

A recent article in the Associated Press reported:

Some of America's best cancer hospitals are off-limits to many of the people now signing up for coverage under the Nation's new health care program.

Practically speaking, the AP reports:

Those patients may not be able to get the most advanced treatment including clinical trials of new medications.

In a particularly cruel twist, many of the patients who lost access to doctors and hospitals didn't know they would lose access when they signed up for their plans as provider information on the health care exchange Web sites is often, to quote a Business Week article, "missing, wrong, or difficult to navigate."

In addition to promising that patients would be able to keep their health care plans and their doctors, the President promised his health care law would reduce health care costs, but in fact health care costs have only risen since the Affordable Care Act passed. Families and individuals who were effectively dumped into the exchanges have frequently found that their only health care options cost far more than their previous health care plans and offer far less.

Family shopping for so-called silver plans now can face deductibles up to \$12,700, a staggering amount of money that very few families are able to afford. For many families that number represents a full quarter of their income before taxes.

Last week news emerged that already-high premiums on the exchanges are set to increase substantially next year. This was the headline in *The Hill* newspaper: O-Care premiums about to skyrocket. The *Fiscal Times* reported that Americans should "expect premium prices to soar." In fact, *The Hill* reported that "health industry officials say that ObamaCare-related premiums will double in some parts of the country." The *Wall Street Journal* reports that "one recent analysis finds that 80% of firms offering employee coverage have raised deductibles or other cost-sharing provisions, or are considering doing so . . . to avoid a new tax that's set to hit more lavish plans in 2018 and to counter health-cost increases. Thus, employee out-of-pocket costs could rise." Perhaps a more accurate name for the law would have been the "Unaffordable Care Act."

The havoc ObamaCare has wreaked on our health care system would be ample reason to dislike the law. ObamaCare's damage isn't limited to our health care system; it is also damaging our economy.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reports that ObamaCare will result in 2½ million fewer full-time workers over the next 10 years and reduce wages by more than \$1 trillion. Those are real-world economic impacts.

Household income has already dropped by almost \$3,700 over the course of the Obama Presidency, and

American families are already struggling. Unemployment is high and economic growth is sluggish. The last thing we need is fewer workers and lower wages.

On top of that, ObamaCare is discouraging employers from hiring and reducing employees' hours, thanks to the slew of new taxes, mandates, and regulations ObamaCare levies on businesses large and small. Chief among these, of course, is the requirement that businesses with 50 or more employees provide health insurance to all of their full-time employees, which the law defines as those working 30 hours or more. If they don't do that, they pay fines. Faced with this mandate, State and local governments, nonprofits, and businesses with small profit margins have been forced to cut employees' hours to avoid health care bills or fines they can't afford to pay. Other businesses have been forced to keep their businesses under 50 workers instead of creating new jobs and hiring new people.

Larger businesses are also deciding not to hire or even letting workers go as a result of the costly taxes and regulations the health care law imposes. According to a recent study, ObamaCare's tax on lifesaving medical devices, such as pacemakers and insulin pumps, has already affected more than 30,000 jobs in the medical device industry.

I don't care what party you are from, you cannot think this law is working. Our health care system may have needed reform, but this was not the way to do it. Instead of improving our health care system, ObamaCare is making it far worse. It is time to repeal this law and pursue real solutions to our health care challenges.

Instead of the failing government health care exchanges, we could create affordable health care plans by allowing the purchase of insurance across State lines. This would allow for interstate competition when it comes to the purchase and sale of insurance. That would increase competition among health plans, which in turn would drive prices down, not up, as is happening now.

We could allow businesses to pool together to negotiate lower rates with health insurance companies.

We could improve high-risk pools to help people with preexisting conditions and expand health savings accounts to allow families to put away money tax free to pay for future health care-related expenses.

We could end the rampant lawsuit abuse that is driving up the cost of care for all Americans.

We do need real reform of our health care system—the kind of reform that will actually drive down costs and expand access to care while allowing Americans, not the government, to make decisions about the health care plans they choose and the doctors they visit. ObamaCare is doing the opposite.

