

20-X-96 LITTLE ROCK SITUATION
September 24, 1957



FOR RELEASE AT 9:00 P.M., EDT, SEPTEMBER 24, 1957

James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to the President

P.P.F.
20-X-96

THE WHITE HOUSE



TEXT OF THE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES, DELIVERED FROM
HIS OFFICE AT THE WHITE HOUSE, TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 24, 1957, AT 9:00 P.M., EDT

AS ACTUALLY DELIVERED

Good Evening, My Fellow Citizens:

For a few minutes this evening I want to speak to you about the serious situation that has arisen in Little Rock. To make this talk I have come to the President's office in the White House. I could have spoken from Rhode Island, where I have been staying recently, but I felt that, in speaking from the house of Lincoln, of Jackson and of Wilson, my words would better convey both the sadness I feel in the action I was compelled today to take and the firmness with which I intend to pursue this course until the orders of the Federal Court at Little Rock can be executed without unlawful interference.

In that city, under the leadership of demagogic extremists, disorderly mobs have deliberately prevented the carrying out of proper orders from a Federal Court. Local authorities have not eliminated that violent opposition and, under the law, I yesterday issued a Proclamation calling upon the mob to disperse.

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. This became necessary when my Proclamation of yesterday was not observed, and the obstruction of justice still continues.

It is important that the reasons for my action be understood by all our citizens.

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.

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Our personal opinions about the decision have no bearing on the matter of enforcement; the responsibility and authority of the Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution are very clear. Local Federal Courts were instructed by the Supreme Court to issue such orders and decrees as might be necessary to achieve admission to public schools without regard to race -- and with all deliberate speed.

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.

It was my hope that this localized situation would be brought under control by city and State authorities. If the use of local police powers had been sufficient, our traditional method of leaving the problem in those hands would have been pursued. But when large gatherings of obstructionists made it impossible for the decrees of the Court to be carried out, both the law and the national interest demanded that the President take action.

Here is the sequence of events in the development of the Little Rock school case.

In May of 1955, the Little Rock School Board approved a moderate plan for the gradual desegregation of the public schools in that city. It provided that a start toward integration would be made at the present term in the high school, and that the plan would be in full operation by 1963. Here I might say that in a number of communities in Arkansas integration in the schools has already started and without violence of any kind. Now this Little Rock plan was challenged in the courts by some who believed that the period of time as proposed in the plan was too long.

The United States Court at Little Rock, which has supervisory responsibility under the law for the plan of desegregation in the public schools, dismissed the challenge, thus approving a gradual rather than an abrupt change from the existing system. The court found that the school board had acted in good faith in planning for a public school system free from racial discrimination.

Since that time, the court has on three separate occasions issued orders directing that the plan be carried out. All persons were instructed to refrain from interfering with the efforts of the school board to comply with the law.

Proper and sensible observance of the law then demanded the respectful obedience which the nation has a right to expect from all its 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.

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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.

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.

The interest of the nation in the proper fulfillment of the law's requirements cannot yield to opposition and demonstrations by some few persons.

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

Now, let me make it very clear that Federal troops are not being used to relieve local and state authorities of their primary duty to preserve the peace and order of the community. Nor are the troops there for the purpose of taking over the responsibility of the School Board and the other responsible local officials in running Central High School. The running of our school system and the maintenance of peace and order in each of our states are strictly local affairs and the Federal Government does not interfere except in a very few special cases and when requested by one of the several states. In the present case the troops are there, pursuant to law, solely for the purpose of preventing interference with the orders of the Court.

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. Manifestly, such 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.

They deplore the call of extremists to violence.

The decision of the Supreme Court concerning school integration, of course, affects the South more seriously than it does other sections of the country. In that region I have many warm friends, some of them in the city of Little Rock. I have deemed it a great personal privilege to spend in our Southland tours of duty while in the military service and enjoyable recreational periods since that time.

