

KWC professor says U.S. can make case for Venezuela intervention

BY JAMES MAYSE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

The recent U.S. capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro could be considered legal, a Kentucky Wesleyan College political science professor said Tuesday, Jan. 6, because of Maduro's questioned status as the legitimate leader of the South American country.



Eric Schmidt

Some countries might protest last Saturday's U.S. action that resulted in Maduro's arrest on federal drug trafficking charges. However, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — which include the United States — have the authority to veto any council action against them.

While the United Nations discourages the use of military force, there is an exception for self-defense, said Eric Schmidt, KWC's assistant professor of political science and coordinator of the political science and legal studies programs.

"That self-defense clause is pretty elastic," Schmidt said. "The permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the U.S., U.K., France, China and Russia — have veto power over any collective action.

"None of those nations would've joined the U.N. if that veto hadn't been built in," Schmidt said.

The Trump administration can argue Maduro's arrest was legal because of his disputed status as Venezuela's leader. An election was held in Venezuela in July, but the results were disputed, and the administration of former President Joe Biden said Maduro's opponent, Edmundo

Gonzalez, was the legitimate winner.

Then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken said there was "overwhelming evidence" that Gonzalez had won the election over the incumbent Maduro, who has been in power since 2013.

Because Maduro is not recognized by the United States as Venezuela's rightful head of state, the argument the Trump administration can make is that Maduro does not have the protections afforded to legitimate leaders of other nations, Schmidt said.

U.S. officials can argue Maduro "doesn't have sovereign immunity," Schmidt said. "The prohibition (against) the use of force wouldn't apply as strongly."

The near-collapse of Venezuelan society can also

factor into the U.S. decision to capture Maduro, Schmidt said.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council, 7.9 million people have fled Venezuela since 2014 to escape "rampant violence, inflation, gang-warfare, soaring crime rates as well as shortages of food, medicine and essential services."

"Something like one-fourth of the population has left," Schmidt said. Part of the U.S. argument for removing Maduro could be, "maybe you don't want a failing state in your hemisphere," Schmidt said.

The United States would have an interest in removing Maduro in an attempt to reverse societal decline in Venezuela because allowing conditions to deteriorate could enable adversarial nations such as China and Russia to step in and establish influence there, Schmidt said.

That policy is known as the Roosevelt Corollary, which is part of the Monroe Doctrine, Schmidt said.

"The key is how a mismanaged state invites strategic competitors to take advantage against us," Schmidt said.

Over the last quarter-century, "we've taken a less gunpowder diplomacy approach" to issues in Central and South America, Schmidt said.

The closest parallel to Maduro's capture occurred when the United States invaded Panama in December 1989 to capture Manuel Noriega, who was also wanted on drug trafficking charges. Noriega had voided election results that would have removed him from power.

Claims that a country's government is illegitimate have been used in other conflicts. For example, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed the invasion of Ukraine was conducted to remove what he called a "neo-Nazi" government that he said threatened Russian-speaking people.

"What's to stop any great power from making that argument? Historically, they have," Schmidt said.

Maduro's removal made Vice President Delcy Rodriguez the acting head of state.

Schmidt said he anticipates the Trump administration will pressure Rodriguez to make concessions to Washington, and to hold new elections sometime in the future.

"My prediction is the U.S. government continues to treat the current Venezuelan government as illegitimate," while pressuring it to adopt positions more favorable to the United States, Schmidt said.

Attempts to change a country's government —

known as regime change — are often filled with complications.

"There are more examples of it going poorly than going well," Schmidt said.

The Trump administration will push for elections at a time when they are less likely to destabilize Venezuelan society, he said.

For now, the goal will be to assemble a coalition that includes various political factions in Venezuela, including

hard-liners loyal to Maduro.

Improving Venezuela's oil production would benefit citizens if changes allow the entire country to share in oil revenues, Schmidt said.

"We should take the (Trump) Administration at its word that it is interested in the welfare of the people of Venezuela," Schmidt said. "For an economy that could be very robust, the benefits have not been equally distributed to the people of Venezuela."

DID YOU KNOW?



By Duke Brubaker

The Indiana Hoosiers are having a legendary season! Coach Curt Gignetti has the most wins in the 1st two years at a school since the AP poll debuted in 1936.

Indiana Hooser receivers have dropped a total of 6 Heisman trophy winning QB Fernando Mendoza passes out of 332 attempts this season.

In the recent College Football Playoff (CFP) semifinals for the 2025 season, all four starting punters—Oscar Bird (Ole Miss), Dylan Joyce (Miami), James Ferguson-Reynolds (Oregon), and Mitch McCarthy (Indiana)—were Australians.

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MIDDLE

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The loss dropped the seventh-grade team to 3-11 on the season.

In the eighth-grade matchup, McLean County came up just short against Daviess County, falling 38-35 in a tightly contested game. The Cougars shot 45 percent from the field and 36 percent from three-point range but struggled at the free-throw line, converting just two of seven attempts. Will Johnson led McLean County with 14 points,



Photo by Tom Carr Photography

knocking down five field goals, including two three-pointers, and going 2-for-

2 at the line. Jackson Abney added seven points along with six defensive rebounds and three assists, while Cade Colburn also finished with seven points. Easton Lowery added four points, Landon Clark scored three and the Cougars rounded out the scoring with contributions from the rest of the lineup as McLean County finished with 35 points on the night. McLean County recorded eight assists and four blocked shots while forcing 11 turnovers, but the narrow margin held late as Daviess County secured the win. The eighth-grade team now stands at 12-5.

