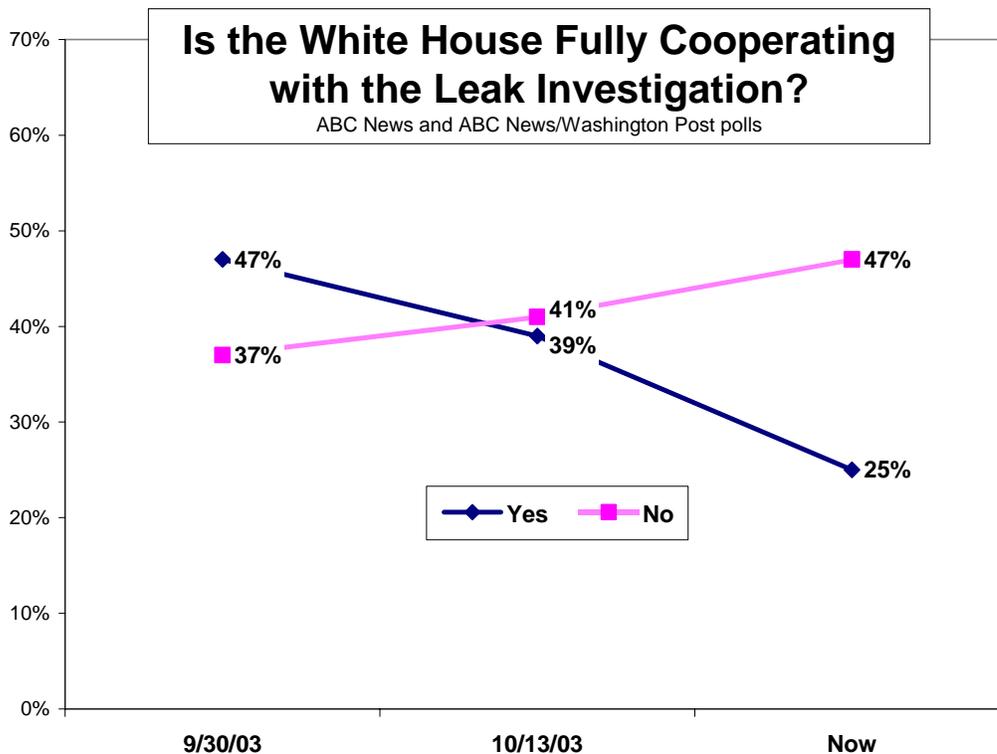


Many Doubt White House Cooperation With Federal Investigation of CIA Leak

Just a quarter of Americans think the White House is fully cooperating in the federal investigation of the leak of a CIA operative's identity, a number that's declined sharply since the investigation began. And three-quarters say that if presidential adviser Karl Rove was responsible for leaking classified information, it should cost him his job.

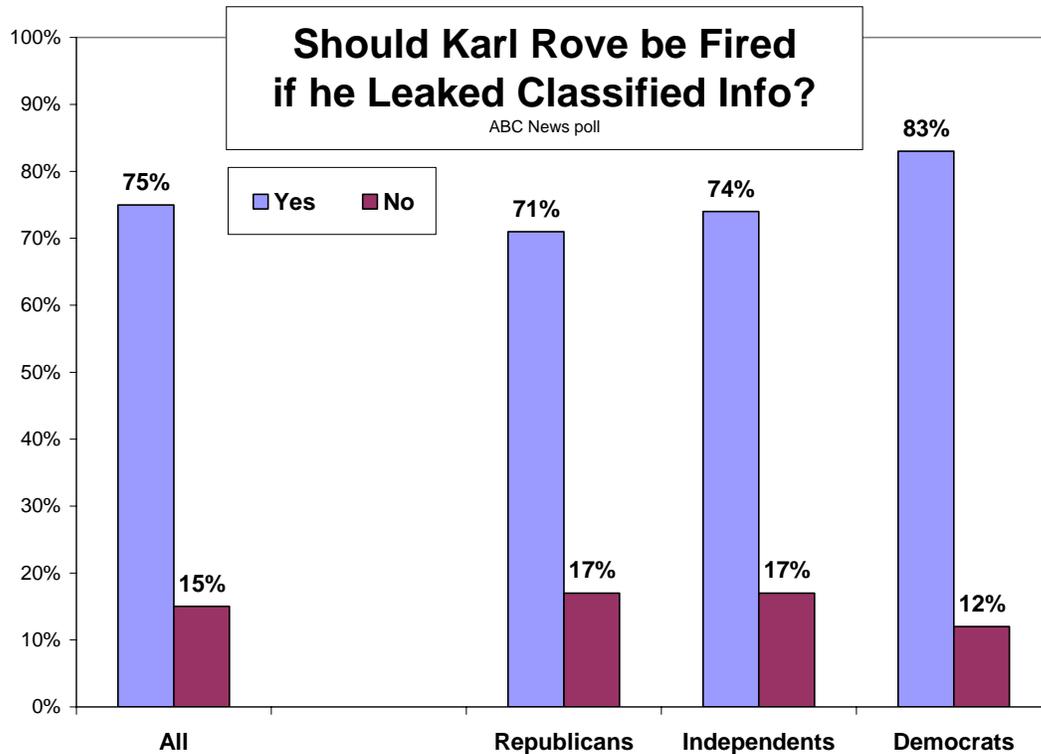
Skepticism about the administration's cooperation has jumped. As the initial investigation began in September 2003, nearly half the public, 47 percent, believed the White House was fully cooperating. That fell to 39 percent a few weeks later, and it's lower still, 25 percent, in this new ABC News poll.