So from intimate personal knowledge, I know that the overwhelming majority of the people in the South -- including those of Arkansas and of Little Rock -- are of good will, united in their efforts to preserve and respect the law even when they disagree with it.

They do not sympathize with mob rule. They, like the rest of our nation, have proved in two great wars their readiness to sacrifice for America.

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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.

At a time when we face grave situations abroad because of the hatred that Communism bears toward a system of government based on human rights, it would be difficult to exaggerate the harm that is being done to the prestige and influence, and indeed to the safety, of our nation and the world.

Our enemies are gloating over this incident and using it everywhere to misrepresent our whole nation. We are portrayed as a violator of those standards of conduct which the peoples of the world united to proclaim in the Charter of the United Nations. There they affirmed "faith in fundamental human rights" and "in the dignity and worth of the human person" and they did so "without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

And so, with deep confidence, I call upon the citizens of the State of Arkansas to assist in bringing to an immediate end all interference with the law and its processes. If resistance to the Federal Court orders ceases at once, the further presence of Federal troops will be unnecessary and the City of 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.

Good night, and thank you very much.

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P.P.F.

Newport, Rhode Island
September 27, 1957



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Dear Governor Herbert:

Thank you very much for your support of the recent difficult, but necessary, steps taken by the Federal government in the Little Rock situation. I know you understand fully the complexities of the matter, and I am more than grateful for your message of approval.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

The Honorable Thomas J. Herbert
Supreme Court of Ohio
Columbus
Ohio

CROSS CARD FOR STAFF SECRETARY.

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P.P.F.

20-X-96

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RECEIVED
OCT - 1 1957
GENERAL FILES

Newport, Rhode Island,
September 27, 1957.



Dear Stanley:

Thank you for your note, for understanding so well the soul-searching that has been mine, and for that "unwavering" confidence. In these days of attacks from all sides, it's nice to be reminded that friends such as you are solidly behind me.

With warm regard,

Little Joe

As ever,

X
Mr. Stanley High,
230 Park Avenue,
New York 17, New York.

CROSS CARD FOR STAFF SECRETARY.

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DATE 20078A.



Substitute 515 20078A
New York, NY 10017

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MILITARY

STANLEY HIGH
230 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, NEW YORK

THE WHITE HOUSE
SEP 26 11 22 AM '57
RECEIVED

September 25, 1957



Dear Mr. President:

I want to thank you for last night's address to the nation, for the record of patience and forbearance which preceded it and for this renewed and heartening confirmation of the belief, in which I have never wavered, that we have a President who -- beyond the reach of partisans and demagogues -- is President of all the people.

XDF142-A-5A

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Stanley -

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

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P.P.F.

20-X-96

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Newport, Rhode Island
September 27, 1957

GENERAL FILE

GENERAL FILE



Dear Jack:

I truly appreciate the understanding you demonstrate by your telegram of the twenty-fifth. Thank you very much indeed.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

The Honorable H. J. Porter
3402 Gulf Building
Houston, Texas

CROSS CARD FOR STAFF SECRETARY.

LEVEL SECRET/VA

Porter, Jack
3403 Ohio Street
The Heights N. W. D.C.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
SEP 25 1957



SEP 25 1957
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

The White House
Washington

WB130 PD

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THE PRESIDENT ✓

THE WHITE HOUSE

REGARDLESS OF WHAT DEMAGOGUES MAY SAY YOU ARE DOING X OF 142-A-5-A

RIGHT AND YOU DID A GREAT JOB TONIGHT

JACK PORTER.

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P.P.F.

20-X-96

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RECEIVED
OCT - 1 1957
GENERAL FILES

Newport, Rhode Island,
September 27, 1957.



Dear Mrs. Talcott:

I cannot tell you how touched I am by your kindness in writing me, and by your understanding of the problems that a President must always bear. A rare and sympathetic note such as yours does much to lift my spirits.

