

# 50% in Gallup Poll Think Nixon Helped in Watergate Cover-up

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Half the American voting-age public thinks President Nixon took part in covering up the Watergate scandal, according to a special Gallup Poll on Watergate reactions.

Of those who saw or heard about his television speech Monday night, in which Mr. Nixon accepted responsibility but denied any direct involvement in the Watergate affair, most people in the poll, by a margin of 4 to 3, indicated a belief that the President had not yet told the "whole truth."

Even after his denial, 40 per cent of the people polled said that Mr. Nixon "knew in advance" of the bugging raid last June 17 against the Democratic National Committee's Watergate headquarters.

Despite the strong evidence of suspicion about the Nixon White House found in the poll, 53 per cent said they saw "little difference" with respect to corruption between the Nixon Administration and others over the last 25 years. And 8 per cent said they believed there was "less corruption" in the White House now than earlier.

## Small Phone Sample

The special Gallup poll, was taken by telephone last night from an unusually small national sample of 456 people, aged 18 and over.

Most Gallup surveys are based on direct interviews with a sample of about 1,500 people and are said to have a margin of error of about 4 points above or below the reported percentages. A spokesman for the Gallup organization said today that the margin of error in the Watergate survey might be as high as 6 percentage points in either direction.

The poll suggests that, after a slow start, the Watergate story is now a matter of major interest in the entire nation. More than 90 per cent of those polled said they were aware of the Watergate affair and 85 per cent had heard or read about President Nixon's speech Monday night. Fifty-three per cent said they consider Watergate an issue of "great importance." Only 15 per cent dismissed its significance as "very little."

The poll also hinted at the dimensions of the damage to the Nixon Administration's credibility: After what the President intended as a definitive statement on the case Monday night, only 30 per cent in the pool said they believed he had told everything; 40 per cent thought he had held back some of the truth; 15 per cent had no opinion, and 15 per cent were not aware of the speech.

By a margin of 6 to 1, those polled indicated a belief that the president must appoint someone outside his own Administration to investigate the Watergate affair.

Nearly 6 people in 10 said that the scandal had reduced their confidence in the Federal government as an institution—37 per cent said "somewhat" and 21 per cent said "a great deal." The figure for this category, 53 per cent, is the same as that for the group that sees "little difference" between the Nixon Administration and its predecessors.

## Impeachment Suggested

If it can be determined that President Nixon knew beforehand about the bugging, or participated in the cover-up, 30 per cent of the people polled believe he should be brought to trial and possibly be impeached and 11 per cent would support another kind of "strong action."

Following are the questions asked by the Gallup interviewers and the results:

1A. Did you happen to hear or read about President Nixon's speech to the nation about Watergate on Monday night?

Yes ..... 85 per cent  
No ..... 15 per cent

1B. (Asked of those who answered "Yes" above). Do you think President Nixon told the whole truth in his speech, or not?

Yes ..... 30 per cent  
No ..... 40 per cent  
No opinion .. 15 per cent  
Not asked ... 15 per cent

2. How important an issue do you think Watergate is to the nation? Of great importance, of some importance, or of very little importance?

Great  
Importance 25 per cent  
Very little

importance 15 per cent

No opinion .. 7 per cent

3A. Do you think President Nixon knew in advance about the Watergate bugging of last June?

Yes ..... 40 per cent

No ..... 47 per cent

No opinion .. 13 per cent

3B. (Asked of those who answered "yes" above). Because of this, do you have a more unfavorable opinion of Nixon than you did previously?

Yes ..... 29 per cent

No ..... 10 per cent

No opinion .. 1 per cent

Not asked .. 60 per cent

4. Do you think President Nixon has participated in a cover-up of the Watergate situation?

Yes ..... 50 per cent

No ..... 35 per cent

No opinion .. 15 per cent

5. What degree, if at all, has the Watergate situation reduced your confidence in the Federal Government as an institution?

A great deal .. 21 per cent

Somewhat ... 37 per cent

Not at all ... 37 per cent

No opinion .. 5 per cent

6. Do you think a person from outside the Nixon Administration should be appointed to head the Watergate investigation?

Yes ..... 74 per cent

No ..... 12 per cent

No opinion .. 14 per cent

7. Suppose it is determined from the proposed investigations that Nixon knew about the Watergate "bugging" in advance, or participated in a cover-up; what action, if any, do you think should be taken?

Impeachment or brought to trial .... 30 per cent

Nothing or nothing at present .. 20 per cent

Take some strong action .... 11 per cent

Should be censured by Congress 8 per cent

Other ..... 6 per cent

No opinion .. 25 per cent

8. Compared to other administrations of the last 25 years, do you think there is more corruption in the Nixon Administration, less corruption, or little difference in this respect?

More ..... 29 per cent

Less ..... 8 per cent

Little difference .. 58 per cent

No opinion ... 5 per cent