

U.S. Is Not a Nation Of Quitters—Nixon

Wallace to Nixon:
'God Bless You...'

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HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Feb. 18—President Nixon, amid many signs of support and a few calling for his impeachment, told a crowd of more than 20,000 "honor America" celebrants today that "the American people are not a nation of quitters. We are a nation that will keep fighting on."

The President made his remarks at Huntsville's second annual observance in a general patriotic vein, rather than in personal reference to his own political troubles, about which he made no direct mention.

Mr. Nixon shared the platform with Gov. George C. Wallace, who said, "God bless you, Mr. President. You're among friends here."

In the political climate in which he spoke—punctuated by the mixed signs of support and criticism in the large crowd—Mr. Nixon's words did however, give emphasis to his own stated determination to remain in office in the face of critics' calls for his resignation or removal.

On this local celebration of George Washington's birthday, several in the crowd held signs bearing a portrait of Abraham Lincoln with the legend: "What if he had quit?"

Also, a message that has become familiar wherever he goes—"Hang in there, Mr. President"—was held aloft in the crowd, which stood in balmy, occasionally sunny weather in a holiday mood, with many American flags waving from children's hands.

This second presidential speech in the South in five days was, like the first in Miami last Thursday, delivered extemporaneously and dealt in general appeals for resort to traditional American values

See **PRESIDENT, A2, Col. 1**

PRESIDENT, From A1

of self-reliance, determination and perseverance.

Unlike the Miami speech, during which hecklers almost without let-up chanted "Impeach Nixon now" as the President spoke, today's northern Alabama audience listened without interrupting him—except occasionally with applause. Pro-Nixon signs today widely outnumbered the anti-Nixon placards and the crowd was more festive, with many children in costumes.

Sounding the "honor America" theme, Mr. Nixon observed that "We live in one of those periods in American history when there is a tendency for there to be a great deal of handwringing and pessimism about the future of America. It is not unusual and it often occurs after the end of a war, but the point that I wish to make is that it is very well on an occasion like this when we honor America, that after hearing so much about what is wrong with America, we hear a little bit about what is right about the United States of America. . . .

"Let us be thankful that the problems we have today are the problems of peace and not the problems of war. For example, people are concerned, as they should be, about the high cost of living, prices are

too high, but what we are trying to build in America is something that we haven't had for the last two years, and that is a new prosperity without war, without inflation.

"What we are trying to do is to stop the rise in prices without a recession and without the domination of big government on top of all of the American economy. I think we can do it. And I believe we can achieve that goal."

The President, referring to the energy crisis, said the United States is more fortunate than any other major industrial country in "the free world" in having the resources to be self-sufficient. "Let us . . . set our goal which we can reach by the year 1980 that the United States will be completely independent from any other nation for the energy we need to provide our jobs and to move our cars and to heat our homes."

Mr. Nixon also told the crowd that the United States will maintain its strength to meet its responsibility "to defend freedom, which we are doing throughout the world. . . . It is good that the peace of the world is in our hands. I say that from the standpoint of other nations, because we seek not to insulate them, we seek not any domination over them, we seek only for

themselves what we have, the right to independence, to freedom for all of our people."

The President, at the close of his speech, took a thinly veiled slap at news organizations in Washington, as he had done in leaving a Washington restaurant one night last week.

"Washington," he told the audience, "is a great capital; the first capital in the world, it's a great city. But sometimes those of us who live there and work there find that in the nation's capital there is a tendency for partisanship to take over from statesmanship."

"In the nation's capital sometimes there is a tendency in the reporting of news—and I do not say this critically, its simply a fact of life—bad news is news and good news is not news, and as a result those of us who work there and try to develop the policies for the nation may get a distorted view of what is America and what it's really like."

"It is there that you hear more than anywhere in the world that America is sick, that there's something wrong with America that can't be corrected . . ."

"I thank you for reminding all of us that here in the heart of Dixie that the heart of America is good, that the character of America is strong, and we are going to continue to be a great nation when we're 200 years old."

President Nixon was introduced by Gov. Wallace, who said he was proud to welcome Mr. Nixon to Huntsville, home of Redstone Arsenal, the nation's early space center, and of the Marshall Space Flight Center.

The Alabama Democratic governor, who ran against Mr. Nixon as an independent in 1968 and sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972, looked thin but strong as he pulled himself from his wheelchair and stood at the podium in Big Spring International Park to make the introduction. He is still recuperating from wounds of his shooting in the 1972 Maryland presi-

dential primary.

Mr. Nixon helped wheel the governor in his chair back to his place on the platform after the introduction. He recalled visiting Wallace in the hospital in Silver Spring, Md., after the shooting and telling Mrs. Wallace, who was with her husband today, "There's nothing wrong with his spirit. He has the will to come back. He's going to make it." Then the President added: "And he did, because he has got that strength."

Wallace and Mrs. Wallace met the President's plane at Redstone Arsenal airfield in the early afternoon, shook hands and chatted with him and with his daughter, Tricia Nixon Cox, and son-in-law, Edward Cox, before motoring to the park.