

Many Leaders Think He'll Be Out

World Views on Nixon

Washington

Many foreign leaders have concluded that President Nixon will probably have to leave office because of his Watergate related problems, a worldwide survey by correspondents of the New York Times indicates.

This appears to mark a significant switch in attitude since last year, when it was considered likely that he would ride out the political storm.

Although the possibility of his departure has aroused concern in some countries, the correspondents reported, leading figures in many capitals are already resigned to a change in the White House but do not expect a marked shift in American foreign policy as a result.

The survey also uncovered these findings:

- Interest in Mr. Nixon's problems has diminished from the high point of last summer, when the Senate Watergate hearings fascinated foreigners. In some countries, the Nixon story receives little press coverage and, in many of the underdeveloped areas such as Africa, public figures show almost no interest.

- The belief that the President will probably resign or be forced from office is often accompanied by praise for his foreign policies. The new Labor party government in Britain openly backs his European policies but makes it known that it expects no crisis if he leaves office prematurely.

- The Russians have taken a conspicuously ambiguous position. Publicly they still support the President and accuse his critics of being against improved relations, but privately they appear to be weighing alternatives and are saying that detente is not based on individuals.

Many of the comments reported by the Times' correspondents were based on the assumption that Vice President Ford, if he assumed the presidency, would keep Henry A. Kissinger as secretary of state, insuring a continuation of foreign policies that have generally been evaluated favorably overseas.

upon him as a strong friend, now believe that the House of Representatives may impeach him, a strikingly different perception from six months ago, when most knowledgeable officials and newsmen assumed he would not be impeached.

In Britain, where a senior diplomat said last year that if would be "a real disaster for the world" if Mr. Nixon had to resign, the new government is letting it be known that it could work just as well with his successor as it has with him in the two months since it took office.

There was no feeling in London that Mr. Nixon's departure would upset relations with Britain; some British officials believed they might be strengthened.

On the other hand, the survey found that some capitals were deeply concerned about Mr. Nixon's political fate.

In South Vietnam, the gov-

ernment of President Nguyen Van Thieu was reported to be hoping that Mr. Nixon would overcome his troubles while reading that he would not.

The South Vietnamese have long feared without Mr. Nixon, American support would quickly dissipate, leading to a new invasion from the north.

Recently, the government-controlled press was permitted to report more thoroughly on Watergate-related developments, a sign that the South Vietnamese leaders were preparing the public.

Similarly, the hard-pressed Cambodian government fears that Mr. Nixon's departure might signal the end of American concern for the struggle against the Communist-led insurgents.

In another country involved in a tense situation, Egypt, President Anwar Sadat has said publicly that "it would be a real tragedy for our area and for the world" if Mr. Nixon were forced out of office.

The Egyptians have asserted that under Mr. Nixon the United States has made a fundamental shift toward a more even-handed policy in the Middle East. A change in the White House would cause concern in Cairo, even with Kissinger staying on.

Kissinger was reported to have told the Egyptian foreign minister, Ismail Fahmy, in Washington that, even if Mr. Nixon is impeached, he would be able to survive trial in the Senate. Therefore, Kissinger was said to have advised the

Egyptians. they should not worry about the political situation.

The secretary has told newsmen privately that he is confident that Mr. Nixon will remain in office and that in any case impeachment discussion has no direct bearing on his activities.

Nonetheless, the President's political difficulties have had perceptible impact on the conduct of foreign policy. Some State Department officials have said they believe that his decision to hold several meetings while in Paris for President Georges Pompidou's funeral two weeks ago was motivated in part by political considerations.

On the way home from Paris, Alexander Haig, the White House chief of staff, said that "it was very evident that European leaders and world leaders with whom the President met continue to look to the United States and President Nixon as an essential factor in the realization of the continuing efforts to develop a structure for a stable international environment."

With a summit meeting planned for Moscow in June, the White House has stressed the relationship Mr. Nixon has built with Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet Communist leader.

However, a Russian said at the United Nations the other day that he was concerned that Mr. Nixon might take an overly tough stance in Moscow to prove that he was not capitulating in an effort to get a strategic-arms accord.

The President's troubles have caused some problems for the Japanese, who seem to assume that he will not last out his term.

Impeachment would probably be viewed as a loss of face for the U.S., but sources in Tokyo agree that it would not have much permanent impact on Japanese-American ties, which have been loosened in recent years by Japan's gradual shift from virtually total dependence on the U.S. and toward more balanced relations with China, Europe and the Soviet Union.

In Africa, where President Nixon's problems have not aroused much concern or interest and where local problems predominate, his fate seems distant and of no particular importance. In India, officials have taken a relaxed attitude. With a foreign ministry official asserting: "Nixon is not the United States. If he goes you may get a better president."

The survey found that, with few exceptions, the Watergate affair and the process of impeachment remained a mystery to most people. They are aware of corruption in high places but have little knowledge of the workings of the U.S. system.

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