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Letter: Storm Trooper Blues

- Robert F. Lyons, Kennebunkport, Maine

Rep. Dusty Johnson writes in his Washington Report, (“Transparency Matters,” Press & Dakotan, Oct 21): “The impeachment process unfolding in the House over the last several weeks should cause pause for all members of Congress and the American people.” After reading the recent Associated Press headline: “GOP storms secure hearing room, delaying impeachment deposition,” the law abiding South Dakotans I know of in my native state may indeed pause and arrive at a different view than Johnson on his party’s impeachment tactics.

This headline conjures up scenes reminiscent of Germany’s Third Reich when the brown-shirted storm troopers organized to promote the rise of Adolf Hitler to power. The sight and sound of two dozen Republican members of the House of Representatives forcefully occupying a legally constituted congressional hearing on impeachment and “just screaming about the president” is chilling. Then they ordered pizza and tweeted to the world of their invasion.

Hitler’s storm troopers, made up of various roughneck elements, were used to protect party meetings, march in Nazi rallies and physically assault political opponents. Today’s GOP storm troopers break up lawfully constituted impeachment hearings, attempt to intimidate witnesses and attach themselves to a president who is in the process of slow removal as evidence mounts that he has violated our Constitution to achieve personal gain.

Two Republicans alone may escape the harsh judgment of Dante’s “Inferno” that: “The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis.” Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) has emerged as the only outspoken dissident in Trump’s Republican Party. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) has stated that the “picture emerging on President Donald Trump’s Ukraine actions is ‘not a good one.’”

Rep. Johnson might take another look at the matter and read again his oath of office when he took his seat in Congress: “I, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

Dante’s prediction is prescient for today’s GOP storm troopers: “The world will let no fame of theirs endure; both justice and compassion must disdain them; let us not talk of them, but look and pass.”