

Nixon 'Almost Died' After His Surgery

Condition Still Listed As Critical

Long Beach

Former President Nixon almost died Tuesday after going into shock following surgery for phlebitis, his former White House press secretary said yesterday.

"There is no doubt that we almost lost President Nixon yesterday afternoon," Ronald L. Ziegler told an impromptu news conference at the hospital where Mr. Nixon is being treated.

Mr. Nixon's doctors have side-stepped questions as to whether his life was in danger during the crisis on Tuesday. He remained on the critical list yesterday.

Dr. John Lungren, Mr. Nixon's personal physician, said the former president has shown improvement. He said internal bleeding, which triggered the shock, has apparently stopped.

Lungren said that although Mr. Nixon's vital signs are stable, it is too early to make a prognosis on his condition.

Ziegler said, "I know that President Nixon has not lost the will to live . . . he's a man of great strength and great courage, and he will pull out of it."

Ziegler said Mr. Nixon's condition after he went into "vascular shock" — collapse of blood circulation — for three hours was so serious that "I think it's fortunate that President Nixon was in the intensive care

unit.

"It's also fortunate that the doctors were handy and could go through the necessary procedures to deal with the President's condition and pull him out of what was . . . a very serious condition."

The 61-year-old former president was said to be experiencing restlessness and receiving medication for pain and occasional nausea. He was also taking nourishment and antibiotics intravenously. Ziegler said Mr. Nixon received blood transfusions yesterday morning.

Lungren said Mr. Nixon received three pints of blood to counteract shock and internal bleeding, and "several more units are being held in reserve for him."

Mr. Nixon continues under the care of specially trained intensive care nurses, said Lungren, adding: "All emergency resuscitation equip-

Back Page Col. 5

From Page 1

ment for any contingency is at his bedside."

He said Mr. Nixon's heart activity and blood volume were being monitored continuously. A tube was being used to prevent swelling of Mr. Nixon's abdomen because Mr. Nixon could not move his bowels as a side-effect from the bleeding, a hospital spokesman said.

Anti-coagulation therapy—clot-fighting drugs that made Mr. Nixon prone to the bleeding which sent him into shock — was discontinued. Lungren said it will not be begun again "until we feel safe that bleeding from surgery is not a danger."

Lungren's remarks were in a three-page statement

More Nixon news on Page 13

read to newsmen by a spokesman for Memorial Hospital Medical Center of Long Beach.

Mr. Nixon had been taking anti-coagulants for weeks to reduce further blood clotting in his left leg. The clotting was induced by phlebitis, a vein disorder.

During the surgery, a one-inch plastic clamp resembling a clothespin with teeth was attached to a vein in Mr. Nixon's groin to keep leg clots that might break loose from traveling to Mr. Nixon's heart or lungs, where they could cause death or serious injury.

The serious complication will probably lengthen Mr. Nixon's stay in the hospital. After surgery, Lungren had said the former president would return to his San Clemente villa within a week to convalesce for four to six weeks.

Ziegler said Mr. Nixon's wife Pat and daughters Tricia and Julie, who flew here Tuesday night, are staying at a private residence near the hospital on the advice of Lungren.

President Ford will be in Los Angeles for a campaign appearance tonight, but a White House spokesman has said there are no plans for him to visit Mr. Nixon.

Associated Press



UPI Telephoto

Pat Nixon, Julie Eisenhower and Tricia Cox visited Mr. Nixon yesterday at the Long Beach hospital