

Fascist network uncovered in German Army's Special Forces unit

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On Friday, the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported on a 12-page letter sent by a sergeant in the Army's Special Forces commando unit (Kommando Spezialkräfte—KSK) to Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. The letter makes clear that the 1,100-strong unit, which operates in top secrecy and specialises in lethal operations, is directed toward suppressing domestic opposition with the methods of fascist terrorism. According to the letter, some of the KSK soldiers compare the unit to Hitler's Waffen-SS.

"Right-wing extremist tendencies" are "tolerated" in the KSK and "sometimes consciously covered up," wrote *Der Spiegel*, based on the soldier's letter. According to the author of the article, evidence of the presence of right-wing extremist soldiers is "internally acknowledged, but for a variety of motives collectively ignored or even tolerated." It is "drummed into" the soldiers from their superiors "not to report any incidents."

According to the news magazine, the letter describes "accurately" and "in detail" how the trainers silence their recruits. They are "taught to be subservient," which, in the words of the commando soldier, is "incompatible with the limits of the system of orders and obedience in the Army."

The letter states that "To bring soldiers and, above all, critical officers into line," "punishments" are used to create a "type of carcass obedience" and "a culture of accepting illegal behaviour." Through the "firm leadership of newly recruited KSK fighters in training," the recruits are "taught a rigorous obedience," which, according to the text of the letter cited by *Der Spiegel*, "has been compared by commando soldiers in training to that of the Waffen-SS."

The soldier goes into detail about the fascist outlook of his trainers. He says that one of them, who always uses Nazi codes in radio communications, makes no secret of his "national conservative ideology."

One of the trainers mentioned in the letter is Daniel K., who, according to Deutsche Welle, was "heavily involved in the founding of the elite unit" and previously, in 2007, attracted notice due to his right-wing extremist ideology. At the time, he sent a threatening letter signed with his full name to a higher-ranked Army officer. That officer, a spokesman for the critical soldiers' organisation "Darmstädter Signal," had requested on

the grounds of conscience to be relieved from duties related to drone operations in southern Afghanistan.

K. wrote at the time, "I deem you to be an internal enemy and will direct my actions to destroy this enemy with a decisive blow." He attacked the "contemporary conglomerate of left-wing uniform-wearing recipients of care," and urged the critical officer to return "to the swamp of Stone Age Marxism." In conclusion, he warned, "You are being observed, no, not by impotent instrumentalised services, but by a new generation of officers who will act if the times demand it." He wrote in the postscript, "Long live holy Germany!"

The officer filed a formal complaint concerning the threat, but no action was taken in response to K.'s letter, other than it being noted in K.'s personnel file. Although his superiors knew by 2007 at the latest that K. was a right-wing extremist, he was allowed to continue training soldiers and rose through the ranks to become a lieutenant colonel.

He was suspended in 2019 only after it emerged he was a supporter of the far-right "Reichsbürger" and the right-wing extremist "Identitarian Movement." According to media reports, he claimed that the state no longer had the situation under control due to the influx of immigrants, meaning that "the Army now has to take things over."

The author of the letter to the defence minister stressed that it would be "naive" to view K. as an isolated case.

Just a month ago, another KSK soldier was suspended after his close ties to the Identitarian Movement were revealed. The *Tagesschau* reported last Wednesday that the soldier played a part in the mistreatment of Murat Kurnaz in Afghanistan.

Kurnaz, who was born in Bremen, was held in the US Guantanamo Bay prison camp for four years as a "Taliban fighter." After his release, he accused two KSK soldiers of having abused him in Afghanistan in 2002. The Defence Ministry confirmed that the incident involved the soldier who was suspended a month ago and a fellow soldier, who were posted to the US air base in Kandahar on "guard duty."

Kurnaz testified in 2006: "Then one of the two Germans said to me, 'You picked the wrong side. Eyes on the ground ... Do you know who we are? We are the German force, KSK.' ... Then he slammed my head on the ground and one of them kicked me."

