

**The Harris Survey**

# Public Continues to Lose Confidence in the President

By Louis Harris

Although no more than 22 per cent of the American people think President Nixon should resign over the Watergate affair, steady erosion continues to take place in public confidence in Mr. Nixon. His over-all rating on the job he is doing as President has slipped to 54 to 42 per cent negative. On his inspiring confidence personally in the White House, he stands at 69 to 21 per cent negative.

The over-all presidential rating of 54 to 42 per cent negative is not the lowest ever recorded by the Harris Survey for this President. In March 1971, Mr. Nixon stood at an even lower 56 to 41 percent negative. However, on the personal confidence measure, the 21 per cent positive is the lowest registered by the Harris Survey, down from 24 per cent in June. The lowest the late President Johnson's standing on inspiring confidence ever dropped was 23 per cent positive.

In this latest Harris Survey, taken between July 18 and 22 in personal interviews among 1,485 households nationwide, Mr. Nixon's current crisis of confidence with the people was documented in several ways. By 65 to 20 per cent, a majority agrees with the statement that "the President has not been frank and honest on

the Watergate affair, but has withheld important information about it." by 55 to 32 per cent, a majority also believes that "President Nixon does not inspire confidence as a President should." However, by 49 to 34 per cent, a plurality thinks that "President Nixon is a man of high integrity."

By 66 to 22 per cent, 3 to 1, the people also do not think the President should resign. The cross section was asked:

*In view of what has happened in the Watergate affair, do you think President Nixon should resign as President or not?*

	July	June	May
Should resign	22%	22%	14%
Should not resign	66	62	75
Not sure	12	16	11

Since June, the number who feel Mr. Nixon should not resign appears to have firmed up. How then can the dropping confidence in the President be reconciled with the large majority who think he should not resign?

The answer lies in a growing trend on the part of the public to believe that even if the President were to admit some involvement in Watergate, he still should remove himself from office.

*The survey asked in June and again in July:*

*If it is proven that President Nixon ordered the cover-up of White House involvement in Watergate, after Republican agents were caught*

*there, do you think he should resign or not?*

	July	June
Should resign	44%	46%
Should not resign	45	40
Not sure	11	14

The slim 46 to 40 per cent plurality of June which thought Mr. Nixon should be forced to resign if White House involvement were proved has now turned to a 45 to 44 per cent plurality that even if involved the President should not resign.

*Here is the trend in the President's confidence ratings: How would you rate President Nixon on inspiring confidence personally in the White House—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?*

	Good Only Fair-Not		
	Excellent	Poor	Sure
July, 1973	21%	69%	10%
June	24	65	11
May	32	57	11
April	33	53	14
March	38	50	12
Feb.	48	41	11
Jan.	38	52	10
Dec., 1972	38	52	10
Oct.	44	48	8
Sept.	48	45	7
April, 1971	50	39	11
April, 1970	32	55	16
July, 1971	29	56	15
May, 1970	40	48	12
April, 1969	61	21	18

Mr. Nixon's overall job is not at its all-time low, although it is edging toward it:

*"How would you rate the job President Nixon is doing as President—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?"*

	OVER-ALL JOB RATING		
	Good Only Excellent	Fair-Not Poor	Sure
July, 1973	42%	54%	4%
June	48	49	3
Feb.	60	39	1
Jan., 1972	49	47	4
Jan., 1971	48	50	2
Dec., 1969	62	36	2

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