



Source 1

Extracts on integration at Little Rock, in a telegram sent from the British Embassy in Washington, 13 September 1957

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Questions

1. What reason did Governor Faubus give for ordering out the National Guard and State Police?
2. According to this telegram, what other reasons might there be for the Governor's actions?
3. What was the attitude of President Eisenhower to the Governor's actions?
4. What, according to this telegram, were the effects of events at Little Rock on the rest of the United States of America?
5. This source comes from the British Embassy in Washington. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using it as evidence about events at Little Rock?



HEROES & VILLAINS

King & civil rights > Little Rock

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2. In 1954 the Supreme Court of the United States ordered the integration of public schools. Some integration has already taken place in Arkansas and it was to begin on a gradual basis at the Little Rock High School on the re-opening of school after the summer vacation on September 3. On the previous evening Governor Faubus of Arkansas ordered out the Arkansas National Guard and State Police "in order to prevent violence and bloodshed when the school opened". Armed National Guardsmen were posted at the approaches to the school on the following morning and prevented nine negro children from entering.

3. A series of legal moves by Governor Faubus and by the Federal authorities ensued. The Governor claimed that he was not seeking to prevent integration but only to prevent violence and bloodshed, as was his duty. No evidence has however been produced to show that violence would have ensued had he allowed the school to admit the negro pupils, as the school board themselves desired to do. The Governor sent to the President, and made public before the President received it, a telegram seeking an assurance of Mr. Eisenhower's "understanding", and claiming that the Federal authorities were planning to take him into custody and were tapping his telephones. Mr. Eisenhower's reply was that "the only assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me by every legal means at my command".

5. On the national front the case has aroused extreme interest because it is considered a tactical move by Southern segregationists, possibly instigated by the Governor of Georgia, to frustrate the decision of the Supreme Court, and because it has revived the controversy over States rights.

6. All responsible commentators agree that this incident is having the worst possible effect on United States prestige and policies abroad. Mr. Dulles, questioned about it at his press conference on September 10, admitted that the incident "would not be helpful to the influence of the United States abroad". Commentators point out that the Soviet Union and other Communist powers, while themselves guilty of the most savage forms of brutality and repression in their own countries and the countries they control, are depicting this relatively isolated incident "which is abhorred and condemned by millions of Americans" as typical of the attitude of white Americans all over the United States towards their coloured countrymen.