

President Is Improved

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — President Nixon's personal physician reported "very slight improvement" in his overall condition yesterday but said

the viral pneumonia had spread to his left lung and that he ought to get about three weeks of combined hospital care and rest before resuming fulltime duties.

Even as White House physician Walter R. Tkach was relaying word on the President's condition, Nixon was said to be working from his bed at Bethesda Naval Hospital in suburban Maryland despite some continuation of the chest pains which first led to his confinement Thursday.

"This man doesn't give up easily," the doctor said. "He didn't call me until he was flat on his back."

Some Clearing

In a late afternoon medical bulletin, doctors said a chest X-ray revealed "some clearing" of the infection in about one-third to one-half of Nixon's right lung along with the evidence that the virus had spread to the left lower lung base.

"The President has been resting with less discomfort today," Tkach reported. "He continues to run a fever. He is breathing easier and has not experienced as much chest pain this afternoon."

In sum, the doctor said Nixon was thought to be responding satisfactorily to treatment.

He cautioned, however, that the President has lost a little weight and "he's still a sick man."

At an earlier briefing, Tkach said he felt it would be best to keep the President in the hospital for perhaps seven to 10 days. "We want to be sure there is no relapse," he said.

Following Nixon's release,

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Report Nixon Is Improved

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The doctor said he thought the President should have another 10 days of rest and recuperation — possibly at the Camp David retreat in Maryland.

Despite Tkach's recommendation, both the doctor and Ziegler said Nixon might decide to return to the White House as soon as he is released from the hospital, possibly Tuesday or Wednesday.

No Comment

Asked if the Watergate scandal had contributed to Nixon's illness, Tkach said: "I won't answer that."

Tkach and the staff of doctors working with him diagnosed the disease as viral pneumonia, which accounts for approximately 75 percent of all short-term, acute lung infections. It is troublesome, but usually not serious. Doctors often refer to it as "walking pneumonia."

Depending on the severity, the symptoms of viral pneumonia range from a mild fever and discomfort to pain, high fevers and wracking coughs that disturb rest. The coughing is caused by an irritation of the pleura, the membrane which covers the chest wall. It causes weakness and a general "lousy feeling" and can be contracted from another person.

Major Decisions

White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Nixon reduced his schedule, but was still making major decisions. He also said there was no need for Vice President Spiro T. Agnew to

stand in for the President in ceremonial or other functions.

Nixon talked by telephone with his key foreign affairs adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, and received a 40-minute national security briefing from Gen. Alexander M. Haig, the White House Chief of Staff. Ziegler said the President also made several decisions about the Phase IV economic plan to be announced shortly.

Ziegler said Nixon will not meet with Sen. Sam Ervin, chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, as long as Nixon remains in the hospital.

Nixon was continuing to get an outpouring of telegrams and cables and telephone calls from well wishers and bouquets of flowers.

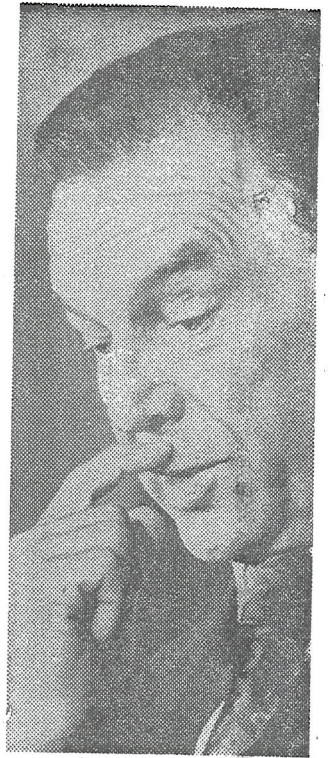
Meanwhile, the White House said yesterday that state visits of the Shah of Iran; Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka still are scheduled despite Nixon's illness.

The Shah is due July 24, Whitlam July 30 and Tanaka July 31.

Pat's Visit

Mrs. Nixon, Julie and David Eisenhower visited the President yesterday afternoon, as they did Friday. Arriving just after 2 p.m., they had no words for reporters standing nearby.

When the family emerged a little more than an hour later, Julie told a questioner that her father was "better" and David said Nixon was "coming along," but Mrs.



Dr. Walter Tkach

Nixon studiously avoided any comment.

"She doesn't want to say anything," said Press Secretary Ziegler. "She's leaving that to the doctors."

At the noon news briefing, Tkach said he examined Nixon at 7 a.m. PDT and found him showing "very slight improvement." His temperature continued to hover at 100 degrees, but there was some easing of his chest pains.

The doctor said Nixon is responding to antibiotics and chest massages four times daily to help relieve the congestion in his right lung. He said the President has lost five pounds.

Nixon was said to have had a "reasonably restful night, getting 7½ hours sleep with the help of a pain killer give to him by injection."

Tkach also said Nixon was getting two types of analgesics orally, one to make him sleep and the other to reduce pain.