

Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D. C.

EX-100-100000

447

FG/BE

May 21, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This memorandum will bring you up to date on problems which may occur over the summer with respect to Civil Rights. It also contains recommendations for your consideration.

A. SCHOOLS

There are court orders, effective in September, in the following places in the deep south: Rome, Macon, Columbus, and Albany, Georgia; Greenville, South Carolina; Gadsden, Alabama; Jackson, Biloxi, and Leake County, Mississippi; Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana; and Orange, Marshall, and Texarkana, Texas. It also seems quite likely that there will be orders effective in Montgomery and Bullock County, Alabama, by September.

Although there may be some problems, it is my judgment that we can count on responsible behavior by both state and local officials in Greenville, South Carolina, in all of the cities in Georgia, and in Texas. I intend to arrange for some representative of the Department to look into each of these places separately, however.

There are no indications of acceptance of the court orders in any of the three places in Mississippi. There have been indications that Governor Johnson will make efforts to prevent disorder, but it is difficult to see how this can succeed if no efforts are made within the state to gain public acceptance. It is quite possible that school closings will be tried as a way out.

It is my judgment that Gadsden, Alabama, can be peacefully desegregated if it is left alone by Governor Wallace.

Nothing else sent to  
Capital Files as of 10-31-75

Original sent to handwriting 10-31-75

This will be more difficult, but not impossible, in Montgomery, again depending upon the attitude and actions of the Governor.

## B. DEMONSTRATIONS

### 1. Mississippi

In Mississippi an organization called the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) has been formed for the purpose of recruiting students to do voter registration and adult education work this summer. Our information at present is that COFO has recruited several hundred students from northern university campuses for this purpose.

There are conflicting factors at work which will determine whether this will result in public disorder.

The National Council of Churches has set up a training program for the students which is intended to enable them to do adult education work. The intention is to turn the students who will be in Mississippi to some sort of useful and productive activity. In addition, the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights has started a program of collecting volunteer lawyers from the leading national law firms to give legal counsel and assistance through the National Council of Churches to persons in Mississippi who are participating in the program who need it.

On the other hand, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers are also involved in the COFO plans for the summer. They are seeking assistance from National Lawyers' Guild representatives, and some of them are more interested in forcing federal action in connection with street demonstrations than anything else.

The Department will keep itself as well informed as possible on this situation. There is no specific action to be taken now.

There has been an increase in white extremist activity in Mississippi as well, although this has been counter-balanced by the Governor's apparent desire to keep the peace. Some forty instances of Klan type activity or police brutality have come to the Department's attention over the past four months. I have little doubt that this will increase as the time for the school orders becomes closer.

## 2. Alabama

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) (Martin Luther King, Jr.) has been recruiting a "Freedom Army" for Alabama. King has announced that Alabama is the target for "non-violent direct action" campaigns this summer. They claim to be organizing groups in Mobile, Montgomery, Tuskegee, Selma, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Gadsden, Anniston, Talladega, Huntsville, Dothan, and Decatur.

At a meeting on May 15, I am informed that the SCLC leaders decided to cooperate with any compliance demonstration program which could be achieved in Birmingham. This would involve the testing of facilities which had in advance agreed to comply with the Civil Rights Act. On the other hand, if there is no compliance with the Civil Rights Act by hotels, theaters, and restaurants, in Birmingham, there is wide anticipation of new, large-scale demonstrations.

The SCLC organizer in Alabama is Reverend James Bevel, who believes in direct action and street demonstrations of a provocative type.

## 3. Other

At present we have no information on other organized civil rights activity in the South this summer. It should be noted, however, that there are local groups in virtually every town and city which may be planning some sort of protests against a completely segregated society. This is true throughout Louisiana, and particularly in the north, including the city of Shreveport; in southwestern Georgia; in northern Florida; and in parts of other states.

The chances of disturbances in any of this area will probably turn on whether there is any compliance with the provisions of the Public Accommodations title of the Civil Rights Act, when it becomes effective, and on the occurrence of unpredictable events. In this connection, it should again be noted that there are white extremist groups, such as the Klan, which are active. In addition to a number of incidents of isolated violations in many locations, the FBI in early May learned of a plot to murder Jack Greenberg and Martin Luther King, Jr., on the occasion of a rally set for Mobile on May 17.

It must be anticipated that there will be continuing racial disturbances in a number of cities and towns in northern states.

### C. EFFECT OF CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

As noted above, a great deal will turn everywhere on whether or not there is compliance with the public accommodations provisions of the bill. If there is non-compliance on a large scale, there are bound to be a great many protests, and the federal government is bound to become involved since federal rights will be asserted.

There have been a large number of meetings on this subject with business and church groups. We hope at a minimum to stimulate organized business efforts at obtaining compliance with the bill in 35 to 40 major cities, in addition to more general efforts by church leaders and women's groups. In general the reactions have been good, but compliance will depend to a large extent on political leadership in the most difficult areas.

### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

We can and should continue to work with the business, church and other groups with respect to general problems, and do what we can to keep particular situations under control. This task will be much easier if southern political leaders take a moderate line when the civil rights bill becomes law.

Two possibilities for action on your part occur to me. First, it might be possible to persuade some of the southern opponents of the civil rights bill in the Senate to take the lead in urging compliance with the law and orderly resolution in the courts of problems which will occur under it. They could deplore organized violence or resistance. This might provide the start of a similar line to be taken by other political leaders in the south.

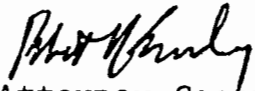
Secondly, it might be possible for you to urge a similar viewpoint upon other southern politicians -- governors, attorneys general and mayors in particular. Possibly this could be done by individual talks. It might, however, be preferable to confer with groups which could include officials from northern states which have serious racial problems. Sponsoring a series of candid discussions under White House auspices might serve to encourage the moderate line which is so essential to non-violence.

In view of the groundwork being done by the business groups (with which Lee White and Hobart Taylor are familiar) I believe there is a good prospect of success with respect to such meetings. The focus of attention should be on public accommodations, and the hopeful result would be commitments to comply with the law rather than oppose it.

I would be glad to discuss this more fully with you in person or with members of the White House staff. Also, if you or anyone at the White House has any suggestions for us, we would be most happy to receive them.

Finally, I think it will be increasingly important for all Government officials to follow your lead in calling for compliance with the Civil Rights Bill once it is enacted so as to make it as easy as possible for the southern businessmen and southern politicians to take this view.

Respectfully,

  
Attorney General