

THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Klanwatch Project

400 Washington Avenue • P.O. Box 548
Montgomery, Alabama 36195-5101

April 15, 1986

Honorable Caspar Weinberger
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Weinberger,

I am writing you on behalf of the black citizens of North Carolina to call your attention to members of the United States Marine Corps stationed at Camp Lejeune participating in Ku Klux Klan paramilitary activities and to seek your assistance.

On January 11, 1985, the Federal District Court in Raleigh certified a class of all black citizens in North Carolina as plaintiffs in a suit filed against the Confederate Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CKKKK) and its Grand Dragon, Glenn Miller. See Exhibit A. These plaintiffs are represented by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

On September 17, 1985, the court entered an injunction against the CKKKK prohibiting the organization and its members from operating a paramilitary army and from harassing black citizens. See Exhibit B. On or about March 15, 1985, the CKKKK changed its name to the White Patriot Party (WPP) but declared that its goals and purposes were the same as the CKKKK. Subsequently the court amended its injunctive order to include the WPP. See Exhibit B. ("White Patriot Party is, in fact, the successor group to the defendant, Confederate Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. . .")

Investigators of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Klanwatch Project, who have monitored the CKKKK/WPP in North Carolina for several years and who most recently have been monitoring the group's compliance with the court injunction, have discovered solid evidence that active-duty United States Marines have been and now are participating in CKKKK/WPP activities. Enclosed is a group of photographs showing Marines in military fatigues (encircled in photos) along with members of Glenn Miller's CKKKK/WPP. Exhibit C shows Corporal (E-4) Russell Bordelon, USMC (second from left). This photo was taken at a paramilitary drill and parade of the CKKKK/WPP on Oct. 19, 1985, at Fuqua-Varina, N.C.

Exhibit D shows two Marines in military fatigues at a CKKKK/WPP march in downtown Raleigh on January 27, 1985. The photo marked Exhibit E also shows armed Marines participating in a CKKKK/WPP paramilitary exercise. This picture was taken at St. Pauls, N.C., on November 17, 1985.

The activities of the CKKKK/WPP, although normally aimed at blacks, have lately taken on a stronger anti-Semitic tone. Note photo marked Exhibit F, taken at the same time and place as Exhibit E, showing a large sign that reads "KKK RALLY NO JEWS ALLOWED!". Note also from the same event Exhibit G, which shows a number of members of the CKKKK/WPP special forces armed with military-type assault rifles.

The CKKKK has long boasted of having military participation in its membership and assisting in its paramilitary training. On October 24, 1982, CKKKK head Glenn Miller displayed 15 masked CKKKK members at a press conference in Jacksonville, N.C. He told assembled newsmen that these Klansmen were active Marines stationed at the Marines Corps Air Station at New River and Camp Geiger. See Exhibit H. On other occasions vehicles bearing military identification have been observed at CKKKK/WPP functions.

Furthermore, our investigators have obtained a sworn statement from a former CKKKK member-turned-informant of Marines assisting in training CKKKK/WPP special forces soldiers. The following exchange is noteworthy:

Q. I believe you told Mr. Williams, my assistant, that the Marines directed much of the paramilitary training?

A. Marines and Steve [Miller] both. They were in there together.

Q. Now these were active-duty Marines where?

A. At Jacksonville, North Carolina, Marine base.

This informant also stated that the Marine instructors provided supplies to the CKKKK, including -- on occasion -- official uniforms bearing the Marine Corps insignia.

According to the sworn statement of a high-ranking former CKKKK/WPP military officer who also turned informant, the training given to the CKKKK/WPP special forces consisted of offensive military exercises and techniques such as those taught in basic training, including search-and-seizure, reconnaissance, ambush, river crossings, hand-to-hand combat, map and compass reading and weaponry.

This informant told Klanwatch investigators that the CKKKK/WPP is extremely well-armed. The following question-and-answer exchange is from his sworn statement:

Q. Was that a pretty standard weapon, the Mini-.14?

A. Yes. It's a pretty massive, destructive weapon.

Q. Is that a pretty common weapon with the special forces of the North Carolina Klan?

A. Yes.

Testimony on file from these informants will be produced at your request and with assurances of confidentiality.

You should be aware of the uses Mr. Miller has publicly stated this training is to be put. On March 19, 1985, Miller threatened in a prepared statement read at a news conference in Raleigh to "commence UNDERGROUND GUERRILLA warfare against the federal government, which will include the punishment of federal tyrants and their puppets." [emphasis original] Exhibit I.

Earlier this year, Miller renewed the threat. In a news release issued February 19, 1986, he announced that "If our elected leaders refuse to even hear our voices and to respond to our voices, then we have no alternative but to resort to armed revolution to replace them. When and if this occurs, the blood shed, [sic] will be upon their hands, not ours. . ." Exhibit J.

