

The Pentagonization of America

Posted by Joan Russow

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Tom dispatch Mandy Smithberger and William Hartung, The Pentagonization of America POSTED ON JANUARY 28, 2021 It's ever more obvious that the forever wars the U.S. military has been fighting for almost two decades are coming home, especially in the wake of the creation of a Baghdad-style "Green Zone" in Washington, D.C., for the recent inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. We now know as well that, on January 6th, during the storming of the Capitol by a mob of white nationalists and QAnoners, the military arrived in Washington earlier than most of us imagined. NPR reports that, among those in that vast crowd who broke into the Capitol, ran riot, and have so far been charged with crimes, nearly one in five was a military veteran or a member of the armed forces. And keep in mind that National Guard officials removed 12 of the troops they sent to Washington to protect the inauguration, at least some for fear of similar inclinations. Of course, none of this should be surprising since, among the crew of Wolverine Watchmen arrested last October for planning the kidnapping and possible assassination of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, at least two were Marine veterans.

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Today, TomDispatch regulars and Pentagon experts Mandy Smithberger and William Hartung note a particular irony of this century: the less effective the U.S. military has been abroad, the more it's fought those pointless forever wars to hell and back, the more it's come to be prized, respected, and treasured here at home. In the process, as those two authors suggest today, American democracy, too, has been transformed into a kind of Green Zone. There should be a distinct irony in that, if anyone were paying real attention. Joe Biden typically ended his Inaugural Address, "May God bless America and may God protect our troops." The question Smithberger and Hartung ask is, if God is protecting the troops, who's protecting us? Not, it seems, the powers-that-be in Washington when it comes to the militarization of our political system. Tom

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