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## Conservative Research Department

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KB/SEN

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr. Richard Ryder,  
10 Downing Street,  
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20th May 1980

*Dear Richard,*

*ms.*

### Public Opinion Background Note 16

I attach a copy of the results from our latest Gallup tracking study. The sharp increase in Liberal support that I pointed out in Public Opinion Background Note 15 has not been confirmed by the results of our latest tracking study. Apart from this there is very little of interest in this week's tracking findings.

*Yes  
Kate.*

D.K. Britto.

Enc.

Confidential

Public Opinion Background Note 16  
(Produced 18th May 1980)

1. Introduction

Our latest Gallup "tracking" study conducted between 7th and 12th May 1980 found a 5% Labour lead compared with 3% in our previous tracking study (conducted 30th April - 6th May). The 17% saying they would vote Liberal that we found in our 30th April-6th May study has fallen to 13% in our latest study. As this figure is in line with previous studies it would seem reasonable to treat the 30th April - 6th May figure as likely to have been due to sampling fluctuations.

2. Voting Intention

Trends in support for the main parties as found in our "tracking" study are shown below:-

	<u>Voting Intention</u>				
	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
May 1979 (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*	42	43½	12	2½	-1½
<u>1980</u>					
11/17 March	37	49	11½	2	-12½**
20/24 March	38	45½	13½	2	-7½
27/31 March	40	43	14	3	-3
2/8 April	39	45	13	3	-6
10/14 April	36½	45	15	3½	-8½**
16/21 April	41	43	14½	1½	-2
23/28 April	39	44	14	3	-5
30/6 May	39	42	17	2	-3
7/12 May	40	45	13	2	-5

\*First Gallup post-election survey

\*\*Published Poll

As last week the fluctuations in support for the parties over recent weeks make it difficult and possibly misleading to attempt to produce any conclusions with regard to trend in support.

3. Government Record

The 7th-12th May tracking study found almost no change in the level of approval for the Government.

Government Record

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
11/17 March	30	59	11
20/24 March	32	56	12
27/31 March	38	49	13
2/8 April	36	51	13
10/14 April	36	52	12
16/21 April	38	50	12
23/28 April	34	54	12
30 April/5 May	36	51	13
7/12 May	37	50	13

\*First post-election survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Increase in popularity of Callaghan but no significant change in popularity of Mrs. Thatcher.

	<u>Mrs. Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
11/17 March	38	59	6	53	35	12	60	19	21
20/24 March	40	56	5	51	34	15	60	18	22
27/31 March	41	49	7	53	35	12	60	18	22
2/8 April	40	51	6	56	31	12	55	19	26
10/14 April	41	54	5	55	33	12	60	19	21
16/21 April	43	51	7	52	34	14	59	17	25
23/28 April	40	54	6	52	33	14	57	18	25
30/6 May	45	51	5	53	32	15	57	17	26
7/12 May	44	49	6	57	31	13	59	20	21

5. Communication

In the week 7th - 12th May we found 28% of the electorate claiming to have heard or seen something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days (25% 30th April - 6th May) and 11% claiming to have heard or seen something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government (18% 30th April - 6th May). The main reason for seeing the Government in a more favourable way was the Iranian Seige, mentioned by 20% of those claiming to have seen anything making them more or less favourably inclined towards the Government. On the less favourably inclined side the only items mentioned by more than 1% was the rising cost of living (3%).

6. Published Polls

N.O.P. Poll

An N.O.P. Poll published in the Observer on Sunday 18th May found a majority of the electorate still believing that Britain's athletes should take part in the Moscow Olympics.

The research which was conducted on 15th May found 61% of the electorate in favour of British participation and 33% against.

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19.5.80