ObamaCare isn't working. We need to repeal it now and replace it with real

health care reforms so that Americans don't have to endure another 4 years like the last 4.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, sometimes it takes a sudden, flagrant breach of international order to dispel a President's naivete about an adversary. The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had that effect on President Carter, and one can only hope that Russia's annexation of Crimea will have a similar impact on President Obama.

Only recently the President was describing his Russian reset—those were his words—as a success. In other words, he was still calling the reset a success after Moscow had done the following things—and I think it is worth recalling the litany of things Vladimir Putin and Russia have done notwithstanding President Obama's hopeful intention to reset that relationship. Here is what Moscow has done:

They brutalized domestic human rights activists.

They tortured and murdered anticorruption whistleblower Sergei Magnitsky.

They unleashed a barrage of anti-American propaganda.

They threatened to target U.S. missile defense sites with offensive weapons.

They vetoed numerous United Nations resolutions regarding Syria, where Bashar al-Assad has now killed roughly 150,000 civilians. They vetoed those resolutions. They also ignored U.S. demands to stop aiding Bashar al-Assad, period. It is well known and documented that Russia regularly sends weapons to Assad to use on his own people.

Russia has denounced U.S. sanctions against Iran as undisguised blackmail. This is a country seeking a nuclear weapon that would destabilize the entire region—and perhaps worse—in the Middle East.

Russia has expelled USAID from their country and pulled out of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program designed to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons.

Russia has also banned American citizens from adopting Russian children and offered asylum to NSA leaker Edward Snowden.

That is quite a list. As you can see, while President Obama said he wants to reset that relationship with Russia, Vladimir Putin has basically thumbed

his nose at the United States and the international order. Yet none of that has kept President Obama from calling this relationship with Putin and Russia a success.

If we consider the three biggest U.S. diplomatic victories often attributed to this reset the President likes to talk about—greater Russian cooperation in Afghanistan, the New START arms control treaty, and the Russian support for U.S. sanctions in Iran—only the first one looks like a genuine, durable achievement from the vantage point of March 2014.

The New START treaty was a dangerous giveaway. In addition to jeopardizing U.S. missile defense plans, it reduced the number of American nuclear launchers and warheads while allowing Russia to increase the size of its own arsenal.

As for the Iran sanctions endorsed by the U.N. Security Council members in June of 2010, these were less significant than the unilateral U.S. sanctions that Congress forced upon President Obama despite his objections in December 2011. For that matter, the administration has now unilaterally decided to loosen U.S. sanctions—and thereby relinquish some of the best leverage we have on Tehran—to keep them from crossing that red line and acquiring a nuclear weapon. What did we get for that? We got minor concessions and more hollow promises.

As with other U.S. adversaries, the Iranians are watching Ukraine to see how President Obama responds. In the modern era, cross-border military invasions of sovereign States have been a blessedly rare occurrence. Yet Vladimir Putin has now launched two of them in less than 6 years. The Secretary General of NATO has called Russia's armed seizure of Crimea "the gravest threat to European security and stability since the end of the Cold War." Europe remembers the primary location for two world wars during the last century. They remember, and they remember what happened in 1938 which, unfortunately, bears an eerie resemblance to some of the initial steps being taken by Vladimir Putin and Russia today, and they remember what happened after that, casting the world into a terrible war in which millions of people lost their lives in World War II.

President Obama's initial response was to sanction 11 Russians and Ukrainians, leaving Putin's inner circle and his favorite oligarchs untouched, and they drew mocking rebukes from the Kremlin. Last Thursday, the President decided to ramp up the sanctions by issuing new sanctions that did go a little further, targeting four oligarchs and 16 government officials, including Putin's Chief of Staff, along with a prominent Putin-linked financial institution.

