

Venezuela Through Mike's Eyes

Johnson Sees God and the Devil in Everything - Except the Man Bombing Venezuela



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Under Johnson’s speakership, the chances of Congress being balancing check on the executive branch are zero. Johnson, a radical Christian, has long abandoned his constitutional role in the house and to the Constitution.


Mike Johnson has been dining out on his “constitutional expertise” for twenty years. The man is practically wearing a tricorn hat in his LinkedIn photo. Before he got to Congress, he spent two decades litigating “high profile constitutional law cases” - which mostly meant suing to keep gay couples from marrying and defending theme parks shaped like Noah’s Ark. He chaired the House Subcommittee on Constitution and Limited Government, a title so on-the-nose it’s practically self-parody.

After the 2020 election, The New York Times anointed him “the most important architect” of the Electoral College objections. Johnson was the compromised legal mind who convinced three-quarters of House Republicans to challenge Biden’s victory using his pet theory of “constitutional infirmity” - the argument that state officials modifying COVID-era voting procedures without checking with state legislators had violated the sacred text. Never mind that the whole thing was rubbish and the Supreme Court tossed it without ceremony. Johnson had found his brand: constitutional martinet, defender of the founding document, the guy who reads the Federalist Papers for pleasure.

So naturally, when Donald Trump bombed Venezuela, kidnapped its president, and announced America would be running the joint for the foreseeable future—all without bothering to tell Congress—Johnson was absolutely outraged by this flagrant violation of constitutional war powers. Just kidding! He called it “decisive and justified” and promised briefings would happen “when Congress returns next week.” You know, after the bombs had already fallen, after Delta Force had already snatched Maduro from his palace, after Trump had already declared himself the interim viceroy of Caracas.

The constitutional expert, it turns out, has highly selective memory about which bits of the Constitution actually matter.

On January 3rd, while most of America was still nursing New Year’s hangovers, Trump ordered a full-scale military strike on Venezuela. Not a targeted drone strike. Not a covert special ops snatch-and-grab. A full-on bombing campaign with warships, low-flying aircraft, explosions ringing out over the capital, the works. The objective: capture President Nicolás Maduro, bring him to New York, and charge him with drug trafficking. Mission accomplished! Maduro and his wife are now guests of the American justice system at a federal jail in Brooklyn. Trump announced the U.S. would “run” Venezuela until there’s a “safe, proper and judicious transition” - which is Trump-speak for “indefinitely.”



“Today's military action in Venezuela was a decisive and justified operation that will protect American lives. Nicolas Maduro is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans...”

SPEAKER MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA)
JAN. 3, 2026

C-SPAN

Oh, and Congress? Didn't know a thing about it until it was already happening. The Gang of 8—the bipartisan group of congressional leaders who are supposed to be briefed on sensitive intelligence operations—learned about the invasion from DoD (or is it DoW??) staff after the operation had begun. Trump had explicitly decided not to tell them in advance because, in his words, “Congress has a tendency to leak.” Secretary of State Marco Rubio, making the rounds on Sunday shows, offered the same defense: advance notification would have “endangered the mission.” This is the constitutional equivalent of asking forgiveness rather than permission, except forgiveness isn't on offer and permission was actually required by law.

Here's the thing about the Constitution, *Mike: it's pretty clear on this point*. Article I, Section 8 gives Congress—not the president—the power to declare war. The founders weren't being coy about this. They'd just finished fighting a revolution against a monarch who could drag entire nations into war on a whim. They were rather keen on making sure the American president couldn't do the same. The War Powers Resolution of 1973, passed after Vietnam when Congress finally got tired of presidents lying about wars, requires advance consultation with Congress before military action. It specifically mandates notifying the Gang of 8 before sensitive operations. These aren't guidelines. They're the law.

Trump violated every single provision. He told no one (except we now know - he consulted executives from the oil industry). He consulted no one. He admitted he didn't tell Congress because they'd leak—as if the constitutional requirement for congressional authorization is merely a courtesy that can be waived for operational security. And Mike Johnson, constitutional scholar extraordinaire? Complete silence on the constitutional questions. No hand-wringing about separation of powers. No lengthy discourse on Article II limitations. Just a statement praising Trump's “decisive” action and a vague promise that Congress would get briefed eventually, like children being told how the vacation went after the parents return home.