In addition to these explicit threats, Mr. Miller also has publicly endorsed a right-wing terrorist group called the Order, which engaged in armored car robberies, murder and other acts of violence during 1983-84 in furtherance of a conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government.

The Order is comprised of radical white supremacists, many of whom have KKK backgrounds. Twenty-one members of the group were convicted and/or pleaded guilty to federal racketeering charges during 1985. Federal authorities confiscated large quantities of semi-automatic and automatic weapons, military explosives and hand grenades from the defendants.

In a gesture of solidarity with these domestic terrorists, more than three hundred of Mr. Miller's followers marched in Raleigh on January 18, 1986, behind a banner proclaiming, "We Love the Order."

Mr. Miller is clearly a revolutionary and an advocate of the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. It is simply intolerable that members of the U.S. armed forces, sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, be allowed to hold membership in an organization which seeks to overthrow the federal government through violent means. It is equally unacceptable for U.S. servicemen to actively participate in such groups' armed paramilitary exercises.

I am sure that you do not condone the active participation of military personnel in hate groups such as the CKKKK/WPP, but you may believe they have a First Amendment right to participate. If this is your view, I urge you to read the court decisions contrary to this position as regards the Ku Klux Klan.

The courts have long ago determined that the Ku Klux Klan is a violence-prone group, not a political organization peacefully promoting a racist point of view. In United States v. Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 250 F. Supp. 330, 334 (E.D. La. 1965) (three-judge court) (Wisdom, J.), the court stated in its factual findings that

To attain its ends, the Klan exploits the forces of hate, prejudice and ignorance. We find that the Klan relies on systematic economic coercion, varieties of intimidation, and physical violence in attempting to frustrate national policy expressed in civil rights legislation.

As will be shown below, the Klan has continued its violent activities to the present. In 1981, Judge Gabrielle McDonald enjoined the Ku Klux Klan from interfering with Vietnamese fishermen's use of Galveston Bay. Vietnamese Fishermen's Association v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 518 F. Supp. 993 (S.D. Tex., 1981). A year later Judge McDonald enjoined the Texas Emergency Reserve, a paramilitary arm of the Klan, from operating in Texas, thereby rejecting Klan claims of associational privilege rights. In that opinion, the court observed

Over the years, members of various Klan organizations have engaged in acts of racial intimidation, harassment and terrorism. (Cites omitted.) Members of the Ku Klux Klan are now engaged in military training programs in Texas and apparently throughout the country. (Footnote omitted.) (Emphasis added.)

Vietnamese Fisherman's Association v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 543 F. Supp. 198, 219 (S.D. Tex., 1982).

The court also took notice of the fact that the Texas Klan, under the direction of its Grand Dragon, Louis Beam, had trained members of the U.S. military. The court said

Beam, himself a man of extensive military experience in Viet Nam, testified that he trained persons who were currently members of the United States armed forces as well as civilians (Beam Test. 51).

Vietnamese Fishermen's Association v. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 543 F. Supp. at 204 (S.D. Tex., 1982).

The United States Supreme Court, in its landmark associational privilege case, held that Alabama's Attorney General could not force the NAACP to disclose its members' identities as a condition of doing business in Alabama. When NAACP v. Alabama, 357 U.S. 449 (1958) recognized this associational privilege, the Court carefully distinguished and reaffirmed its prior decision in Bryant v. Zimmerman, 278 U.S. 63 (1928), upholding a New York law requiring disclosure of Klan membership. The Court noted that the Bryant decision "was based on the particular character of the Klan activities, involving acts of unlawful intimidation and violence . . ." NAACP v. Alabama, 357 U.S. at 465-66.

The CKKKK/WPP's members have engaged in unlawful acts ranging from violating North Carolina's law prohibiting the operation of an unauthorized paramilitary army to attempted murder of blacks.

On July 3, 1985, for instance, nine members of the WPP in Belle Glade, Fla., were arrested for attempting to kill a black man at random as he walked along a public street. Two of these WPP members were state corrections officers. All nine pleaded guilty to a variety of criminal charges arising from this and other racist violence. You can verify this by contacting Sgt. Jack Fulenwider of the Belle Glade, Fla., Police Department (305 996-7251).

On a number of occasions Miller has threatened to use his CKKKK/WPP special forces as a vigilante force. As recently as April 4, 1986, Mr. Miller stated in a letter to Johnston County, N.C., Sheriff Freddy Narron that he had "1,000 armed and uniformed members of the White Patriot Party . . . standing by" to combat "black insurrection and revolution in Johnston County, North Carolina", regarding black/white student conflicts at a local high school. Exhibit K.

