

WXPost DEC 13 1973  
**Nixon Gains  
In Harris,  
Gallup Polls**

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President Nixon's popularity has risen since he took the offensive to explain his version of the Watergate case and related controversies, according to two national public opinion polls released yesterday.

They marked the first time since February that Mr. Nixon's popularity had not fallen in the major polls.

Both the Gallup Poll and the Harris Survey recorded an increase in the proportion of people generally approving of his presidency. Both George Gallup and Louis Harris attributed this to what they called Mr. Nixon's "Operation Candor."

Approval of Mr. Nixon's performance rose by four percentage points in the Gallup Poll and by five points in the Harris Survey.

However, when asked specifically to evaluate Mr. Nixon's handling of the Watergate case, the public continued to give him low marks. More respondents than in previous polls said they regarded his performance as only "fair" or "poor."

Each poll was conducted after the White House announced that Mr. Nixon would hold a series of meetings with every member of Congress to discuss Watergate. They also followed announcements that the White House would make arrangements with the Watergate special prosecutor's office for voluntary turning over tapes and documents previously withheld.

The Gallup polling took place between Nov. 30 and Dec. 3 — after Mr. Nixon's lawyers had asserted publicly that two subpoenaed tapes had never existed and that there was an 18¼-minute blank segment on another tape.

In Gallup's poll, 31 per cent said they approved of the way Mr. Nixon is "handling his job as President," compared with 27 per cent about four weeks earlier. Fifty-nine per cent said they disapproved, and 10 per cent had no opinion.

Most of Mr. Nixon's gain was made in the South, where the percentage approving his presidency increased from 34 to 41 per cent over the month of November.

Overall, it was the first time Mr. Nixon's popularity rating had risen on the Gallup index since early this year when the Watergate revelations began to break. Last January, 68 per cent approved on his performance but by October the law-water mark of 27 per cent has been reached.

The Harris Survey was conducted between Nov. 13 and 16 — after the account of two missing tapes had been made public but before the 18¼-minute blank on another tape had been disclosed.

In the mid-November Harris Survey, 37 per cent rated Mr. Nixon's performance as "good" or "excellent," an increase of 5 percentage points since the October poll. Sixty-one per cent described it as "fair" or "poor" and 2 per cent were not sure.

Answering another question, only 13 per cent thought Mr. Nixon has done a good or excellent job of that proportion has remained substantially the same for the last six months.

However, the proportion giving the President an unfavorable rating on the Watergate case rose substantially, from 77 to 83 per cent between October and November. During that period, the percentage having no opinion declined, from 9 to 4 per cent.

The new Harris Survey found Mr. Nixon's popularity rising sharply on his performance as a force for international peace.

Seventy per cent in mid-November rated his efforts for bringing "peace in the world" as good or excellent. A month earlier, only 58 per cent rated him that well.

The increase apparently reflected news of the administration's actions on the Middle East cease-fire.