

8:50PM--10:43PM, Sept. 30, 1974POOL REPORTPresident Visits Wife Betty at Bethesda

President Ford ate dinner and then departed the White House through the South Diplomatic Entrance at 8:21PM. He was accompanied by Don Rumsfeld.

Motorcade led by single park police car crossed Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and took the George Washington Parkway to the Beltway and then to the Naval Hospital arriving at approximately 8:30 PM.

The president spoke briefly with waiting reporters.

He said: "They (the doctors) told me what the announcement was that was published. And it's I think good but there are also some questions raised and we're going to do whatever the doctors advise."

He said, in answer to a question whether he is optimistic: "I certainly am. Because, uh, I think they're the experts. We'll follow their advice. And with her strong, fine attitude I think everything will work out all right."

About an hour and 15 minutes later, the president emerged from the hospital. He appeared red-eyed and tired. But he offered a cheerful "good evening" to the waiting reporters.

(more)

It was 10:13PM.

He said: "She was feeling much, much better. She had some liquid...she sat up...she had been up today and it was a great improvement and she gave me a hard time about a couple of things so she must be feeling better."

The president was asked if Mrs. Ford had complained about his not visiting earlier.

He answered: "No, she understood I had a number of things I had to talk about at the office and work on..."

Asked the basis of his optimism, the president answered: "They told me the same thing they told all of you and that information is optimistic as far as I am concerned. She feels great."

Asked if he's set a date for his appearance before the Hungate Subcommittee, the president declined to answer and moved to his car.

The motorcade retraced its path and arrived at the White House at 10:43PM.

Rumsfeld and the president spoke briefly outside the limousine before going inside the White House.

(The president carried two gifts--we were told they were from "friends" and not told what they were--to Mrs. Ford, in addition to a card from the Secret Service).

Jim McManus
Westinghouse Broadcasting