With many thanks and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Mrs. Charles H. Talcott,
Cutler Road,
Greenwich,
Connecticut.

CROSS CARD FOR STAFF SECRETARY.



MRS CHARLES H TALCOTT CUTLER ROAD GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT



Dear President Eisenhower,

I want to thank you as a citizen
of the United States for the Television
address you have just made to the
Nation, on the reasons for your decision
at Little Rock, which must make it very
clear to everyone what his duty is.

About ten days ago when I returned
from my vacation and found many
personal problems awaiting me, I
thought of you, going on your vacation,
with probably as we all have, many
personal problems, plus all of those
of the United States, and the world,
I wanted to write you then, and
thank you, for giving your life, and

MRS CHARLES H TALCOTT CUTLER ROAD GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

time to all of us, for I think one
in as high a position as you hold,
often receives far too little praise,
except in our thoughts, for we are
timid in expressing these directly to
you.

I do however tonight feel that
I must thank you, for whatever it
is worth.

Most sincerely,

Lester Whitney Talcott



P.P.F.

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SERIAL FILES

[Handwritten signature]

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THE PRESIDENT



THE WHITE HOUSE

THANK YOU SIR FOR YOUR MASTERFUL STATEMENT ON TELEVISION TONIGHT
AND YOUR FORTHRIGHT ACTION. YOU HAVE MADE IT
POSSIBLE FOR US TO RESTORE CALM AND GOOD FEELING TO THIS
COMMUNITY

HARRY S ASHMORE EXECUTIVE EDITOR ARKANSAS GAZETTE.

K.A.F.

20-K-96

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P.

Newport, Rhode Island,
September 27, 1957.

RECEIVED
OCT - 1 1957
GENERAL FILE



Dear Nelson:

K.A.F.
Rockefeller

Many thanks for your note. I am sure you and Winthrop, especially, realize just how difficult these last few weeks have been.

from field work
#

I look forward to seeing you at lunch on the tenth.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

10-2-59
X

The Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller,
Room 5600,
30 Rockefeller Plaza,
New York 20, New York.

CROSS CARD FOR STAFF SECRETARY.



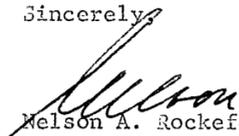
ROOM 5600
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK 20, N Y

September 15, 1957

Dear Ann:

The Boss really was superb last night -- a great leader at a decisive moment.

Sincerely,


Nelson A. Rockefeller

Mrs. Ann Whitman
The White House
Washington, D.C.

SENT BY FAX
OCT - 1 1957
MESSAGE

WA298 PD

FAX NEW YORK NY SEP 25 1957 335PME

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WHAT YOU SAID LAST NIGHT AND THE WAY YOU SAID IT MAKES

US ALL PROUD TO BE AMERICANS

NELSON.

The White House
Washington

1957 SEP 26 AM 10 43

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OCT - 3 1957
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Rockefeller

P.P.F.

20-X-96

M

October 1, 1957



Dear Edison:

Many thanks for your telegram of the twenty-fifth. I showed it to the President at once, but what with moving about our life has been complicated.

I can only hope some of your Augusta friends agree with you!

Sincerely,

Ann C. Whitman

Ann C. Whitman
Personal Secretary
to The President

Mr. Edison Marshall
Milledge Road
Augusta, Georgia

FCM 805 THE STANDARD REGISTER CO., DAYTON, OHIO, U. S. A.



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The White House
Washington

WB308 NL PD

AUGUSTA GA SEP 24

1957 SEP 25 PM 10 22

ANNE WHITMAN, SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE



IF YOU HAVE OPPORTUNITY WILL YOU GIVE THE PRESIDENT MY
CONGRATULATIONS ON A GREAT DEED AND A GREAT ADDRESS
IN THE SPIRIT AND STATURE OF OUR GREATEST PRESIDENTS
EDISON MARSHALL.

