

Nixon Released From Hospital, Faces a Lengthy Recuperation

By Stuart Auerbach
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LONG BEACH, Calif., Nov. 14—Former President Nixon, wan and obviously weak, left the hospital here this morning for his home in San Clemente after a three-week stay, during which he almost lost his life.

His personal physician, Dr. John C. Lungren, prescribed a long, stress-free recuperation period for Mr. Nixon, 61, and said the court-ordered examination of the former President by a panel of three doctors named by U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica could cause unneeded stress that could be harmful.

Lungren said Mr. Nixon still faces the possibility of further medical problems as the result of the phlebitis in his left leg and the complications—including massive internal bleeding that threw him into shock—that followed an operation to stop life-threatening blood clots from going to his lungs.

Among the possible complications, Lungren said, are hepatitis as a result of the blood transfusions given Mr. Nixon and a painful swelling of his atitis as a result of the blood gate put on a vein in his leg to prevent clots from flowing to his lungs.

Another Nixon doctor, Eldon Hickman, declined to make a prediction for Mr. Nixon's full recovery, but said, "The prognosis is better today than it might have been a couple of weeks ago. I don't anticipate grave danger with the type of progress he's had, but I think it would be unrealistic to guess and speculate that problems wouldn't develop in the future."

This hospitalization has been hard on Mr. Nixon. He lost five pounds, on top of the five to 10 pounds he lost during his first 12-day hospital stay—that ended Oct. 4. The total weight loss of 10 to 15 pounds left him looking drawn, and a person who had seen him daily in the hospital said he is so weak he can barely walk across the hospital room and then needs two to three hours rest.

Hickman described Mr. Nixon as "tired and easily fatigable," but said that condition is normal after three weeks in the hospital.

Mr. Nixon left Memorial Hospital Medical Center of

Long Beach in a wheelchair, wearing ice-blue pajamas and a dark blue bathrobe. He appeared feeble as he was helped from his wheelchair into the back seat of a black limousine to join his wife, Pat, for the hour's drive south to his San Clemente estate, La Casa Pacifica.

He smiled and waved weakly as his car drove past the crowd of waiting reporters.

In San Clemente, Mr. Nixon will sleep in a hospital bed moved there so he can keep his phlebitis-stricken left leg elevated.

A Navy corpsman detailed to the former President will take daily blood samples and rush them 50 miles north to the hospital here for an analysis of his clotting times. This will tell if the anti-coagulation medicine coumadin he is getting to prevent new clots from forming is working.

His blood pressure, which has risen markedly during the past week when he is under physical or mental stress, will be carefully watched. And his activities will be restricted to short, non-tiring walks.

"Extended periods of standing, sitting and walking will not be permitted," Lungren said.

"At this time," he continued, "it is impossible for us, the attending physician, to render a decision on how long this restrictive period of activity will be necessary. The progress of the patient's recovery, the level of maintained anti-coagulation therapy, the absence of new complications will all play a role in this decision."

Both doctors called "unnecessary" the examination by the court-appointed doctors to see if Mr. Nixon is well enough to testify in the Watergate cover-up trial of his former aides. Lungren specifically refused to comment when he was asked whether he thought Judge Sirica was intruding into merical matters by sending his own doctors to examine Mr. Nixon.

The examination by the court-appointed doctors, Jungren said, could cause "a rather marked rise in blood pressure," which would be dangerous for Mr. Nixon. Patients with high blood pressure run an increased risk of internal bleeding when they take anti-coagulating drugs.

Hickman said the court-appointed panels examination

could be carried out in San Clemente. "I think it would be an unnecessary stress to bring him back to Long Beach simply for this examination," he said.

Hickman said the doctors, "under controlled conditions," could examine Mr. Nixon anytime — "today, tomorrow, next week. I don't think that the time is as important as the approach, the circumstances, the attitudes and other factors."

Aside from the blood pressure problem, the doctors appeared happy today with Mr. Nixon's recovery. His lungs—the right one stricken with pneumonia and the left with a small amount of fluid in it—continued to improve. The pin-sized blood clot discovered in his right lung during the first hospitalization is dissolving normally. And no new clots have flowed to his lungs.

Moreover, the Coumadin appears to be working—something it failed to do before this hospitalization. Lungren said Mr. Nixon's clotting time was 32 per cent of normal this morning as a result of taking 10 milligrams of Coumadin a day, and he hopes to get the clotting time down to 25 to 30 per cent of normal. When that happens, the dosage can be dropped to 7.5 milligrams a day.

The doctors decided against giving Mr. Nixon drugs to combat his occasional bouts of high blood pressure, possibly because they might inhibit the effects of the Coumadin.

"We are inclined to feel," Lungren said, "that as the patient is permitted to gain his strength during a proper con-

valence period without periods of stressful activity, this condition will rectify itself."

In a press conference, the doctors defended themselves against published comments by physicians not connected with the case that they had made mistakes in their treatment of Mr. Nixon. "We feel very strongly," said Lungren, "that former President Nixon has been treated by the highest caliber of Western medicine."

The basic cost to Mr. Nixon for his room, board and nurses during his hospital stay was put at \$3,184 by Jackie Wilson, director of public relations of the hospital. In addition, Mr. Nixon faces bills for the blood he received, for the many complicated lab tests performed for him, the daily lung x-rays and the specialized radiological examinations.

DR. JOHN A. SPELLE JR. DR. CHARLES A. HUFNAGEL DR. RICHARD S. ROSS
... appointed by Judge John Sirica to examine former President Nixon.

