

Watergate Is Felt Abroad

By George Gallup

PARIS—The Watergate affair, which has dominated the news in America, has been given front-page coverage almost daily in the other nations of the world.

The word "Watergate" has become not only a household word in the United States, it has entered the language of other nations as far distant as Finland and Australia and Uruguay.

Reaction of these people, as reported by the directors of 24 Gallup-affiliated survey organizations in conference in France, falls into two broad categories. The first is the belief that Watergate will severely reduce President Nixon's effectiveness in foreign policy matters and put a new strain on political and economic relations between the United States and other nations.

In the second category, respect for the climate of open inquiry in the United States which permits the press to probe extensively in the higher councils of government with impunity is cited.

Typical of the comments falling into the first category is the statement of the director of a survey institute in a major European country. Commenting on the views of his countrymen, he said: "Before Nixon can be persuasive in asking Europe to make concessions to his new European plans, he will

have to put his own house in order."

These public opinion experts regularly survey their respective countries on attitudes toward the Nixon administration.

Each public opinion expert reports broad daily coverage of the Watergate affair in his nation, even crowding out national news. Editorial positions range from the view Watergate is part of a widespread system of governmental espionage and intrigue to the view the Watergate activities are a natural consequence of the American political system.

While the Watergate affair is creating an uneasy feeling among citizens abroad concerning the impact on U.S. foreign policy, there is little evidence of a rise in anti-Americanism.

By and large, there appears to be little gloating among the informed citizenry of the nations reported on. In fact, people in some countries, according to the reports, have come to expect scandals in government and are not particularly exercised by the situation in the United States.

According to these reports, there is even a feeling of sympathy for the American people who must add still a new problem to the many others which they have faced during the last decade.

Each Gallup director re-

ports that President Nixon's prestige—at a high point after the Vietnam peace settlement in January—has suffered, whether or not he is seen as directly involved in the Watergate affair. In the case of people in some nations, Watergate has confirmed the feeling that President Nixon cannot be trusted.

Others, however, feel that President Nixon is the victim of circumstances and that Watergate is the kind of situation that can develop when a nation has a free-wheeling political system which places few restrictions on candidates seeking office, including the amount of money which can be spent on campaigns.

Criticism among informed citizenry abroad centers not so much on the actual bugging incident, which is viewed as foolish and naive, but on what is believed to be attempts to cover up the situation.

Reports of public opinion Watergate were presented at the Gallup International Conference by public opinion experts representing Australia, Austria, Canada, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, India, Italy, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan West Germany and Uruguay.