

FOREIGN INTEREST IN SCANDAL RISES

Dean Spurs Press Coverage,
but Confusion Abounds

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LONDON, July 3—The testimony of John W. Dean 3d against President Nixon has revived worldwide press interest in the Watergate scandals, but foreigners have generally remained confused and apathetic about the events.

A spot survey by New York Times correspondents in Europe, Asia and the Middle East showed that many newspapers outside the Soviet bloc had expanded their coverage after the former White House counsel accused the President of participating in the cover-up of the bugging and burglary of Democratic party headquarters last year. But the coverage has slipped in recent days with the subject relegated to inside pages and with editorial comment virtually nil.

Despite the startling nature of the Dean testimony, the importance of the whole affair and its ramifications still seem to escape most foreigners. From the start, many said it was too complicated to follow and only served to confirm their long-held suspicions that political life included too many evil men.

The Dean charges did little to clear the air for the citizens in London, Paris, Cairo, Tokyo, Sydney and other capitals checked in the survey. Many complained that the confusion was merely compounded and added that their own interests focused on events closer to home and easier to comprehend.

Key Japanese Question

In Tokyo, where the Japanese press has been dominated by articles on local elections, the United States ban on soybean exports, and a fish pollution scare, the public mood was said to have been best summed up by Marshall Green, the new American Ambassador to Australia and a recent visitor to Japan. In answer to a question, he said the Japanese were mainly interested in "whether Sony equipment was used [in the bugging] and if not, why not."

At Government levels, the Dean charges are viewed with greater interest and greater awareness of the significance of the allegations and their potential danger for the President. The continuing weakness of the dollar on the world money markets, for example, is seen at these levels as one consequence of the Watergate affair.

While officials in foreign capitals have been careful to avoid public comments on Watergate, there is private concern over the increasing speculation that the charges could lead to Mr. Nixon's resignation. In one of the few Watergate editorials in Britain last week, for example, the conservative Daily Telegraph said that Mr. Dean's charges, if substantiated, were enough to secure Mr. Nixon's "impeachment or at least force his resignation."

Such an event would not be welcomed by officials in most of the surveyed capitals, including those in Eastern Europe. The official feeling is that the resignation of Mr. Nixon would lead to a period of global instability just when the superpowers were hard at work trying to foster detente.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Dean allegations were given the usual silent treatment in the press

and radio. All along, the Moscow press and other newspapers in the Soviet bloc have avoided printing any news articles on the affair.

The Soviet leadership apparently fears that if the issue were publicized in the Soviet press it would raise questions among the Russians as to why their leaders want to deal with a President who appears to be in such deep trouble. Moreover, Soviet and East European leaders hope to engage in serious business with the President and do not want to offend him by Watergate coverage, no matter how objective.

The official assessments in most capitals focus on just how much Mr. Nixon's authority has been undermined by the scandals. The Economist here worried about American "paralysis." Several newspapers in other countries described Mr. Nixon as a President with "clipped wings" who faced increasing troubles with Congress.

Still, correspondents reported that the public in general appeared "bored" or "jaded," "uninterested" and "bewildered" by the charges and countercharges. They agreed, however, that the Dean testimony was another blow to the image of the President.