

World Press

Focuses on Nixon's Woes

Realization that President Nixon's departure from office may be imminent provoked varying amounts of surprise and interest in world capitals yesterday, depending on how closely each country had followed the unraveling of Watergate.

The constant, mostly in newspaper comments, seemed to be a feeling that a change in American leadership would not have any widespread effect on international relations.

Although other governments had no official comment on what they described as an internal American affair, Monday's revelations were splashed across front pages everywhere except in the Soviet bloc and China, which maintained the discreet veil they have cast over the President's troubles.

Soviet Union

From Moscow, Washington Post correspondent Peter Osnos reported that Tass, the Soviet news agency, and Moscow radio and television carried excerpts of Mr. Nixon's Monday statement, but did not include the President's observation that "Impeachment is virtually a foregone conclusion." The English-language service of Tass did add that comment late last night in a second report on the statement.

Earlier, Pravda, the official Communist Party newspaper, published a major article on the long-term importance of better U.S.-Soviet relations and the accomplishments of the recent summit talks, but significantly did not mention Richard Nixon by name a single time, Osnos said.

While the language in the article—written before Mr. Nixon's statements—was somewhat oblique, Soviet sources familiar with the nuances of the official line on detente said the omission of Mr. Nixon's name from such an important article was too systematic to be accidental.

From the outset, the Soviet media have rarely men- and have tended always to cast their reports in terms most favorable to the President. In recent days, however, as the pace of events has quickened, news items have been appearing more frequently.

Japan

From Tokyo, Washington Post correspondent Don Oberdorfer reported that Japanese leaders do not feel that Mr. Nixon's departure from office would bring about long-term instability in American policy or harm Washington's relations with Japan. The Japanese press and Japanese officials have generally taken the line that the impeachment process demonstrates the strength of the American political system.

Noting that Mr. Nixon is not popular in Japan, because of his tough stand on textile imports and his failure to consult Tokyo before reversing U.S. policy toward China, Oberdorfer added that the President's fall from power would bring only pro forma expressions of regret from senior political and diplomatic figures.

The Washington developments rated very heavy newspaper coverage in Tokyo under such headlines as "American President Confesses Cover-Up" and "At the Edge of Impeachment or Resignation." Tokyo mass-circulation dailies carried the text of the Monday presidential statement as well as portions of the June 23, 1972, transcript, translated in a low form of Japanese akin to gutter language, which would be considered disgraceful for any Japanese official.

The influential public television network carried newsfilm of Mr. Nixon's previous denials of early knowledge of the Watergate cover-up, along with a simulation of the Nixon-Haldeman conversation in which a cover-up attempt was authorized.

South Vietnam

In Saigon, although officials and politicians have long expected Watergate to force President Nixon out of office. His admission that he directed the cover-up caused surprise and excitement, Washington Post correspondent Philip A. McCombs reported.

Foreign Minister Vuong Van Bac said in an interview that economic and military aid to South Vietnam "is the assistance from a nation to a nation and does not come from Mr. Nixon himself.

"The policies of the

United States are government policies of the American people... so I think that no matter who is President the policies will remain the same," he added.

Despite this cool official view, President Thieu is said to have been immediately alerted to the news and to be receiving frequent up-to-the-minute reports in the presidential palace.

The news was featured yesterday as the most important page-one story in Democracy, the newspaper of Thieu's own political party and was the largest Watergate story ever run by the official organ.

China

The official Chinese press remained silent on Watergate, Agence France-Presse reported from Peking, and Chinese sources questioned by Western newsmen refused to comment.

The AFP dispatch noted that although the Chinese have steadfastly maintained that Watergate was an "internal affair" that did not call for public comment, the scandal must have been reported in some detail by a controlled circulation daily publication called "Reference Sheet," which regularly translates Western news.

The publication—which is not available to foreigners in China—has a circulation of 7 million copies.

Israel

For the first time, the Israeli press took it for granted yesterday that Mr. Nixon's departure from the American political scene seems almost inevitable, special correspondent Yuval Elizur reported from Jerusalem.

The latest events in Washington came as a shock to most Israelis, who until now have been largely unexcited by the Watergate affair and often said in private that Americans had "overreacted" to it.

Editorials dealt mainly with the possible consequences for the Middle East, rather than with Watergate's meaning for the American political system. Two of Israel's leading newspapers wrote that the main danger is not a new administration, but a vacuum that could develop in international affairs while President Nixon fights for survival.

Israeli officials refrained from comment.

Europe

In London, the chairman of the opposition Labor Party's foreign affairs committee, Tom Dallyell, said that the admission came as no surprise.

"Most of our colleagues have assumed for many months that President Nixon was up to his neck in Watergate from an early stage," he said, expressing a hope "that the executioners will act quickly and decisively."

"The business of the Western world has been clogged up by the situation in the White House," Dallyell added.

The influential Paris newspaper Le Monde, seeing something "pathetic in what must be called the irresistible agony of President Nixon," added: "Even a statesman as hard-bitten as Nixon must have nerves. There are limits to solitary resistance, especially when it reveals itself to be hopeless."

The news reached Western Europe too late for most daily newspapers to comment editorially.

The timing was even worse for Eastern Europe, and Hungarian newspapers, for example, relegated brief news dispatches of Mr. Nixon's announcement to inside pages.

Ethiopia

President Nixon's admission of an early involvement in the Watergate cover-up was the leading news on radio stations in Addis Ababa and throughout most of black Africa all day yesterday, Washington Post correspondent David B. Ottaway reported.

Ethiopians, who have generally admired Mr. Nixon for his foreign policy and only vaguely understood the import of his political difficulties at home, were shocked by the news.

"I would never have believed such a thing of an American President," one Ethiopian official said, "It's shocking."

The state-run radio station, which only recently began giving any coverage at all to Watergate developments, called it a "sensational admission of guilt."