

Soviets Modify Nixon's Stress on

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MOSCOW, June 28—The Soviet Union indicated today that it did not agree entirely with President Nixon's evaluation of the importance of his personal relationship with Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Though convinced of the importance of this relationship in the recent history of Soviet-American relations, the Soviets appear unwilling to describe the future of existing Soviet-American agreements or detente generally in terms of personalities.

This distinction—indirectly expressed in today's Soviet press—appears to reflect the

Soviets' General attitude toward Mr. Nixon's domestic difficulties. On one hand, the Soviets want to help the President in any way they can; on the other, they do not want the Soviet public to think that the future of detente depends on Mr. Nixon.

The Soviets conveyed this message with a subtle bit of editing of Mr. Nixon's toast at a Kremlin banquet last night in his honor. Mr. Nixon expressed the opinion that existing Soviet-American treaties and agreements "were possible because of a personal relationship that was established," between himself and Brezhnev.

Moreover, the president went on, existing treaties would undoubtedly be fulfilled and new agreements negotiated "because of our personal relationship."

When Tass, the government news agency, translated Mr. Nixon's toast for the morning Soviet newspaper, the latter sentence was altered.

The Tass version quoted Mr. Nixon as saying that existing Soviet-American agreements would be fulfilled and new ones achieved "as a result of the relations that have grown up between us." The word "personal"—which Tass used in translating the President's

other references to a personal relationship—disappeared, so the phrase could be read as referring to the relations between two countries, not two men.

President Nixon's press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, told a reporter later that the American side asked the Soviets about the mistranslation of Mr. Nixon's toast. "I expect to see 'personal relationship' in tonight's *Izvestia*," Ziegler said, referring to the official government paper which comes out in the evening.

Several hours later, however, *Izvestia* appeared carrying the original mistranslation.

'Personal Relationship'

Tass also dropped a reference to "next year" when it translated a remark of Mr. Nixon's about the next visit of Brezhnev to the United States. The President said this would come next year, but Tass made no predictions.

The Soviet spokesman for this summit conference, Leonid Zamyatin, who is director general of Tass, did happily join Ziegler in repeated references to the special "personal relationship" at a news briefing this afternoon.

"General Secretary Brezhnev and President Nixon have repeatedly emphasized the importance of their personal relationship," Zamyatin volun-

teered, as Ziegler looked on with a smile.

Only when questioned about Tass' editing of Mr. Nixon's toast did the Soviet spokesman take a different tack. He insisted that the translation of "personal relationship" was accurate—though the word "personal" had obviously been dropped—and accused this reporter, who asked him about it, of not understanding Russian.

The whole question of personal relationships among statesmen is a delicate one for the Soviets. Their Marxist ideology alleges that personalities play a minor role in international relations, but in prac-

tice they have often shown a weakness for Western statesmen they thought were sympathetic to them.

Gen. Charles de Gaulle was the best example of such a figure, despite his strong anti-communism and his decision to build a French nuclear force, De Gaulle was never criticized here.

Mr. Nixon has not fared that well, but he has become one of the Kremlin's favorites. Soviet officials have openly expressed their dismay at the course of the Watergate affair—which the Soviet press has never explained to its readers, apparently to avoid embarrassing Mr. Nixon.