

W. Post

8/19/74

Nixon Situation Stirs World Interest

From News Dispatches

The world's news media showed intense interest in the reports that President Nixon's resignation was imminent, but most foreign leaders were silent.

Even the Soviet people were officially told during the day yesterday that President Nixon, who made a triumphant visit to the Soviet Union only six weeks ago, was now about to resign.

Soviet media had paid scant attention to Watergate right up until yesterday.

The revelation was made to millions of viewers in Moscow television's main evening news program of Mr. Nixon's impending resignation.

Two announcers, a man and a woman, successively read reports from the official news agency Tass saying that Mr. Nixon had called Vice President Gerald Ford to the White House to inform him of his resignation.

Tass did not indicate why Mr. Nixon was resigning.

It also carried comments by Sen. Edward Brooke (R-Mass.) that Mr. Nixon should not be prosecuted if he resigns. It was the first time the media suggested to the Soviet public there was any possibility that Mr. Nixon might go to jail.

Radio Moscow earlier alerted millions of listeners that Mr. Nixon was not long for political life. The radio quoted Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) as its source.

The radio quoted Sen. Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Democratic majority leader, and Sen. Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican minority leader, as say-

ing they would continue to support détente.

The Soviet press also quoted assurances by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger that no foreign power need fear any change in Washington's chosen policy.

Whatever his troubles at home, President Nixon got generally favorable marks abroad for his diplomatic contributions to world peace. There were a number of expressions of anxiety about the effects of his resignation on the world situation.

The Israeli mass-circulation newspaper Maariv warned that Mr. Nixon's departure might damage the recent Middle East peace initiatives.

"The Middle East agreements reached with the mediation of Dr. Kissinger... are not in the framework of mutual commitments, but agreements reached between each party and the Secretary of State," it said. "The change of personalities in the White House may reveal the weakness of the agreements."

But Mohammed Hassan Helkal, once Egypt's most powerful newspaperman, was quoted as saying, "President Nixon has become weak and the Arabs do not need a weak President."

Helkal, former editor of Cairo's semi-official newspaper Al-Ahram said, "Nixon is a Godfather... When you find that the sole preoccupation of the American President is to conspire against justice, offer bribes, lie to people and violate the Constitution, you can easily foretell his future."
A Syrian-backed Beirut

paper said that Arab nations cannot afford to pin their hopes on individual personalities in the U.S. government, but must concentrate instead on convincing the American leadership in general that American and Arab interests are linked.

A government official in Saigon said that the last act in the Watergate drama is giving North Vietnam and the Vietcong just the right opportunity for an all-out offensive.

"The disturbances in the United States, its political problems, would be the hands of America even if it wanted to help us," said the official, who declined to be identified.

He said the fall of President Nixon could mean that the next few months would be the most dangerous for South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have stepped up attacks in the central and northern parts of the country and the Congress has voted to cut further military aid for South Vietnam.

Few Europeans praised Nixon as strongly as Alfonso Paso, editorial writer for the Madrid newspaper Alcazar, who said:

"He was the first President in the history of the United States who was neither a braggart nor excessive, the only one who gave his people a lesson in humility which it needed since 1929... He was much better than Kennedy, than Truman or Johnson."

Jeremy Campbell, writing from Washington in the Evening Standard in London urged Americans to

treat Mr. Nixon "with accommodation and even generosity. He has, after all, shown the state some service."

The Economist magazine of London said the time has passed when Mr. Nixon was necessary to be United States or the world for the sake of his foreign policy.

"That might have been true a year ago," it said. "It is not like that any longer. The past year has seen some spectacular successes for American diplomacy... But these have been the successes of quick-footed American diplomats deploying the sort of bargaining power the United States would command wherever was in the White House."

"The central issues of American policy, the ones that have to do with Russia and China and Europe, have moved on since this time last year," The Economist said. "Mr. Nixon is no longer in a position to argue that he is his country's, and the world's, indispensable man."

The Manchester Guardian, the leading Liberal Party paper in Britain, recalled, "In one of his televised statements, President Nixon declared, 'I am not a crook.'" The tapes have shown him to be both a liar and a crook."

The British Daily Telegraph, a Conservative Party paper that has supported Mr. Nixon, came reluctantly to the conclusion that the American President should resign. Its editorial said that Mr. Nixon "slipped into one misjudgment after another, into one semi-dishonesty after another."