

Haggard Nixon Look Has Europe Worried



How the President's appearance has changed from, left during his re-election campaign . . . center, during April 30 TV speech on Watergate affair . . . and, right, just before entering Bethesda Naval Hospital

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ROME — America's European allies are becoming increasingly concerned about President Nixon.

The hospitalization of the President coupled with the haggard look of his face in recent photos has led to anxieties that the ordeal of the Watergate scandal on top of the other domestic and foreign problems confronting him may be proving too much of a strain.

Washington reports have created the impression that he may have been on the verge of a nervous breakdown when he entered the hospital to be treated for a viral pneumonia condition. His inability to sleep more than a few hours a night despite sedation was seen as an indication of an extremely troubled mind.

West German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel who conferred with the President in Washington two days before he went to hospital, reported on his return to Bonn that the American leader looked pale and very fatigued. Officers in Bonn

There was speculation in Western European political and diplomatic circles over what effect the President's health might have on his handling of the Watergate problem.

Counterattack?

If he recovers quickly from the viral pneumonia and regains his physical strength, it is assumed he will counter-attack to attempt to clear himself of the

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implied charges and suspicion that he was involved in the Watergate cover-up. Prior to the President's entry into Bethesda Naval Hospital, one Western European envoy in Washington informed his foreign office that in his opinion it was highly improbable Nixon would resign or be impeached by Congress.

Following former Attorney General John Mitchell's testimony at the Watergate hearings, the London Daily Telegraph said, "Mr. Nixon seems to be over the worst. His position will be weakened but not fatally."

What now worries Western

id Brezhnev, too, is the extent to which the President's physical well-being may have been affected by the strain he has been under. If his health has been seriously impaired, he might be tempted to resign.

Most of the European allied leaders, and presumably the Soviet and Chinese leaders as well, want to see Mr. Nixon remain President.

While the British, French, German and Italian governments disagree with some of the President's foreign policies, especially monetary and trade, and feel that he has failed to consult them sufficiently in connection with Soviet-American negotiations, nevertheless they regard as great historic achievements the successful moves he has made to improve relations with Russia and China and get the United States militarily out of the Vietnam war.

Furthermore, the apparently good personal relationship he has established with Brezhnev is considered of great importance for progress in the East-West détente movement in Europe

and for a further curbing of the nuclear arms race between the two super powers.

While the allied governments therefore want to see Nixon remain President, they are at the same time somewhat concerned over the effect of Watergate on his diplomacy. The possibility is foreseen that he may seek new foreign policy successes to distract attention from Watergate.

Uneasiness over the outcome of the recent Nixon-Brezhnev meeting in the United States was particularly evident in Paris and Bonn. There was concern

that the Soviet-American pledge to avoid the risk of nuclear war might affect America's nuclear protection of Western Europe, weakening the link between the use of tactical nuclear weapons and conventional arms in the event of war.

As long as President Nixon remains in the White House with sufficient authority to conduct America's foreign affairs, the European allies feel they can count on the United States to pursue a pragmatic policy to preserve world peace. That question of the President's health coupled with the uncertainty of the effect of Watergate on his authority is a matter of serious concern to them.