

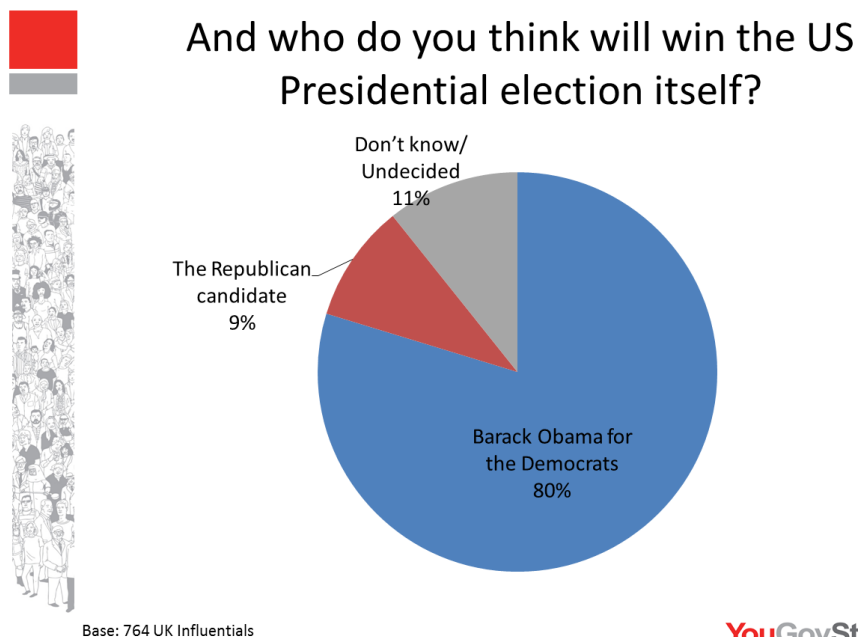
YOUGOVSTONE RESEARCH: US ELECTIONS AND THE 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP'

UK 'influentials' expect Barack Obama to win the 2012 US Presidential election, seeing off the expected Republican nominee Mitt Romney. Of the two, Obama is thought to be best for British interests, and our sample of MPs and Peers also feels this. Most 'influentials' anticipate the UK continuing to play second string in the US-UK special relationship, but for many it is central to retaining Britain's role in the world and its long-term security. Only a third (36%) of 'influentials' feel Britain's future lies more with Europe than with the US.

YouGovStone interviewed 764 members of its ThinkTank of 4000+ influential Britons in February 2012, with panellists drawn from politics, business, media, academia, NGOs, the public sector and beyond. YouGovStone also interviewed 100 MPs and 100 Peers of the House of Lords, as well as a nationally representative sample of 1731 members of the UK public.

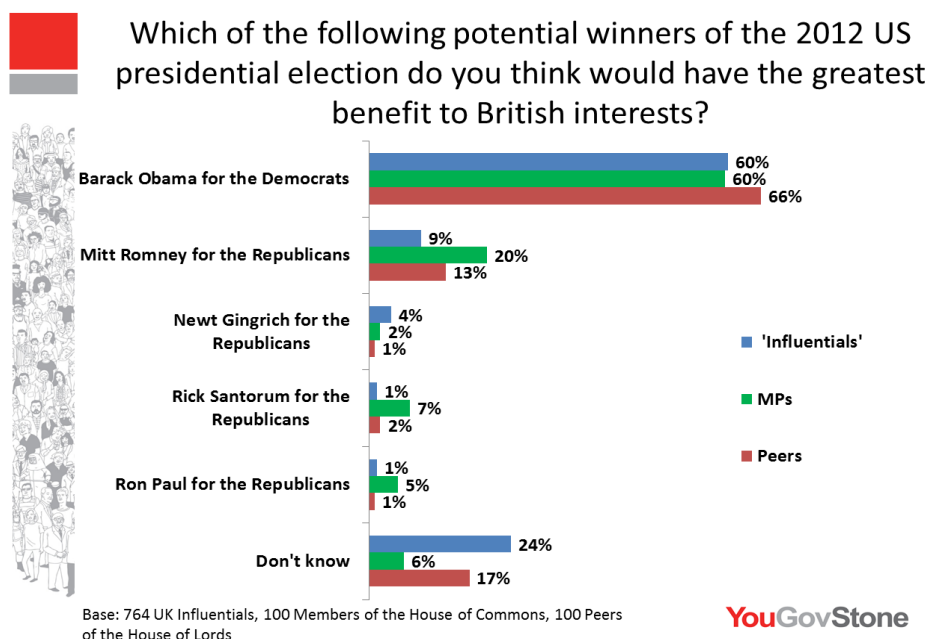
The race for the Presidency

For the 'influentials', Mitt Romney is now the prime candidate to win the Republican nomination for the US Election. 68% believe Romney will win, with Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich trailing far behind at 5% and 3% respectively. However, nearly a quarter are still undecided. Nevertheless, the ThinkTank is more certain than it was when the question was last posed in late December; then, only 36% thought Romney would win, with Gingrich in second place at 20%, and 36% undecided.