Several incidents of CKKKK/WPP intimidation and threats gave rise to the civil lawsuit which led to the federal court injunction against CKKKK members for harassing blacks. On April 9, 1986, I filed a motion asking the federal court in Raleigh to hold CKKKK/WPP member Jerry Michael Lewis in contempt of court for threatening to bomb the residence of Bobby Persons, the named black plaintiff in the above-mentioned suit. This threat was made on March 24, 1986. See Exhibit L.

Klansman Lewis, along with CKKKK/WPP members Gregory and Joan Short, were enjoined by a Federal District Court in North Carolina on September 17, 1985, for their part in going to the rural home of Bobby Person in Klan and paramilitary garb and threatening him with weapons solely because of his efforts to obtain a promotion in his state job.

During the past eight years, the Ku Klux Klan has engaged in a variety of violent acts throughout the South and across the country, ranging from a lynching to violent assaults on blacks and Jews.

In North Carolina alone, 21 Klansmen have been indicted on federal charges related to crimes of racial violence in the last 18 months. A dozen have been convicted and/or pleaded guilty. As recently as January 7, 1986, 12 Klansmen were indicted by a federal grand jury in the Western District of North Carolina for a variety of assaults, cross burnings, nightriding incidents and other acts aimed at blacks or whites who associated with blacks. More indictments are expected against North Carolina Klansmen, including members of the CKKKK/WPP, by a federal grand jury now in session.

In Alabama, another 21 Klansmen have been convicted and/or pleaded guilty to federal civil rights violations involving racially motivated violence or intimidation since 1979, and nine others are awaiting trial. Among the 21 was a Mobile KKK member who, along with a fellow Klansman later convicted on state murder charges, picked up a black youth off the street at random and lynched him in 1981 "to show Klan strength in Alabama." I will gladly furnish you copies of these indictments upon request.

In 1984 six Klansmen in Georgia were convicted and/or pleaded guilty to federal charges related to acts of racially motivated violence. In addition, dozens of other Klan members have been convicted on various state and local charges since the late 1970's.

An alarming aspect of active military participation in Klan activity has been the appearance of dangerous and life-threatening military hardware in the hands of Klansmen. The enclosed photograph, Exhibit M, shows military-issue, plastic explosives seized from Klan members in rural Montgomery County, Ala., in 1984. You may contact BATF Agent Glen Kibler at 205 832-7507 to verify this seizure.

Just last July, a North Carolina man with ties to the Ku Klux Klan was arrested by federal and local law enforcement officers in Fayetteville, N.C., for attempting to purchase illegal C-4 military-type explosives. According to a BATF agent, the defendant said the munitions were to be used in "KKK paramilitary training." Also confiscated in the arrest were a fully automatic rifle, night vision scopes, gas masks, pyrotechnics and other equipment for paramilitary training. Exhibit N.

In addition, federal authorities found numerous military-type weapons and explosives in an April 1985 raid on the compound of The Covenant, The Sword, The Arm of the Lord, a white supremacist group with KKK-Nazi ties located in a wooded rural area near Three Brothers, Ark. Among the items confiscated were an anti-tank rocket-launcher and missile, 77 semiautomatic and automatic weapons and 2.5 pounds of C-4 plastic explosives.

It is of grave concern to our clients and to blacks and Jews being trained at United States military bases to have Klan mem-

bers in positions of authority or with access to dangerous weapons and explosives. I am sure you can imagine how a military leader with Klan ties, asked to make subjective judgments on the performance of a black or a Jew, might let his or her racial bias interfere. It is also of concern that impressionable young white Klan members, seeing the involvement of uniformed military personnel in Klan functions, might be encouraged to engage in racial violence.

On behalf of our clients in North Carolina, I call upon you and your subordinates to:

1. Immediately instigate a full-scale investigation of the involvement during the past 24 months of active-duty military personnel in Klan and Klan-related groups in all service commands.

2. Make public the findings of this investigation.

3. Publicly identify all active-duty military personnel involved presently or in the past 24 months in any way with the Klan, the White Patriot Party and other Klan-related groups in the State of North Carolina.

4. Publicly identify the active-duty Marines shown in Exhibits C, D and E.

5. Make public a list of all military hardware such as guns, explosives, gas masks, chemical warfare materials and other potentially harmful items that have been stolen, lost, misplaced, or disappeared from any military installation in North Carolina in the past five years.

6. Prohibit all active-duty military personnel from membership or participation in any Ku Klux Klan group or any group affiliated with any Klan group, including but not limited to the White Patriot Party.

Please call if I can furnish you additional information concerning this matter.

Sincerely,



Morris Dees
Executive Director

cc: General P.X. Kelley
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