

# Half in Survey Call Watergate 'Politics'

By George Gallup

PRINCETON, N.J. — The reaction of the American public to Watergate, as of early June, can be summed up as follows:

1. Two out of every three American in the latest survey believe that President Nixon was involved, to at least some degree, in the Watergate affair.

2. At the same time, approximately half of all persons dismiss the Watergate affair as "just politics — the kind of thing that both parties engage in," although a sharply increasing number believe it is a "very serious matter," revealing corruption in the Nixon administration.

A series of questions was asked to determine public awareness of the Watergate affair, views of Mr. Nixon's degree of involvement, and whether or not the public regards Watergate as revealing corruption in the Nixon administration.

To measure awareness, this question was asked first:

*Have you heard or read about Watergate?*

Sept. 22-25, 1972	52%
April 6-9, 1973	83
April 27-30	91
May 11-14	96
June 1-4	97

Another question in the Watergate series sought to find out whether the public believes Nixon was involved and to what extent:

*Here are four statements concerning President Nixon's connection with the Watergate affair. Will you please tell me which one comes closest to your own point of view?*

Nixon planned the Watergate "bugging" from the beginning	8%
Nixon did not plan the "bugging" but knew about it before it took place	28
Nixon found out about the "bugging" after it occurred, but tried to cover it up	31
Nixon had no knowledge of the "bugging," and spoke up as soon as he learned about it	19
No opinion/Not heard or read	14

Views on the extent of Mr. Nixon's involvement depend in considerable measure on one's political affiliation. For example, only 3 per cent of Republicans say Mr. Nixon planned the bugging from the beginning, compared to 14 per cent of Democrats. Correspondingly, at the other extreme, 37 per cent of Republicans say Mr. Nixon had no knowledge of the incident, while a far smaller proportion of Democrats (9 per cent) hold this view.

A mid-May survey showed 46 per cent of persons interviewed holding the view that Mr. Nixon knew in advance about the Watergate bugging and 56 per cent of the opinion that the President participated in a cover-up of the Watergate situation.

This question was also asked:

*Which of these two statements comes closer to your point of view about Watergate?*

1. *It's a very serious matter because it reveals corruption in the Nixon administration.*

2. *It's just politics—the kind of thing that both parties engage in.*

The latest findings show a sharp increase since an early April survey in the percentage of Americans who feel that Watergate is a very serious matter. Three in 10 held this view in April, while nearly one-half (47 per cent) do so in the latest survey. Here is the comparison:

	Serious Matter—Reveals Corruption	Just Politics	No Opinion/Not Heard or Read
June 1-4	47	46	7
April 6-9	31%	53%	16%

The findings reported today are based on interviews with a total of 1,546 adults, 18 and older, interviewed in person in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period June 1-4.