Ipsos Public Affairs

1146 19th St., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 463-7300

Interview dates: May 2-4, 2012
Base: 776 Americans

Ipsos Poll conducted for Reuters, May 2012
AFGHANISTAN POLICY
NOTE: all results shown are percentages unless otherwise labeled.

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from May 2nd – 4th, 2012. For the survey, a sample of 776 American registered voters was interviewed online. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 4.1 percentage points for all respondents. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, ethnicity and a political values scale. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of a per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

AFGHANISTAN POLICY

Q1. How familiar are you with the recently announced plans for the continued U.S. involvement in Afghanistan? (Select one)

Very familiar	11
Somewhat familiar	38
Not very familiar	29
Heard of it, but that's it	10
Have not heard of it	12
Familiar (t2b)	**49**
Aware (t4b)	**88**

Q2. Do you favor or oppose these specific portions of the recently announced plan for U.S. involvement in Afghanistan? (Select one)

[ROWS; RANDOMIZE]
The U.S. is committed to supporting Afghan economic and security development through 2024.

Strongly favor	8
Somewhat favor	28
Somewhat oppose	38
Strongly oppose	26
Total favor	**36**
Total oppose	**64**

The U.S. will not establish any permanent military bases in Afghanistan.

Strongly favor	38
Somewhat favor	35
Somewhat oppose	17
Strongly oppose	10
Total favor	**73**
Total oppose	**27**

The U.S. will keep forces in Afghanistan to assist with Afghan troop training.

Strongly favor	14
Somewhat favor	43
Somewhat oppose	28
Strongly oppose	16
Total favor	**57**
Total oppose	**44**

The U.S. will keep forces in Afghanistan to conduct missions targeting Al Qaida

Strongly favor	19
Somewhat favor	42
Somewhat oppose	26
Strongly oppose	14
Total favor	**61**
Total oppose	**40**

All U.S. combat troops (excluding trainers and Special Forces) will leave Afghanistan by the end of 2012.

Strongly favor	48
Somewhat favor	29
Somewhat oppose	16
Strongly oppose	8
Total favor	**77**
Total oppose	**24**

Ipsos Public Affairs

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ\, i.e., Y|θ~Bin(n,θ), where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of "yes", or "1", observed in the sample, so that the sample mean ($\bar{y}$) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian[1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution (π(θ/y)~β(y+a,n-y+b)), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on $\pi(\theta/y)$. Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that a=1 and b=1 and $y = n/2$. Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}.$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Analysis Domain	Sample size	Credibility intervals
All Americans	776	4.1

[1] *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

[2] *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi . Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*