

Print
11-20-74

General Brown's Remarks on 'Jewish Influence'

Strange that General Brown and "General" Arafat should hit the front pages at the same time. The PLO leader made clear that nothing has changed—he does not accept the idea of a separate Jewish State and the news media ought to have enough guts to say so. But what is it to the U.S.? We didn't join the rest of the world in re-establishing a Jewish State just because we felt guilty about anti-Semitism or just because of a Jewish lobby but because it was right in terms of human values, social history and political justice. And that is still right... so the real question is just how to provide for the Palestinians and still leave a viable Jewish State.

We have to say that. Today we know it is not only right but also in the interest of the U.S. to have Israel there as a bulwark of Western values against Russian expansion. Most Americans have known that for years. But Chief of Staff Brown has missed the word somehow. If he thinks we care about Israel just because of a Jewish lobby, he ought to be fired and not just scolded because he "mis-spoke."

William B. Saunders.

Bethesda.

The recent orchestrated outcry against General George S. Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for his comments on "Jewish influence" in the U.S. points to a significant lack of candor on this sensitive subject.

It would be the epitome of naivete at best, or of hypocrisy at worst, to ignore a fundamental facet of American politics: i.e., the overwhelming strength of the Zionist lobby in every aspect of policies affecting Jews everywhere.

The manifestation of this influence can be felt crucially in the U.S. Congress, where, to this day, no bill favoring the State of Israel has ever met with a significant opposition. The same influence is felt when the subject of

freedom of movement in favor of Soviet Jews is involved. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry constitute a clear case of religious and racial bias on the part of this lobby, since it seems to be totally unaffected by the plight of other oppressed minorities in the Soviet Union.

The unrestrained bankrolling of the State of Israel by U.S. taxpayers constitutes yet another example of the problem General Brown referred to in his remarks. Rather than join the chorus of those who find it unpalatable to have their activities characterized in a thought-provoking manner, The Post should reflect on the serious consequences of the actions of this same Zionist lobby, particularly in the limitations it imposes on American foreign policy. General Brown expressed, perhaps clumsily, thoughts that have been muffled for many years by an increasing number of Americans.

John Tsimberlidis.

Washington.

Were a highly-placed government official to suggest publicly that all "red necks" were illiterate bigots, all WASPs were rich and Republican, all intelligent Catholics in the priesthood, all West Pointers cheats, and all military men afflicted with terminal stupidity, this column would be flooded with a veritable blizzard of mail that would reduce the Brown affair to the status of but a hiccup in the night.

Unhappily, by falling upon that most malodorous of canards that Jews "own, you know, the banks in this country, the newspapers," General Brown feeds the canard, equally malodorous, about the "military mentality."

Let's dispense quickly with Brown's folly. Of the 1748 newspapers in this nation, only 3.1 per cent are owned by Jews. A relatively recent study showed that, of some 800 enrolled members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 20 were Jewish.

In the '60's, a study revealed that in New York City, whose population is about 30 per cent Jewish, less than 1 per cent of commercial bank officers were Jews.

What cannot be dispelled as readily is the shameful and low bent of mind that repeatedly and fearfully clutches at scapegoatism in lieu of imagination and intelligence and courage. It brings into question Gen. Brown's very capacity and competence to deal with the world crisis now on his plate.

As importantly, he gravely compromises the Pentagon's own official strategic estimate that the American stake in the Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Middle East is dependent upon Israel's survival.

Jerry M. Landay.

Washington.

General Brown's remarks at Duke University, in spite of his apologia and the reprimand by President Ford and Secretary James Schlesinger, raises a profound question as to his continued usefulness as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To remark as he did about "Jewish money" and "Jewish influence" is a painful and unnecessary traducement and vilification of our Jewish citizenry.

General Brown should further understand that the conduct of our nation's foreign policy, be it with Israel or other areas of the world, is the constitutional responsibility of President Gerald R. Ford. Therefore, there is no need for our nation to become "tough minded enough to set down the Jewish influence in the country and break the lobby." In terms of understanding of his role and gross insensitivity, General Brown should seriously consider why he should not show cause why he should not be removed forthwith by President Ford.

Samuel L. Banks.

Baltimore.