Monday's games also marked Eighth-Grade Night at McLean County Middle School, recognizing the Cougars who are playing their final season at the middle school level. The group will close out the regular season this week before transitioning to McLean County High School next year, marking an important milestone in their development within the program.

With postseason play approaching, the eighth-grade class now turns its focus to finishing the season and preparing for the move to the high school ranks.

UNVEILS

FROM PAGE B1

also manages the convention center and Sportscenter.

Jeff Esposito, general manager for OVG in Owensboro, said several tournaments have already been booked for the facility.

Thus far, one tournament is scheduled for August, while five tournaments are on the books between January and March of next year. Con-

struction of the sportsplex is scheduled to be complete this summer.

Esposito said OVG is interested in sponsors.

"We are working on naming rights, a variety of sponsors, even if people are interested in having their name on a court," Esposito said. "There's plenty of opportunity, so if folks have an idea, certainly bring it to us. We're happy to consider it. I think there is room for a lot of different-sized businesses in addition to a naming rights sponsor."



Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | avarren@messenger-inquirer.com

LADY

FROM PAGE B1

Cougars were perfect at the free-throw line, going 5-for-5, and collected 19 rebounds.

Freshman Karlee Floyd led McLean County with 16 points, knocking down six field goals and going a perfect 2-for-2 from three-point range while also pulling down six rebounds. Ella Larkin followed with 13 points on an efficient 6-of-9 shooting night, adding three rebounds. Anna Miller finished with six points, connecting on two three-pointers, and grabbed four rebounds. Bentley Wagner added five points, converting all three of her free-throw attempts, and contributed three rebounds. McLean County shot 41.7% from the field and matched that mark from beyond the arc, but was limited offensively by a lack of transition opportunities, an area that prevented the Lady Cougars from generating easier scoring chances.

GRAYSON COUNTY

McLean County returned to action Thursday night on the road at Grayson County and came away with a 46-42 loss in a game that saw the Lady Cougars rally late after trailing by double digits.

Grayson County entered the matchup with just two in-region losses, both coming against Daviess County and Breckinridge County, and showed that experience early.

Grayson County opened the game with an 11-2 run, holding McLean County to four points in the first quarter. The Lady Cougars found more rhythm in the second, scoring 10 points to stay within reach at the half, trailing 23-14. Grayson extended its lead in the third quarter, building a 13-point advantage late in the period, but McLean responded with its strongest stretch of the night down the stretch.

Anna Miller led McLean County with 16 points, connecting on five field goals that included three three-pointers and finishing a perfect 3-for-3 at the free-throw line while also pulling down six rebounds. Ella Larkin followed with 15 points on 5-of-9 shooting and added five rebounds. Karlee Floyd finished with nine points, hitting four field goals and adding four rebounds. McLean County shot 32.6% from the field for the game and collected 20 rebounds as a team while working to close the gap late.

Anna Miller led McLean County with 16 points, knocking down three three-

pointers and going a perfect 3-for-3 at the free-throw line. Larkin added 15 points and five rebounds, while Floyd finished with nine points. McLean County shot 32.6% from the field and collected 20 rebounds as a team.

Through 13 games, McLean County has continued to compete against a demanding schedule that has included tournament play and road matchups against established programs. The Lady Cougars have leaned on a young core for scoring while showing an ability to disrupt opponents defensively. Outside shooting has been inconsistent during this stretch, but defensive pressure and points off turnovers have remained areas of strength.

LOOKING AHEAD

McLean County enters a busy stretch beginning Monday, Jan. 12, with a road game at Butler County, followed by a Tuesday trip to South Spencer (Rockport), Indiana. The Lady Cougars then travel Friday, Jan. 16, for a district matchup at Ohio County before competing Saturday, Jan. 17, at Muhlenberg County in the Farmer's Bank & Trust Lady Mustang Classic against Edmonson County. The four-game stretch in six days will

test McLean County as it looks to regroup and build on a 9-4 start to the season.



Green River Area Development District (GRADD) Request for Proposal (RFP) for Lawn Maintenance Request for Proposal (RFP) for Janitorial Services

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) is seeking proposals for the following services:

- Lawn Maintenance
- Janitorial Services

Both RFPs will be available on January 15, 2026, and can be viewed and printed from the Green River Area Development District (www.gradd.com), off the main webpage. The deadline for submitting questions relative to either of the RFPs is 3:00 pm, CST, on February 6, 2026. Both RFP deadlines are 3:00 pm, CST, on February 13, 2026.

All proposal submittals shall be labeled as follows:

Proposals for Lawn Maintenance
ATTN: Mariah Myres
Green River Area Development District
300 GRADD Way
Owensboro, KY 42301

Proposals for Janitorial Services
ATTN: Mariah Myres
Green River Area Development District
300 GRADD Way
Owensboro, KY 42301

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