This isn't a surprise invasion that no one saw coming, either. Trump has been escalating military action in the Caribbean for months, bombing suspected drug boats, killing over 115 people in what he claims is a war on narco-trafficking. Members of Congress have been watching this train barrel down the tracks and frantically pulling the emergency brake. In December—just weeks ago—Congress voted on two separate war powers resolutions designed to prevent exactly this scenario. Rep. Gregory Meeks introduced H. Con. Res. 61, which would have required congressional authorization before military action against any designated terrorist organization in the Western Hemisphere. It failed 210-216, with Republicans voting overwhelmingly against it. Another resolution, H. Con. Res. 64, specifically addressed Venezuela. It failed even more narrowly, 211-213.

A man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt and a black leather harness with buckles and straps. He is standing in front of a dark, textured background that looks like a metal grate or a wall. The lighting is warm and focused on him.

SIDE BAR

THE LADY DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH: A SPEAKER'S VERY PECULIAR PREDICAMENT

In which America's most aggressively heterosexual politician keeps trending for all the wrong reasons

Pour yourself something stiff—unlike, we're assured, our House Speaker's browsing history.

Mike Johnson has a Grindr problem. The phrase keeps trending with the stubborn persistence of a Covenant Eyes notification. For the uninitiated, that's the accountability software Johnson publicly admitted he shares with his teenage son to monitor each other's porn consumption. Father-son bonding in the Johnson household apparently involves weekly reviews of browser histories. Wholesome!

At Home With The Johnsons - or - How To Screw-up Your Teenaged Son

Imagine being a teenage boy. Your body is a carnival of hormones. Your browser history is a war crime. This is universal. Now imagine your father—not a private accountant in Shreveport, but the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives—announces on a podcast that you two monitor each other's pornography consumption. Mutually. Reciprocally.

Dad checks your search history.

You check Dad's.

You read this right. The creep factor is off the charts. This kid has to go to school. ***Like NOW!***

Why is this mutual? What precisely is a teenager supposed to do upon discovering his father searched for something untoward? Stage an intervention between AP History and soccer practice? The whole thing has the energy of a man who trusts himself so little around temptation that he's deputized a minor as his accountability chaperone. It's a teenager being drafted into the management of his father's impulses, which is a species of emotional labor no child should bear. It tracks like “Deliverence” meets Joel Olsten. It's really fucked.

If the Johnson son is reading this: my brother in Christ, you are legally entitled to clear your browser history without submitting it for parental review. This is not normal. Therapy exists. College is temporary freedom. Godspeed.

The Speaker has made homosexuality his thing. Not in the fun way. In the "I wrote legal briefs arguing states should criminalize gay sex" way. In the "homosexuality caused the fall of Rome" way. In the "I partnered with conversion therapy organizations targeting teenagers" way. His wife runs a Christian counseling practice that equates being gay with bestiality. Date nights must be riveting.

When a TikToker threatened to release what he claimed was Johnson's Grindr profile, the internet didn't ask "is this real?" The internet asked "which closeted Republican is it this time?"

The precedent is robust. We've had the "wide stance" in the Minneapolis airport bathroom. We've had the rentboy luggage handler. We've had so many family-values crusaders discovered in compromising positions with men that it's become its own political subgenre. As the "I've Had It" podcast hosts put it: when you talk about gay people all the time, you're trying to convince yourself of something.

The rumor has legs because it feels true—not factually, but narratively. Because we've seen this movie before. Because when Grindr crashes twice during the Republican National Convention, we notice.

Mike Johnson built his career feeding a beast that devours LGBTQ people, their rights, their dignity, their very existence.

Beasts bite back.

Mike Johnson voted no on both. So did nearly every House Republican. They had the chance to assert Congress’s constitutional war powers. They chose Trump’s imperial presidency instead. And then, shockingly, Trump did exactly what these resolutions were designed to prevent. He invaded Venezuela without congressional authorization, without advance notice, without any pretense of constitutional process. Who could have possibly predicted this?