This view is highly partisan; barely over a tenth of Democrats and just a quarter of independents think the White House is fully cooperating. That grows to 47 percent of Republicans – much higher, but still under half in the president's own party. And doubt about the administration's cooperation has grown as much among Republicans – by 22 points since September 2003 – as it has among others.

There's less division on consequences: Seventy-five percent say Rove should lose his job if the investigation finds he leaked classified information. That includes sizable majorities of Republicans, independents and Democrats alike – 71, 74 and 83 percent, respectively.

At the same time, in September 2003 more Americans – 91 percent – said someone who leaked classified information should be fired. The question at that time did not identify Rove, the White House deputy chief of staff and one of George W. Bush's closest advisers, as the possible source of the information.



A Time magazine reporter, Matthew Cooper, said this weekend that Rove told him that the wife of a former ambassador was a CIA officer, without giving her name. Cooper testified last week before the grand jury investigating the matter, saying his source had released him to do so.

Bush today appeared to raise the bar on a dismissable offense, saying he'd fire anyone who committed a crime. Previously the administration said anyone who'd disclosed the CIA agent's identify would be removed, without specifying a criminal act.

MILLER – This poll finds majority support for another reporter, Judith Miller of The New York Times, who's gone to jail rather than disclose her confidential source in the case. Sixty percent say she's done the right thing, ranging from 49 percent of Republicans to about two-thirds of Democrats and independents.

That view comports with an ABC News/Washington Post poll in May that found majority support for the use of confidential sources by news reporters – 53 percent in general, rising to 65 percent if it's the only way to get an important story.

SERIOUS – The leak investigation is seen as a meaningful issue: About three-quarters call it a serious matter, and just over four in 10 see it as “very” serious. These are down slightly, however, by five and six points respectively, from their level in September 2003.

Fifty-three percent are following the issue closely – a fairly broad level of attention. Those paying close attention (who include about as many Republicans as Democrats) are more likely than others to call it very serious, to say the White House is not cooperating, to say Rove should be fired if he leaked, and to say Miller is doing the right thing.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone July 13-17, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,008 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. As you may know, a federal prosecutor is investigating whether someone in the White House may have broken the law by identifying an undercover CIA agent to some news reporters. One reporter has gone to jail rather than reveal her source. How closely are you following this issue - very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not closely at all?

	-----Closely-----			-----Not closely-----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	op.
7/17/05	53	21	32	47	18	29	*

2. Do you think this is a very serious matter, somewhat serious, not too serious or not serious at all??

	-----Serious-----			-----Not serious-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	op.
7/17/05	76	42	33	19	11	8	6
10/13/03	82	46	36	14	9	4	4
9/30/03	81	48	34	16	7	9	3

3. Do you think the White House is or is not fully cooperating with this investigation?

	Is cooperating	Is not cooperating	No opin.
7/17/05	25	47	28
10/13/03	39	41	20
9/30/03	47	37	16

4. It's been reported that one of George W. Bush's closest advisers, Karl Rove, spoke briefly with a reporter about this CIA agent. If investigators find that Rove leaked classified information, do you think he should or should not lose his job in the Bush administration?

	Should	Should not	No opin.
7/17/05	75	15	10

Compare to: If the investigation finds that someone in the White House leaked classified information, do you think that person should or should not lose their job?

	Should	Should not	No opin.
9/30/03	91	5	4

5. Do you think the reporter who has gone to jail is doing the right thing or the wrong thing in not identifying her confidential source in this case?

	Right thing	Wrong thing	No opin.
7/17/05	60	26	14

END