ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed hearing my friend from Illinois first talking about the great State of Illinois. It truly is. We appreciate all the doctors who have been sent down to Texas after we did tort reform and Illinois continues to have significant problems.

We had had problems keeping doctors in Texas until the great State of Illinois ran into greater and greater malpractice lawsuit problems. Texas did tort reform, and we started having doctors coming from places like Illinois to Texas, and we are doing much better.

The problem is, with health insurance, I heard my friend talk about 13 million who won't have insurance, and I think, to be fair there, are so many millions right now who are forced to do the unthinkable.

□ 2045

It is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court simply chose to become political in their decisionmaking rather than constitutional. You could pick nine people off the street at random and probably six or seven out of the nine, after they heard the dispute and read the Constitution, would find contrary to the Supreme Court.

We put so much magic, supposedly, in those black robes. Somehow, they are given more credibility than they ought to be. Thomas Jefferson thought that the judicial system would be the weakest of the three branches, but now it pretty much controls everything.

Under ObamaCare, people are forced to buy a product. For the first time in American history, you can be forced to buy a product. If you didn't, you would be fined, punished, taxed. The Court said, on one hand, it wasn't a tax. Therefore, the Court had jurisdiction. Forty-some pages later, it said it is a tax, so it is constitutional.

In any event, people have been forced to buy a product and they have paid for as cheap a policy as they could get away with, but the deductibles were so high. I have heard this over and over hundreds of times in my own district. They were buying insurance they will never be able to use. The deductibles are so high, they don't have that kind of money.

So what the repeal of the individual mandate is going to mean is that people can still buy the insurance if they want to. They are not going to be penalized if they don't buy it.

But in order for ObamaCare to work, it is stealing from Peter to pay Paul. In other words, young people, for example, were having to buy insurance they would never use because they would have the deductible. But they did the calculation: Do I pay more if I pay for the insurance or do I pay more if I pay the extra income tax? Then they make that decision.

What the repeal of the individual mandate means is that we will help the Supreme Court in their ridiculous ruling and the mental gymnastics that went into not calling it a tax at page 13 or so, and then 40 pages later calling it a tax.

It is really pretty absurd, but it was a political decision. John Roberts was intimidated into believing that, if they struck down this unconstitutional bill, he would be deemed to be Chief Justice over the most political Court. As a result of what he did, he goes down in history as having the most political Court since Dred Scott. It wasn't quite as bad as the Dred Scott decision. That has got to be the worst.

We know from history that sometimes they just get it wrong. We will do the right thing by the American people, and we will repeal the individual mandate. Unfortunately, it is not going to start for a year.

I also heard my friend mention—and I have heard others say—that this bill will end up putting most of the income in the hands of the top 1 percent.

One of the great things about being in Congress is you get to learn so much if you are paying attention.

My friends can go back and look at YouTube and find President Obama, after being in office for a number of years, admitting that, for the first time in American history, 95 percent of the Nation's income went to the top 1 percent income earners. It never happened before.

But under the policies that do as President Obama said he was going to do before he got elected—and that is spread the wealth around—every time somebody tries to spread the wealth around—it is a socialist idea, a communist. But when you try to spread the wealth around, it never seems to fail that the richest, most powerful get richer and more powerful.

You can go to the Soviet Union. There were a handful of people making a lot of money, even over there now, under Putin. Of course, Putin gets richer. But there were a handful of people who get rich and most of the people don't. Most of the people bring in about the same amount of income, but they don't have access to the same benefits.

Anyway, we are going to move in a direction away from what President Obama's policies established, and that was, as a fact, 95 percent of the Nation's income is going to the top 1 percent. We want to get away from that.

Reforming the Tax Code and getting away from the punishing days of President Obama's policies will allow the working class to do better for the first time in years. They have been flatlined or less when adjusted for inflation. It is time they did better.

The tax bill we should take up tomorrow will end up doing that. It will get money into the hands of the working poor, the middle class. We saw the middle class shrink under President Obama; the poor got poorer, the ultrarich got ultraricher, and the middle class shrunk.

More people—over 50 million, as I recall—signed up for food stamps. That has already dropped significantly under the policies of the current President. We are hoping that the policies that we will push through together with the President will continue to have that effect. People will do better. There will be more jobs.