A CBS News poll from November found that 70% of Americans opposed military action in Venezuela. Seventy-five percent said Trump would need congressional approval for such an operation. Most Americans didn’t even consider Venezuela a major threat. So Trump invaded anyway. And Johnson cheered him on. This is representation in the same way Fyre Festival was a luxury music event. The American people said no. Their elected representatives in Congress were kept in the dark. Trump decided he’d rather govern like a Latin American caudillo than bother with constitutional niceties. And the Speaker of the House—the man charged with defending the institutional prerogatives of the legislative branch—couldn’t even muster a mild objection.

THE WORLD REACTS

The bombings on Venezuelan territory and the capture of its president cross an unacceptable line. These acts represent a grave affront to Venezuela's sovereignty and yet another extremely dangerous precedent for the entire international community.
🇧🇷President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil

The Government of Mexico strongly condemns and rejects the military actions carried out unilaterally in recent hours by armed forces of the United States of America against targets in the territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in clear violation of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.
🇲🇽President Claudia Sheinbaum, Mexico

With President Trump, the U.S. are abandoning the rules-based order that has shaped us since 1945. Trump is destroying what was left of any trust in the U.S.
🇩🇪Roderich Kiesewetter, German MP (CDU)

The military operation that led to the capture of Nicolas Maduro violates the principle of not resorting to force, that underpins international law.
🇫🇷Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, France

Deeply shocked by what [the U.S. described] as a blatant use of force against a sovereign state and action against its president. Such hegemonic acts of the U.S. [violate international norms].
🇨🇳Chinese Foreign Ministry

The US committed an act of armed aggression against Venezuela, which gives rise to deep concern & warrants condemnation. The pretexts used to justify these actions are untenable.
🇷🇺Russian Foreign Ministry

Spain did not recognize the Maduro regime. But neither will it recognize an intervention that violates international law and pushes the region toward a horizon of uncertainty and belligerence.
🇪🇸Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, Spain

Trump has brought the US to a new level of low - never seen before. Russia and China took the higher ground; but in the end what Trump gave to these two counties are safe harbors from their own authoritarian tendencies.

Johnson was elevated to the speakership in October 2023 after the MAGA wing of the party took a blowtorch to Kevin McCarthy. Johnson had served barely seven years in Congress—among the shortest tenures of any Speaker in modern history. He’d never

chaired a major committee, never held senior leadership, never done much of anything except vote the right way and maintain perfect loyalty to Trump. He got the job precisely because he was unthreatening. A pliable figure who would never assert institutional authority against Dear Leader. And he has governed exactly as advertised. *This article continues after the paywall.*

Under Johnson's speakership, the House has passed fewer bills into law than any comparable period in recent history. He has proven constitutionally incapable (pun intended) of asserting congressional authority against Trump's increasingly imperial presidency. When Trump declared drug cartels "unlawful combatants" and announced America was in "armed conflict" with them—an extraordinary expansion of presidential war powers—Johnson said nothing. When Trump started bombing boats in the Caribbean without congressional authorization, Johnson said nothing. When Trump explicitly told Congress he wouldn't brief them on Venezuela because they leak too much, Johnson said nothing. And now Trump has launched a full-scale invasion, captured a foreign head of state, and declared America will occupy and govern Venezuela indefinitely. Johnson's response? Same as always. Effusive praise, vague promises of future briefings, complete abdication of congressional responsibility. The speakership under Mike Johnson is performance art. It's a man sitting in the Speaker's chair pretending to wield authority he has no intention of using.

What makes Johnson's bootlicking particularly galling is that we all know he knows better. This is a man who built his entire political identity on constitutional originalism. He litigated religious liberty cases for Alliance Defending Freedom. He championed a "Convention of States" to amend the Constitution. He wrote "7 Core Principles of Conservatism" with limited government at the top of the list. After the 2020 election, he spent months lecturing anyone who would listen about constitutional process. State officials modifying voting procedures without legislative consultation? Constitutional crisis! The separation of powers in peril! Someone fetch the smelling salts.

