

Nixon Finds Wallace in Good Spirits

SFChronicle
MAY 20 1972
United Press

Silver Spring, Md.

President Nixon paid a surprise hospital visit to Governor George C. Wallace yesterday and reported, "You would think he was just in for a tonsillectomy or something like that."

Mr. Nixon stopped off at Holy Cross Hospital on his way back to the White House from Camp David, Md., where he spent the past two days in seclusion preparing for his summit meeting with the Russians next week.

Mr. Nixon said the 52-year-old Alabama governor "wished me well" on the trip. "I told him that when I returned I would see to it, if he wanted to, that he got a briefing on some of the things we discuss in the Soviet Union."

Arriving just before 9 a.m., Mr. Nixon visited about 40 minutes with Wallace, who is still paralyzed from the waist down from a

See Back Page

From Page 1

spinal injury suffered in an attempted assassination Monday at nearby Laurel, Md.

Just before the President arrived, the hospital issued a medical bulletin saying that Wallace's temperature had declined somewhat and that he had spent "a good night" although he still had no feeling in his legs.

FOOD

After Mr. Nixon's visit, Wallace sat for a while in a hospital chair and took his first food since he was shot, a half-bowl of chicken broth. Until then he had been fed intravenously.

Mr. Nixon told reporters that Wallace's eyes were bright and "he is very alert and in good spirits. He has not been depressed."

Mr. Nixon said he and Wallace did not discuss politics but he also had a "good talk" with Wallace's wife, Cornelia, 32, who married the governor about 16 months ago after the death of his first wife, Lurleen, from cancer.

After visiting Wallace, Mr. Nixon went to nearby Walter Reed Army Medical Center to see Secret Service agent Nicholas Zarvos, 37, who was shot through the throat during the attempted assassination.

FIND

Maryland state officials meantime reported that a piece-by-piece search of a car registered to Arthur H. Bremer, 21, Milwaukee, accused of shooting Wallace, had turned up a second pistol.

Prince Georges county police said they found a 9mm automatic in a door panel of the car when they tore it apart and searched it after the FBI had conducted a regular search. Wallace was shot with a snub-nosed .38. One of the slugs caused Wallace's paralysis when it lodged near his spine. The revolver was recovered at the scene.

Wallace's Hopeful Message

SILVER SPRING (Md.) — (AP) — George Wallace has given his supporters a thank-you message with a political flavor, and his press secretary says that means he is continuing his presidential campaign.

"I want to thank the people of Alabama for staying with us," Wallace said in a message relayed to newsmen yesterday by his press secretary, Billy Joe Camp.

"They are responsible for the new direction in this country because most of the politicians are now sounding like us," the Alabama governor said.

Responding to questions, Camp said the statement could be interpreted as Wallace's first move toward resuming his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Spinal Canal

As his third and strongest presidential bid gained momentum, Wallace was struck down by a would-be assassin at a shopping center rally near here Monday. He has yet to learn whether the bullet still lodged in his spinal canal will leave him a permanent cripple.

However, the day brought a reminder that there is hope that some degree of mobility could return to the Alabama governor. His principal neurosurgeon consultant has indicated there is a long-shot possibility the restoration could be "significant," although it is improbable.

The remark by Dr. James Galbraith of the University of Alabama Medical School was largely overlooked when made to newsmen earlier this week in the light of his statement that Wallace had less than a 50-50 chance of walking again.

Galbraith also said, according to a transcript of the news conference:

"There is no deadline... for saying that, after this point in time there is no hope for recovery."

Galbraith added: "We simply say, in general, that the longer he goes without any improvement, the poorer the outlook for any improvement later on."

A bullet remains lodged in Wallace's spinal canal, possibly "impinging on" his spinal cord, according to Galbraith. The cord is said to be damaged, but if it is not severed he may walk again.

If the spinal cord is severed, however — and Wallace's surgeons say they don't know yet whether it is not — there can be no regeneration of nerve fibers, no return of either mobility or sensation.

Muscle Tone

The medical bulletins had little to add. Doctors said Wallace's legs remain paralyzed and that he is continuing physical therapy to maintain muscle tone and blood circulation.

He was taken off intravenous feeding and given a meal of chicken broth.

Meanwhile, authorities continued to probe the circumstances of the attack by Arthur Bremer who is charged with the shooting.

Prince George's County police searched Bremer's car and said they found a gun apparently overlooked in earlier FBI searches.

State's Atty. Arthur A. Marshall Jr. said a 9-millimeter Browning semiautomatic pistol and one clip were found. The gun allegedly used in the shooting was a .38-caliber pistol.