My Fellow Citizens:

For a few minutes I would like to speak to you about the serious -- indeed the sad -- situation which has arisen in Little Rock.

In that city, under the incited leadership of demagogic extremists, disorderly mobs have prevented the carrying out of proper orders of a Federal Court acting in conformity with the requirements of the Constitution of the United States.

Local authorities have not succeeded in maintaining the order of justice and, under the law, I yesterday assumed the duty of calling for Federal troops to aid in the execution of the law at Little Rock, Arkansas. This was necessary because my Proclamation of yesterday calling upon all persons in the area to refrain from obstructing justice was not observed. Indeed, the situation has progressively worsened. Consequently, no reasonable choice remained open to me.

It is important that the reasons for my action be completely clear and fully understood.

As you know, the Supreme Court of the United States has declared that separate educational facilities for the races are inherently unequal.
Local Federal Courts were instructed to issue such orders and decrees as might be necessary to achieve admission to public schools on a non-discriminatory basis with all deliberate speed.

During the past several years, many communities in our Southern States 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. We thus demonstrated to the world that we are a nation in which the law, not men, is supreme.

I regret to say that this was not the case at Little Rock. It was my hope that this localized situation would be brought under control by local 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 respected. But when large gatherings of obstructionists made it impossible for the decrees of the Court to be carried out, both the national interest and the law demand 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 schools in that city. It contemplated 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. This plan was challenged in the courts by some who believed that the period of time as proposed 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. It found that the school board had acted in good faith in making effective a school system free from racial discrimination.

Since that time, the court has issued orders on three separate occasions ordering that the plan be carried out. All persons were directed 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 as a right to expect from all the people. This, unfortunately, has not been the case at Little Rock.
Certain numbers of people there have insisted upon defying the law and have sought to bring it into disrepute. The orders of the court have thus been frustrated.

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 orders of the Federal Courts with all the means when necessary at the President's command. Unless this were the case, anarchy would result. There would be no security for any one except that which each one of us could provide for ourselves. The interest of the nation in the proper fulfillment of the law's requirements cannot yield to demonstrations by some few persons. Mob rule, even in one area of the nation, cannot be allowed to overrule the decisions of our courts.

The proper use of the powers of the Executive Branch to enforce the orders of a Federal Court are limited to extraordinary and compelling circumstances. Manifestly, such an extreme situation has been created in Arkansas. This challenge must be met with such measures as will preserve to the people as a whole their lawfully-protected rights and legal processes in a climate permitting their free and fair exercise.

The overwhelming majority of our people in all sections 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 to violence of extremists.

I have confidence that the overwhelming majority of the people
in the South are of good will, united in their efforts to preserve and
respect the law even if they disagree with it. They will reject the
sympathy with law violators and they have
pride that is strong enough to sustain them in their own defense against
a call to violence of extremists. They recognize their moral and public
responsibilities. They 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.

I call upon all citizens of the State of Arkansas to bring to an
immediate end all interference with the law and its processes. If re-

I hope that proper order will soon prevail.