

Gallup Reports New Decline

Poll on Nixon Popularity

By George Gallup

Princeton, N.J.

With the public reacting to fast-moving events, President Nixon's popularity has declined to a new low point in the latest nationwide survey.

A key factor is Mr. Nixon's firing of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox and the subsequent resignation of Attorney General Elliot Richardson, followed by the firing of Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus.

Only about one person in four — 27 per cent — in this late October survey approves of the way Mr. Nixon is handling his duties as chief executive.

In contrast, 60 per cent express disapproval while 13 per cent are undecided in their views. In the previous (early October) poll 30 per cent approved of Mr. Nixon's performance in office.

TIMING

Interviewing for the current survey was conducted October 19 through October 22. Three-quarters of the field work was conducted before news of Cox's firing late Saturday. Those results showed Mr. Nixon's popularity to be at about the same level as found in the previous poll, with three persons in ten (31 per cent) ex-

pressing approval. (cent) expressing approval of Mr. Nixon's performance in office.

The decline in Mr. Nixon's popularity rating registered during the weekend tested was accompanied by an uptrend in the percentage of people who felt he should be impeached and compelled to leave the presidency. One-third (33 per cent) favored such a course of action, while 52 per cent were opposed and 15 per cent did not express an opinion.

CONTRAST

As in the case of Mr. Nixon's popularity rating, there is a sharp difference between the findings based on interviewing conducted before Cox's firing and interviewing conducted after his firing.

Interviewing taken before dismissal showed three in ten in favor of compelling Mr. Nixon to leave office, while interviewing conducted afterwards showed the figure climbing to more than four in ten (45 per cent).

However, the percentage who favor removing Mr. Nixon from office declined to 28 per cent following the announcement that he would release the White House tapes, the agreement reached with the Russians to police the Middle East cease-fire and his press conference on October 26.

Public confidence in the Nixon administration, however, did not correspondingly increase, judging by a na-

tionwide telephone survey conducted immediately after Mr. Nixon's press conference.

DROP

The current popularity rating of 27 per cent represents a drop of 41 percentage points in approval from the President's high point of 68 per cent, recorded in a survey taken following the Vietnam peace settlement in January. The trend in approval since January has been relentlessly downward, except for a slight momentary rise in August, following Mr. Nixon's long-awaited speech on Watergate.

The President's current rating is only four points above the lowest presidential popularity rating reord-

ed in more than three decades, which was the 23 per cent approval rating given President Harry S. Truman in late 1951, during a period of widespread pessimism over the Korean war.

QUESTION

Following is the question asked about the incumbent President since the Roosevelt years:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nixon is handling his job as President?"

Here are the national findings, based on the total sample, with the trend since mid-August:

	NATIONWIDE		
	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
Oct. 27	27	60	13
Oct. 6-8	30	57	13
Sept. 21-24	32	55	9
Sept. 7-10	35	55	10
Aug. 17-19	38	54	8

Following is the question asked to determine views on removing Mr. Nixon from office:

"Do you think President Nixon should be impeached and compelled to leave the presidency, or not?"

The latest (full sample) results and trend:

	Yes			No		
	%	%	Opinion	%	%	%
Oct. 19-22	33	52	15	33	52	15
Aug. 3-6	26	61	13	26	61	13
July 6-9	24	62	14	24	62	14
June 22-25	19	69	12	19	69	12

The findings are based on a national survey of 1583 adults, 18 and older, interviewed in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period October 19-22.

Copyright 1973
 Field Enterprises, Inc.

See graph, SFChronicle 4 Nov 73, under headline "Nixon Takes on TV News."