

3 PHYSICIANS SEEK ADVICE ON NIXON

Ask Sirica if Patient Will Agree to Examination

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 14—The panel of three physicians appointed by Judge John J. Sirica is waiting to hear from the court whether former President Richard M. Nixon will agree to the examination the judge has ordered to determine if Mr. Nixon is physically able to give testimony in the Watergate cover-up trial.

At a news conference today, Dr. Charles A. Hufnagel of Georgetown University, the panel chairman, said he had asked for some clarification from the judge and expected it within a few days.

In answer to questions, Dr. Hufnagel said the panel would prefer to have the court establish the contacts for them with Mr. Nixon's aides and determine whether the examination would be opposed. The doctor, an internationally known heart surgeon, said that these were legal, not medical issues.

Judge Sirica had instructed the doctors to study Mr. Nixon's medical records, examine him physically if necessary, and report to the court by Nov. 29. They were instructed to report whether he was in fit condition to travel and testify at the trial in Washington, or testify on the West Coast or give a deposition in California and what conditions should be set to avoid risk to his health. Mr. Nixon left the hospital today for home in San Clemente, Calif.

Other Members

In addition to Dr. Hufnagel, who is known for pioneering work in heart valve development, the panel members are Dr. Richard Starr Ross, director of the adult cardiac clinic at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, and Dr. John A. Spittell Jr., a heart specialist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

Dr. Hufnagel said the three had consulted by telephone on the logistics of their mission but did not expect to meet until the latter part of next week. Dr. Ross is president of the American Heart Association and must attend the association's annual meeting Nov. 28 through 21 in Dallas.

Dr. Hufnagel said that the panel had not yet communicated with Mr. Nixon's doctors and presumably will not do so until Judge Sirica clarifies the situation.

Although Dr. Hufnagel did not commit himself on the question of whether a physical

examination of Mr. Nixon would be necessary, he said it might be difficult to make the report without doing so.

He said he thought such an examination could be done without endangering the former President's condition. He also expressed the opinion that a physical examination could be done only if Mr. Nixon agrees.

The panel's charge, the heart surgeon said, is only to determine whether Mr. Nixon is able to testify or give a deposition and under what circumstances. Such a determination might take a couple of days, he said.

In answer to a question, he said the panel would be "to some degree guided" by what Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's physician, tells the panel about his patient's condition.