



Note to Editors: This is the first of a 2-part series on the Iran-contra affair. Part 2, which also will be for immediate release, will be sent to you tomorrow. These two stories will take the place of The Gallup Poll releases regularly scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 11, and Sunday, Dec. 14.

# The Gallup Poll

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Dispatched Dec. 8, 1986)

## As Job Rating Plunges

# Public's Appraisal of Reagan, the Man Little Affected by Recent Events

By George Gallup, Jr.

PRINCETON, N.J. — Although President Reagan's overall job performance rating has plunged in the wake of the Iran-contra affair, his personal popularity with the American people has declined only slightly and remains at a very high level.

In a special Gallup survey completed last Friday, public approval of Reagan as a person outweighs disapproval by a 4-to-1 ratio, with 75% offering positive and 18% negative appraisals. The President's current personal rating represents only a 5 percentage-point decline since mid-September, when 80% approved and 12% disapproved. The latest personal approval figure also is marginally higher than those accorded Reagan during 1982 and 1983, during and soon after the recession.

In contrast, the Dec. 4-5 survey found a sharp drop in Reagan's job performance rating, from 63% approval in a late October Gallup Poll to 47% at present.

The strength of President Reagan's personal popularity is attested to by the fact that among persons who disapprove of his overall performance in office — 44% of the total sample — a 54% majority nevertheless approves of Reagan as a person. Among those who give the President a favorable job performance rating, his personal approval rating is a virtually unanimous 93%.

### Sharp Declines on Foreign Affairs

The Iran-contra affair has caused the sharpest declines in Reagan's ratings for his handling of foreign policy — from 51% approval in July to 34% today, the Middle East situation — from 47% to 27% approval, and the situation in Nicaragua — from 34% to 23% approval. However, the new survey revealed a comparatively modest drop in approval of Reagan's handling of relations with the Soviet Union, from 60% in July to 53% at present.

### No Change on Economy

Currently, 50% of Americans approve of Reagan's handling of economic conditions, statistically unchanged from the favorable ratings he received in Gallup surveys earlier this year.

Following is the question asked to determine Reagan's overall job performance ratings, and the 1986 trend:

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president?*

### Reagan Job Performance Ratings

	Approve %	Dis- approve %	No opinion %
1986-Dec. 4-5	47	44	9
-Oct. 24-27	63	29	8
-Sept. 12-15	61	25	14
-Aug. 8-11	61	27	12
-July 11-14	63	28	9
-Jun. 9-16	64	26	10
-Jun. 6-9	61	29	10
-May 16-19	68	23	9
-Apr. 11-14	62	29	9
-Mar. 7-10	63	26	11
-Jan. 10-13	64	27	9

Here is the question on Reagan as a person and the trend:

*Apart from whether you approve or disapprove of the way Reagan is handling his job as president, what do you think of Reagan as a person? Would you say you approve or disapprove of him?*

### Reagan, the Man

	Approve %	Dis- approve %	No opinion %
1986-Dec. 4-5	75	18	7
-September	80	12	8
1985-November	81	10	9
1983-August	67	21	12
1982-February	70	20	10
1981-July	78	13	9

These questions were also asked:

*Now let me ask you about some specific foreign and domestic problems. As I read off each problem, would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way President Reagan is handling that problem? Economic conditions in this country? Foreign policy? Relations with the Soviet Union? The situation in the Middle East? The situation in Nicaragua?*

Following are the current ratings for the President's handling of specific responsibilities:

#### Reagan Performance Ratings

	Approve %	Dis- approve %	No opinion %
Economic conditions	50	45	5
Foreign policy	34	57	9
Soviet relations	53	36	11
Middle East	27	59	14
Nicaragua	23	64	13

Following are highlights of the recent trend in approval:

#### Reagan Approval Ratings

	Dec. '86 %	Jul. '86 %	Jan. '86 %	Jul. '85 %
Economic conditions	50	49	53	53
Foreign policy	34	51	50	50
Soviet relations	53	60	65	52
Middle East	27	47	43	*
Nicaragua	23	34	*	29

\* Not asked.

The latest findings are based on telephone interviews with 865 adults, 18 and older, conducted in scientifically selected localities across the nation Dec. 4 and 5. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be 4 percentage points in either direction.

In addition to sampling error, the reader should bear in mind that question wording and other practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. *These statements conform to the standards of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

#### COMING TOMORROW (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

- Perceived damage to America's influence in world affairs
- Support for future aid to the contras
- Implications for "Star Wars"
- Reagan's handling of Iran-contras affair vs. Nixon's early handling of Watergate
- Mood of the nation