

Nixon Says America Isn't Sick

Huntsville, Ala.

President Nixon, sharing a platform with Governor George C. Wallace at an Honor America Day rally, told a predominantly friendly crowd of more than 20,000 yesterday that partisanship and distorted reporting in Washington have made it appear that the nation is sick.

His comment, which he called a "personal note" at the end of a "what's right with America" speech, was an oblique but obvious reference to the attention that has been focused on the scandals in his administration.

"In the nation's capital," he said, "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 — I do not say this critically, it's simply a fact of life — that bad news is news and good news is not news."

"And as a result," he continued, "those of us who work there and try to develop the policies of the nation may get a distorted view of what is America and what it is really like. It is there that you hear more than any other place in America that America is sick, that there is something wrong with America that cannot be corrected."

Then he told his flag-waving audience, "I thank you for reminding all of America that here in the heart of Dixie we find that the heart of America is good, the character of America is strong and we are going to continue to be a great nation."

The President, who flew here from his villa in Key Biscayne, Fla., after a five-day vacation, looked tanned and rested and seemed to relish the applause.

It was the kind of occasion that was carefully calculat-

ed by his assistants to give him a large, friendly reception.

Despite his loss of popularity across the nation, Mr. Nixon retains a strong base of support in the deep South, particularly among the peo-

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ple who have supported Governor Wallace over the years. Further, Huntsville, a city of 150,000, is a space center heavily dependent on government employment and contracts. The city shut down — schools, businesses and industries — to attend the second annual Honor America Day, an event designed to "emphasize those things which are positive and good in this country and reverse the negative trend."

The large crowd that gathered in Big Spring International Park in the center of the city waved American flags and carried slogans favorable to the President such as "God bless America: Support our President," a picture of Lincoln and the words, "What if he had quit?" The anti-Nixon people were clearly in the minority with such slogans as: "Honor America, Impeach Nixon."

Wallace, in his wheelchair, met Mr. Nixon at the Redstone Arsenal airport and made the occasion even friendlier for Mr. Nixon by introducing him with praise:

"God bless you Mr. President, and I submit to you that you are among friends."

On the platform were two other southern governors, William Waller of Mississippi and Winfield Dunn of Tennessee, and most of Alabama's congressional delegation. Beside the platform was a 30-ton monument called "Honor America" bearing a plaque of the Declaration of Independence and an "eternal flame," which had been put out for the energy crisis but relit for the President's visit.

The audience was a sea of solemn white faces.

The occasion attracted a constituency that both Mr. Nixon and Wallace had vied for during the 1968 presidential campaign. In attacking the national news media as he had done from time to time in other places, Mr.

Nixon was following a Wallace tradition. Wallace's climb to national prominence was based in part on repeated charges that he was unfairly maligned by the national media.

Mr. Nixon spoke without notes and his address was an amalgam of statements he had made repeatedly over the last few years:

"We are strong and we are rich, but there is so much more work left to be done here at home to build better opportunities for our children for education and health, and all the other areas that we want for



UPI Telephoto

PRESIDENT NIXON AND ADMIRERS
He got a warm welcome in Huntsville, Ala.

them."

"Abroad there is so much more to be done that only America can do to leave the legacy for generations to come of a peaceful world."

"While we do have problems, they are problems that are challenges. They

are the problems of peace, and they are problems we can solve," he said.

The President left Huntsville and flew to Indianapolis, Ind., to pick up his hospitalized daughter, Julie. The presidential party then flew on to Washington.