Above all, there is the stark contrast between the American socialists who are bitterly denouncing the ouster of this socialist dictator and the masses of ordinary Venezuelans celebrating their deliverance from him.

Socialism under Chavez and Maduro utterly destroyed the prosperity and freedom of Venezuela, reducing it from

one of the wealthiest nations in the world to one of the poorest. Like all socialist regimes, the Chavistas depend on brutal intimidation, terrorism, and violence to maintain their grip on power. A third of the population has now fled that afflicted nation. With Maduro's ouster, this diaspora of socialism's victims finally see a cause for hope, and they are rejoicing in the streets.

This should be a warning to our fellow Americans who today are flirting with the same socialist movement in our own country. It has long been foretold that when socialism comes to America, it will come as a smile.

Venezuelans are not the first to be seduced by the siren song of a benevolent and all-powerful government. Like every people who have blundered down that road, they awakened one morning to find the benevolence was gone and the all-powerful government was still there. Let that be a lesson to our misguided countrymen.

This should also be a warning to our adversaries around the world that the Monroe Doctrine has been revived and that America is again willing and capable of defending the New World from the intrigues of the old.

Every thug and despot around the world has new reason to fear the ancient warning: sic semper tyrannis.

Mr. Speaker, has the President acted within his inherent authority as Commander in Chief? The Federal courts have already answered that question time and again including the attacks on Libya by Obama and the arrest of Noriega by Bush. They have consistently ruled that these nearly identical precedents were within the prerogatives of the President and that Congress just as consistently has acquiesced.

As law professor Jonathan Turley put it: "If Obama can vaporize an American citizen without even a criminal charge, Trump can capture a foreign

citizen with a pending criminal indictment without prior congressional approval."

This is an important debate that goes to the heart of the separation of powers and one that we ought to have. The Constitutional Convention originally considered giving Congress the exclusive power to make war. Elbridge Gerry successfully replaced "make war" with "declare war."

Madison explained this distinction as "leaving to the executive the power to repel sudden attacks." That distinction has been widened over the centuries, and perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at this question of what distinguishes declaring war from making war.

In 1847, Congressman Abraham Lincoln addressed this very point and unsuccessfully argued that once the executive initiates a hostile act against a foreign power, it has, in fact, declared war by giving that power *casus belli*. He said that reacting to a military attack is one thing, but initiating an attack is quite another.

Personally, I think he had a point. I disagree with the current precedents, although I find it hard to fault the President from acting within them.

Restoring the many guardrails that separate executive, legislative, and judicial powers in our Constitution would be a fitting way for Congress to celebrate our Nation's 250th anniversary. The Supreme Court is doing its part by restoring the President's exclusive control over executive agencies, and perhaps it will soon restore Congress' exclusive control over tariffs. I certainly hope so.

Reasserting Congress' supremacy and the momentous question of war and peace will require a serious and sober discussion in Congress. When I hear the hyperbolic and hyperpartisan rhetoric of the Democrats in this House with their hatred of Donald Trump dripping from every word, I fear that discussion

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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must await calmer times, cooler heads, and wiser voices.

In the meantime, let us rejoice in the fruits of this action. They include the removal of the worst despot in the Western Hemisphere; the revival of the Monroe Doctrine; the ejection of malignant powers insinuating themselves into Latin America; the unmistakable warning to tyrants around the world that America is back; the triumph of American arms; and most of all, setting the stage for the return of liberty, justice, and prosperity to the people of Venezuela.

RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF STENY HOYER

(Mr. HOYER of Maryland was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask Mr. SCALISE: Where is my 1 minute when I need it?

Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear and close friends, STEVE WOMACK and Madam Speaker, for being here. I also thank my colleagues and my dear friends, Majority Leader SCALISE and Majority Whip EMMER, for being here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with, obviously, mixed emotions and reluctant conviction. There is a true story I have told many times over the past 60 years. It is about a young man—myself—who was a student at the University of Maryland, College Park, just a few miles from this place.

As a freshman, like many young people, I lacked a vision for my future. I nearly flunked out of college and didn't enroll in the 1958 fall semester. Fortunately for me, I reenrolled the following spring.

It was the spring convocation of April 27, 1959. Classes were canceled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. so that we could all go hear the guest speaker. Frankly, I had not planned to attend. However, I was walking up the hill near Cole Field House where the event was located. I saw our guest drive up in a 1958 Pontiac convertible. That, Mr. Speaker, was a cool car. It was so cool that I decided to go to this convocation.

