

Moscow Displays Mounting Concern On Nixon's Future

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MOSCOW, May 16—The Soviet press agency, Tass, rose today to the defense of President Nixon by contending that his Watergate troubles were "being fanned by the President's political adversaries."

In doing so, the agency reported for the first time that Mr. Nixon was approaching the threshold of impeachment and was even facing pressure to give up his office to Vice President Ford.

While the brief report ran only two paragraphs and was

extracted from an interview with the President by the Washington Star News, its appearance indicated the concern with which Moscow was watching the President.

It further suggested the nervousness that has been privately expressed by some Soviet officials over whether the President will be able to remain in office long enough to make his planned visit to Moscow next month.

The Soviet press has seldom offered more than the sketchiest details of the Watergate case, largely in deference to Mr. Nixon.

The Kremlin continues to give every indication that it expects the President here next month. Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin told Arthur F. Burns, chairman of the Federal Reserve

Board, during a private talk last week that the leadership was looking forward to the visit.

The report today by Tass, the agency's first on Mr. Nixon's troubles since the government newspaper Izvestia said 16 days ago that he was turning over White House tape transcripts, was likely to jolt some Soviet readers in its revelations.

Its approval for publication suggested that the Kremlin might be beginning to brace itself for a disappointment in June.

Tass, in referring to The Washington Star-News interview, reported that "President Nixon, touching upon the Watergate case, which is being fanned by his political adversaries, has stated that he is not guilty of anything and is not going to resign under any circumstances or surrender his office even temporarily to the Vice President."

The agency went on to quote the Star-News article as having said that "if the House of Representatives should vote to impeach Mr. Nixon will then defend himself to the very end of a Senate trial."

The transcripts of the tapes and the negative reaction they produced in the United States were not mentioned.