

Doubt, confusion over Nixon's health

By Fraser Kent
Knight News Service

MIAMI — Maj. Gen. Walter Tkach, President Nixon's personal physician, has said his patient is "out of danger" but has refused to identify the location of the blood clot in Nixon's left leg.

This has been interpreted by some specialists in cardiovascular disease to mean that the President's thrombophlebitis may be more serious than has been disclosed.

Their fears have been reinforced by denials and reassurances by White House press officers that since have proven false.

All that is known is that there is a blood clot (or 'thrombus') associated with a localized inflammation of a vein in the leg. There is little chance of it breaking free, and there is no indication that surgery will be needed.

Specialists agree that it is impossible to determine how serious the condition is or what risk there is of long-term complications without knowing which vein is involved and at which point.

The general rule is that the higher the point of inflammation the more serious the medical problems, they said.

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Next for Nixon?

Associated Press

KEY BISCAYNE — As President Nixon relaxed in Florida, reports circulated yesterday about his next trip — a possible excursion to Japan in August.

A White House spokesman said that plans for further overseas travel "are not yet fixed," but reaffirmed that Nixon expects to visit Japan sometime this year.

Some White House sources confirmed yesterday that there has been discussion about a possible trip to Japan in August. But publicly, there was no such confirmation.

The veins of the leg, which steadily push blood back up to the lungs for a fresh supply of oxygen, becomes larger as they approach the groin.

As the vein increases in size — up to a half-inch in diameter — so does the clot that would block it. A thrombus may be large enough to

obstruct the leg's largest vein, said Dr. Arthur J. Hayes Jr. of Pennsylvania State University Medical School, and may be up to a foot long.

The larger the clot, the more completely it would block the blood's flow into the lung if it broke free and shot up to the pulmonary vein. There, it would stop the flow of blood through the lungs into the right side of the heart.

The Boston Globe reported yesterday that some specialists in phlebitis "are expressing grave concern about the way the President's case was diagnosed and treated."

Quoting unnamed doctors, the newspaper said the President's case "was not diagnosed with the most sophisticated methods available." Therefore, the doctors said, the diagnosis may have been inaccurate, and there might actually be no threat to Nixon's life.

On the other hand, the Globe said, "If the diagnosis was correct, some doctors think that the President did not receive the treatment considered routine in such cases."

The disorder was diagnosed June 10 but was kept secret until June 24.