

Aides Say Nixon Is 'Capable'

SAN CLEMENTE — (UPI) — President Nixon's aides have acknowledged for the first time that he is under tension and strain as a result of Watergate revelations, but they insist that he is capable of performing his presidential duties.

Meanwhile there was speculation that Nixon's long awaited press conference on Watergate may be held this week. Nixon has not held a news conference since March 15.

"There is no question that during the past few months there have been periods of pressure of the President," Deputy Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren said.

Duties

But he also told reporters: "There is no question in the President's mind, in the minds of those around the President that he is not only capable of performing the duties of his office, but he is doing this. He is leading the nation."

Warren said he checked with White House doctors and Nixon is not taking any medication.

Rare questions about Nixon's mental and physical health were handled, to the surprise of reporters, in an almost routine fashion at a news briefing yesterday.

They stemmed from the President's unusual display of anger and lack of poise

—See Back Page, Col. 5

—From Page 1

while on a speechmaking trip to New Orleans Monday.

Hard Shove

The President, who was obviously frustrated by the rerouting of his motorcade because of an assassination threat, gave Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler a hard shove when they entered convention hall where he addressed the Veterans of Foreign Wars and told him he wanted "no press" to follow him.

The incident was widely publicized and TV cameramen caught the scene on film which some stations later broadcast in slow motion. The film clip showed an angry Nixon and a stunned Ziegler.

During his off-the-cuff remarks, the President also blew some of his lines and misquoted the Duke of Wellington. His eyes looked puffy and some of his words were slurred, according to close observers.

"Watching the President speak yesterday there is considerable speculation that the President is under considerable strain and pressure," a reporter told Warren. "How would you describe his mental state at this time?"

'Difficult'

Warren replied that the New Orleans situation was "difficult and serious."

But he added that the President "was very pleased with the reception at the VFW convention and very pleased with the response to his remarks from the delegates."

"As to his frame of mind today, it's one he feels ... he is out here to work. It's time to get moving and to get on with the essential business of the nation. In the area of the economy, foreign policy and energy situation, so I would leave it at that."

"Over the last few months, the President has been called upon to devote a certain amount of time to various speeches and statements that he has made (on Watergate), I think that is obvious."

Relationship

As for Ziegler and the President, Warren said, "I can assure you their relationship is a good one."

"We were dealing with a confused situation yesterday. I repeat the relationship is a good one, the matter is over. It is not a matter to be concerned with. The President was to go in one way and the press the other."

Warren evoked loud laughter when he added that Nixon "was just pointing out something to Ron."

The White House continued to play it cool in terms of Nixon's relationship with Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.