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Nixon Assails 'Distorted View That America Is Sick'



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President Nixon chatting with Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama at Huntsville yesterday

By JOHN HERBERS

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HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Feb. 18— President Nixon, sharing a platform with Gov. George C. Wallace at an "Honor America Day" rally, told a predominantly friendly crowd of more than 20,000 today that partisanship and distorted reporting in Washington had 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

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

**Retains Southern Support**

Despite his loss of popularity across the nation, he retains a strong base of support in the Deep South among the people 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, and the city shut down—schools, businesses, 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 slogans favorable to the president: "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."

**2 Other Governors Present**

Governor 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 that bore 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 white solemn faces.

The occasion attracted a constituency that both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Wallace had vied for in the 1968 Presidential campaign. In attacking the national news organizations as he had done from time to time in other places, Mr. Nixon was following a Wallace tradition. Mr. Wallace's climb to national prominence was based in part on repeated charges that he was unfairly maligned by the national news organizations.

Mr. Nixon spoke without notes and his address was an amalgam of statements he has 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 them," he said. "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. After the speech, Mr. Nixon's black limousine rolled from the park as the band played "God Bless America."

**Nixon Takes Daughter Home**

INDIANAPOLIS, Feb. 18 (AP)—President Nixon flew here today and picked up his convalescing daughter, Mrs. David Eisenhower. Then the Nixon

family boarded the Presidential jet and took off for Washington. Mrs. Eisenhower, the Nixons' younger daughter, underwent major surgery last Thursday for removal of a bleeding ovarian cyst. She is expected to resume a three-week recuperation period at the White House.

Mrs. Eisenhower gave farewell hugs and kisses to her nurses and the President com-

plimented the staff at the Indiana University Medical Center just before the Nixons left. Mr. Nixon and his older daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Cox, flew to Indianapolis from Huntsville, Ala., this afternoon after the President spoke there.

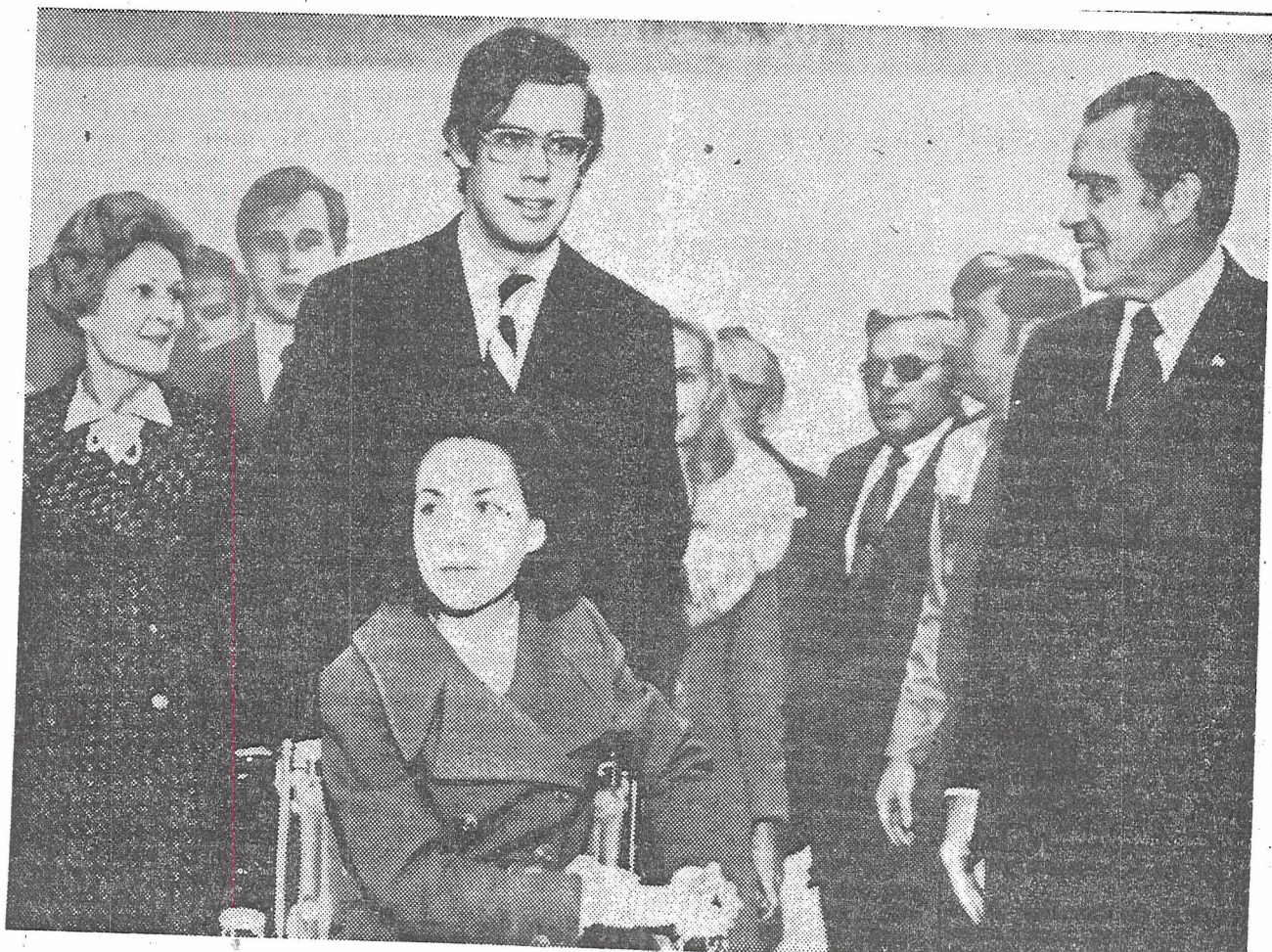
The President and the Coxes waved at a friendly crowd outside the medical center and

then went inside to go through a receiving line of doctors, nurses and hospital staff who had cared for Mrs. Eisenhower since she was hospitalized with severe abdominal pains.

Also at the hospital were the President's wife and Mrs. Eisenhower's husband. Mr. Nixon thanked the hospital staff for their attention to his daughter and said, "Doctors

are very important; the nurses are indispensable."

After a 20-minute visit, the Nixon family left with Mrs. Eisenhower in a wheelchair pushed by her husband. She was wheeled out to a waiting limousine, where Mr. Nixon shook hands with about a dozen members of the crowd. Mr. Nixon's stay in Indianapolis lasted just under an hour.



David Eisenhower wheeling his wife, Julie, out of the University of Indiana Medical Center in Indianapolis. Watching them are Mrs. Eisenhower's parents, President and Mrs. Nixon.

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