

Nixon 'Pleased' by Release of Aides

San Clemente

Former President Nixon, described as pleased with the release of three former associates from prison, spent a quiet 62nd birthday yesterday with his wife, Pat, at his oceanside villa here.

No special occasion was made of Mr. Nixon's first birthday since leaving the White House following his resignation last August, an aide said. The birthday came 2½ years after the break-in at Democratic national headquarters.

Mr. Nixon, recuperating from surgery for a blood clot in his left leg, received flowers from his four-member staff and Rabbi Baruch Korff, trustee of the President Nixon Justice Fund. The fund was organized to pay his mounting legal expenses.

Rabbi Korff told a news conference at a hotel here that Mr. Nixon was "heartened" by thousands of letters and wires pouring in from around the world, including some from heads of state.

The rabbi said Mr. Nixon told him he was pleased Judge John Sirica had freed from prison three of his former associates, John Dean III, Herbert Kalmbach and Jeb Magruder.

The rabbi said, "President Nixon told me, 'That is very good to ease the burden of these men. I'm glad.'"

Rabbi Korff said some money from the justice fund, which he said has raised about \$95,000 so far, would be used in an effort to recover Mr. Nixon's presidential papers and tapes now being held by the government.

Rabbi Korff has asked if Mr. Nixon felt any guilt because four of his former top aides were convicted last week in the Watergate cover-up trial.

"President Nixon said, 'I made errors in judgment. I was too yielding. Perhaps at

times too compassionate,'" the rabbi said.

He said that although Mr. Nixon admits to errors in judgment, "if you look at his presidency as a whole, he's in league with the great."

The White House said President Ford called Mr. Nixon just before noon. "He spoke for a few minutes with the former President . . . and wished him a happy birthday," the announcement said.

Rabbi Korff, asked about Mr. Nixon's isolation at Casa Pacifica, said, "The President would like to see everyone and talk to everyone, but his doctors insist he not see anyone that would lead him from his recuperation."

He said Mr. Nixon still tires easily.

Rabbi Korff said Mr. Nixon must engage in a legal battle at his own expense to recover his presidential papers and tapes. He said the justice fund to date has paid \$80,000 in attorneys' fees and has raised another \$15,000 toward a \$30,000 payment due next Wednesday.

He said the withholding of the presidential material and "other actions being taken in the name of Watergate, if unchallenged, can destroy the very foundation of our democratic way of life in this country."

In addition, he said, the government is holding the Nixon personal effects, including such items as his cartoon collection, his elephant and gavel collection, his personal pen, Julie's wedding dress and Julie's and Mrs. Nixon's inaugural ball gowns.

The rabbi said Mr. Nixon hopes that in time he will be able to resume an active

life.

"His hopes are yet that he might make a contribution to world policy in the area of nuclear confrontation," he said.

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AP Wirephoto

Rabbi Baruch Korff stood behind former President Nixon's birthday cake.

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