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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GOMEZ).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 21, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JIMMY GOMEZ to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

CONSEQUENCES OF ABANDONING OUR KURDISH ALLIES

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in great sadness and profound concern over President Trump's inexplicable abandonment of our Kurdish allies in Syria who sacrificed more than 11,000 of their sons and daughters in our joint fight against ISIS.

The President's impulsive and abrupt decision not only betrays our allies, but it betrays our values. It imme-

diately compromises our national security, dramatically undermines American credibility, and will have negative strategic implications for generations to come.

It is not just me saying this. These are the words of Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL: "Withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria is a grave strategic mistake. It will leave the American people and homeland less safe, embolden our enemies, and weaken important alliances."

While we should all welcome the announced 5-day pause in the Turkish assault, we should not be celebrating. Turkey has not recognized the ceasefire but, rather, just a pause in fighting. Reports from the area indicate that Turkish-affiliated forces are still attacking, and the pause is scheduled to end tomorrow. We can likely expect the carnage to then resume with a new ferocity.

Regarding the deal with Turkey, The Wall Street Journal this morning notes: "Critics have said the agreement was a wholesale concession to Ankara, giving it control of an area in Syria it has coveted for years and freeing it from U.S. sanctions in return for pausing an offensive it had no international backing for. While President Trump hailed the pact as a diplomatic victory, U.S.-allied Kurds have likened it to a surrender on their part."

Unsurprisingly, our Kurdish allies have now aligned their forces with Assad's army. Assad has, thus, instantly made significant territorial gains in just a few days, effectively controlling lands that the U.S. and allied forces have spent years seeking to defend.

So, let's review.

In the weeks following the President's decision to walk away from our allies, Turkish forces and allied fighters, many of which are Islamic extremists, have crossed the border into Syria.

U.S. forces have abandoned forward operating bases and then sent U.S. planes to destroy those bases. But before those bases could be destroyed, celebrating Russian troops posted selfies in some of these former American strongholds.

Turkey is not just targeting Kurdish forces, they are attacking entire towns, and civilians are literally being murdered in the streets.

The expansion of control by Russian and Syrian forces is not just a win for those countries in Syria but also threatens our allies in the region—in particular, Israel.

Iran's sense of emboldenment will likely lead it to expand programs to deliver advanced weapons to Hezbollah, increasing the already significant threat to Israel—only now from Syria as well as Lebanon.

As already noted, Assad has consolidated his power over virtually all of Syria at no political or military cost.

Finally, many ISIS prisoners have escaped to join the fight, and thousands more are at risk of release, giving ISIS a greater ability to reorganize.

One more thing: Today, there are reports that President Erdogan now wants Turkey to acquire nuclear weapons. The last thing this region needs is a nuclear arms race.

Here is the bottom line. Last Thursday, the American Vice President and Secretary of State stood at a podium and announced the administration's effective capitulation and surrender. Turkey will complete its ethnic cleansing, and the U.S. will lift all sanctions.

Assad has full control in Syria, under the tutelage of his Russian and Iranian masters.

Turkey, Syria, Russia, and Iran are the winners. The Kurds are, once more, on the losing end.

The United States, under President Trump, is sadly diminished—so much so that Syrians are throwing rotten food at retreating U.S. troops.

□ 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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