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March 11, 2015: Well, Some Dare Call it Treason

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Title: Well, Some Dare Call it Treason

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3/11/2015—The news is dominated by the letter from 47 Republican Senators to the Iranian leadership explaining that they will not be bound by any deal President Obama makes with Iran. Even the sympathetic Daily News called them “Traitors” on the front page. Well, why not? Why not send such a letter? Another sympathetic newspaper, the Tribune Review, wrote today that the letter was giving President Obama a dose of his own medicine. We have a President who legislates in violation of the separation-of-powers and a Congress that conducts its own foreign policy, also in violation of the separation-of-powers. Yesterday, New York Times columnist David Brooks lamented relativism as it affects family life. He was referencing, if I remember correctly, Robert Putnam’s new book, *Our Kids*. The poor lack values, Brooks wrote. But Brooks is wrong to see nihilism only among the poor and only in intimate life. Here, in the President’s Executive orders and the Netanyahu speech and Iranian letter, is the face of nihilism. For nihilism is the lack of restraint that comes when there are no standards other than my own will. It is the will to power. Why shouldn’t the President act to promote good policy as he sees it? Why shouldn’t the Republicans try to protect the nation from the folly they fear? None of us has faith that our existing institutions will vindicate the good in the long run. So, we have to act. We are ensnared in what Heidegger called the nihil, the nothing. All that is left is self-assertion. And it is on all sides. I’m not without hope that we will not remain in this plight. Heidegger famously said “only a God can save us.” And he did not mean a return to old-time religion. But he did mean that a saving could happen. The question is, how does it happen? I wonder if we could begin to prepare in law?