

# MOSCOW IS CALM ABOUT U.S. SHIFT

It Tells People That Nixon's  
Departure Will Not Mean  
a Collapse of Detente

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Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Aug. 9 — Assured by the Kremlin that détente would not collapse just because one American personality was gone, the Soviet people learned today of President Nixon's resignation and seemed to react with equanimity.

For the first time since the Watergate scandal came to light, President Nixon's vain struggle to stay in office was accorded front-page treatment in the Soviet press today. Soviet radio broadcast frequent bulletins from Tass, the official news agency, during the day.

As expected, there was no official Soviet comment on the resignation. The impression here was that although Soviet leaders were following American political developments with great interest, they did not regard the situation as a crisis in Soviet terms.

## Brezhnev on Vacation

According to diplomatic sources, Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet Communist party leader, intends to continue his summer vacation in the Crimea, and there have been no known high-level meetings of party or Government officials to discuss the change in American administrations.

According to a Western diplomat, one Soviet official said privately: "It's too bad this has happened. I regret this. At the same time, we must recognize that personalities are not all that important."

"Perhaps we can say that Nixon has made his contribution."

At lower levels of Russian society, reactions varied. Foreigners were asked whether they knew anything about Mr. Ford—how old he was, what he looked like, and so forth.

As usual, press comment was indirect and ambiguous.

The Soviet Communist party organ Pravda took a somewhat truculent tone this morning before the resignation was reported here. An article on détente, without mentioning the imminent departure of President Nixon, appeared to warn his successor against trying to take advantage of the currently improved international climate.

"However, furious counter-attacks against the advancing forces of peace and socialism may be, they will not be able to arrest the march of history and the social progress of mankind," the article said.

"The fall of anti-Communism and the triumph of Communism are equally inevitable," it concluded.

## Poem by Yevtushenko

But the evening newspaper Izvestia, which is the organ of the Soviet Government, appeared to be taking a very different tone.

It carried a poem by Yevgeni Yevtushenko, which, the poet said, he had written two days ago when it became apparent that President Nixon was about to leave office.

In an analysis, Izvestia's political commentator, Vikenti Matveyev, gave the first official Soviet view of President Nixon's departure. He said:

"In the development and improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the question of détente in general, there is a basis of national support in the U.S.A., that does not depend on membership in the Democratic or Republican party, or some or other vacillation in that country's political atmosphere."

The article concluded, in effect, that détente had become irreversible.

The Kremlin's reaction to Watergate has changed significantly over the last year and by early this spring Moscow had begun to cushion itself against the growing likelihood of Mr. Nixon's departure.

Initially, Soviet officials, ranking newspaper editors and

specialists on American affairs dismissed the Watergate scandal as a minor affair unlikely to touch Mr. Nixon or to have any impact on Soviet-American relations.

The second phase of Soviet reaction was to treat the Watergate affair more seriously and to charge that critics and opponents of détente were using Watergate not only to attack Mr. Nixon but also to attack his policy of accommodation with the Soviet Union. This view prevailed until the winter.

## Reappraisal Undertaken

But following the removal from office of Vice President Agnew, the Kremlin undertook a basic reappraisal. In February the outward indications were that the most knowledgeable Soviet officials and an-

alysts saw Watergate as a genuine threat to Mr. Nixon and realized that it was the result of domestic political differences and not focused primarily on Soviet-American relations.

The tenor of Soviet press treatment of Congress and of Democratic party liberals began to change and the Kremlin invited Senator Edward Kennedy to visit Moscow. Later a delegation was sent to the United States to meet Congressional leaders.

By the time Mr. Nixon arrived in Moscow for his talks with Mr. Brezhnev this June, the Soviet leader had disengaged himself considerably from the beleaguered American President to avoid being personally hurt should Mr. Nixon fall.

NYT 8-10-74