

Campaign '72

The Harris Survey

'Nixon Does A Good Job'

By Louis Harris

The American people give President Nixon a 59-40 percent positive job rating, the highest marks accorded him since his first year in office. Nixon's standing with the electorate has risen steadily since the first of this year, when no more than 49 percent were able to give him a positive overall rating.

President Nixon hit the low point of his Administration to date in March of 1971, with a positive rating of only 41 percent against a negative mark of 56 percent and 3 percent not sure. He did not return to majority support until after his announcement of a wage-price freeze a year ago this month. On the wave of his new economic policies and his visits to Peking and Moscow, his standing with the electorate has risen steadily. Obviously, Nixon's relatively high marks from the voters are now an asset in his bid for reelection.

A closer scrutiny of specific Nixon job ratings, however, reveals a singular dependence on public backing for his foreign rather than his domestic policies and record.

Here are the ratings accorded the President on foreign policy areas in the latest Harris Survey from a cross section of 1635 likely voters.

	Positive	Negative	Not Sure
Trip to China			
Aug., '72	70%	23%	7%
July, '71	X	X	X
Handling Relations with Russia			
Aug., '72	68	25	7
July, '71	44	42	14
Trip to Russia			
Aug., '72	68	24	8
July, '71	X	X	X
Working for Peace in World			
Aug., '72	64	34	2
July, '71	48	48	4
Handling Relations with China			
Aug., '72	60	30	10
July, '71	35	48	17
Handling Vietnam War			
Aug., '72	47	50	3
July, '71	36	58	6
Winding Down U.S. in Vietnam			
Aug., '72	47	50	3
July, '71	32	51	17
Handling Middle East Crisis			
Aug., '72	44	43	13
July, '71	34	52	14
Negotiating Vietnam Settlement			
Aug., '72	38	55	7
July, '71	X	X	X

The rise in confidence in President Nixon's foreign policy has been dramatically upward, particularly in his handling of relations with Russia and China.

On a whole host of domestic areas, Nixon does not achieve anywhere near the positive ratings from the people that he does in the foreign policy area:

	Positive	Negative	Not Sure
Handling Relations with Congress			
Aug., '72	40%	49%	11%
July, '71	37	51	12
Handling Race Matters			
Aug., '72	39	56	5
July, '71	35	64	1
Helping Curb Drug Abuse			
Aug., '72	38	51	11
July, '71	X	X	X
Handling Crime, Law and Order			
Aug., '72	34	61	5
July, '71	31	63	6
Handling Air and Water Pollution			
Aug., '72	34	55	11
July, '71	31	58	11
Keeping Economy Healthy			
Aug., '72	32	64	4
July, '71	22	73	5
Keeping Down Unemployment			
Aug., '72	28	68	4
July, '71	16	77	7
Handling Taxes and Spending			
Aug., '72	26	69	5
July, '71	20	63	17
Keeping Down Cost of Living			
Aug., '72	19	79	2
July, '71	16	77	7
X—Not asked			

In most cases, there has been little change upward in Nixon's standing on domestic issues.

However, in one key area, there has been a dramatic turnaround in Richard Nixon's standing with the public: The extent to which people feel he inspires confidence personally in the White House:

	Positive	Negative	Not Sure
August, '72	45%	43%	12%
June	42	48	10
May	36	50	14
April	32	52	16
July, '71	29	56	15

The rise in inspiring confidence has been steady and dramatic for Nixon since a year ago when he hit his low point of no better than 29 percent positive. However, while his balance on this key dimension is now positive, nonetheless it is a close 45-43 percent balance.

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