

Harris Poll

Americans Felt Nixon Was Guilty

By Louis Harris

As the House of Representatives was preparing to debate and vote on the articles of impeachment against President Nixon, a sizeable majority of the American people had concluded that Mr. Nixon is guilty of committing most of the acts he has been charged with, along with some others which were left out of the articles recommended by the House Judiciary Committee.

Specifically, in the area of "obstruction of justice" in the Watergate case, on the eve of the sensational release of new White House tapes, majorities already felt President Nixon had committed the following offenses:

- By 62 to 19 per cent, a majority felt that he made "false and misleading statements to investigative officers of the United States about judicial proceedings."
- By 61 to 22 per cent, a majority believed the charge against the President of "approving, condoning and counseling witnesses to give false or misleading statements to investigative officers."
- By a higher 67 to 19 per

cent, the public believed that Mr. Nixon "interfered with the conduct of investigations by the Department of Justice, the FBI and the Watergate special prosecution force."

- By 61 to 21 per cent, most people felt that the President "approved and concealed the payment of money for the purpose of obtaining the silence of participants in the illegal entry into headquarters of the Democratic National Committee."

- By 60 to 22 per cent, most Americans believed their President to be guilty of "leading prospective defendants and people already convicted to expect favored treatment in return for their silence or false testimony."

- By 68 to 20 per cent, a sizeable majority felt that Mr. Nixon "made false or misleading public statements in his capacity as President for the purpose of deceiving the people of the United States into believing that a thorough and complete investigation had been conducted on Watergate."

These issues, largely covered in the "obstruction of justice" article presented by a majority of the House Judiciary Committee, spell out the alleged claim that President Nixon was well aware of the Watergate cover-up while it was going on. Following the action of the Judiciary Committee on impeachment, a cross section of 1,552 adults was interviewed between July 31 and Aug. 2.