NOTE TO EDITORS: The Gallup Report on President Nixon's popularity—originally scheduled for today—will be for release Sunday, July 11, in order to include new survey results showing the impact of the Pentagon papers.

The Gallup Poll

For Release: Monday, July 5, 1971

Say Newspapers Had Right to Publish

Public in Accord with Court Ruling on Pentagon Papers

By George Gallup

PRINCETON, N. J., July 4 -- Prior to the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the publication of the Pentagon papers, the public had reached the same judgment. In a survey completed last Monday, 81 per cent of those familiar with the case said the newspapers did the right thing in publishing the articles. Hence 45 per cent said they did the wrong thing.

Few issues of recent times have provoked such deeply-felt opinions, as evidenced by comments in the survey.

'The People Have
The Right to Know'

"The people have the right to know" -- this is the theme of most comments given by those who think the newspapers did the right thing in publishing the Pentagon papers. A 41-year-old black mechanic from New York City explained:

"People should know what the hell is going on in this country. Why do things always have to be so hush-hush? The Pentagon's not worried about national security — they're afraid of being unmasked!"

A 43-year-old machinist from Norfolk, Va., remarked: "We are a democracy and I like to believe that the government is leveling with us." And this from a retired 68-year-old coal-mine foreman from Evansville, Ind.: "If the newspapers don't publish the true facts, how are we going to know? I think the public is being kept in the dark too much!"

'Not Up to Newspapers
To Publish Secrets'

Those in the survey who feel the newspapers were wrong to publish the articles most frequently argue that secret information should not be divulged. Here is what a 58-year-old corn farmer from Iowa said: "This is top secret material. The government hasn't changed that classification and it certainly isn't up to the newspapers to change it on their own."

A 50-year-old banker from Virginia wasirate: "Those papers were stolen. It's a case of crimsn rage and simple and I think Ellsberg ought to be thrown in jail."

Constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press.

The findings reported today are based on personal interviews with 2,526 adults 18 and older. These are near final returns from a survey, completed within the last four days, in which a total of more than 3,500 persons were reached in more than 500 scientifically selected localities across the nation.

All persons in the survey were first asked this question:

Have you heard or read about the articles first published in the New York Times about how we got involved in the Vietnam war?

The results:

Have read, heard about ... 55%

Those replying in the affirmative were then asked:

In your opinion, did the newspapers do the right thing or the wrong thing in publishing these articles?

Right thing ... 58%
Wrong thing ... 30

No opinion ... 12

100%