

Poll Shows Nixon Popularity Down

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President Nixon's long-anticipated speech tonight on Watergate comes at a time when his popularity has plunged to the lowest point to date.

Only three in ten Americans (31 per cent) say they approve of the way Mr. Nixon is handling his job as President, a drop of 9 points in the past four weeks and an over-all drop of 37 since his high point in January following the Vietnam peace settlement.

The latest approval score represents the lowest popularity rating given any President in 20 years. The Gallup Poll's final report on President Truman's popularity in January, 1953, showed the same percentage of Americans, 31 per cent, expressing approval.

President Nixon's popularity has for the first time dropped to below President Johnson's low point of 35 per cent approval, recorded in August of 1968 during a per-

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iod of deepening concern over the course of the Vietnam war.

A decline in approval is recorded for all major population groups, but is most pronounced among adults under 30 (39 per cent to 26 per cent), persons in the South (45 per cent to 33 per cent, and independents (41 per cent to 30 per cent).

Key factors behind the decline are:

• **WATERGATE** — Three persons in four believe Mr. Nixon was involved to some extent in Watergate, and one person in four (26 per cent) says the President should be compelled to leave office. The latest survey also shows two persons in every three (67 per cent) expressing disapproval of President Nixon's refusal to release tapes of conversations he has had with former presidential

aides connected with Watergate.

• **HIGH PRICES** — A recent Gallup Poll shows inflation to be easily the nation's top problem in the minds of Americans. In addition, many more persons blame government for inflation (46 per cent) than blame labor (25 per cent) or business (19 per cent). A year ago 39 per cent said government is primarily responsible for high prices, compared to 20 per cent who blamed business and 29 per cent who blamed labor.

• **BOMBING** — A large majority of Americans in the latest survey (65 per cent) said Congress should not grant an extension, if President Nixon asks to extend the August 15 deadline for cutting off funds for military efforts in Cambodia and Laos. These results parallel those from an April survey that showed Americans opposed by a 2 - to - 1 margin to the bombing in Cambodia and Laos.

This is the question that has been asked about the incumbent President since the Roosevelt years to measure presidential popularity: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Nixon is handling his job as President?"

The table below shows the trend in Mr. Nixon's popularity since the beginning of the current year:

	APPROVE	DISAP- PROVE	NO OPIN.
Aug. 3-6	31	57	12
July 6-9	40	49	11
June 22-25	45	45	10
June 1-4	44	45	11
May 11-14	44	45	11
May 4-7	45	42	13
April 27-30	48	40	12
April 6-9	54	36	10
Mar. 30-Apr 2	59	32	9
Feb. 16-19	65	25	10
Jan. 26-29	68	25	7
Jan. 12-15	51	37	12

Here are the other questions asked in the survey,

and the national findings:

"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?" (Survey respondent was handed a card with the four statements.)

	June 1-4	June 22-25	July 6-9	Aug 3-6
Nixon planned the Watergate bugging from the beginning	8	8	9	9
Nixon did not plan the bugging but knew about it before it took place	28	27	30	28
Nixon found out about the bugging after it occurred but tried to cover it up	31	36	34	36
Nixon had no knowledge of the bugging and spoke up as soon as he learned about it	19	17	15	15
No opinion/not heard or read about Watergate	14	12	12	12

"President Nixon has said he will not release tapes of conversations he has had with former presidential aides connected with the Watergate break-in to either the special Senate committee headed by Senator Sam Ervin or special prosecutor Archibald Cox. Do you approve or disapprove of President Nixon's action?"

Approve	24%
Disapprove	67%
No opinion	9%

"Congress has voted, by cutting off funds, to end U.S. bombing in Cambodia and Laos by August 15. If President Nixon asks for an extension of this deadline so the bombing can continue, do you think Congress should grant this extension, or not?"

Yes, should	23%
No, should not	65%
No opinion	12%

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