

Doctor's View

Controversy on The State of Nixon's Health

New York

Former President Nixon remained secluded yesterday at his San Clemente estate instead of in a hospital, as his doctors had recommended, amid growing concern and controversy over the true state of his physical and mental health.

Concern over a flareup of Mr. Nixon's chronic phlebitis and formation of a new blood clot in his left thigh was heightened by statements from Air Force Major General Walter Tkach.

Tkach, who was chief White House physician in the Nixon administration examined the former President on Friday. 13 SEP

Tkach said in an interview published in Newsweek magazine that Mr. Nixon is under tremendous tension. "It's going to take a miracle for him to recover. I don't know whether I can pull him through."

Tkach was reported as saying that Mr. Nixon's condition was "much worse than when I saw him two weeks ago. He just has no bounce, no responsiveness at all."

Despite the change and the gloomy picture that he described, Tkach said he had not discussed Mr. Nixon's condition with Mrs. Nixon "for fear of frightening her." But Newsweek said Tkach added: "I guess she'll read this now and I guess that's good."

In Washington, United Press reporter Helen Thomas interviewed Tkach and said he has strongly recommended that the former President "not get under any more pressure."

Miss Thomas said there are indications that Mr. Nixon

on may seek on medical grounds to avoid testifying in the Watergate coverup trial beginning October 1. She said Tkach did not address himself to that question directly, but declared only:

"I'm recommending to him that he not get under any more pressure."

Tkach said in the UP interview that he had detected "no depression" in Mr. Nixon's mental state, but found him suffering from exhaustion.

"He seems to be more tired," Tkach said. "He doesn't have that bounce to attack."

He described Mr. Nixon as a "man looking back and wondering what had happened to topple him from the presidency."

Asked if Mr. Nixon's spirits had been lifted by President Ford's action in pardoning him for any illegalities during his presidency, the doctor declared, "The

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pardon didn't do him a damn bit of good."

He said he fears a buildup of more tension or pressure could lead to a heart attack because Mr. Nixon is under "severe physical strain."

Tkach, in an official statement last Friday, said Mr. Nixon had rejected a recommendation that he enter a hospital.

Tkach was later reported as saying that Mr. Nixon's rejection was based on the belief that: "If I go into the hospital, I'll never come out alive."

It remained unclear why Tkach did not reflect this degree of concern in the official statement he made after examining Mr. Nixon Friday at San Clemente. Nor is it clear whether Tkach's recommendation for hospitalization was based on the need for diagnostic tests or for more definitive medical treatment.

Tkach's bulletin did not make clear whether the phlebitis involves veins above (superficial) or beneath muscles in his leg. If the clot is in the deep venous system beneath the leg muscles, the risk of a piece breaking off and lodging in the lungs is much greater.

If the lung clot is large enough, it can cause sudden death.

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