

Pneumonia 'Responding Well' To Drugs, Nixon Doctors Say

By Stuart Auerbach
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LONG BEACH, Calif., Nov. 7 — Former President Nixon continued to improve today, his doctors said.

The minor case of pneumonia in Mr. Nixon's right lung "is responding well" to antibiotics, the doctors reported.

Nevertheless, Mr. Nixon is still very weak and faces a long period of recuperation from complications that brought him to the brink of death after an operation Oct. 29 to prevent life-threatening blood clots from flowing to his lung.

His attorney, Herbert J. Miller, in an affidavit, told the Watergate cover-up trial in Washington today that "the earliest time Mr. Nixon could participate without serious danger to his health in any activity requiring substantial mental or physical effort would be two to three months."

Miller said it would be even longer before the former President will be physically able to travel "any significant distance."

The attorney told U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica that it will be eight to 12 days before Mr. Nixon, 61, will be released from the hospital — jibing with unofficial reports here. Hospital spokesman Norman R. Nager refused to comment on the affidavit

except to say that he knew it had been filed.

The Miller affidavit in the Washington trial was based on telephone talks with Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's personal physician, and followed almost exactly the daily medical bulletins being issued at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center.

The attorney detailed for the court the series of medical complications that have plagued Mr. Nixon's recovery from surgery nine days ago.

These complications started with Mr. Nixon's going into shock as a result of massive internal bleeding six hours after the operation. Miller described the shock as "a total vascular collapse . . . that could have resulted in a terminal event."

He said the bleeding continued for several days, but the doctors now think that it has stopped.

Miller indicated, however, that the doctors still don't know the cause of an "abnormal" blood condition — "a marked decrease in Mr. Nixon's platelet count." Platelets are a clotting factor in the blood, and as a result of that complication the doctors have been unable to put Mr. Nixon back on the anti-coagulant treatment designed to keep blood clots from forming in his phlebitis-stricken left leg.

The doctors were quoted by Miller as saying they are continuing to run tests on Mr. Nixon in an effort to find the cause of the platelet count drop and to determine a treatment to prevent it.

Miller repeated the doctors' report that Mr. Nixon has a large mass of clotted blood, called a hematoma, in his left lower back. The hematoma is being gradually absorbed by the body. The doctors said they are hoping not to have to tap the blood mass, but Lungren said the absorption process "may take considerable time."

This mass of clotted blood pressing up on the left lung has caused a small amount of fluid to gather in the lung, a condition known as pleural effusion. Lungren reported today that the amount of fluid in the lung is decreasing.

Lungren said that Mr. Nixon's heartbeat and rhythms have "been remarkably stable through all the complications." As a result, the doctors stopped continually monitoring Mr. Nixon's heart activities.

Hospital spokesman Nager said today that the doctors still feel it is too soon to give a prognosis on Mr. Nixon's chance of recovery. Miller quoted Lungren in Washington as saying "the prognosis is guarded."