

Nixon, on 62d Birthday, Called Physically Troubled

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Jan. 9—Richard M. Nixon is very thin, tires easily, has a poor appetite and trouble sleeping but is "gradually, gradually recovering" from surgery on his phlebitis-damaged left leg, Rabbi Baruch M. Korff said today on the former President's 62d birthday.

Rabbi Korff, one of Mr. Nixon's most vocal supporters, who visited the former President on Tuesday and yesterday, held a news conference at a hotel near Casa Pacifica, the five-acre estate where Mr. Nixon has remained secluded since he resigned the Presidency five months ago today. He said that the former President's right leg "lately has also showed signs of difficulty—I think some swelling."

Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's personal physician in Long Beach, said through a secretary that he had "no comment" on Rabbi Korff's remark about the previously normal right. Ronald L. Ziegler, Mr. Nixon's press secretary, said he knew of no problems with the leg.

Rabbi Korff also said that Mr. Nixon was "deeply saddened" by the conviction of four of his former aides in the Watergate cover-up on Jan. 1, but happy that three convicted Watergate figures—John W. Dean 3d, Jeb Stuart Magruder and Herbert W. Kalmbach—were freed from prison yesterday.

Regarding the prison releases, Rabbi Korff said that Mr. Nixon, "with a very benign look," had stated: "That is very good to ease the burden of pain in a time of trouble."

In response to a newsman's question about whether the former President seemed less enthusiastic over the release of Mr. Dean, who testified exclusively against Mr. Nixon in the Watergate affair, Rabbi Korff said that Mr. Nixon "did not differentiate" between the three men when expressing his pleasure on their release.

Rabbi Korff said he had spoken to Mr. Nixon about the Watergate affair and that the former President had "freely said to me" that "he made errors in judgment, he was too yielding and, perhaps at times, too compassionate." Rabbi Korff said he believed Mr. Nixon "misused his power" and that Watergate was "wrong, terribly wrong."

But when asked if he felt the former President had committed crimes, he replied strongly, "no sir."

The rabbi said he believed that people should be "merciful" to the "suffering and pain" Mr. Nixon has endured. He added that although Mr. Nixon



Associated Press

A birthday cake with 62 candles, inscribed for Richard M. Nixon, being shown by Ann Christie at Rabbi Baruch Korff's news conference yesterday in San Clemente, Calif. The cake was given to reporters after Mr. Korff told of visits to the former President.

would probably not be able to resume an active life for some time, "he did express his hopes that he might make a contribution to world peace" in the future.

Among a number of subjects discussed in his two-day visit with Mr. Nixon, Rabbi Korff said, was the President Nixon Justice Fund, an organization headed by the rabbi to raise funds to meet Mr. Nixon's legal expenses.

According to Rabbi Korff, the

group paid \$80,000 on Dec. 18 constitutional questions" into cover part of the legal fees incurred from a number of lawsuits and other legal matters plaguing Mr. Nixon. On Jan. 18, a payment of \$30,000 more is due, Rabbi Korff said.

"Approximately \$10,000 came in Christmas gifts to San Clemente and another \$5,000 to \$6,000 came into our Washington office. We hope the remainder will come after this press conference," Rabbi Korff said.

In a prepared statement that he read to newsmen, Rabbi Korff said that many of what he called "personal items" belonging to the Nixon family—for example, Mr. Nixon's cartoon collection, his elephant and gavel collection, his personal pen, inaugural ball gowns and Julie Nixon Eisenhower's wedding dress—had been held "illegally" in Washington for five months.

Rabbi Korff also said he believed the Government's withholding of Mr. Nixon's Presidential papers, "all his papers, not only those matters related to Watergate," posed "deep

constitutional questions" including "the right of privacy" and "the ability of the Presidency of the United States to function efficiently and effectively within the universally understood rights of confidentiality."

Commenting on Mr. Nixon's appearance, Rabbi Korff said, "I've never seen him looking so thin; his bones are sticking out." He said that Mr. Nixon's mood was "reflective" and "meditative" and that "he feels this is a significant birthday after his ordeal in the hospital" in October, when he suffered complications following surgery.

Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon was spending a quiet birthday with Mrs. Nixon and that their daughters, Julie and Tricia, were not at the estate. He said the former President had received "thousands" of birthday cards.

Ford Phones Wishes

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9 (AP)—The White House said today that President Ford called Mr. Nixon just before noon. "He spoke for a few minutes with the former President and wished him a happy birthday," a White House spokesman said.