

# Nixon critical; dangers lurking in the background

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LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Former President Richard M. Nixon's internal bleeding apparently has stopped, but "there are dangers lurking in the background" and more blood transfusions were started, Nixon's team of doctors said Thursday.

Nixon probably will remain on the critical list for 24 to 72 more hours, the doctors said.

The doctors said they were still working to replace the blood Nixon lost in internal hemorrhaging that followed his phlebitis surgery.

The former president could have died from the bleeding that sent him into shock for three hours after the operation Tuesday, "if proper measures had not been taken," said Dr. John C. Lungren.

Nixon's former press secretary, Ron Ziegler, made a similar statement Wednesday.

Lungren, Nixon's longtime doctor, and two surgeons who operated on Nixon, did not specify when the apparent letup in

bleeding took place.

The three held a 10-minute news conference at the hospital where the 61-year-old former president is being treated.

Earlier in the day, Lungren and Dr. Eldon Hickman said that because of a slight decrease in Nixon's hemoglobin level they believed Nixon may have been bleeding again.

The doctors said they would continue to watch Nixon's condition to determine whether it had stopped altogether.

Lungren said Nixon's vital signs had "pretty much returned to normal," but he added, "There are dangers lurking in the background, imminent dangers, real dangers ..."

Lungren did not say what the dangers were.

Earlier in the day, Lungren and Hickman said in a statement that Nixon's vital signs — blood pressure, pulse and heart beat — were stable. But the two said a prognosis was not possible

because "the possibility still exists for further complications."

However, Lungren seemed to indicate Nixon had made some slight gains, saying: "His spirits and mental attitude are excellent. He is alert, oriented to everything going on around him, and cooperative."

At the news conference later, Hickman said Nixon was "handling it well" although he was "somewhat annoyed" by the constant bedside monitoring of his condition.

Lungren said the transfusions Nixon was receiving would replace the post-surgical blood loss and combat the low hemoglobin and low platelet counts. He did not say how much blood Nixon would receive.

Hickman said the hemoglobin drop was probably due to "hemodilution from increased urinary output." Hemodilution, a thinning of the blood from body fluids, is not unusual after an operation, a hospital spokesman said.