

Nixon Said Bedridden With Phlebitis

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By Stuart Auerbach
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Former President Nixon is bedridden in California with a recurrence of phlebitis, his son-in-law David Eisenhower said yesterday. The blood clot in his left leg has moved above the knee and caused his leg to swell to twice its normal size.

A medical source in Washington familiar with the case added that Mr. Nixon has refused the pleas of his family that he go for treatment to Eisenhower Memorial Hospital in Palm Springs, Calif., where he is vacationing.

The medical source also reported that Mr. Nixon has stopped taking the anti-coagulant drugs that were prescribed when the phlebitis first

showed up in June, just as the former President was about to leave on a state visit to the Middle East.

Mr. Nixon also has refused to use the elastic bandage he was told to wear around his leg to keep the swelling down.

Dr. Walter Tkach, Mr. Martin, Mr. Nixon's White House physician and a close friend of the former President, is flying to Palm Springs today to see his patient.

David Eisenhower said that a doctor who had treated Mr. Nixon before he was elected President, Dr. John Lungren of Long Beach, Calif., will also go to Palm Springs today. Mr. Nixon is resting at the palatial Palm Springs estate of Walter Annenberg, the ambassador to Great Britain. Despite the doctors' visits, Eisenhower said there

is no feeling among the family of a medical crisis.

"Nobody's ready to start issuing bulletins or anything like that," he told Washington Post Staff Writer William Greider.

While phlebitis is regarded by doctors as a common ailment that is not serious if treated properly, it is painful and can cause death.

It is an inflammation of the veins, and most commonly occurs in the legs. It is accompanied by blood clots, and the main danger is that a clot will break loose and get into the lungs. Known as a pulmonary embolism, the clot can block a blood vessel and cause death within minutes.

In July, after Mr. Nixon returned from the Middle East, Dr. Tkach told

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reporters that he had warned the former President against taking the trip because the blood clot "could have killed him."

Mr. Nixon "took a calculated risk" and ignored the medical advice and continued his travels because he felt "he had an obligation to make the trip," Tkach said.

In July, Tkach told newsmen that the clot had attached itself to the wall of a vein, and said that means the danger "is pretty much gone."

"He still has some swelling. There is no pain, but the clot will always be there," said Tkach, an Air Force major general who has been reassigned from his job as White House physician.

Another medical source familiar with the case said that the emotional strain that Mr. Nixon has been under, both before he resigned a month ago and since his resignation, could have aggravated the phlebitis.

"Severe tension states lower all bodily defenses," the medical source said.

Eisenhower, in an interview on the "Today" show (NBC, WRC) yesterday morning, said Mr. Nixon is "depressed" and

unable to relax.

"Right at this moment he is not feeling well," said Eisenhower. "He has his leg elevated because (of the) phlebitis . . . The clot has moved above the knee and his one leg is swollen about twice its normal size. His health is not good."

"He's fighting that. He can't play golf, he can't relax, he can't unwind and so I would say his spirits are not great right now. There's no question about that."

Nevertheless, in his talk with Greider, Eisenhower avoided extreme talk about Mr. Nixon's mental state. "He has his up and down moments," Eisenhower said.

In granting Mr. Nixon a full pardon on Sunday, President Ford said that the threat of prosecution for Watergate-related offenses was adversely affecting the former President's health.

But Deputy White House Press Secretary John W. Hushen said yesterday that Mr. Ford got his information from reading the newspaper and talking to people. He said that the health question did not play a large part in the President's decision.



By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post
Son-in-law David Eisenhower describes Richard Nixon's ills on "Today" show.