with the Clinton campaign, maybe they are crazy enough to think Donald Trump would do something like this. It is going to end up making them look bad in the end, and that would certainly affect the election if the campaign were crazy enough to utilize such a totally fabricated dossier, I guess that would affect the election.

I still have trouble getting over the decision to tell American heroes to stand down, don't go try to save the lives of our Ambassador and the others there with the Ambassador. Tyrone Woods, Ty, was not going to have any of it. He and the other heroes headed out there to help as they could, including willingness to lay down their lives to protect other Americans, something the CIA station chief, in collaboration with other ''U.S. intelligence community,'' apparently decided was not worthwhile.

This article goes on to say: ''Mr. McCabe's abrupt departure is the latest event in a highly unusual back-and-forth between the Trump administration and a Federal law enforcement establishment that is both investigating him as it works for him and cherishes its independence.''

We know that is not true. They don't cherish their independence. Oh, yeah, the FBI, in other levels, absolutely does. But then, at the same time, they also cherish their good working relationship with other local and State law enforcement.

This article further down said: ''Mr. McCabe's resignation also comes as the FBI faces fallout from thousands of text messages between an FBI agent and lawyer who were involved in the Russia investigation, including some texts harshly critical of Mr. Trump.''

How about that? The lawyer working for Mr. McCabe.

Apparently, Mr. McCabe is racing the clock to retire with full benefits as the President himself tweeted out. I can't help but still go back to the former Director of the FBI, Mr. Mueller, who set up a personnel program that would ensure that the thousands and thousands of years of incredible law enforcement experience that was obtained by honorable, honest FBI supervisors—that they would be run off by Mr. Mueller. He didn't want those people hanging around.

□ 2130

He put a personal policy in place that ran off thousands of years of incredible law enforcement experience from the FBI.

I can't help but think that if Mr. Mueller had not had such a policy to get rid of people that had great experience in law enforcement from the FBI, there would have been people who could have gently nudged people like Andrew McCabe or Mr. Strzok or Lisa Page and would have warned them when they were getting close to the edge before they got into such total politicization of our important FBI and DOJ. But those people weren't there because Director Mueller put in place a policy that ran them off.

I still wonder about the victims at the Boston Marathon bombing. Had we had an FBI Director that was as interested in seeking out radical Islamist killers as he was in having community outreach with the mosque that was started by a man who is now doing 23 years in Federal prison for supporting terrorism, if he had not been so interested in playing patty-cake out with his community partnership and instead gone to the mosque and been asking specific questions about the older Tsarnaev brother after we got two notices that he had been radicalized—they never asked a question, not one, about Tsarnaev; about what he has been concentrating on, what he is reading, what he is memorizing, what he is talking about, what books he has got. They didn't know what questions to ask because Director Mueller had seen to the purging of the FBI training materials so the FBI agents didn't know what questions to ask. They didn't know what they were looking for in a radicalized Islamist.

The same scenario has played out time and again. Tsarnaev should have never been able to carry out that bombing, because he came into the crosshairs of the FBI investigation. Basically, from all we can find out from the hearings, they asked him if he was a terrorist. He said he wasn't. They asked his mom if he was a terrorist. She said: He is a good boy.

That is an encapsulation of it. But they didn't know what to ask because of Mueller.

Michele Bachmann and I reviewed material that was purged. The FBI classified it so we couldn't reveal, Mr. Speaker, to others publicly what was purged. Some of it was silly and needed to be purged.

Say, for example, there were a purging of verses from the Koran. Why should anything ever be purged from the Koran if it is part of the training materials?

You have to ask Mr. Mueller that.

The FBI and the DOJ deserve better. We are looking forward to finding out what the IG report has to say, but it is time for games to stop. It is time for law enforcement to do their jobs at the Department of Justice and the FBI. Jeff Sessions has got his hands full. It was obvious that he felt like he could trust those who were called career DOJ employees. Hopefully he has learned some of those career employees didn't have the law enforcement long in the tooth to give them the benefit of their experience because Mueller ran them off. They got off into an area of politicization of the DOJ and the FBI. He can't trust the people he would have been able to otherwise, had the FBI not gotten so far off track.

