

WELCOME, TRAVELERS!

-An OP ED -

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Why the 47 Senators Should be Charged with Treason*

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Has common sense just been stripped naked and run into the street into the arms of a straitjacket?

This is the only way I can describe the action of 47 renegade Republican senators who took it upon themselves to write an Open Letter to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The letter's content is elementary, insulting, and stupid. One saving grace is that the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker did not participate. Corker is a Republican representing Tennessee.

On Tuesday, a Corker aide gave the following statement to The Mid-South Tribune: "As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Corker's focus is on getting a veto-proof majority to support his bipartisan bill for congressional review of any comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran." (Also, for the record Tennessee's other senator, Lamar Alexander, who was a one-time presidential contender, did not sign the letter). On Thursday, March 12, Corker's office put out a press release outlining the steps on what would be done to pass a bipartisan bill he and his team constructed to deal with the Iranian nuclear talks. The press release laid out step by step on what has to happen in the Senate to get a majority of votes for his bill. There is no requirement in there that senators must explain the procedures to a foreign government.

Amid all this, the media's preoccupation has been over the storm of Hillary Clinton's email-gate while overlooking the tsunami of the gravity of this Open Letter which is nothing short of treason. And yes, there is a race factor to this quasi coup to overthrow a president who is African American, because the 47 would not have committed such a grave act had this president been white. (And to those who believe racism had nothing to do with this in any form or fashion, then you should take up residence on an island and drink your milk from a coconut.).

If the renegades wanted to write an Open Letter, they could have addressed it to the American public and they could have laid out intelligently why they were in disagreement with the president's nuclear negotiations with the Iranian government. They could have followed the leadership of Corker who put forth his bill entitled "The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015" which was introduced on March 12.

Corker did not condone what the 47 did, though in the press release, he sort of chalked their juvenile behavior up to “The fact is there is so much passion around this issue because the White House is stiff-arming [Congress]...People on both sides of the aisle believe that is wrong...”

Corker has to be kind to his fellow party members; whereas, “passion” is not the word I would substitute for ‘stupid.’

The letter is formally addressed as “An Open Letter to the Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran” and begins:

“It has come to our attention while observing your nuclear negotiations with our government that you may not fully understand our constitutional system.”

The letter presupposes that the Iranians are so dumb that they have no idea how the U.S. Government works – even on this elementary political level. I dare say that the Iranians are more aware of how the U.S. government and most of its constitutional accoutrements work better than the 47 know how the Iranian government works. Also, the question begs: What did the 47 “observe” which made them think that “Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran” “may not fully understand” the American constitution?

Now that the 47 having “observed” this, they go on to write to the “Leaders”: “Thus, we are writing to bring to your attention two features of our Constitution—the power to make binding international agreements and the different character of federal offices— which you should seriously consider as negotiations progress.” This sounds as if the 47 have taken it upon themselves to threaten the “Leaders” of Iran if the Iranians even consider what the Administration is trying to negotiate. Threat is the key word here.

Okay, let’s read further what the renegades wrote and delivered to the “Leaders” of a sovereign nation of which this sovereign nation is currently in nuclear negotiations with: “First, under our Constitution, while the president negotiates international agreements, Congress plays the significant role of ratifying them. In the case of a treaty, the Senate must ratify it by a two-thirds vote. A so-called congressional-executive agreement requires a majority vote in both the House and the Senate (which, because of procedural rules, effectively means a three-fifths vote in the Senate). Anything not approved by Congress is a mere executive agreement.”

Now, let’s sit back and drink our Kool-Aid here. International treaties are negotiated among sovereign nations to sovereign nations. Individuals, groups, or 47 senate renegades in the Legislative Branch cannot lawfully posture themselves as this nation’s official negotiator. This is done through the Executive Branch. The 47 trespassed onto the Executive Branch’s grounds and admitted such by stating “...while the president negotiates international agreements...” Exactly what words in this phrase did the 47 not understand?

Now I hope those who like or don’t like the president’s policies (and I have certainly disagreed with him and his administration on occasions), will continue to read the 47’s next paragraph which they wrote to the “Leaders” of a sovereign nation

informing the “Leaders” that whatever the president does is a “mere executive agreement”.