With all of the ridicule of lowering the corporate tax, if people will just be realistic and honest about it, corporations don't pay corporate taxes. They have to pass that on as a cost of doing business to their customers, their clients, those who purchase their goods or services. They pass that 35 percent tax on.

I know that before the President got elected, the current President, he had talked about maybe putting a tariff on Chinese goods. The fact is we have been putting on a 35 percent tariff, the highest tariff anybody puts on its own goods and services of all the industrialized nations. It is the biggest.

If we knock that 35 percent down, then it means our goods will be more competitive around the world. It means more jobs. It is going to be a great thing for America. It really is. As much as some people despise the President, like it or not, it is going to help make America great again.

Lower the corporate tax. I wish we could have kept it at 15 percent. Apparently, the powers of the leaders of the House and Senate, by a margin of two-to-one against the President wanting it at 15 percent, but at least we are getting it lowered. That is going to mean more goods can be competitive abroad. It means more jobs here. It means more manufacturing back here.

For those who have got their nose in the air and think we shouldn't have manufacturing in America, you go around the world and see manufacturing in other places and you see it here. It is about as clean a manufacturing company as you can have. This is the best place for those jobs because we do have to breathe the air that China and India pollutes, which we are cleaning up, but not near fast enough because they are polluting it so much.

Fortunately, the President withdrew from the so-called climate accord. The reason all these other countries wanted the United States in is because we were the ones that were going to send checks to all the other countries. We were going to pay guilt money. We have no guilt to pay for.

In fact, this is the country that is helping clean up the air and water, unlike other large nations in the world. They owe us a check, if somebody is going to be owing checks for the amount of pollution. It should mean a better economy.

There is one other thing that severely hurt our country under the past administration.

I am not normally a big fan of Politico's articles, but this is a fascinating one that calls itself: ''The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook.''

Hezbollah is recognized as a terrorist organization. This is entitled: ''The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook.''

Part one starts with a ''Global Threat Emerges. How Hezbollah turned to trafficking cocaine and laundering money through used cars to finance its expansion.

''In its determination to secure a nuclear deal with Iran, the Obama administration derailed an ambitious law enforcement campaign targeting drug trafficking by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah, even as it was funneling cocaine into the United States, according to a Politico investigation.

''The campaign, dubbed Project Cassandra, was launched in 2008 after the Drug Enforcement Administration amassed evidence that Hezbollah had transformed itself from a Middle East-focused military and political organization into an international crime syndicate that some investigators believed was collecting $1 billion a year from drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering, and other criminal activities.''

So, that was 2008, during the Bush administration, with Robert Mueller as head of the FBI.

This points out: ''Over the next 8 years''—that would be as we went into the Obama administration, 2009—agents working out of a top-secret DEA facility in Chantilly, Virginia, used wiretaps, undercover operations, and informants to map Hezbollah's illicit networks, with the help of 30 U.S. and foreign security agencies.

''They followed cocaine shipments, some from Latin America to West Africa and on to Europe and the Middle East, and others through Venezuela and Mexico to the United States. They tracked the river of dirty cash as it was laundered by, among other tactics, buying American used cars and shipping them to Africa. And with the help of some key cooperating witnesses, the agents traced the conspiracy, they believed, to the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran.''

It is rather ironic. I got in the car a moment ago and heard my good friend, Mark Levin. Apparently, he had read part of this story on the air and had a call from a person they didn't fully identify who was one of these agents who was helping track what Hezbollah was doing.

The article says: ''But as Project Cassandra reached higher into the hierarchy of conspiracy, Obama administration officials threw an increasingly insurmountable series of roadblocks in its way.''

Parenthetically here, so the Obama administration had found that Hezbollah was massively producing and getting into the United States drugs that were addicting American young people—well, of all ages, but especially our young, our future—making a billion dollars or so, and they were dying as they got hooked on worse and worse drugs. The answer of the Obama administration, according to this article, was throwing an increasingly unsurmountable series of roadblocks in the way of those investigating Hezbollah and the evil infliction of harm they were doing to America.

□ 2100

The article goes on:

'' . . . according to interviews with dozens of participants, who, in many cases, spoke for the first time about events shrouded in secrecy, and a review of government documents and court records. When Project Cassandra leaders sought approval for some significant investigations, prosecutions, arrests, and financial sanctions, officials at the Justice and Treasury Departments delayed, hindered, or rejected their requests.''