According to research by Southwest Broadcasting (SWR) and *Tagesschau*, the soldier remained stationed in Calw with the KSK before “making a career in the United States.” After a leadership training course at Fort Bliss, Texas, he took a post at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and later became an official liaison between the German and US militaries.

Spokesmen from the Army and the Bundeswehr refused to discuss the content of the allegations with SWR.

The links of the two KSK soldiers to the Identitarian Movement are also significant because one of the movement’s most prominent supporters, Brenton Tarrant, carried out a fascist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, killing 51 people and injuring another 50. One year earlier, he donated €1,500 to the Identitarian youth movement, prompting its leader, Martin Sellner, to initiate enthusiastic direct email contact with Tarrant.

Under far-right Austrian Foreign Minister Herbert Kickl (Austrian Freedom Party), Sellner was able to delete the messages from his hard drive shortly before the Austrian police carried out a search warrant on his home. According to the Military Intelligence Service (MAD), the KSK soldier suspended in May also donated money to the Identitarians.

The KSK pursues the interests of German imperialism around the world in secretive operations and specialises more than any other Army unit in killing people.

Against the backdrop of the return of German militarism and the revival of the class struggle, such capabilities are increasingly required at home. *Der Spiegel* wrote that according to the letter, K. demanded that his recruits write “essays ... that sketch out a potential KSK domestic intervention.”

Such plans are already well advanced. The letter to the defence minister makes clear that the far-right network in and around the KSK, which has repeatedly been in the headlines in recent years, is no mere “isolated case,” but is systematically promoted from above and covered up.

Just a few weeks ago, investigators took a KSK soldier into custody after he was found to be hoarding military weaponry, and a large underground store of explosives and munitions from the German Army’s supplies was found on his private land.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported, a right-wing extremist “shadow army” composed of KSK soldiers, police officers, judges, lawyers and intelligence service agents is preparing to round up and kill political opponents on “day X,” using death lists, military transports and munitions seized from the Army. Witnesses reported in 2017 that in this context, discussions about a “final solution” had taken place.

A central figure in this terrorist network is Andre S., code named “Hannibal,” a former KSK soldier and friend of Franco A., an army officer strongly suspected of planning political assassinations, using the fabricated identity of a refugee. Together with an intelligence agent, Andre S. founded the organisation “Uniter,” which provided the personnel and organisational basis for the network.

The available information leaves no doubt about the fact that these right-wing extremist command structures have enjoyed the backing of figures at the highest levels. The MAD (Military Intelligence Service), in collaboration with the domestic intelligence service, placed the leading figures under surveillance and even used “Hannibal” as an informant during his time as a soldier.

In its official annual report, the agency wrote that it was supporting “members of the Army who are in a ‘social close relationship’ to suspected extremists, to protect them from ... unjustified suspicion.” In this context, the MAD described the KSK as the “focus of the work.”

The cover-up will continue even after the sergeant’s letter. Eva Högl (Social Democratic Party), the new parliamentary commissioner for the Army, confirmed this in an interview with Deutschlandfunk. She said it was “very, very important to say that there is no blanket suspicion, neither towards the army or the KSK.” The army is “not a hotbed for right-wing extremists,” she continued, but rather a “piling up of isolated cases.”

Högl said she intended to carefully review “whether the right-wing extremist structures or networks exist.” But she would leave the investigation to a working group composed of the MAD and the KSK. This means the criminals—the KSK and the MAD, which covered up these developments—will be investigating themselves.

Asked whether “the dissolution of the elite unit could take place at the end of the review process in a worst-case scenario,” Högl answered: “This is not the time to talk about or even consider the dissolution of the KSK. Next year, we will celebrate—if it comes to that, and I hope it will—25 years since the founding of the KSK, and I am firmly convinced that we need this elite unit. It performs a tremendous service under extremely difficult conditions.”



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