In addition, President Obama declared he had now signed a new Executive order. Remember, the President said he has a phone and a pen. Well, he has been using them—not necessarily

working with Congress but he has been using them. He has issued a new Executive order that gives us the authority to impose sanctions not just on individuals but on key sectors of the Russian economy. The problem with that is that sanctions imposed on Russia's economy are going to hurt Europe and invariably end up inflicting damage even on the U.S. economy. But I hope the President uses this authority to send Putin a message and finds a way to thread the needle to exact the costs he said he would exact on Putin for this lawless act.

In my view, the sanctions should also target Rosoboronexport. This is a State-owned Russian arms dealer that has been supplying the Assad regime and Syria with weapons, and it has become the Grand Central Station of corruption. The U.S. Pentagon has inexplicably been buying Mi-17 helicopters from Rosoboronexport to supply the Afghan military, despite numerous alternatives. I am happy to report the senior Senator from Indiana Mr. COATS has introduced an amendment that would terminate these contracts and prohibit all business dealings with companies that cooperate with Rosoboronexport, and I am a proud cosponsor of that amendment. I hope the majority leader, as Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, implored this morning, will allow an open amendment process so reasonable amendments designed to improve this bill will be allowed to be voted on.

As America responds to Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, sanctions will remain a critically important tool, but sanctions alone are not enough. They should be accompanied by at least three other U.S. policy moves.

First, the United States needs to assess the military needs of Ukraine and other Eastern European countries and then swiftly dispatch—or facilitate the purchase of—whatever resources may be required. Offering military ration kits rather than serious military assistance is a joke. It is a bad joke, and it is an insult to our friends in Kiev and freedom-loving people within the orbit of Russia.

Second, we should enhance and expand our European missile defense system with upgrades such as a new X-Band radar and more capable interceptors. We should also increase our overall missile defense budget. This is something Putin hates but which is a legitimate expenditure of self-defense monies to help keep the world safer, particularly from the threat of an Iranian missile.

Third, we should dramatically accelerate the approval process for U.S. companies seeking to export liquefied natural gas. Congress can take the lead here by amending the 1938 Natural Gas Act, an antiquated, Depression-era law that has become an obstacle to economic growth and U.S. foreign policy interests. Even in the short term, most of our LNG exports would go to Asia, it is true, rather than Europe, but it

would increase overall the supply, and expediting and expanding those exports would increase that global supply, help push down prices, and signal to Vladimir Putin that Washington is determined to squeeze his gas revenues and break his energy stranglehold on Eastern Europe. That is why members of both political parties have called for boosting and accelerating LNG exports as quickly as possible. Those can begin to flow from the United States as early as 2015, thus increasing supply, alleviating dependency on other sources, and send a very important message to Mr. Putin.

All of the actions I have described would send a powerful message to Moscow and help maximize our diplomatic leverage in the current crisis. The March 20 sanctions were a good start. The legislation that is crafted by my friend from Tennessee, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, along with Senator MENENDEZ, the chairman, are a good start, but there is more that can be done and should be done. I hope the majority leader will allow a reasonable and rational process to allow other Members in the body to participate by adding their constructive ideas to this legislation, which will pass by the end of the week, but I think there are a multitude of good ideas that could be added to it to make it even stronger and send an even more effective message to Vladimir Putin and, hopefully, discourage him from acting further in his naked aggression in Ukraine.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to ask about my time, but before the Senator from Texas leaves, I wish to thank him for his comments and his involvement in this issue. I appreciate his coming to the floor. I think this is an important issue for us to be debating and I firmly support the open amendment process that has been alluded to.

If I could, I wish to inquire as to how much time is remaining at this point.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 4 minutes remaining on the Republican side.

Mr. CORKER. I was afraid that might be the case. I wonder if I could ask unanimous consent to speak for 8 minutes or so.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UKRAINE

Mr. CORKER. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the pending business before the Senate, which is the aid package and sanctions package and the IMF package relative to Ukraine. I wish to thank Senator MENENDEZ for the way he conducted our hearings and markup relative to this bill.

I think most people in this body understand this is a bill that came out of