We need a second special counsel, as I advised the President back in June, and we need it now. Investigations cannot be conducted by Mueller into what Mueller did during the prior Russian investigation, along with U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein, and could not properly investigate his joined-at-the-hip friend, Mr. Comey.

He could not properly investigate what will be in the inspector general's report, but it certainly should require further investigation. He can't do that. It needs to be totally independent. I am not talking about the godfather of one of Mr. Comey's kids, Patrick Fitzgerald, who conveniently got appointed after he talked John Ashcroft into recusing himself. I am talking about somebody totally independent. That is what we need.

Where does the DOJ go to get its reputation back?

It is going to be a long process and it is going to take truly independent people cleaning up the mess that has been created so that can happen. We need a reputable Department of Justice and FBI, and it is high time we got one back.

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

RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) for 22 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I am joined today by JARED HUFFMAN from California. And eventually, I think, BRENDAN BOYLE from Philadelphia, the home of the new NFC champions, is also going to join us.

What we are going to talk about is: What are the Republicans afraid of? What is it they are hiding? What is it they think is going on with respect to this investigation of the President and his ties to Russia?

It starts from the very beginning. This time last year, we asked the President: Are you going to turn over your tax returns so that people can see what is in your tax returns; whether you have relations with the Russians, or who knows who?

Every President for the last 40 or 50 years has turned over their tax returns. But, of course, the President did not turn over his tax returns and has refused to turn over his tax returns.

The first thing you ask is: What is in there? What are you hiding?

Now, what we see is a concerted effort by the Republicans in the Congress and in the White House to smear and disparage hardworking law enforcement officers in the FBI, in the intelligence community, and the Department of Justice, who have been tasked with trying to figure out whether or not Russia involved itself criminally in our elections last year and whether or not there is any implication of the Trump campaign with respect to those particular efforts by the Russians.

We need to make sure that Russia does not hack into our elections, does not participate in a way that favors one party over another or one candidate over another.

These investigations started and the first thing the President did was fire Jim Comey from the FBI. Through a process, the Justice Department then appoints a special prosecutor, a special counsel, to continue this investigation.

Since that has occurred, there have been a couple of indictments and a couple of plea agreements. Michael Flynn, who was the intelligence head for the President, has faced part of this investigation. There was Paul Manafort and Richard Gates, who were involved in the campaign, and then George Papadopoulos.

But that is just the tip of the iceberg. All these people, both on the Trump campaign side and all of these Russians, have played some kind of a role, and this investigation must be pursued.

My friends on the Republican side of the aisle can complain, can stomp their feet, can throw mud at the individuals who are asked to do these investigations, but these investigations must continue so that the people understand exactly what happened and to make sure that the Russians are not allowed to participate and infiltrate and affect our elections once again.

There are just a couple of questions: What are you afraid of? What are you hiding? Is there a coverup of some kind here?

The bottom line is: just let our law enforcement individuals do their detective work, do what they were asked to do, and leave them alone and let it be done. If it exculpates and proved that nothing happened, then great. But if there is some wrongdoing here, America needs to know about it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from northern California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for organizing this Special Order hour conversation.

You asked the right question: What are they hiding and what are they afraid of?

It is a bit of a rhetorical question, because when you think about that chart you have displayed there, when you think about the indictments and the plea deals and all of the other information that we are beginning to glean, it is pretty obvious what they are afraid of and what they are hiding.

This investigation is getting pretty darn close to the personal and political and financial ties between this Presidency and those around him and Russia, and it is a lot of information that they don't want the world to know about. That is why we are seeing all of these distractions, all of these elaborate and increasingly desperate attempts to change the subject and create diversions.

Frankly, today, I am very worried that—not so much that this is coming from our President, because we have seen him throughout his career engage in character assassination, burning down the house tactics, and all manner of ruthlessness, but I am disturbed that many of our colleagues in this body have taken up those same tactics and that same cause. That is dangerous.

One of the great things about this country, I believe, is that it is about the rule of law. Our Founders actively debated this question about whether we would be a country of laws and institutions or a country of men.

Would we have some people above the law or would we all be subject to the law?

