

Fervent Cheers For Nixon at A Rally in D.C.

Washington

President Nixon told a cheering group of ardent supporters yesterday that a strong presidency is needed to achieve peace in the world and pledged that "I shall do nothing that will weaken this office."

Addressing enthusiastic participants in a "Citizens Congress," sponsored by the National Citizens Committee for Fair Play to the Presidency, Mr. Nixon said their support will strengthen him as he departs today on what he said will be "a long and difficult journey" to five Middle Eastern countries.

"You come from the heart of America and you have touched our hearts," Mr. Nixon said to the 1400 neatly groomed men and women who had paid \$50 each to attend the luncheon meeting.

Participants represented the bedrock of popular support for the President at a time when the public opinion polls indicate that many Americans have lost confidence in Mr. Nixon.

As Mr. Nixon looked on, the participants shouted their approval of a resolution — read by Rabbi Baruch Korff, president of the committee — reaffirming "our faith in God and country, in constitutional government, in the presidency and in our beloved President who is one of the strongest links in the chain of the presidency."

The resolution also charged "collusion between some members of Congress and vested interests" to aid and abet "the impeachment syndrome within the House Judiciary Committee."

It charged that members of the press and electronic

media had engendered a "climate of hysteria" in a "massive attempt to reverse the overwhelming mandate given the President by the people of the United States."

All of yesterday's speakers, including Mr. Nixon, assailed the news media. Each attack was greeted by roars of approval by the participants, who shook their fists and shouted imprecations at

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reporters and cameramen who were in a roped-off area in the ballroom of the Shoreham Hotel, where the luncheon was held.

Othal Brand, a Texas farmer who is general chairman of the National Citizens Committee, said that the committee's membership numbers more than two million and that it has taken in about \$1 million after only 11 months of existence.

Brand said that one of the major "targets" of the program would be "the 38 members of the House Judiciary Committee," which is now inquiring into a possible impeachment of Mr. Nixon.

The gathering applauded thunderously.

Mr. Nixon did not mention impeachment or Watergate during his short speech.

But his message seemed to be that the attacks on him would weaken the presidency and thus harm the prospects for achieving his goal and the goal of all future presidents — peace in the world.

Referring briefly to his forthcoming trip to the Middle East, Mr. Nixon said that "all of the problems will not be solved," but that



AP Wirephoto

MR. NIXON AT RALLY He responded to cheers

he plans to "build on the progress we have already made."

Then he added that "a strong American presidency is essential if we are to have peace in the world."

Mrs. Nixon and her two daughters, Mrs. Edward Cox and Mrs. David Eisenhower, were honored at yesterday's luncheon. Mrs. Nixon remained silent as she accepted her honor, but both daughters spoke up in support of their father.

Mrs. Cox said that her father will be in office "955 more days," until his term is scheduled to expire on Jan. 20, 1977.

Mrs. Eisenhower declared that her father "loves you and he loves this country."

The chief speaker was Senator Carl T. Curtis,

(Rep.-Neb.), who made a sharp, strident attack on critics of the President, whom he referred to as the "get Nixon crowd."

When Curtis assailed those who would conduct "a trial by press" of the President the crowd responded with a deep guttural roar interspersed by rebel yells and gestures at the reporters.

Calling for an end to the character "assassination of public officials," Curtis asserted that "lynching hasn't stopped in the United States, it's just that different people are doing it."

He added that the Watergate grand jury in the District of Columbia (most of whose members are blacks) "can hardly be considered a cross-section of the country."

He also assailed former Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox and members of the special prosecutor's staff, who he said are political partisans and could not be fair.

The audience roared, applauded and waved small American flags with almost every sentence.

The majority of the participants appeared to be middle-aged or older, relatively affluent and fiercely emotional in their support of the President.

Many of them were from smaller towns or cities. They crowded around the dais, asking the Nixons for autographs or taking pictures of them.

One elderly woman from Tennessee commented, "I haven't been in a crowd this big since President Harding's inaugural."

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