

SOVIET STRESSES DEMOCRATS' ROLE

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Press Reports on the Trip
by Nixon Hint Bid for
Bipartisan Support
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MOSCOW, June 2—The Soviet press, in its first significant comment on President Nixon's visit since the date was announced on Friday, stressed today that the summit meeting beginning June 27 enjoyed the backing of Democrats as well as Republicans in Congress.

The commentary in Pravda, following several other recent articles, indicated that the Russians may have embarked upon a new tack more favorable to the Democratic opposition because of a reassessment of the Watergate affair.

The shift toward Congress became evident two weeks ago when a Soviet delegation left for the United States on a visit that was aimed at meetings with prominent Congressional leaders on Capitol Hill at a time when Congress was moving closer to impeachment proceedings against the President.

Throughout the visit, the So-

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viet press dwelt on the bipartisan nature of the delegation's meetings. Earlier, the press had been critical of the Democrats for opposing the President, particularly on the issue of trade concessions and credits, and had even contended that the Watergate affair was "being fanned by the President's political adversaries."

Advances Noted

In its weekly international review today, Pravda reported that the delegation's conversations with Congressmen as well as business leaders in the United States had confirmed that a real basis existed for developing Soviet-American relations.

The delegation, which returned last week, was headed by Boris Ponomarev, an alternate member of the Politburo who is considered a relative conservative in the Kremlin.

Mr. Ponomarev normally deals with nongoverning Communist parties and it was suggested here that he might have been sent to Washington to en-

courage more flexibility among the hard-line faction of the leadership in dealing with the United States.

In the course of the visit, Pravda reported that "another important channel of Soviet-United States relations has been inaugurated" by the meetings on Capitol Hill and stressed that "it is rather significant that the hospitality accorded the Soviet parliamentarians in Washington was of a bipartisan character."

The Soviet press emphasized that the delegation had been greeted by such leading Democrats as Senator Mike Mansfield, Senator John J. Sparkman and Senator Russell B. Long, as well as by Republican leaders, including Mr. Nixon.

Disappointed Over Fulbright

In another reference to Congress last week the press here expressed disappointment over the defeat of Senator J. W. Fulbright, a Democrat who has often been quoted here, in the Arkansas Democratic primary.

Speaking today of Mr. Nixon's visit, Pravda made no mention of Watergate. Nor was there any reference to the calls within Congress for him to put off his trip to Moscow lest his domestic problems leave him negotiating from a position of weakness.

On the contrary, the Communist party newspaper reported that "it is characteristic that the rivals of the Republicans, prominent representatives of the Democratic party, came out most recently with statements in support of the visit of Richard Nixon to the U.S.S.R."

Pravda reported that they were interested in achieving agreements on the limitation of strategic arms and nuclear tests as well as the further development of trade—issues that the Soviet leadership will be giving priority in the coming talks.

In connection with the visit, two American delegations arrived in the Soviet Union last Wednesday to meet with Soviet specialists on the issues of energy and the limitations of nuclear underground tests.