That would be Bob Mueller at the FBI. He had already purged the FBI training materials so that FBI agents, as they came in, would not know what questions to ask. So when they went out to interview Tsarnaev, after we got a heads up that he was a terrorist—he had been radicalized—those FBI agents didn't know what to ask.

Why?

Because Bob Mueller purged the training material. So they didn't know what to ask. They didn't know what to look for in a radical Islamist. They went and asked his mother, and she said: No, he is a good boy. He is not a terrorist.

There were people who died because of Bob Mueller purging the FBI training materials; so they didn't even know what they were looking for.

And when I was cross-examining him before our committee, I said: ''You didn't even go out to the mosque where they attended to investigate them.'' He indicated that they did go out to the mosque in their outreach program, where they sit down and play ''Pat-a-Cake,'' share a meal, and the last thing they do would be to inquire about one of the mosque attendees being radicalized. They didn't bother to do that. They were too busy making merry in their outreach program.

He also testified on one occasion that the Islamic community is like every other religious community in America; and they had this wonderful outreach program with them, and it is working so well.

So I asked a question: ''Well, you said the Islamic community is like every other community in America, and you have this wonderful outreach program with them, so let me ask you: How is your outreach program going with the Buddhists, and the Jewish, and the Baptists, and all of these other communities?''

Well, they don't have an outreach program to any except the Islamic community. So that told me then: this isn't just like every other community. They don't have outreach communities through every other religious community in America because they are not worried about them blowing up innocent people, to the extent they apparently were before Mueller came along.

In any event, back to this article:

''The Justice Department declined requests by Project Cassandra and other authorities to file criminal charges against major players such as Hezbollah's high-profile envoy to Iran, a Lebanese bank that allegedly laundered billions in alleged drug profits, and a central player in a U.S.-based cell of the Iranian paramilitary Quds Force. And the State Department rejected requests to lure high-value targets to countries where they could be arrested.''

So the Justice Department—during that period, of course—would have been Eric Holder. I believe I saw him in the news recently. He had forgotten how he was in contempt of Congress, how he covered up—obfuscated—crimes that appeared to be occurring under his watch. And now we find out, just days after his high-profile blasting of what was going on here, trying to get to the truth, it turns out he was obfuscating, just like we found he was doing, hindering and obstructing justice.

We really needed a special counsel to investigate him. But, of course, he was not going to have a special counsel investigate himself, nor was Loretta Lynch going to allow a special counsel to investigate Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch. We still need one to investigate both of them. And the more we find out, the more it points to this desperate need.

It has this in the article from December 15, 2011:

''Hezbollah is linked to a $483,142,568 laundering scheme. The money, allegedly laundered through the Lebanese Canadian Bank and two exchange houses, involved approximately 30 U.S. car buyers.''

Then it goes on and shows in the article, from the Southern District of New York, U.S. Attorney's Office:

''Manhattan U.S. Attorney Files Civil Money Laundering and Forfeiture Suit Seeking More Than $480 Million From Entities Including Lebanese Financial Institutions That Facilitated a Hezbollah-Related Money Laundering Scheme''

'' 'This was a policy decision, it was a systematic decision,' said David Asher, who helped establish and oversee Project Cassandra as a Defense Department illicit finance analyst. 'They serially ripped apart this entire effort that was very well supported and resourced, and it was done from the top down.' ''

That would be from President Obama, it would be from Eric Holder, and it would be from Bob Mueller.

Bob Mueller should have been honest and sincere enough when he was asked to be special counsel, and should have said: I am probably going to be investigated myself. I am not in a position to be the investigator.

Because he certainly should be investigated. And this is one more story.

''The untold story of Project Cassandra illustrates the immense difficulty in mapping and countering illicit networks in an age where global terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime have merged, but also the extent to which competing agendas among government agencies—and shifting priorities at the highest levels—can set back years of progress.''

And that is exactly what happened under Bob Mueller and President Obama's administration.

And this 56-page article appears very well documented, and it actually appears well done. It has John Brennan in here creating problems for the investigation into the drugging and laundering of money to help finance terrorist operations.

And one part of this is they killed this investigation. They were afraid it would prevent the Iran agreement from going forward. Well, it didn't go forward. It was never constitutionally ratified. The Corker bill was just that: it was a bill. It could not turn the Constitution upside down, as it attempted to do.

