

Nixon Finds Cheering Crowds in Mississippi

Meridian, Miss.

President Nixon, making his first public appearance since the Watergate scandal deepened, received a rousing welcome here yesterday when he arrived to dedicate a new military installation.

Thousands of cheering Mississippians lined streets, overflowed onto a hillside and climbed trees to get a glimpse of Mr. Nixon who spoke at a naval air station training center here named for Senator John C. Stennis (Dem-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Stennis still recovering from gunshot wounds suffered January 30 at the hands of bandits outside his Washington home accompa-

nied the President on the flight from the capital, which included a swing over states flooded by the Mississippi River.

AIDES

In an apparent show of support Mr. Nixon also brought H. R. Halderman and John D. Ehrlichman along. Both aides have been prominently mentioned in the Watergate scandal.

The Mississippi visit was the President's first public appearance since April 17 when he revealed that in the face of new disclosures linking some of his top aides to Watergate he was making "intensive new inquiries" into the affair.

During his ten-minute dedication talk, the President, after lavishly praising the Senator's support of the Nixon military policies, spoke of hard decisions he, the President, had made in the past.

"There were times when I made these decisions when I felt I was pretty much alone, at least as far as the city of Washington was concerned. However, out in the country that wasn't the case.

A President can make a hard decision, but a Presi-

dent is not able to carry out that decision unless he has the support of the people

REMARKS

Mr. Nixon recalled that he had visited Mississippi in 1968 when Hurricane Camille ravaged the Gulf Coast. He noted how the "strong" people of Mississippi had rebounded and added:

"I am confident the people and communities concerned can and will make a strong comeback from this (flood) tragedy."

After his speech Mr. Nixon visited briefly with people in the crowd nearby, and obviously enjoyed the warm reception. He then got into his limousine and was driven to Air Force One for the flight back to Washington.

A.P. & U.P.



PRESIDENT NIXON AND SENATOR JOHN STENNIS
They rode an open-top car through Meridian, Miss., crowds



UPI Telephoto

Haldeman (front), Ehrlichman (rear) and Nixon's doctor, Walter Tkach, went along.