But when Trump unilaterally launches a war of regime change in violation of the War Powers Resolution, in defiance of congressional sentiment, against the wishes of 70% of Americans? Suddenly Johnson's constitutional principles have left the chat. Suddenly separation of powers doesn't matter. Suddenly limits on executive authority are inconvenient technicalities that can be waved away with talk of "operational security." Johnson's selective constitutionalism reveals what we all suspected: his legal expertise was never about principle. It was always about power. The Constitution matters when it can be weaponized to challenge elections Trump lost. It matters when it can restrict voting access or limit LGBTQ rights or defend conservative Christians. But when Trump wants to bomb Venezuela and kidnap its president? The constitutional scholar suddenly can't remember where he left his founding documents.

The Venezuela invasion isn't just about Venezuela, of course. It's about what Trump now knows he can get away with. He can launch a regime-change war without

congressional authorization. He can capture foreign leaders. He can announce plans to occupy and govern sovereign nations. And congressional Republicans will not only refuse to stop him—they'll praise him for it. Senator Tim Kaine laid out the obvious question: "Where will this go next? Will the President deploy our troops to protect Iranian protesters? To enforce the fragile ceasefire in Gaza? To battle terrorists in Nigeria? To seize Greenland or the Panama Canal?" Trump has threatened all of this and more. And if Johnson won't assert constitutional authority now—over an actual invasion of a sovereign nation—when exactly will he? The answer, of course, is never. Because Johnson didn't take the speakership to lead. He took it to follow.

What's most depressing about Johnson's spinelessness is that he's supposed to be one of the grown-ups. He has an actual legal education. He spent years in courtrooms making constitutional arguments. And yet when it actually matters—when the president is shredding constitutional limits on war powers—Johnson's legal expertise evaporates like morning dew. He becomes just another MAGA sycophant, offering post-hoc justifications for illegal wars.



Even Mike Lee, the supposedly libertarian senator from Utah, initially questioned the constitutional justification for the invasion. "I look forward to learning what, if anything, might constitutionally justify this action in the absence of a declaration of war or authorization for the use of military force," he tweeted at dawn on Saturday. Two hours later, after a phone call from Marco Rubio, Lee had completely reversed himself. The invasion "likely falls within the president's inherent authority under Article II of the Constitution to protect U.S. personnel from an actual or imminent attack," he announced, having apparently discovered new constitutional provisions during his chat with the Secretary of State. This is how quickly Republican "constitutional principles" collapse under pressure. One phone call from a Trump cabinet secretary and suddenly there's no constitutional problem at all.

Congress returned to Washington Monday. Briefings will be scheduled. Johnson will sit through PowerPoint presentations about the invasion he should have been consulted about before it happened. Senators will ask pointed questions about what comes next in Venezuela. And Johnson will continue pretending that everything Trump did was perfectly normal and constitutional. The speakership under Mike Johnson is an empty chair. There's no leadership. No institutional pride. No defense of congressional prerogatives. Just servility to Trump dressed up in the language of constitutional conservatism.

The Constitution gives Congress two fundamental checks on executive power: the power of the purse and the power to declare war. Johnson has surrendered both. He won't use appropriations to constrain Trump's military adventurism. He won't demand congressional authorization for acts of war. He's reduced the speakership to a ceremonial position, issuing supportive statements after Trump acts rather than asserting authority before he does. This isn't leadership. It's barely even participation.

Trump has now established a precedent: he can wage war unilaterally, without congressional input, and face no institutional resistance from his own party. The War Powers Resolution is a dead letter. Congressional war powers are a quaint historical footnote. The president can bomb whoever he wants, capture whoever he wants, occupy whatever countries he wants. And Mike Johnson, the constitutional expert who spent twenty years litigating the finer points of the founding document, has nothing to say about it except "well done, sir."

The constitutional scholar forgot the Constitution. Or more accurately, he remembered it perfectly well and decided Trump's whims mattered more.

There are many bad actors in Trump's world, but Johnson deserves a special place in both history and (ironic for such a "stellar" Christian) Hell. Never has there been a Speaker who has done more to hurt the Union than Mike Johnson. And when you look at him through a wider lens, it's not just his politics that makes your skin crawl.

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