They answered it loud and clear. We were going to be a country of law and institutions. At every critical test in our history, we have reaffirmed that essential great aspect of what it is to be the United States of America. That is what Watergate was all about, as we are beginning to remember.

Yet, today, it seems that that proposition is being retested all over again. To my dismay, some of our colleagues are hoping for a different answer as we retest that proposition this time. That is very troubling.

I am not in the habit of quoting FOX News very often, and certainly not their news hosts, but one of their hosts, Shepard Smith, said something that really struck a cord in the last few days. Here is what he said about the so-called Nunes memo: ''A memo can be a weapon of partisan mass distraction.''

That is exactly what this is: a desperate attempt to protect President Trump from investigation and accountability.

I think we need to recap a few facts that brought us to this point.

Back in November 2016, when the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee was appointed to President-elect Trump's transition team, he, like our President, started sowing doubts about whether Russia had interfered with the 2016 election, incorrectly claiming that there was some kind of disagreement between our intelligence agencies on the subject.

In fact, there was no disagreement. All of the American intelligence community agreed that, as they had looked into this, they determined that Russian operatives had worked to undermine the integrity of our election. That conclusion has been reinforced and reaffirmed by everything we have learned since then.

The chairman told Politico shortly before President Trump's inauguration that the House should not investigate contacts between Russia and the Trump camp, even though his Senate intelligence counterparts had already committed to following the facts wherever they may lead. So he had already made up his mind.

□ 2145

The chairman described the Trump-Russia connections as a dead trail. He said there is nothing there. And, of course, we know President Trump has said he has nothing to do with Russia, totally contradicted by everything we have learned since.

All of this, of course, is going to come as a surprise if there is nothing there to the President's campaign chair, who is under indictment; to members of his family, who have been hauled before the special prosecutor to answer to secret meetings and other dealings that they have had with Russia; and to others in this administration who had repeated contacts with Russia.

And, of course, no one can forget the intelligence chairman's trip to the White House last year, where he staged an impromptu news conference, claiming that he had briefed the White House about a source who could explain how Trump campaign officials were caught up in foreign intelligence intercepts. His unnamed sources that he rushed to brief the White House about, well, it turned out they were White House officials.

This was a completely choreographed stunt. They had planted the misleading information with the chairman in the first place, obviously desperate to give some cover to the President who had tweeted out about wiretapping, conspiracies, and on it goes.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, ED PERLMUTTER, is asking all of the right questions. This investigation is beginning to answer those questions in very, very important ways. We need to make sure that it runs its course. It is important to finding out the truth. The American people deserve to know the truth.

It is also important to reaffirming that incredibly important aspect of what makes this country great, and that is that we are a nation of laws and institutions. We have to reaffirm that, unfortunately, over and over again from time to time.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California for his comments. He was talking about a memo.

One of the former chairmen of the House Intelligence Committee, a guy named MIKE ROGERS, was also a panelist, I think, on a CNN program. Apparently, this memo is going to be released today against all sorts of norms with respect to the Intelligence Committee and classified information. His words were, releasing a memo like this is farcical.

It is a mistake. It starts to undermine so many things with respect to our intelligence community, the trust that we have with our allies, and all of it to kind of put up this smoke screen. They go after the law enforcement agents, who are the detectives on the beat. Now they are releasing information that is incomplete and, in MIKE ROGERS's words, ''farcical,'' to try to distract, divert, avoid the real conversation, which is: What did the Russians do? How did they play in the elections? Was there any kind of cooperation, collusion, whatever it might be, with the Trump campaign?

We know that Bob Mueller was appointed. He has been a lifelong Republican. Everybody embraced his position as special counsel when it first came about, but quickly the President was

thinking about firing him. Now people want to smear all of this: It is a mistake.

The real question is: What are you hiding?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE), my friend from Philadelphia, who is a pretty happy camper because his Eagles are going to be playing in the Super Bowl on Sunday.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for his belief early on in the season in the Eagles, despite the fact he is a die-hard Broncos fan. The Super Bowl will be a nice diversion from the seriousness of the subject that we are discussing and debating tonight.

Let me take us back a bit to a couple of events that, yes, may have happened a little bit before I was born, but I know well as a student of American history. I fear that we are on the verge of repeating them, possibly only days away on the verge of repeating them.