The 47 continue: “Second, the offices of our Constitution have different characteristics. For example, the president may serve two 4-year terms, whereas senators may serve an unlimited number of 6-year terms. As applied today, for instance, President Obama will leave office in January 2017, while most of us will remain in office well beyond then— perhaps decades.”

To those who have not been stripped of their common sense, please re-read this. Examine the term “as applied today”. The president’s term has long been established in the Constitution. Obviously, the 47 have presupposed that the “Leaders” have no idea how long senators and presidents serve in office. Also, there is no other way to interpret this paragraph other than the 47 have flat out told the “Leaders” of a sovereign nation that the U.S. Legislative Branch can override the Executive Branch in foreign affairs to speak directly to another sovereign; thus, posturing themselves as the legal and true negotiators in foreign affairs. Not only did the 47 say it, they did it!

Never mind that the Executive Branch has been the face of and official negotiator of this nation since George Washington became president. There is a chain of command and protocols which the renegades knowingly broke as they were led by the ir renegade leader, Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas who could demonstrate in a Spelling Bee contest that he would have trouble spelling “I”.

As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Corker can ‘spell’. In fact, in his press release, the Senator ‘spelled’ out these protocols and procedures which the 47 operating on an 8th grade herd mentality deliberately and spitefully chose to ‘teach’ directly to the “Leaders”. This smacks of that White Western-Euro-centric paternalistic-colonialist-jingoist mentality demonstrated throughout history when the ‘natives are restless’. This mentality has no place in U.S. 21st Century foreign relations.

Let’s take another sip of Kool-Aid and continue the 47’s open letter to the “Leaders”: “What these two constitutional provisions mean is that we will consider any agreement regarding your nuclear-weapons program that is not approved by the Congress as nothing more than an executive agreement between President Obama and Ayatollah Khamenei. The next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time.”

These are strong words with implied retaliation should an agreement be struck.

Again, to the folks who still have common sense, re-read this paragraph and do keep in mind that the renegades are speaking down to the “Leaders” ; threatening the “Leaders” that the Legislative Branch will undo whatever “President Obama” does because “future Congresses” can strike it down with the “stroke of a pen” and “modify the agreement at any time.” Therefore, the 47 have laid out clearly that they are, ironically, above the Constitution of the United States. This paragraph goes beyond party lines.

This action sends the signal to any sovereign state that members of Congress can interfere DIRECTLY by placing themselves as ‘official’ arbitrators in treaty-making. There are three fronts upon which this precedent has become more dangerous: First,

because the 47 represent nearly half of the U.S. Senate, they cannot be viewed as a typical group disenchanted with their government. Any sovereign nation wishing to do so can use their behavior as an excuse not to negotiate with any president in the future—yes, beyond 2017 as the 47 wrote. Second: These negotiations are taking place with a Middle East sovereign government. This is a sensitive geo-political-religion area of vast diversity which the U.S. foreign policy is searching to find solutions and common ground. This is about nuclear negotiations which may or may not be fruitful. What if the 47 existed when John F. Kennedy dealt with the Cuban missile crisis? Would they have directly engaged in these negotiations as members of the Legislative Branch or have behaved as such during the Korean or Vietnam Conflicts or while Bush was dealing with Iraq? Third, the mainstream media has miserably informed the public of the gravity of the 47's action by presenting it solely or mostly in terms of Republicans vs. Democrats, and that the 47's action is no more than politics as usual when there is a constitutional crisis issue in play.

Now, let's wrap this up with how the 47 ended the letter to the "Leaders": "We hope this letter enriches your knowledge of our constitutional system and promotes mutual understanding and clarity as nuclear negotiations progress."

(For the record, this op/ed piece contains the full text of the 47's letter and most certainly can be read without my commentary.)

The 47 should be charged with treason.

This should be done as a signal to other sovereign nations that U.S. foreign policy is not conducted by Legislative Branch renegades. Perception is very much catalytic as variables and indicators in a nation's foreign policy. Treason charges may or may not be fully carried out, but the papers should be drawn up and put in for the record and put on the 47's record with the same gusto of those who have attempted time and time to impeach the president on various charges which do not have nearly the consequences of what has been done by the 47's recklessness.

Their action trumps party affiliation.

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*This article can be found on the Op/Ed and Editorial lanes on The Mid-South Tribune and the Black Information Highway at www.blackinformationhighway.com.

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