

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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Washington 10, D. C.
June 9, 1964

Mr. Clifford Alexander
Executive Offices
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Cliff,

It was good talking with you this morning. As I told you, a number of prominent Boston area citizens asked Dr. Robert Coles, Dr. Howard Zinn, and myself to deliver to President Johnson a letter expressing concern about the Mississippi situation and urging the use of Presidential powers to guarantee the safety of the students participating in the "Mississippi Freedom Summer" project.

A copy of the letter is enclosed. We have mailed the original directly to the President with a carbon copy sent to Attorney General Kennedy.

It is our feeling that a state of emergency exists in Mississippi already and that this will be heightened as the summer proceeds. In the past, as you are well aware, federal intervention has come only after a direct challenge to the implementation of court orders and in the presence of the threat of force and violence. We believe that it is both possible and politically desirable for the Administration to take preventive or deterrent action in this instance. That is, it is our belief, based on information we have gathered both in the field and from testimony offered at informal hearings like the one here in D. C. yesterday, that unless preventive action is taken now it will be necessary to undertake more militant forms of federal intervention later in the summer. Our concern is both for the damage to the administration's image in this eventuality; coming as it will closer to the Convention or the general election, and for the lives and welfare of those whose death or disfigurement would make intervention inevitable.

We are suggesting, that in the absence of workable guarantees from Governor Johnson of Mississippi, that President Johnson assign a substantial force of federal marshalls to Mississippi with specific instructions to enforce the constitutional rights of the civil rights

workers and the people of Mississippi, and empowered not only to investigate constitutional violations but also to arrest civilians and local law enforcement agents involved in or aiding and supporting such violations. The President has both precedents and adequate authorization for this, and the use of marshall's in civilian dress, might be expected to express federal determination, encourage those who are becoming increasingly alienated by the current ineffectiveness of the federal government in Mississippi (a rather widespread feeling according to the testimony of native Mississippians and sharecroppers we heard yesterday), and prevent the more flagrant constitutional abuses and distortions with more effectiveness and less irritation than the presence of uniformed federal forces or even nationalized units of the local National Guard.

We would appreciate any influence you might bring to bear in emphasizing the critical nature of this situation.

Best regards to your family.

Sincerely,



Noel Day

ND:mmm

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 10, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR

MR. LEE C. WHITE

I think Noel Day's letter
makes it clear what action is expected
of us.



Clifford L. Alexander, Jr.