In October 1973, the Watergate investigation was being conducted by the special counsel, Archibald Cox. It had been going on, at that point, for most of 1973. On a Saturday night, President Nixon decided to fire the special counsel, in part, because the special counsel was doing his job and was getting too close to uncovering the conspiracy.

President Nixon ordered his Attorney General to fire the special counsel. The Attorney General proved to be a profile in courage and refused. It then went to the Deputy Attorney General. The Deputy Attorney General refused. Finally, the number three man, the Solicitor General, named Robert Bork, decided that he would follow what President Nixon wanted and fired Archibald Cox. That became known as the Saturday Night Massacre.

When John Chancellor, then the anchor for NBC News, came on the air—and I was recently rewatching this—he said: Tonight, I utter words I never thought I would say, but we are in the midst of the greatest constitutional crisis in the history of the Republic.

I fear that history may very well repeat itself. We now know, since we were last in session—and it has been reported and confirmed by many media outlets, including FOX News—that President Trump has ordered his own White House attorney to fire the special counsel.

Why? If the President really has nothing to hide, then why would he fire the special counsel and want to bring this process to an end? It gets back to the very first question that my colleague from Colorado has asked: What does he have to hide?

I sincerely hope that the special counsel will find and will prove that nothing happened. That would be the best outcome and best course for all of us as Americans. But, boy, if the President is innocent, he sure isn't acting like it.

We must come together—as Democrats and Republicans second, but as Americans first—and do what is in the best interest of justice and of this country and say that the special counsel must be allowed to continue his work until its natural conclusion.

If the President moves to fire the special counsel, that, by its very definition, is obstructing justice. This body and the other body on the other side of this building cannot allow that to happen.

Here is the good news. In Watergate, ultimately, the American people didn't let it happen. There was such an outcry on a bipartisan basis that, within 48 hours, President Nixon had relented and appointed another special counsel, Leon Jaworski, who ended up being just as dogged, pursued the President all the way to the Supreme Court. Then the Supreme Court ruled, unanimously, that President Nixon had to hand over the tapes even though three of the eight Justices were Nixon appointees.

President Nixon, actually, to his credit, complied with that Supreme Court order and released the tapes, including a few tapes that clearly proved he was guilty—the so-called smoking gun—and, within about a week or two, resigned in August of 1974.

We can prevent that history from repeating itself if we act here in Congress to ensure there is a proper procedure in place to protect the integrity of this investigation. If that does not take place, there will be, I predict, an outcry of the American people you have not seen or heard since October 1973. This country and its institutions are a heck of lot more important than any political party, and it is about time all of us in this body act in such a way that shows we believe in those words.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for the history lesson he just reminded us about. His words are ones that I don't think I can add anything to.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), my friend, if he has anything else to add.

But I just want the Speaker to know and I want this Chamber to know that we are not going to go away. We are not going to allow things to be hidden. We are not going to allow things to be covered up. This has got to run its full course, just as my friend said.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We are being taken back to the lessons of Watergate tonight. The system worked in the 1970s. The checks and balances that our Founders put in place took effect. The public stepped up. The media stepped up. People of conscience in important positions within the government stood their ground and did the right thing.

But I think it would be foolish for us not to take the threats of this moment in our history very, very seriously because there are some things at play this time around that weren't there in the 1970s. You did not have rightwing media organs out there actively trying to undermine public trust in our government. You did not have a complicit United States Congress that, instead of doing oversight, seems to be spending more of its effort running cover for the administration, trying to hide the facts, trying to block investigations, playing tribal politics at its worst, instead of fulfilling our institutional role in a critical constitutional test like this.

I think it is a very, very serious moment in our history, and I am glad that the gentleman is convening discussions like this on the floor. We have to make sure that, in this investigation, the professional law enforcement personnel who do this for a living are allowed to do their job so that we can all learn the truth, whatever that may be.

The question is: What are they afraid of? What are they hiding?

This investigation is going to answer those questions, and we will all accept those answers, whatever they may be, but we have got to let the system work.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership tonight.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MCCLINTOCK (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and January 30 on account of an illness.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and January 30 on account of death in family.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1873. An act to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to establish peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30, 2018, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.