

Ford visits Nixon

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LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — President Ford sat in a chair beside former President Richard M. Nixon's hospital bed on Friday. "Did you have a good night?" Ford asked.

"None of my nights are too good," Nixon replied in a husky voice. His hair was mussed and his face was drawn. He was thinner than most people remember him.

Nixon's passion while in office was foreign affairs, and Ford told him of plans in the near future for presidential trips to Japan, South Korea and the Soviet Union.

He told Nixon — he called him Dick — of tours by Nixon's favorite, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, to the Soviet Union, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The eight-minute visit was a surprise to Nixon. Fearing any sustained excitement might be too much for their still seriously ill patient, doctors told Nixon that Ford was coming only minutes before the President walked through the door of Nixon's top-floor suite.

It was the first meeting between the

men since Nixon resigned the presidency Aug. 9.

After the visit, Mrs. Nixon was heard by a Ford aide telling presidential physician William Lukash, who accompanied Ford to the hospital, that she thought the visit had been very good

for her husband.

"It was very good of President Ford to come and see me," Nixon said afterward, adding, "It was really very thoughtful of President Ford to come to

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the hospital."

Then, feeling tired, Nixon dozed off.

Nixon wore a white hospital gown and his bed was elevated slightly. On a shelf above the bed were monitors attached to Nixon's body and bottles for intravenous medication and feeding.

Nixon's physician, Dr. John C. Lungren said he had approved Ford's visit because he thought it would boost Nixon's morale. Ford, in California for Republican campaign appearances, had been asked to come to the hospital by Mrs. Nixon. Lungren said that though Nixon was still listed in critical condition, "he is slowly and steadily improving."

Lungren said all internal bleeding had apparently stopped. Nixon has been in critical condition since Tuesday, when he went into almost fatal shock for three hours after phlebitis surgery triggered internal bleeding.

But he added that there was still a chance of further hemorrhaging. Nixon has received many blood transfusions.

The Ford-Nixon meeting was described by Ron Nessen, Ford's press secretary, and Ron Ziegler, former White House press secretary. They stood outside Nixon's room during the session. Photographers and newsmen were kept away.

At a press conference outside Memorial Hospital Medical Center, Ford said Nixon, 61, was alert and showed "great strength" yet "it was obvious to me that he had been very, very ill."

But he added, "Mr. Nixon is coming along very, very well ... He showed a great deal of strength, both physically and mentally."

Nixon's doctor said late Thursday that Nixon would probably remain on the critical list for 24 to 72 hours. Lungren said, "There are dangers lurking in the background."

The highest flying birds are believed to be geese which have been photographed at 29,000 feet.