

The President hangs tough in Okla.

By Grace Bassett
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STILLWATER (Okla.) — President Nixon, in what seemed a massive exertion of will, last night attempted an inspirational address to college graduates rather than a defense against impeachment.

He got a warm welcome from nearly 30,000 Oklahomans at Oklahoma State University here and at the Enid, Okla., airport.

The President stumbled over a few words in his university address. He appeared to forget a few dates. But he made one affirmation of his determination to remain in office:

"Having presented all the evidence to the Congress of the United States, I say that the Congress and the President can get on with the people's business as we should."

Then, as though his words would make it true, the President spoke of challenges America would meet through the rest of the century.

"We will see our great years," the President said.

"We will achieve . . . the goal of complete independence in energy."

He addressed the problems of farmers, of consumers,

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and of working people throughout the world. He became so engrossed that he overran his 15-minute speaking schedule.

Despite this public show, the President appeared to win no votes of confidence from the Oklahoma Congressmen who accompanied him on the jet that flew him here.

Sen. Dewey F. Bartlett (R-Okla.) said he had seen nothing to indicate the President would resign but was withholding his judgment.

Rep. John Jarman (D-Okla.) said he "was saddened" by the tone reflected in the White House transcripts but had not seen any incriminating evidence that would justify impeachment.

The President, in Enid, was obviously touched by the cheers, though the crowd was recruited, carefully controlled and behind ropes.

"To have people say 'hang in there', 'we're with you,' that does your heart good," the President said.

"I can assure you I have that old Okie spirit and I have it deep down inside and we never give up."

Nixon's reception generally was regarded as friendlier — with less heckling — than that he received last

weekend at a public appearance in Phoenix.

He received standing ovations when he was introduced, at the conclusion of his remarks and when he and Mrs. Nixon were escorted from the stadium to head back to Washington. Several times the crowd applauded his call for cooperative efforts to conquer the energy crisis and world food and health problems.

Nixon spoke of efforts for peace in the Middle East, an area that he said "could be equated as the Balkans of the '70s unless we do something about it and do something about it now."

The crowd was generally

quiet, but a few shouts such as "pay your taxes" and "liar" could be heard as Nixon spoke.

Signs and placards had been banned by Oklahoma University President Robert Kamm, who introduced Nixon to the campus "as President and as a fellow human being." Kamm said Nixon should be treated with "the affection and respect due one who has given so much in public service."

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President Nixon addresses graduates at Oklahoma State University

—AP Photo