

Pravda Suggests Nixon Is Imperiled

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, May 18 — Pravda, the official Soviet Communist Party newspaper, today published an unusual article on relations with the United States which seemed to contain a subtle warning that President Nixon may not survive in office.

Pravda's carefully worded article is the latest of several signs that the Soviet authorities are trying to prepare the public for a possible change of presidents in Washington. Until recently, Soviet propaganda organs virtually ignored Watergate, and have never speculated on its possible consequences.

(In Warsaw, the Polish Communist Party newspaper Polityka came out with a strong editorial supporting Mr. Nixon but telling its readers, "The President who could have gone down in history as the President of peace is at bay.")

The speculation now is opaquely worded, but an alert Soviet reader will understand the new message.

The main theme of Pravda's article today is that despite the difficult domestic political situation, and the activities of opponents of detente, the main lines of Mr. Nixon's foreign policies are supported by politicians of both parties and a majority of the public.

"Precisely this allows the ruling circles in America to follow the course set in the two Soviet-American summit meetings . . . despite all the complications and contradictions of the internal political situation existing in the country," Pravda said.

In other words, those "ruling circles" — all powerful in the Marxist world view — will stick to the path President Nixon and Soviet Party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev have set.

Pravda also describes as "fantasies" suggestions that the Soviet Union would try "to use the internal difficulties of the American administration to get some concessions from it."

Pravda's article is signed by R. Vasilyev and V. Slavin, neither staff writers on the paper. Such unfamiliar bylines on a major commentary give them added weight.

There was another example of the shifting Soviet position on Mr. Nixon's survival prospects on television recently. Yuri Zhukov, Pravda's chief

commentator, said a viewer had asked him if Mr. Nixon's signature on the recent treaties and agreements with the Soviet Union will remain valid when another President takes office in America.

Of course, Zhukov replied, Mr. Nixon signed for the U.S. government, and the signatures remain valid. Zhukov implied he was talking about the President who will take office after the 1976 elections, but this formality did not change the message.

According to reports circulating in Moscow, closed meet-

ings of branches of the Communist Party are being read a new report on the Watergate affair prepared by the Soviet embassy in Washington. According to unconfirmable reports, this document is a frank evaluation of the seriousness of the President's current difficulties.

Yet the Soviet Union has shown no interest in postponing or canceling the President's planned visit next month, or in risking any open insult to Mr. Nixon. "As long as he is the President we will treat him like a President," one Soviet official observed recently.

Pravda's only references to Mr. Nixon's visit were quotations from Sens. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) that the President must go to Moscow "enjoying the full support of the American people." Even here Pravda avoided using Mr. Nixon's name.

Diplomats here generally agree the Soviets have no other choice. The men in the Kremlin do not want to jeopardize improved relations with the United States so they will do nothing that could be interpreted as exploiting Watergate.

Some diplomats here feel that the Soviet preoccupation with maintaining detente actually strengthens Mr. Nixon's hand, despite his domestic problems, since the Soviets will be anxious to avoid any impression that they are taking advantage of a weakened President.

Taking short term advantage now, these diplomats reason, would damage Soviet interests in the long run, when a new and stronger President is in the White House.

Imperiled

Polish Praise Nixon, Criticize U.S. Press

Agence France-Presse

WARSAW, May 18—The Polish Communist Party newspaper Polityka today came out with a strong editorial supporting President Nixon and castigating the U.S. press for tormenting him with the "juicy" sensations of Watergate.

Giving the United States crisis of conscience over Watergate a great amount of space for the first time in Poland, Polityka said Mr. Nixon appeared hunted down by the

press, Democrats and the enemies of the East-West detente.

The article is signed by Polish journalist Daniel Passent. Previously Polish newspapers, like other Eastern bloc countries have handled the story very discreetly and quietly.

Polityka did not challenge the accusations against President Nixon. But it said, "urgent internal and foreign affairs are waiting. This is why what began as a cheap burglary in a hotel does not interest only the American people."

Polityka said Mr. Nixon was under "pressure and threat of blackmail" from his colleagues. "He is more and more obliged to save his own skin which progressively limits his possible achievements as President."

The newspaper noted that Congress would deal with impeachment. But it said so far Nixon had not been proved guilty.

Polityka outlined Mr. Nixon's successes in foreign affairs by contrast with the internal affair of Watergate. His presidency had brought about an improvement in East-West relations, concrete results in the limitation of strategic

arms, the development of trade, the Vietnam cease-fire and hopes of an end to the impasse in the Middle East, Polityka said.

As for the Democrats, the newspaper suggested that lacking a leader around whom they could rally they had united "in their aversion to Richard Nixon."

Polityka accused the U.S. press and the enemies of the detente of having lain in wait for just such an opportunity as Watergate presented.

For the press Watergate was "a very tasty tit-bit", the paper said. This "juicy" sensation allowed the press to "torment" Mr. Nixon with impunity.

Polityka's editorialist described the two Washington Post journalists who had first uncovered the affair as having found the goose that laid the golden egg. He noted they had made several thousand dollars from Playboy magazine.

Polityka's editorial ended with a question mark as to whether President Nixon would survive. It told the Polish people: "The President who could have gone down in history as the President of peace is at bay."