

Media remains silent on appearance of military officers at Trump's inauguration

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A week after Donald Trump's inauguration, no explanation has been given of the strange and troubling appearance of ten military officers behind Trump early in his inaugural address.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported, at about one minute and 16 seconds into Trump's speech, ten military officers walked out from the west side of the capitol building to flank Trump. Junior officers as well as captains and higher-ranking officers from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines gathered around the president for about 40 seconds—long enough for an image of Trump surrounded by uniformed military men to be broadcast internationally. Another uniformed officer then appeared and whispered something, at which point they exited.

On the *New York Times'* live blog coverage of the inauguration, noted presidential historian Jon Meacham questioned the incident. His question was brushed aside by *Times* White House correspondent Maggie Haberman, who suggested that their appearance was due to the light rain. Haberman's comment is rendered thoroughly illogical by the fact that none of the officers in question carried an umbrella.

Celebrity gossip site *TMZ* noted the incongruity of the occurrence, but chalked it up to a "fumble" by the military: "Donald Trump's inaugural speech did not go off without a hitch—there was a clear fumble by the military—but everyone's clammed up."

The *Daily Mail* in the United Kingdom also commented upon the incident. In an article titled, "Trump Gets to Work," the *Daily Mail* attributed it to an unplanned error: "Viewers could have gotten the impression that all was going as planned," the newspaper wrote, "if not for the appearance of an extra man in uniform. That man seemed to tell the soldiers something, prompting them to leave before the end of

the speech."

The highly irregular use of the military during a presidential inauguration went unremarked upon by the mainstream American press. The WSWs has made multiple attempts to contact the White House press office, as well as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* concerning the incident; at this point, no one has returned our calls or emails.

It is quite clear, however, that this did not represent a mere gaffe by the military or the White House. It was a calculated maneuver by Trump to impress upon both the nation and the world his militaristic and nationalistic message. He had already unsuccessfully attempted to requisition missile launchers and tanks from the military for his inaugural parade. His inaugural speech was filled with lamentations about the "sad depletion" of the US military and vows to bolster it with increased spending and personnel.

He concluded his speech by hearkening to the military once again: "We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement, and most importantly, we are protected by God."

In the week since Trump's inauguration, not one question has been raised by the press about his use of the military during his inaugural speech. While White House press secretary Sean Spicer denied journalists the opportunity to ask questions after his first press briefing on Monday, he has allowed questions after each press briefing since then.

The silence of the press, many of whom have noisily objected to Trump's threats to "hold the press accountable," has itself no innocent explanation. Whatever its criticisms of Trump, the media is part of the political establishment and is covering for the anti-democratic and militarist agenda of the new administration.



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