

Ford's news summary more objective than predecessor's

By MAYRON WALDMAN
(C) 1974, Newday

WASHINGTON—The most exclusive newspaper in the U.S. has no editorials, no advertising, no comics, no letters to the editor and a circulation of 158.

But its subscribers are a group that would make any editor proud. The paper, which comes hot off the xerox machine six days a week, does not even have a catchy name. It simply is called: "The President's Daily News Briefing."

Gerald Ford Likes it so much that he takes three copies—one delivered to him by a secret service agent, another plopped on his desk in the oval office and a third placed in the situation room. The other papers go to folks like members of the cabinet, the kitchen cabinet and White House aides.

It is a publication that is not as lively as it used to be. In the days of Richard Nixon, it was so spicy that reporters counted themselves fortunate if they were able to catch a glimpse of it. For what it does is capsule the editorials and stories of 75 newspapers, about 20 magazines and three television networks for the President. During the last years of the Nixon era, the news was such that the editors of the summary felt compelled to comment on the items they included. They described stories as fair or partial and used phrases like "NBC did us no favors."

For Philip Warden, the current editor of the news summary, there is none of the vivid writing that

characterized the paper when Patrick Buchanan was in charge of preparing it for Nixon. "There is no editorializing on our part," Warden said recently. "We use the reporter's words, the editorial writer's words."

Warden has done something else, too: he has taken the challenge out of getting a look at a presidential news summary. All a reporter has to do is ask him to see a copy.

Until a couple of months ago, Warden was a reporter himself. For 34 years he worked for the Chicago Tribune, many of them as the paper's congressional correspondent. Now 62, he directs a young staff of three in putting out the news summary in a messy three-room suite in the Executive Office Building.

His impartial style in capsulizing the news items, some of them critical of the President and his administration, has not drawn any criticism from Ford. But on the first day of his new job, he published a capsulized editorial that dealt harshly with a cabinet member who was a Nixon holdover.

"I got a call from his office, complaining," Warden said. "I told them I wasn't hired to run a puff sheet. I've gotten no more criticisms. I'm just here to report what the newspapers and television commentators are saying."

As it was during the Nixon Administration, the summary usually runs between 35 and 40 pages and emphasizes television news. Warden was advised by his boss, Presidential Assistant Paul Mitchell, himself a former newspaper

reporter, that whether they liked it or not, most Americans got their news from the TV set.

That attitude is reflected in the summary, which includes as a daily feature a single-page chart headed: "Times of TV News Items." Every evening, members of his staff gather in front of their TV sets, each watching a different network, each with a stopwatch in hand and a pen poised over a blank form. Then they note to the second the time the TV reporter spends on each item and its placement in the broadcast.

"It's a very popular feature," Warden said with a laugh. "Somebody's interested in it."

Warden's news summaries pretty much follow the line of the major newspapers—with one significant exception. "We no longer include Watergate in the major items," he said. "The day-in, day-out routine reporting of the Watergate trial I don't believe is of major interest to President Ford. It's in the summary but not included as a major story."

The summary comes in two sections and usually contains at least a couple of cartoons—commonly critical of either the President or his administrations.

Nothing could be tougher than the unvarnished statement in the news summary for last Sunday, which stated on page 1: "President Ford's leadership rates as fair to poor with 53 per cent of Americans, according to a Gallup Poll conducted for *Newsweek* magazine." The sentence was underlined for emphasis.

Russian public still uninformed about Watergate

By PETER OSNOS
(C) 1974, The Washington Post

MOSCOW—With Vladivostok behind them, the Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev and his Kremlin colleagues have now made the transition to a new American President, without ever telling the Soviet people what really happened to the last man in the White House.

Were an analogous upheaval somehow to take place in the Soviet Leadership, the U.S. press would examine its reason and implications to the last detail. The Kremlin's centrally-directed and tightly-controlled information machinery, however, reports only what suits Soviet purposes. And in the matter of the late events in Washington, the selection has been particularly restricted.

As far as the vast majority of Soviet citizens who get their news solely from the official media are concerned, one day last summer Richard Milhaus Nixon stepped down as President of the United States because of something called "Watergate" and because he faced the threat of "impeachment"—terms for which no adequate Russian translation was ever supplied. Nothing was specifically said then—or since—about break ins or coverups.

Shortly after the changeover, some high-level thought was evidently given to publishing a full-fledged account of the Watergate saga. At least one important, although limited-circulation, Soviet journal had such an article in preparation in September. It was never published, and sources at the magazine say it has been permanently shelved.

"To tell the whole story," a thoughtful Moscow editor said the other day, "would have required that the seamy side of Nixon be exposed. For us to say that he was bad would put a shadow on all the agreements and achievements of Soviet-U.S. relations in the past few years. We are not prepared to do that."

Officially then, the Soviets passed up the propaganda chance to show the nature of corruption in the world's most powerful democracy to maintain the consistency of detente.

Critics of the Soviet establishment offer another reason for the silence. Watergate-style excesses are routine in the Soviet Union, Roy Medvedev, the dissident historian wrote recently. The system here, he argued, can hardly advertise the consequences of a "legitimate investigation of real abuses of power."

At the outset, Watergate was regarded by the Kremlin as a minor nuisance, an internal political dispute with no bearing on long-term policy. When that belief exploded, the growing controversy in the United States was portrayed, on the rare occasions that it was mentioned at all, as an effort by the opponents of detente to topple Nixon.

Then came the climax and some explanation had to be supplied. On a television broadcast a few days after the resignation, Leonid Zamatin, the director of Tass, the Government news agency, delivered himself of the view that Nixon was forced out because of U.S. economic troubles, inter-party rivalries in an election year and the yellow journalism of the American Press. His thoroughly misleading statement remains the most detailed ever made here on the subject.

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