

Ziegler Says Nixon's Leg Is Swollen but Not Painful

President Walks Streets in Brussels, Greeting Admirers and Chatting—He Arrives in Moscow Today

By JOHN HERBERS

Special to The New York Times

BRUSSELS, June 26—President Nixon's left leg continues to be swollen from phlebitis but is no longer painful, Ronald L. Ziegler, his press secretary, said today as Mr. Nixon walked the streets of Brussels shaking hands and chatting with admirers.

Disclosure of the efforts that Mr. Nixon took to keep his ailment—a vein inflammation—secret, along with some signs of fatigue that he has displayed from time to time, has once again raised questions about how he is holding up under the strain of his Watergate troubles and his whirlwind travels.

"The President, of course, is seen by the doctors on a daily basis," Mr. Ziegler said. "He is not at this time wearing a leg band." The press secretary said that Dr. Walter Tkach, the chief Presidential physician, and Dr. William Lukash were attending the President.

Still Some Swelling

Dr. Tkach "feels that the matter has resolved itself," Mr. Ziegler said. "However, there is still some swelling in the leg. The President said last night that he was not experiencing the pain that he did experience in the Middle East."

As the 61-year-old Mr. Nixon met with European leaders and mingled with crowds on the way to his meeting in Moscow tomorrow with the Soviet Communist party leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev, he was the picture of a superactive President. There was evidence, however, that he was exercising considerable effort.

In a briefing today, Mr. Ziegler, in response to questions, supplied more details on the phlebitis, which Mr. Nixon first detected in Washington the weekend of June 8 but did not report to his doctors until after he had arrived in Salzburg, Austria, June 10 on the way to the Middle East.

Although most cases of phlebitis are mild and uncomplicated, sometimes blood clots associated with the ailment can lead to life-threatening situations. This is particularly true in conjunction with long airplane flights when, according to medical experts, blood clots

can form in the leg, break off and lodge in the lungs.

Mr. Ziegler said that at Salzburg the doctors found considerable swelling and bound in the leg in an elastic stocking. The President ordered his doctors and his staff not to disclose the ailment.

"It was the President's view," Mr. Ziegler said, "that he did not want to travel through the Mideast and encounter the heads of state and governments that he met with everyone asking him how he is his phlebitis, and spending time talking about the swelling of his vein and being concerned about his movements and so forth."

He indicated that the President's doctors had been considerably disturbed about his condition and tried unsuccessfully to persuade him to curtail his activities. Mr. Nixon was in some pain on the Middle East trip, Mr. Ziegler said, and likened the pain to that of a deep bruise.

He wore the elastic stocking throughout the trip, Mr. Ziegler said, and on returning to Washington he went to Camp David and elevated the leg. Much of the swelling went down, he said.

Main Concern Eased

Dr. Tkach believes that there is "no further possibility of the clotting portion of the difficulty breaking loose, which is one of the concerns of phlebitis," Mr. Ziegler said.

The ailment was confirmed only after CBS News reported it Monday night, but until today the White House spokesmen were hazy in their explanations of what happened. Dr. Tkach himself was restrained from discussing it fully aboard the President's plane yesterday by Mr. Ziegler, who stood over his shoulder throughout the questioning.

In his public appearances here, as on his Middle East tour, Mr. Nixon's face appeared heavy and mask-like in unguarded moments. At an airport reception yesterday, he seemed to rush through a long reception line, saying only "yes-yes, yes-yes" at every introduction.

Today, during a lull in the day-long ceremonies, Mr. Nixon



Associated Press

Mrs. Richard M. Nixon plucked a flower as she walked with Queen Fabiola of Belgium in the garden of the Royal Palace in Brussels yesterday.

emerged from the residence of the United States Embassy, where he and members of his party were housed, and walked, apparently without forewarning the Secret Service, two long blocks to the royal palace, where he was a guest at a luncheon.

He headed immediately to an iron fence that surrounds a park in front of the palace where crowds had gathered and poked his hand through the bars to shake hands, campaign style. At one point he encountered a bearded man and his wife, who identified themselves as residents of Georgia who lived near the Okefenokee Swamp.

"I know where it is," Mr. Nixon said. He started to walk

away, then turned and added, "dry it out."

He was greeted by a number of Belgians and other Europeans. He also shook hands with a man from Toronto who told him, "You are doing a marvelous job." Mr. Nixon responded, "You are going to have a football team pretty soon."

"Well," the man said, "we hope we may have a World Football League team, right." Mr. Nixon said, "Oh I know, you are paying enough for it." "You are right up to date," the man responded.

The President then struck up a conversation with a Briton and told him, "we have been trying to learn English in America for 200 years, and not doing very well."