

Nixon Is Hospitalized By Viral Pneumonia

By Peter Braestrup

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President Nixon entered Bethesda Naval Hospital early last night for treatment of what his physician said was viral pneumonia with "no complications."

Mr. Nixon's doctor, Maj. Gen. Walter R. Tkach, told newsmen at a hastily summoned White House press conference that the President would remain in the hospital at least a week for "rest and recuperation."

As he left for Bethesda, the President was described by presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler thus:

"He is in excellent spirits even though he is somewhat weakened by his condition and is running a high fever of 101 to 102 degrees."

Ziegler said the President would carry on "necessary work" at the hospital.

Pneumonia is acute infection of a lung. The symptoms are fever, pain in the chest, coughing and difficulty in breathing. It is considered a serious disease, but is rarely fatal in otherwise healthy adults.

It is President Nixon's first major illness since he took office in 1969, according to White House officials.

Mrs. Nixon, as well as the President's daughter Julie Eisenhower and her husband, David, remained behind at the White House as the President departed.

After returning earlier this week from San Clemente Calif., the President by all accounts showed no signs of illness until 5:30 yesterday morning. It was then, according to Ziegler, that he called Dr. Tkach complaining of pain in the right side of his chest.

Dr. Tkach told newsmen at the White House last night that after a series of tests, including a chest X-ray, the President was advised to enter the hospital. The advice, Tkach indicated, came after the X-ray early in the evening.

Mr. Nixon changed his schedule between medical tests throughout yesterday. He canceled a scheduled appointment with Graham Martin, ambassador-designate to South Vietnam, but met with the Na-

tional Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Mr. Nixon met with West Germany's visiting Foreign Minister Walter Scheel at 2:45 p.m., almost three hours later than scheduled, posing for pictures with the German diplomat in the White House Rose Garden.

A statement issued last night by the German embassy said Scheel got "quite clearly the impression that the President made a great effort not to appear sick, but it was also obvious that he had to make a great effort. He was not looking healthy."

Mr. Nixon appeared pale and "not well at all," the statement added.

The White House did not explain the shifts in the President's schedule as they occurred. At the regular late morn-

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ing press briefing, Ziegler's aide, Gerald Warren, said, in response to questions, that the President "had adjusted his schedule so he can spend time this morning discussing various matters with staff members ... the economy and things such as that. I do not want to focus on any one thing."

Asked if overwork had brought the President down with pneumonia, Dr. Tkach said "That's a guess. Anyone can suffer viral pneumonia."

Asked if the President would be treated with antibiotics at Bethesda the doctor replied that only 10 per cent of viral pneumonia patients respond to antibiotics. The President, he said, would get "supportive therapy."

The doctor, who gave Mr. Nixon a clean bill of health last Dec. 20 after Mr. Nixon's annual physical, said that the President had had an electrocardiogram yesterday and it showed no heart problems. The electrocardiogram was "entirely normal."

Tkach said the President would get sleeping pills if required to give him rest as well

as pain-killers and any other medication needed, but the main treatment would be "rest and recuperation."

Asked if he had described everything that was wrong with the President, Tkach replied, "That is correct."

Vice President Agnew was notified of the President's plans for treatment at Bethesda before Mr. Nixon left the White House, White House spokesmen said, but they did not know exactly when Mr. Agnew got the message at his home here.

Reporters who accompanied the 60-year-old President in an eight-car motorcade from the rear of the White House at 8:40 p.m. said he arrived at the hospital 38 minutes later. There he was greeted by Capt. Thomas Brown Jr., hospital commandant.

The President's motorcade passed several tourists lined up behind the Executive Office Building, then proceeded through quiet, nearly deserted streets across Roosevelt Bridge and onto the George Washington Memorial Parkway. From there it entered the Capital Beltway and proceeded uneventfully to the Wisconsin Avenue exit. The

newsmen said that two Secret Service agents and Dr. Tkach accompanied the President in his car.

The only two staff members with the President's motorcade were Ziegler and Alexander M. Haig, his chief of staff.

The President's illness came as a surprise to people who had seen him as recently as 24 hours before he was hospitalized.

Sen. Wallace Bennett of Utah, one of a group of 10 conservative Republican senators who pledged their support to President Nixon over cocktails Wednesday evening, said last night, "The news that he's ill just amazes me."

"He was perfectly normal, perfectly himself last [Wednesday] night. There was certainly no indication of illness. He may have been in discomfort but he didn't show it. There was no evidence he felt bowed down or weighed down or uncomfortable."

"I would say he was per-

tectly normal."

Bennett's words were echoed by Sen. Carl T. Curtis of Nebraska, who organized the gathering. Curtis said he was "quite surprised" to learn of Mr. Nixon's illness.

"I thought he looked well, in good spirits. He seemed to enjoy our call. I didn't think of illness at all."

Although pneumonia usually follows a bad cold, it may occur suddenly, and is usually preceded by pains in the chest, chills and a hard, dry cough, followed by coughing up phlegm. If breathing becomes too difficult, an oxygen mask often is used.

Fever and inflammation may last 5 to 11 days and the turning point in the disease comes when a patient seems to be at his worst. His fever falls rapidly and breathing suddenly becomes easier.

Pneumonia is a contagious disease and patients are often kept relatively isolated.

The President had his last physical examination Dec. 20, 1972. At that time Tkach pronounced him in extraordinarily good health and said his only complaint was that he did not get enough exercise.

He told reporters then that the President's weight was at 173, identical to that of 20 years ago, and that he took no medication whatsoever.

Tkach said in December that Mr. Nixon's normal routine was to sleep six to seven hours a night during the week and longer—eight or nine hours—on the weekend.



By Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post

Only a few hours before going to the hospital, President Nixon met with Walter Scheel, Bonn's foreign minister.

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By Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post

President Nixon at White House ceremonies yesterday.