FORM 808 THE STANDARD REGISTER CO. CHICAGO, ILL. U.S.A.

**P.P.F.
P.R.M.**

20-7-96
C
C

Oct 3, 1957

Citizen

RECEIVED
SEP 24 1958
CENTRAL FILE

MEMO FOR MISS KANE, PRS

Do you want this?



Willyce Crucoli
Col Draper's ofc

Open ltr to DDE
fr Wm A. Citizen
protests speech
broadcast Sep 24, 1957

x SF 156 - D

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re Little Rock

x SF 124 - A - 1

School Arkansas

nothing else in file

10/8/58

P.P.F.

20-1-76

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OCT - 4 1957
GENERAL FILES

October 3, 1957



Dear Mr. Dombrowski:

Thank you for your letter and for your interest in making your inquiry regarding the pledge of allegiance. The phrase "under God" is correct when the actual pledge is being given to the flag. However, the President was not giving the pledge of allegiance to the flag but rather using an expression in his address.

Your kind thoughts of the President and Mrs. Eisenhower are truly gratifying and he wanted you to know of his deep appreciation.

Sincerely,

Ann C. Whitman
Personal Secretary
to The President

Mr. Edward Dombrowski, Jr.
4485 Almond Street
Philadelphia 37
Pennsylvania

mfc

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OCT 1 4 1957
MIDWEST



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I

Hear Mr President Eisenhower;



I'm a 17 year old graduate of the Mastbaum Vocational Technical School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While listening to you speak on television tonight, about the events in Little Rock, Ark, you closed the program with the following phrase;-"One nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all." In school we were taught the following;-"One nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all." Would you please inform me to which statement is correct.

(over)

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I would also like to wish you and your wife the best of health and luck in the future, and ask God's blessings upon you always. I also wish that some day I may meet you personally. Thanking you in advance.



Sincerely,
Edward Blombrowski Jr
448 1/2 Almond Street
Philadelphia 37, Pennsylvania

See 27 2-B-1-Encl

P.P.F

October 8, 1957



Dear Dr. Cross:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of September twenty-ninth. It was most thoughtful of you to let him have this expression of your approval of his Little Rock, Arkansas, speech.

We appreciate your writing in such detail giving us your views regarding the appointments to be made to the Civil Rights Commission and should you care to submit any recommendations for this Commission you may be sure they will receive every consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Gray
Special Assistant

Dr. Nancy Jewell Cross
Box 2452
Stanford
California

MR. GRAY: Asks if President is going to appoint three women and three men to the Civil Rights Commission. Would he like additional alternatives.

bkc:mo'b

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1005

October 11, 1957



Dear Bishop Shovskoy:

The President appreciates your recent message commending him for his address of September twenty-fourth.

He has asked me to send to you for your reference the transcript of his remarks at his news conference last week in which he discussed the fundamental factors regarding the difficult Arkansas situation.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend John Shovskoy
Bishop of Russian Orthodox
Greek Catholic Church of America
2040 Anza Street
San Francisco, California

Enclosure

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WA419 NL PD

SAN FRANCISCO CALIF SEP 24

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

MR PRESIDENT IN THE NAME OF MY ORTHODOX DIOCESE IN SAN
FRANCISCO I THANK YOU FOR THE ADDRESS YOU JUST GAVE ABOUT
THE SCHOOLS AND FOR YOUR TIMELY ACTION. I AM ESPECIALLY
PERSONALLY GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR HAVING THUS GIVEN SUPPORT
TO MY CARRYING TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE THROUGH THE VOICE OF
AMERICAN WORD OF THE REALITY OF GOD'S EVANGELICAL TRUTH



The White House
Washington

1957 SEP 25 AM 9 43

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10-11-57



IN THE WORLD AND OF MAN'S HUMANITY
JOHN SHOVSKOY BISHOP OF SAN FRANCISCO RUSSIAN ORTHODOX
GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA 2040 ANZA ST SAN FRAN.