

How the Speech Helped Nixon

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President Nixon has registered a gain in popularity following his speech on Watergate last Wednesday — from a low point of 31 per cent to 38 per cent approval.

In the previous survey, released on the eve of his speech, only three in ten Americans (31 per cent) said they approved of the way Mr. Nixon was handling his job. Since the speech, according to polling over the weekend, that figure has risen to 38 per cent.

At the same time, however, a large majority

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of Americans continue to believe the President was involved in the planning or coverup of Watergate.

Further evidence that the President's speech failed to dispel widespread doubts among the American people is the finding that 58 per cent of those who have seen or heard the speech say they are dissatisfied with his explanation regarding Watergate.

The trend in the public's views on the extent of Mr. Nixon's involvement in Watergate indicates that most Americans made up their minds early and were not dissuaded by the President's speech.

In five consecutive surveys, covering a period of nearly three months, the proportion who believed Mr. Nixon to be involved in the planning or coverup of Watergate has varied by only a few percentage points, from a high of 74 per cent to a low of 67 per cent.

However, the latest survey shows that a slightly greater percentage (23 per cent) than previously (15 per cent) think the President had no knowledge of the bugging and spoke up as soon as he learned about it.

VIEWS ON NIXON INVOLVEMENT

	Planned	Knew About	Coverup	No Knowledge	No Opinion
Aug. 17-20 (Aug. 15: Nixon's Speech on Watergate)	9	24	40	23	4
Aug. 3-6	8	29	37	15	11
July 6-9	9	30	34	15	12
June 22-25	8	27	36	17	12
June 1-4	8	28	31	19	14

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