

Press Reaction

Europe's View Of Cox Affair

London

The European press expressed concern yesterday that the U.S. government's latest Watergate crisis might hamper America's effectiveness as a peacemaker in the Middle East.

Derek Marks, the political correspondent of the Daily Express of London, described President Nixon's action in the dismissal of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox as "arrogance that threatens us all."

Citing the negotiations in Moscow between U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet leaders, Marks said: "It strikes one as totally incomprehensible that President Nixon should deliberately choose this moment to provoke a major constitutional crisis in the United States over the release of the Watergate tapes."

Fred Emery, the Washington correspondent of the Times of London, wrote that as the FBI sealed off Cox's files "the whiff of the Gestapo was in the clear October air."

"Some of the soberest men in government and out are now privately expressing anxiety that the military might now intervene—either to back the President or throw him out," Emery wrote. "It seems the stuff of nightmares but too much has happened this year for men to disbelieve anything they hear when they are awake."

The Financial Times of London said, "One must hope that a settlement of the

Middle East war is not prejudiced by Mr. Nixon's actions, but it is becoming increasingly uncertain how long American foreign policy can be insulated from the political crisis at home."

The Danish conservative Berlingske Tidende sounded a similar note. In a serious international situation," the newspaper said, "with the United States involved in difficult and important negotiations over a cease-fire in the Middle East, the political crisis in Washington must seem especially depressing and cause anxiety."

Most West German newspapers headlined the story on front pages.

The middle-of-the-road West German paper Politiken, under the headline "The Crime Goes On," commented:

"Obviously there are no limits to what President Nixon and his companions in the White House will do to stop the investigation of the Watergate crimes. For the Washington Congress there seems nothing else to do than go ahead with impeachment procedures when the Senate hearings are over..."

The conservative Die Welt of Hamburg said, however: "What Nixon did appears scandalous. But it is to be asked whether he did not act in a kind of self-defense and whether America, whether its allies, ... should wish that he may fall because of the debacle."

In France the financial Les Echos said: "Mr. Richard Nixon ... believed that he could fire at will civil servants and members of the government whose only fault had been to do their jobs seriously."

Associated Press