That walk was my road to Damascus. It changed my life. The speaker was John F. Kennedy. In his remarks, he urged us to do our duty in those days of world chaos. In particular, he charged us students to become more active in our communities. NANCY heard those same words.

Like many hundreds of thousands of young people, I was deeply inspired by Senator Kennedy and his words. Jack Kemp, who was my colleague when I first came here, had a similar story. A week later, I changed my major from business to political science.

Mr. Speaker, 7 years later, in 1966, 5 months out of Georgetown Law School, I was elected to the Maryland State Senate. Mr. Speaker, 15 years after that, in 1981, the voters of the Fifth District elected me to the United States House of Representatives.

I stand here now, after some 60 years in public service, including nearly 45 years as a Member of this House. I have won elections and lost a couple. I celebrated triumphs and suffered setbacks. I enjoyed friendships and endured hardships.

As the song says: "Some days are diamonds. Some days are stone." Happily, I have experienced more diamonds than stone.

Shakespeare advised us all: "This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."

In that vein, Mr. Speaker, I have decided not to seek another term in the people's House. I make this decision with sadness, for I love this House, an institution the Framers designed to reflect the will of the American people and to serve as the guardian of their liberty and their democracy.

Through the past 45 years, I have come to know many good, decent, and patriotic Members chosen by their neighbors to represent them. They come from both parties and all parts of the ideological spectrum.

The Congress I entered in 1981 was somewhat different. Most Republicans and Democrats worked together in a collegial and productive way. The leaders of the House, Tip O'Neill and Bob Michael, fostered that environment. It was, of course, not a Congress without conflict.

In the year to come, I will have much more to say about the issues we have grappled with and the ways this House has changed during my time. At the outset, I have said that I spoke with reluctant conviction. That reluctance is because I am deeply concerned that this House is not living up to the Founders' goals.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to examine their conscience, renew their courage, and carry out the responsibilities that the first Article of the Constitution demands. Only in that way can we ensure that our 250 years will be a preface to a stronger and brighter beacon in a free and principled democracy. It will be a nation of laws, not of men. It will be a nation respected around the world for its strength, certainly, but even more for the ideals it represents and the justice with which it acts.

That effort must extend beyond this House. I fear that America is heading not toward greatness but toward smallness, pettiness, divisiveness, lawlessness, and disdainfulness.

We must respect and love one another. We must remember that we are not great or unique because we say we are great but because we are just, generous, and fair.

I hope that spirit can guide us the rest of this Congress because I still have much I want to do in the coming year, not least of which is keeping the government open. To do that, we must send all our appropriations bills to the President in a bipartisan and timely fashion.

There are many people I intend to thank in the coming months, but here are a few I will recognize now:

First, my family, who has borne much of the burden of my service. I ask them to stand.

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To my late wife, Judy, who died too young and gave so much.

To my beloved daughters, Susan, Stefany, and Anne, who paid a price for Dad's absences.

To my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, for giving me great joy.

To my mother, who thankfully lived to see her son become the president of the Maryland State Senate.

To my staff, for serving me and their Nation with great loyalty and ability.

To my colleagues, for trusting me with leadership.

To the people of Prince George's County, particularly the African-American community, without whom I would not have won my elections.

To the people of Maryland's Fifth District, who gave me a majority of their votes 23 times.

To my wife, Dr. Elaine Kamarck, who has made my life whole and happy. Thank you, Babe.

And to God, for sending me down this road so many years ago that I call the "Road to Damascus."

I thank all of my colleagues—extraordinary people, decent people, people whom their neighbors respect and sent here. The only way they got here was through their neighbors saying that they wanted them to represent them.

I thank you all.

Mr. Speaker, with tremendous gratitude, I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). To my friend, Mr. HOYER, you have served your district, your State, and your country with dignity and honor, and the institution wishes you Godspeed.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE STENY HOYER

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, before I get into my primary remarks, for which I was going to rise, I reflect on 18 years ago when I came into the House of Representatives.

Some of my staff had been on the Hill for, actually, a couple of decades at that point.

My chief of staff said: If there was ever a Democratic Member of Congress who literally represents the term "statesman," it is STENY HOYER.

He truly is. He has not failed at that task, and so I offer my congratulations on his announced retirement and my thanks for his service as a statesman, especially at a time of what we have been living through, of growing divisiveness.