

Seven Days in May. How the CIA and the Pentagon Took Hollywood

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Yesterday, the Los Angeles Times published an op-ed entitled, “[Why Does the Pentagon Give a Helping Hand to Films Like ‘Top Gun’?](#)” by Roger Stahl, a communication studies professor at the University of Georgia and director of the documentary film “[Theaters of War: How the Pentagon and CIA Took Hollywood](#).”

The op-ed pointed out that if a proposed film does not meet with the approval of the Pentagon and the CIA, it will probably not get made. Moreover, according to 30,000 documents from the Department of Defense that Stahl and his team of researchers secured under the Freedom of Information Act, “the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency have exercised direct editorial control over more than 2,500 films and television shows.”

There is one film from the early 1960s that did not meet with the approval of the Pentagon and the CIA that was nevertheless put into production. That film was entitled *Seven Days in May* and starred Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Ava Gardner, and Frederic March. You can watch a trailer for the movie [here](#).

The movie is based on the overwhelming power of the U.S. national-security establishment within America’s federal governmental structure. America’s military generals decide that the president is leading America to doom and decide that they have no choice but to remove him from office in order to save the country. The president gets wind of the scheme and

moves to foil it.

As I detail in my new book [An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story](#), the movie was based on a novel that had the same title as the movie — *Seven Days in May*. President Kennedy read the novel and decided that it should be made into a movie to serve as a warning to the American people of the grave danger posed by the national-security establishment.

Of course, Kennedy was not the first president who issued such a warning. In his Farewell Address, President Eisenhower, the president who preceded JFK, warned the American people of the grave danger to the rights and liberties and democratic processes of the American people posed by the “military-industrial complex,” which was the name he used for the “national-security establishment.”

In fact, in an earlier draft of his speech, Ike had used the term “military-industrial-congressional complex” to denote the symbiotic relationship between the national-security establishment and the members of Congress. That intimate relationship was most recently demonstrated by the quick passage of the \$40 billion aid package that the Pentagon wanted for Ukraine.

In fact, the Founding Fathers felt much the same way. That was why they [fiercely opposed](#) “standing armies,” the name they used for a national-security establishment. That was why America did not have a Pentagon, a vast and permanent military-industrial complex and “defense industry,” an empire of foreign military bases, a CIA, or an NSA for more than 125 years. There was a relatively small, basic military force designed primarily to protect settlers from attacks by Native-Americans.

America’s army was so small that there was no way that the country could get embroiled in the forever wars and conflicts in Europe and Asia. That’s how the American people wanted it. They didn’t want the U.S. military getting America involved in foreign wars. They understood that such wars weakened a nation and also were the prescription for the destruction of liberty and prosperity here at home at the hands of a large, permanent, and ever-growing military-intelligence force.

If the Constitutional Convention had come out with a proposal for a national-security state that consisted of a Pentagon, a vast and permanent military establishment and “defense” industry, a CIA, and an NSA, there is no doubt that the American people would have soundly defeated it. The last thing our ancestors wanted was the type of government under which Americans live today.

In 1970, Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile. As a socialist, he made it clear that he had no interest in joining the U.S. government’s fierce anti-Russia, anti-communist crusade. On the contrary, he reached out to the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other communist countries in a spirit of friendly and peaceful coexistence.

The U.S. national-security establishment, imbued with the same fierce anti-Russia animus that drives it today, deemed Allende to be a grave threat to U.S. national security. Equally important, Allende was deemed to be a grave threat to *Chilean* national security. Therefore, the U.S. national-security establishment embarked on a course of action designed to convince the Chilean national-security establishment that it had a moral duty to remove the country’s democratically elected president in order to save the country.

In other words, the mindset of the U.S. national-security establishment was the same mindset depicted in *Seven Days in May* — the mindset about which Kennedy wanted to warn the American people.

A big problem arose, however. The overall commander of Chile's armed forces, Gen. Rene Schneider, said no. He said that the constitution of Chile did not provide for the violent ouster of the president and, therefore, he would not go along with the scheme.

Consequently, the CIA orchestrated Schneider's kidnapping and assassination on the streets of Santiago. Once he was removed from the scene, the road was opened to doing what *Seven Days in May* warned about — the violent removal of Allende from office, followed by round-ups, executions, rapes, torture, or disappearances of tens of thousands of people, including two young American men, Charles Horman and Frank Terrugi.

CIA Director Richard Helms was later summoned to testify before Congress. When asked about CIA involvement in the Chilean coup, he lied under oath by falsely stating that the CIA had played no role in the coup. Perhaps the reason he did that was because the Chilean regime-change operation bore a remarkable similarity to the Kennedy assassination, especially after Kennedy reached out to the Russians and the Cubans in a spirit of friendly and peaceful coexistence, the same thing that Allende would do.

Ironically, *Seven Days in May* was scheduled to be released at the time Kennedy was assassinated. The release was delayed owing to the assassination.

Purchase [An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story](#) at Amazon.

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Featured image: Burt Lancaster (Source: FFF)

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