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Watergate

Nixon Popularity Drops in Poll

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During a period of growing public concern over the Watergate affair, President Nixon's popularity has suffered a steady decline and is now down 14 points from a high point in late January, following the Vietnam peace settlement.

The latest survey, completed prior to Mr. Nixon's announcement last Tuesday that "major developments" had come to light in the Watergate case, shows 54 per cent of Americans approving of the way he is handling his job, 36 per cent disapproving and 10 per cent undecided.

The previous survey, conducted between March 30 and April 2, showed Mr. Nixon with a 59 per cent approval rate.

Following is the trend since the beginning of the year:

	Ap- prove	Dis- approve	No Opinion
April 6-9	54	36	10
March 30- April 2	59	33	8
Feb. 16-19	65	25	10
Jan. 26-29	68	25	7
Jan. 12-15	51	37	12

While Watergate appears to be an important factor in the President's declining popularity, others can also be cited — for example, concern over high prices. Some decline, however, could be expected with the Vietnam peace settlement now less prominent in people's thinking and the nation's attention focusing on domestic problems.

Watergate has developed into an issue that is familiar to an extraordinary number of Americans; 83 per cent. Nearly one-third of all persons in the latest survey think the Watergate affair reveals corruption in the Nixon administration. Furthermore, 4 persons in 10 express the belief that Mr. Nixon knew about the Watergate situation in advance.

A significant relationship is found between attitudes on Mr. Nixon's handling of his job and attitudes on Watergate.

Among persons who approve of Mr. Nixon's overall performance in office, opinion is 4 to 1 on the side that Watergate affair is "just politics — the kind of thing that both parties engage in."

In sharp contrast, among those who disapprove of the way Mr. Nixon is handling his job, opinion is 5 to 2 on the side that Watergate is a serious matter, revealing corruption in the Nixon administration.

Evidence that Watergate could spell serious trouble for the GOP in the Congressional races next year is shown by the fact that, not only 4 in 10 Democrats, but as many as one-third of independents think Watergate is a serious matter, revealing corruption in the Nixon administration. Thirteen per cent of Republicans share this view.

In light of these findings, it is interesting to note that Mr. Nixon's popularity rating is down 16 points among independents since January, 13 points among Democrats and 6 points among his fellow Republicans.

Over - Watergate a
 Blooming Issue

NIXON POPULARITY

Index — Per Cent	Who Approve
Current	54
Average in current year	59
Average since taking office	57
High since taking office (Recorded Nov. '69 and Jan. '73)	68
Low since taking office (Recorded June '71)	48

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