A large majority, 80%, expect Barack Obama to win the US Presidential Election itself. Respondents were also asked which potential candidate of the Election would be best for British interests. 60% of the 'influentials' think Obama would be most beneficial. YouGovStone also surveyed MPs and Peers on this topic and the results were similar, with 60% of MPs and 66% of Peers considering Obama to be best for British interests.

However, respondents are very divided along party lines. Amongst the ‘influentials’, those who voted for the Conservatives at the last General Election are much less likely to see Obama as best for British interests, with only 44% choosing him, compared to 81% and 74% of Labour and Liberal Democrat voters respectively. For the country’s political elite, the divide is even more sharp. Only 16% of Conservative MPs and Peers believe having Obama as President would be best for British interests, with 39% favouring Mitt Romney and 20% undecided. This contrasts with the Labour Peers and MPs, of which 96% think Obama is best for Britain.



Interestingly, Barack Obama is more popular when it comes to whom ‘influentials’ would personally like to see win the 2012 election. 78% choose Obama, and only 12% personally favour a Republican candidate, with 10% undecided. These figures vary similarly along party voting lines, with 65% of Conservative voters at the last election personally favouring Obama, 92% of Labour voters and 89% of Liberal Democrat voters.

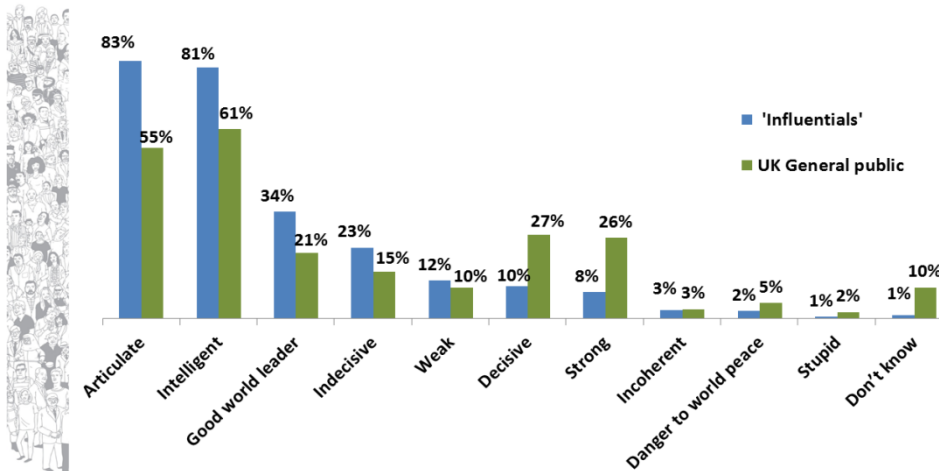
Of the UK general public, 46% personally favour Obama to win, with Romney trailing at 6%, and 42% undecided. However, Labour and Liberal Democrat voters (at the last General Election) are more decided with 63% and 62% respectively wanting Obama to win. Only 38% of Conservative voters favour Obama, while 49% are undecided.

Assessment of Barack Obama’s Presidency

The top two characteristics the ThinkTank associate with Barack Obama are being ‘Articulate’ (83%) and ‘Intelligent’ (81%); much further down in third place comes ‘Good world leader’ (34%), whilst ‘Indecisive’ comes 4th (23%). The general public is also most likely to choose ‘Articulate’ and ‘Intelligent’, but in third place for them comes ‘Decisive’ (27%). ‘Strong’ is also chosen by many members of the public (26%).



Which of these characteristics do you MOST associate with President Obama? (Select up to three)



Base: 764 UK Influentials, 1731 members of the UK general public

The 'influentials's assessment of Barack Obama is largely positive, with 61% stating they have 'a fair amount' of confidence in Barack Obama as President of the United States, and a further 15% claiming they have 'a great deal' of confidence in him. Confidence among the general public is slightly lower; 49% have 'a fair amount', and a further 9% express 'a great deal' of confidence in Obama. Again, those members of the public that voted Conservative in 2010 were more critical of Obama, being less likely to have confidence in him than Labour and Liberal Democrat voters.

The figure for the 'influentials' is also lower for Conservative voters at the last election, with only 65% of these having a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in Obama, compared to Labour and Liberal Democrat voters, both at 88%. Those 'influentials' working in business also are less confident in Obama as President, with 69% having a great deal or a fair amount of confidence, compared to 80% for those in culture and leisure, and 81% for those in education or academia.

Respondents were asked about which of a range of possible effects they have observed since Barack Obama came to power in 2008. The top two choices were the US and UK armed forces being withdrawn from Iraq sooner than they would have been under President Bush (71%), and a weakening of US power (40%). By contrast, only 28% thought Obama's Presidency would lead to an earlier withdrawal of US and UK armed forces from Iraq in July 2008. And only 4% of the ThinkTank thought in July 2008 that Obama's Presidency would lead to a visible weakening power of the US. Other effects of Obama's Presidency that many respondents now see are an increased attention to global environmental issues (24%), increased attention to issues of global poverty, and an improvement in relations between the US and Europe (22%).

