Joint Chiefs Chairman caught with boot in mouth

By Peter Peckasny
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"The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from the officers of the regular components of the armed forces. He serves at the pleasure of the President for a term of two years, and may be reappointed in the same manner for one additional term." — Title 10, USC, sec. 1420.

On October 10, 1974, General George S. Brown (USAF), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed a group of Duke University law students on the topic of international law. A Duke law student supplied a tape recording of the address and question-and-answer period which followed in the Washington Post, which reported some of Gen. Brown's remarks on its front page of Wednesday, November 13.

According to the official Pentagon transcript, released in Washington that afternoon, the JCS chairman responded to one question: "Now, in answer, to the question would we use force in the Middle East, I don't know -- I hope not. We have no plans to. It is conceivable, I suppose, that if US forces were used in the Middle East "it would be almost as bad as the seven days in May." And apparently explained the reference by conjecturing about tough-minded Americans sitting down the Jewish influence. "Seven Days in May" was the title of a book about an attempted takeover of the US by the JCS. Hopefully, it is not to be inferred that the JCS Chairman advocates a military takeover of the US forces intervenes in a future Middle East war.

Notwithstanding Presidential Press Secretary Ron Nessen's statement that President Ford thought that Gen. Brown's comments were "blatantly and poorly handled" and "in no way represent [his] (Ford's) views or the views of any senior officials of his Administration, military or civilian," was Gen. Brown at Duke expressing his own viewpoint or an agreed-upon corporate of the Joint Chiefs?

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There is one other troubling reference in the general's remarks. Gen. Brown said that if US forces were used in the Middle East "it would be almost as bad as the seven days in May" and apparently explained the reference by concentrating about tough-minded Americans sitting down the Jewish influence. Seven Days in May" was the title of a book about an attempted takeover of the US by the JCS. Hopefully, it is not to be inferred that the JCS Chairman advocates a military takeover of the US forces intervenes in a future Middle East war.

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