

Impact of Watergate Abroad Found Slight

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Special to The New York Times

TOKYO, Feb. 10—The American experience with Watergate has led to the selection of a new Premier in Japan, stronger emphasis on ethics by public officials in Canada and a greater determination in some countries to use the press to uncover malfeasance.

Beyond that the trauma that seemed to overwhelm Americans and has been purging American political life has had little impact elsewhere. People have too many problems of their own to be concerned with Watergate.

Moreover, the absence of a "Watergate syndrome" in other parts of the world appears to illuminate — as much as the weakening of the dollar and the withdrawal of American forces from a number of places—the decline in American influence abroad.

Inquiries by correspondents of The New York Times here and in Canada, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Israel and India turned up little evidence of deep changes in the public morality or the behavior of government officials. The few exceptions were in Japan, Canada and the press.

When Premier Takeo Miki of Japan addressed a convention of the Liberal-Democratic party the other day, he said that "at the time of the Watergate issue in America, I was deeply moved by the scene in the House Judiciary Committee where each member of the committee expressed his own or her own heart based upon the spirit of the American Constitution."

"It was this very attitude, I think, that rescued American democracy," he continued. "This attitude and spirit are also needed by us to rescue our party." The party is beset by scandal, internal division and loss of public confidence.

Mr. Miki, in an indirect sense,



Premier Takeo Miki



Paul Conklin

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

owes his position to Watergate. A respected monthly magazine, Bungei Shunju, was impelled by disclosures in the American press to do an investigation into the finances of his prede-

Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, after prodding by the Opposition, has ordered guidelines for the acceptance of gifts by public officials. That followed a Cabinet minister's flight to Israel aboard a liquor company's plane—and a lavish trip to Japan for Mrs. Trudeau at the expense of a Japanese shipping company to launch a ship.

In general, Canadians who discuss Watergate say it has had a profound effect on their country, at least at the national level. An official commented: "It all seemed so horrible to us that we want to make sure it does not happen here."

In Britain, on the other hand, Watergate seems to have had little impact, though the press, which operates under far greater legal restraints than that in the United States, emulated the Americans in digging into a land-speculation scandal involving people close to Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

The Government remains as secretive as ever, despite pledges of more openness, and the only exploration of the acts protecting official secrets appears to be a study of how to strengthen them.

The French never really grasped what Watergate was about. Most of the press made little effort to explain it, and even officials involved in American affairs brushed it off as puritanism and hypocrisy.

Watergate may have made some impression on French editors, however. The newspaper *Le Monde*, which had debated the propriety of publishing unofficial reports on the fatal illness of President Georges Pompidou, has become more candid about the private lives and working habits of public figures. It recently published a major article on the weekend disappearances of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

In West Germany people tended to see Watergate as self-indulgent American moral posturing and never thought of it as something that could happen to them. Indeed, they had a scandal of their own that obscured Watergate—the fall of Chancellor Willy Brandt in a case involving an alleged East German intelligence agent.

'Italian Way of Watergate'

In Italy a high-level wiretapping scandal early last year was inevitably dubbed "the Italian Way of Watergate," but few Italians discerned the parallel. Instead they thought it heartening to see a nation in which even the powerful are made to answer for their misdeeds—but that country certainly could never be Italy.

Some Italian journalists have been affected. One who says he has been "sensitized" by the American reporting of Watergate commented:

"Journalists here have seen that, in the case of Watergate, a lot of information was made available to the public that in Italy would have been hushed up or at least ignored as a matter of course. Now, after Watergate, journalists are more demanding. They do not take that hushing up so much for granted any more. It's a new honesty, in some ways."

The impact of Watergate has been negligible in Israel. People have been watching the conduct of officials more carefully, but that appears to have been motivated by troubles at home, not by Watergate.

In India, the influence of Watergate has been slow to penetrate. Many newspapers are controlled by industrialists who are under pressure from the Government, so the press dare not publish incisive articles about Indian leaders.

cessor, Kakuei Tanaka. The allegations it published caused an upheaval among the Liberal-Democrats and eventually among the public, and Mr. Tanaka was forced out.

Mr. Miki, a surprise compromise selection, sought to enhance his reputation by disclosing his assets after taking office. But that is as far as the influence of Watergate on Japanese politics has gone.

Mr. Miki did not insist that other senior politicians follow his lead, and none did. Moreover, his appeal to his party to heed the example of Watergate in reforming itself seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The Japanese press, which has never had much of an investigative tradition, has not pursued other possible wrongdoers.

As for Canadians, they resist acknowledging it, but they are strongly influenced by things American. In January, 1974, the entire financing of federal election campaigns was overhauled by legislation; limits were placed on spending and public disclosure of gifts over \$100 was required.

During debate on the matter Watergate came up frequently. One of the reform's advocates, in response to a question, said: "The fact that Watergate was on the scene as we moved along was, in many of our minds, a confirmation that we were moving in the right direction."