US-UK special relationship

Before becoming President, Barack Obama spoke of 'recalibrating' the special relationship between the US and the UK, and respondents were asked whether they felt things had changed over his term. The 'influentials' were divided in opinion, with 49% believing things had changed but 41% not noticing any difference. This does not vary much by respondents'

political affiliation. However, those working in government or politics were far more likely to observe a difference, with 60% stating they saw the special relationship having changed.



Which of the following statements about the UK-US special relationship, if any, do you agree with?



Which of the following statements about the UK-US special relationship, if any, do you agree with?	July 2008	February 2012
The UK will never be a full partner	58%	63%
It is vital for Britain's long-term security that we have a special relationship with the US	43%	47%
It has helped the UK play a bigger role in the world than it otherwise would	56%	46%
It is of benefit to resolving major world issues	29%	38%
It has predominantly been to the benefit of the US	40%	38%
The general public does not understand the benefits that the special relationship has provided the UK	44%	37%
Britain's future lies more with Europe than with the US	41%	36%
It creates resentment amongst other nations	49%	27%
The UK is too closely tied to the US	33%	24%
None of these	-	4%
Other	7%	2%

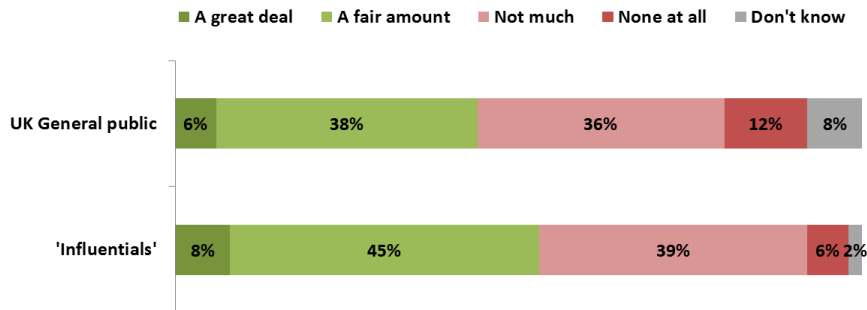
Base: 764 UK Influentials

Nearly two thirds of UK ‘influentials’ believe that the UK will never be a full partner in the special relationship, up on the 58% that stated this in a 2008 survey. And 38% further agree that the special relationship has predominantly been to the benefit of the US. Despite this, just under half still see the relationship as beneficial, with 47% claiming it is vital for Britain’s long-term security, and 46% stating that it has helped the UK play a bigger role in the world than it would have otherwise.

One major change from 2008 is that now only 27% believe the special relationship is creating resentment amongst other nations, down from 49%. Only 36% of respondents now think that Britain’s future lies more with Europe than with the US, down slightly from 41% in 2008. Respondents working in business were even less likely to agree think that Britain’s future lies more with Europe than with the US, at 29%, as were Conservative voters, at 19%.

Finally, respondents were asked how confident they were that the United States would act responsibly in the role of the world’s only superpower. Respondents are divided on this question. Although a majority of ‘influentials’, 53%, have either ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’ of confidence in the US, a significant proportion professes to have ‘not much’ confidence (39%), and 6% have no confidence at all. The general public is even more divided, with 48% expressing little or no confidence in the United States’ ability to act responsibly, but 44% stating they have ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’ of confidence in the world’s only superpower.

Following the end of the 'Cold War' it is often said that the United States is the world's only superpower. How much confidence do you have in the United States to act responsibly in this role?



Base: 764 UK Influentials, 1731 members of the UK general public

Within the sample of 'influentials', those that voted Conservative at the last General Election were more inclined to be positive about the US' ability to responsibly act as the world's only superpower, with 67% having a great deal or a fair amount of confidence. Labour voters were less confident, at 48%, and the Liberal Democrats voters even less so: over half of Lib Dems profess to have 'not much' confidence in the US. Furthermore, those respondents who personally prefer a Republican candidate to win the 2012 Presidential Election are also more likely to feel confident that the US can responsibly live up to its role.

YouGovStone's ThinkTank is a group of over 4,000 influential individuals who take part in regular online surveys. Predominantly UK based, these leaders in their field are drawn from sectors including politics, business, media, public sector, academia and NGOs.

PLEASE NOTE, YOUNGOVSTONE IS A PREDECESSOR OF YOUNGOV'S REPUTATION DEPARTMENT. YouGov now regularly surveys MPs, business leaders and other groups of high level decision makers in the UK and internationally. If your organisation needs to know what these individuals think, please contact Oliver Rowe, Director of Reputation Research on +44 (0)207 012 6032 or email oliver.rowe@yougov.com