The Constitution makes clear that it takes two-thirds of the Senate to ratify a treaty. It doesn't matter what the bill says; it will only take one-third to ratify a treaty. It doesn't work that way. If you want that to be the law, it takes a constitutional amendment to do that. We didn't have one. Therefore, it took two-thirds to ratify, and the Iranian agreement is still not ratified.

But, nonetheless, though it wasn't ratified, it didn't keep the President from sending $100 billion or so in dollars over to Iran. We know Iran is the largest producer of IEDs in Iraq.

As I sat at the funeral of this precious, young 20-year-old gentleman, who went to my daughter's high school, Alex Missildine, killed by an IED, I just sat there going: I wonder if the money President Obama sent paid for the production of the IED that killed our precious Alex?

It has been paid. It is paying for something. We know that Iran is using it—Certainly part of their military operations are continuing to kill Americans in other places.

Yet you had Project Cassandra that was closing in on Hezbollah, closing in on the drug production, drug sales, the laundering of money through the used car, shipping used cars around. And then, lo and behold, a reminder of what has happened right here on Capitol Hill that Luke Rosiak has been pursuing.

Here is an article from February 20, 2017, from the Daily Caller, entitled: ''House Dem IT Guys In Security Probe Secretly Took $100,000 in Iraqi Money,'' from a Hezbollah tie.

The article says:

''Rogue congressional staffers took $100,000 from an Iraqi politician while they had administrator-level access to the House of Representatives' computer network, according to court documents examined by The Daily Caller News Foundation's Investigative Group.

''The money was a loan from Dr. Ali al-Attar, an Iraqi political figure, and was funneled through a company with 'impossible'-to-decipher financial transactions that the congressional information technology, IT, staffers controlled.

''Imran Awan, ringleader of the group that includes his brothers Abid and Jamal, has provided IT services since 2005 for Florida Democrat Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the former Democratic National Committee, DNC, chairwoman. The brothers are from Pakistan.

''The trio also worked for dozens of other House Democrats, including members of the Intelligence, Foreign Affairs, and Homeland Security Committees. Those positions likely gave them access to congressional emails and other sensitive documents.

''The brothers, whose access to House IT networks has been terminated, are under criminal investigation by the U.S. Capitol Police.''

''Investigators found that congressional information was being copied to an off-site server and they suspect the brothers of improperly accessing information and stealing congressional property. Chiefs of staff for the employing Democrats were notified February 2.

''Soon after Imran began working for Members of Congress, Imran's and Abid's wives—Hina Alvi and Natalia Sova—also began receiving congressional paychecks, the DCNF found. Imran's employers included two members of the Intelligence Committee. . . .

''By 2009, the family was simultaneously managing a full-time car dealership in Virginia, with Abid running day-to-day operations after contributing $250,000 in startup cash. It was called Cars International A, LLC, referred to as ''CIA'' in court documents.''

Cars International A, referred to as CIA. Isn't it clever.

''Imran boasted unusual clout among House Democrats, and was even pictured conversing with former President Bill Clinton. After Rao Abbas, who was owed money by the dealership, threatened to sue amid allegations of deception and theft, Abbas appeared on the congressional payroll and received $250,000 in taxpayer payments.''

Incredible. You owe somebody for an illicit car dealership, and you can't pay. Just put them on the House employee system; and they will be on the congressional payroll, and you can pay off $250,000. That must have been a heck of a percentage, though. They borrowed $100,000 from this guy with Hezbollah contact, and they have to pay him back $250,000. Of course, in their case, they were very fortunate, because they did it with the House payroll. There is no evidence that Mr. Abbas ever lifted a finger to do any work, and for good reason. We wouldn't want him involved in all of the inner workings of our computer systems on the Hill. Who knows. Maybe he did. Maybe that was part of the payoff as well.

''Abid had '100 percent' of the dealership, a one-time business partner said in court documents, in addition to his $165,000-a-year job working full-time for multiple representatives. . . .''

Mr. Speaker, this story Politico has run seems to have a lot of parallels to what was going on right here in the House that needs further investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2304

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 11 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3312, SYSTEMIC RISK DESIGNATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–474) on the resolution (H. Res. 667) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. MCCOLLUM (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in district.

JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 8, 2017, she