

## Eisenhower's Speech to the Nation, September 24, 1957

My Fellow Citizens. ...I must speak to you about the serious situation that has arisen in Little Rock. ...This morning the mob again gathered in front of the Central High School of Little Rock, obviously for the purpose of again preventing the carrying out of the court's order relating to the admission of Negro children to that school. Whenever normal agencies prove inadequate to the task and it becomes necessary for the executive branch of the federal government to use its powers and authority to uphold federal courts, the President's responsibility is inescapable.

In accordance with that responsibility, I have today issued an Executive Order directing the use of troops under federal authority to aid in the execution of federal law at Little Rock, Arkansas...

As you know, the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that separate public educational facilities for the races are inherently unequal and therefore compulsory school segregation laws are unconstitutional... During the past several years, many communities in our southern states have instituted public school plans for gradual progress in the enrollment and attendance of school children of all races in order to bring themselves into compliance with the law of the land. They thus demonstrated to the world that we are a nation in which laws, not men, are supreme. I regret to say that this truth — the cornerstone of our liberties — was not observed in this instance. ...

The very basis of our individual rights and freedoms rests upon the certainty that the President and the Executive Branch of Government will support and insure the carrying out of the decisions of the federal courts, even, when necessary, with all the means at the President's command. ...

Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts.

The proper use of the powers of the Executive Branch to enforce the orders of a federal court is limited to extraordinary and compelling circumstances... An extreme situation has been created in Little Rock. This challenge must be met and with such measures as will preserve to the people as a whole their lawfully protected rights in a climate permitting their free and fair exercise.

The overwhelming majority of our people in every section of the country are united in their respect for observance of the law — even in those cases where they may disagree with that law. ...A foundation of our American way of life is our national respect for law.

In the South, as elsewhere, citizens are keenly aware of the tremendous disservice that has been done to the people of Arkansas in the eyes of the nation, and that has been done to the nation in the eyes of the world.

If resistance to the federal court orders ceases at once,... Little Rock will return to its normal habits of peace and order and a blot upon the fair name and high honor of our nation in the world will be removed. Thus will be restored the image of America and of all its parts as one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## **President Sends Troops to Little Rock, Federalizes Arkansas National Guard; Tells Nation He Acted to Avoid An Anarchy**

**By ANTHONY LEWIS----Special to The New York Times**

Washington, Sept. 24, 1957--President Eisenhower sent Federal troops to Little Rock, Ark., today to open the way for the admission of nine Negro pupils to Central High School.

Earlier, the President federalized the Arkansas National Guard and authorized calling the Guard and regular Federal forces to remove obstructions to justice in Little Rock school integration.

His history-making action was based on a formal finding that his "cease and desist" proclamation, issued last night, had not been obeyed. Mobs of pro-segregationists still gathered in the vicinity of Central High School this morning.

Tonight, from the White House, President Eisenhower told the nation in a speech for radio and television that he had acted to prevent "mob rule" and "anarchy."

### **Historic Decision**

The President's decision to send troops to Little Rock was reached at his vacation headquarters in Newport, R.I. It was one of historic importance politically, socially, constitutionally. For the first time since the Reconstruction days that followed the Civil War, the Federal Government was using its ultimate power to compel equal treatment of the Negro in the South.

He said violent defiance of Federal Court orders in Little Rock had done grave harm to "the prestige and influence, and indeed to the safety, of our nation and the world." He called on the people of Arkansas and the South to "preserve and respect the law even when they disagree with it."

### **Guardsmen Withdrawn**

Action quickly followed the President's orders. During the day and night 1,000 members of the 101st Airborne Division were flown to Little Rock. Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of the Defense, ordered into Federal service all 10,000 members of the Arkansas National Guard.

Today's events were the climax of three weeks of skirmishing between the Federal Government and Gov. Orval E. Faubus of Arkansas. It was three weeks ago this morning that the Governor first ordered National Guard troops to Central High School to preserve order. The nine Negro students were prevented from entering the school.

The Guardsmen were gone yesterday, withdrawn by Governor Faubus as the result of a Federal Court order. But a shrieking mob compelled the nine children to withdraw from the school.

President Eisenhower yesterday cleared the way for full use of his powers with a proclamation commanding the mob in Little Rock to "disperse."

At 12:22 P.M. today in Newport the President signed a second proclamation. It said first that yesterday's command had "not been obeyed and willful obstruction of said court orders exists and threatens to continue."

The proclamation then directed Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of Defense, to take all necessary steps to enforce the court orders for admission of the Negro children, including the call of any or all Arkansas Guardsmen under Federal command and the use of the armed forces of the United States.

Later in the afternoon the President flew from Newport to Washington, arriving at the National Airport at 4:50 o'clock.

He began his broadcast speech with this explanation of the flight:

"I could have spoken from Rhode Island, but I felt that in speaking from the house of Lincoln, of Jackson and of Wilson, my words would more clearly convey both the sadness I feel in the action I was compelled to take and the firmness with which I intend to pursue this course. \* \* \*"

It was a firm address, with some language unusually strong for President Eisenhower.

### **President Traces Dispute**

"Under the leadership of demagogic extremists," the President said, "disorderly mobs have deliberately prevented the carrying out of proper orders from a Federal court. Local authorities have not eliminated that violent opposition."

The President traced the course of the integration dispute in Little Rock. He noted especially that the Federal Court there had rejected what he called an "abrupt change" in segregated schooling and had adopted a "gradual" plan.

"Proper and sensible observance of the law," the President said, "then demanded the respectful obedience which the nation has a right to expect from all the people. This, unfortunately, has not been the case at Little Rock.

"Certain misguided persons, many of them imported into Little Rock by agitators, have insisted upon defying the law and have sought to bring it into disrepute. The orders of the court have thus been frustrated."

The reference to "imported" members of the mob was seen as a sign that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had information, obtained through agents in Little Rock, on the organization of yesterday's violence.

The President tried to make it plain that he had not sought the use of Federal power in Little Rock, nor welcomed it. Rather he suggested that as Chief Executive he had no choice.

"The President's responsibility is inescapable," he said at one point. At another he said that when the decrees of a Federal court were obstructed, "the law and the national interest demanded that the President take action."

"The very basis of our individual rights and freedoms," he said, "is the certainty that the President and the Executive Branch of Government will support and insure the carrying out of the decisions of the Federal Courts, even, when necessary with all the means at the President's command.

"Unless the President did so, anarchy would result.

"There would be no security for any except that which each one of us could provide for himself.