

**Hon. Joseph E. Schmitz**  
**Distinguished Constitutional Fellow**  
**Oversight Project: It's Your Government**

Joseph E. Schmitz served as the 5th U.S. Senate-confirmed Inspector General of the Department of Defense from April 2002 to September 2005. As such, he was agency head of the most expansive Inspector General organization in the world, with statutory policy oversight responsibility for roughly 60,000 auditors, investigators, inspectors, law enforcement officers, and oversight professionals throughout the Department of Defense. For his service as Inspector General of the Department of Defense, he was awarded the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest honorary award presented by the Secretary of Defense to non-career federal officers.



Throughout his legal career, Mr. Schmitz has been guided by the foundational American principle of self-determination — reflected in our Constitution’s first three words, “We the People.” He understands oversight not merely as a compliance function, but as a structural safeguard of self-government: ensuring that those entrusted with public authority remain accountable to the People, from whom that authority derives. These ideals are not only for Americans. International law recognizes the principle of self-determination, which Mr. Schmitz has championed on behalf of various peoples around the world desperate for liberty.

In 2022, Mr. Schmitz was appointed as a Commissioner on the independent Congressionally-chartered Commission on the State of U.S. Olympics & Paralympics (<https://www.csusop.org/>).

Prior to his service as Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Mr. Schmitz was a Partner in the international law firm of Patton Boggs LLP, serving as head of the Aviation Practice Group, and at the same time a Captain in the United States Naval Reserve, serving as Inspector General of the Naval Reserve Intelligence Command. He has extensive experience in overseeing compliance with various international and security-related laws, including but not limited to the Inspector General Act, Intelligence Oversight laws, the Posse Comitatus Act, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), and laws administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. His representative past clients included FedEx, Virgin Atlantic, Asiana Airlines, and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association.

Mr. Schmitz’ pre-Inspector General public service included: twenty-seven years of naval service, first on active duty and then as a reserve officer; law clerk to the Honorable James L. Buckley, Circuit Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit; and Special Assistant to the Attorney General of the United States, the Honorable Edwin Meese III.

Mr. Schmitz has published numerous articles and has testified as a constitutional expert before U.S. Senate committees, and before various state legislature committees. From 1995 until 2002, he was an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center, where he developed and taught a seminar on advanced Constitutional Law. He is an alumnus of the American Council on Germany Young Leaders Program, and served as Founding President of the fourth student chapter of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies, at Stanford Law School.

In May 2013, the Center for Security Policy Press published Mr. Schmitz’ “THE INSPECTOR GENERAL HANDBOOK: FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, AND OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ‘ENEMIES, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC’.” This IG Handbook is designed to be useful both to IG professionals and to other military, civilian government, and corporate leaders, including general counsels, who sooner or later will need to work intelligently with an Inspector General.

Mr. Schmitz graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1978, and received his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Stanford University in 1986. He is on the Advisory Board for Save the Persecuted Christians, and a *Newsmax* “Insider” on constitutional issues under the banner, “Support and Defend.” In 2013, he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame (Va. Ch.) as an “Outstanding American.”