

All Europe Suddenly Focuses On the Political Crisis in U.S.

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By TERRY ROBARDS AUG 8 1974

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LONDON, Aug. 7—A storm of intense reaction to President Nixon's latest Watergate disclosures is sweeping Europe, where the American political crisis has suddenly eclipsed all other issues in public debate.

In virtually every European capital, Mr. Nixon's plight has been treated with banner headlines on newspaper front pages. Radio and television have been blanketed with special Watergate programming and talk shows are getting calls from listeners who want to discuss Watergate.

Many Europeans are taking the affair seriously for the first time, after having regarded it as no more than a domestic American squabble of little consequence. Now the realization is setting in that Mr. Nixon's

ability to retain the Presidency is in doubt.

In London, where gamblers customarily can legally bet or anything, the bookmakers have stopped taking bets at any odds against the survival of Mr. Nixon as President. Only last week it was even money that the President would finish out his term of office.

In Rome, a public official said: "it is an interesting switch in the mentality of America. Before, no one dreamed of expecting that politicians would be completely honest. Now, with Watergate they are suddenly supposed to be lily white."

Government officials every

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where in Europe were reluctant to comment publicly on the situation. Generally, however, political leaders have followed the Watergate affair much more closely than most others and, therefore, are less surprised than the public.

Press Comment Caustic

The comment in newspapers has been the most caustic in memory. In Paris, *Le Monde*, the authoritative daily, said in an editorial: "There is something pathetic in what must be called the uncontrollable agony of President Nixon. The most recent restatement Monday, which is evidently not the last, is at the same time overwhelming and pitiful."

The *Guardian*, normally one of Britain's moderate newspapers, said today in a front-page banner headline: "Nixon Is Dead — But He Won't Lie Down." The article beneath the headline said in its first paragraph: "He is displaying a masochistic determination to stay until the bitter end."

In an editorial, the same newspaper said: "Better a mediocrity than a crook," adding, "The tapes have shown him to be both a liar and a crook."

The *Times* of London, calling for the President's resignation, said: "Mr. Nixon is finished. There can no longer be any doubt about that after his extraordinary statement on Mon-

day night." The paper added that the President had "finally removed any lingering doubt about his guilt."

The *Daily Telegraph*, perhaps Britain's most conservative paper, said in an editorial that Mr. Nixon could no longer hope to maintain a viable Presidency. "The sordid clique which he brought into the White House and with which he talked in a sleazy and obscenely vulgar style entirely absent from his talks and contacts with others seems to have corroded part of his character," the paper said.

A Text Printed in Hamburg

In West Germany the conservative Hamburg daily *Die Welt* took the unusual step for a West German paper of running the text of one of the tape recordings involving a discussion between President Nixon and his former chief aide, H. R. Haldeman, about limiting the Federal Bureau of Investigation when it was looking into Watergate matters.

Another respected West German paper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, said that it was time now for Mr. Nixon to resign. "Nixon's ability to deal with foreign affairs has diminished even more, close to nil, in fact," the paper said. "This state of affairs—until now, perhaps bearable—cannot last for months without dangers for peace, security and progress."

Despite their almost exclu-

sive preoccupation with internal problems, two of Portugal's leading papers featured stories and pictures of Mr. Nixon on their front pages. One of them, *Diário de Notícias*, spoke of the President's "historic confessions."

The only major newspaper in Italy still supporting President Nixon openly is the organ of the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement, the most right-wing of the parliamentary parties. It said today in a headline: "The White House Rallies Around Nixon."

The left-wing *Paese Sera* commented: "Today America knows, beyond any doubt, that its 37th president has been a fraud." The paper characterized the President's announced decision not to resign as "a final act of arrogance."

Rome's *Il Tempo* wrote: "The end of Nixon is the salvation of the Republican party, which can now hope to arrive renewed and purified at the Congressional elections in November."

In Switzerland both the *24 Heures* of Lausanne and *La Tribune de Genève* said the Watergate crisis: had proved the strength of the American system. "The strength of the system has been demonstrated by the weakness of the man who is supposed to incarnate it," *La Tribune* said.

France's *L'Est Républicain*, a provincial newspaper, also suggested that the Watergate crisis had some favorable aspects. "The Americans discover with amazement that this unprece-

dent event, the fall of a President, can occur without miring the nation in insoluble problems," the paper said, adding: "With amazement and not pride. Their laws permit it, their democracy, their liberties come out reinforced."

L'Aurore, a conservative French daily, called President Nixon "an inveterate gambler who does not leave the table when he is frantic." It continued: "Even when he is in the process of losing his shirt and his honor, even if he drags down his family, his entourage and an entire country in his fall, the gambler stays riveted to his game."

Le Figaro Supports Nixon

Another leading conservative paper, *le Figaro*, was virtually alone among leading publications in maintaining its support of the President. "How can one put in balance what is, in sum, only the smudge of an election campaign with the work of a President who can be proud of having made peace with Mao and Brezhnev, who brought Europe to heel and who avoided the worst in the Middle East?" the paper asked. "Judged in its true perspective, the Watergate dossier does not hold."