

Regime Change and Speakers of the Legislature: Nancy Pelosi vs. Juan Guaido, Self-Proclaimed President of Venezuela

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The President (Speaker) of the Venezuelan National Assembly and leader of the majority party (Democratic Unity Roundtable) Juan Guaido has been endorsed as (self-proclaimed) interim president of Venezuela by President Trump in the name of democracy:

Today, I [Donald Trump] am officially recognizing the President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaido, as the Interim President of Venezuela. In its role as the only legitimate branch of government duly elected by the Venezuelan people, the National Assembly invoked the country's constitution to declare Nicolas Maduro illegitimate, and the office of the presidency therefore vacant. ([Trump Statement](#), White House, January 23, 2019)



Trump's decision –coupled with threats of military intervention and the freeze of Venezuelan assets in the US — confirms the criminal nature of US foreign policy not to mention the complicity of the Western media, which has upheld the legitimacy of Trump's decision.

A dangerous precedent. Don't like a president of a sovereign country, replace him/her by “appointing” the Speaker of the House as interim president.

But there is something else which sofar has not been addressed:

The position of speaker of the National Assembly held by Juan Guaido (from a constitutional standpoint) is in some regards comparable to that of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives and the leader of the majority party which is currently held by Democrat

Nancy Pelosi.

Nancy Pelosi is second in line to the US presidential line of succession, after Vice President Mike Pence. (25th Amendment of Constitution and [3 USC 19](#), a section of the U.S. Code, established as part of the Presidential Succession Act of 1947).

In contrast, Juan Guaido, president of Venezuela's National assembly (with regard to presidential succession) would assume the office of the presidency of Venezuela during a short interim period, pending the holding of new presidential elections within thirty days, [as stated in Article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution](#).

By endorsing a procedure which proclaims Juan Guaido as president of Venezuela, Trump has opened up a Pandora's box, which could potentially backlash on his own presidency:

Trump's endorsement of Venezuela's speaker of the National Assembly Juan Guaido is tantamount to stating that Nancy Pelosi could legitimately from one day to the next replace Trump as interim president of the US. A pretty grim prospect for the Donald.

Juan Guaido is to Venezuela what Nancy Pelosi is to the United States. The opposition to president Maduro controls the National Assembly. The opposition to president Trump controls the House of Representatives.

Theater of the Absurd? Imagine for a moment what would happen if a US politician or the president of a foreign country were to demand that Nancy Pelosi as speaker of the House of Representatives and majority leader of the House were to be confirmed as interim President of the US, to the detriment of President Trump. Not an impossibility?

Sofar the US Congress including Nancy Pelosi have refrained from taking a position on Trump's endorsement of Juan Guaido as interim president.

Author's note: a correction applying to the Constitutional procedure in Venezuela, January 26, 2019

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