

US Election 2008 - The Hot Issues that will Swing the Electorate

Obama-mania grips the UK's 'influentials' who overwhelmingly say that a President Obama would make better decisions on important issues to the UK and manage the economy better than a President McCain.

METHODOLOGY: This summary contains the results of YouGovStone's 'Influentials Monitor', a survey of 404 influential people in the United Kingdom, polled online between Tuesday October 14th and Monday October 20th 2008.

YouGovStone's ThinkTank is a group of over 3,000 influential individuals, predominantly UK based, drawn from various sectors including politics, business, media, the arts, academia, health, charity and law. For more information on the ThinkTank or these results, please contact Matt Bricken on matt.bricken@yougovstone.com

Eschew or renew the 'Special Relationship'?

We asked our panel of 'influentials' whether they thought the 'special relationship' between the UK and the US might change under the 44th President of America. Overall, respondents expect both candidates to keep the relationship about the same. However, more than one in three (35%) said Obama would strengthen the special relationship compared to just one in ten (10%) who believe the relationship would strengthen under McCain.

Q. "Thinking of the 'special relationship' between the US and the UK, do you think John McCain or Barack Obama will strengthen, weaken, or keep the relationship about the same once President?"

John McCain	ALL	Business	Media
Strengthen the special relationship	10 %	12 %	9 %
Keep it about the same	58 %	58 %	58 %
Weaken the special relationship	26 %	22 %	31 %
Don't know	6 %	7 %	2 %

Barack Obama	ALL	Business	Media
Strengthen the special relationship	35 %	27 %	42 %
Keep it about the same	43 %	45 %	45 %
Weaken the special relationship	17 %	22 %	11 %
Don't know	5 %	7 %	1%

Base: 404 YouGovStone 'Influentials' Oct 2008

The next 4 years of foreign policy: League of Democracies v. tête-à-tête with Iran

Over half (52%) of the respondents do not support John McCain’s idea of creating a ‘League of Democracies’ – a new multi-lateral organisation of democratically governed nations. When asked how successful McCain might be in setting his ‘League’ up in a viable way on a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 means ‘not successful at all’ and 10 means ‘extremely successful’ it achieved a mean success score of just 2.9. A little under four out of five (79%) respondents support Barack Obama’s campaign promise of his Administration meeting personally with leaders of Iran without precondition. Although Obama’s international policy proposal is much more popular than McCain’s ‘League of Democracies’, when asked about its potential success on the same scale, Obama’s diplomacy in Iran garnered a 4.9 mean success score showing many retain doubts.

Q. “Do you support John McCain’s idea of creating a ‘League of Democracies’ – a new multi-lateral organisation of democratically governed nations aiming to solve foreign policy disputes?”

Q. “Do you support Barack Obama’s campaign promise of the Obama Administration personally meeting with leaders of Iran “without precondition” during his first years as President?”

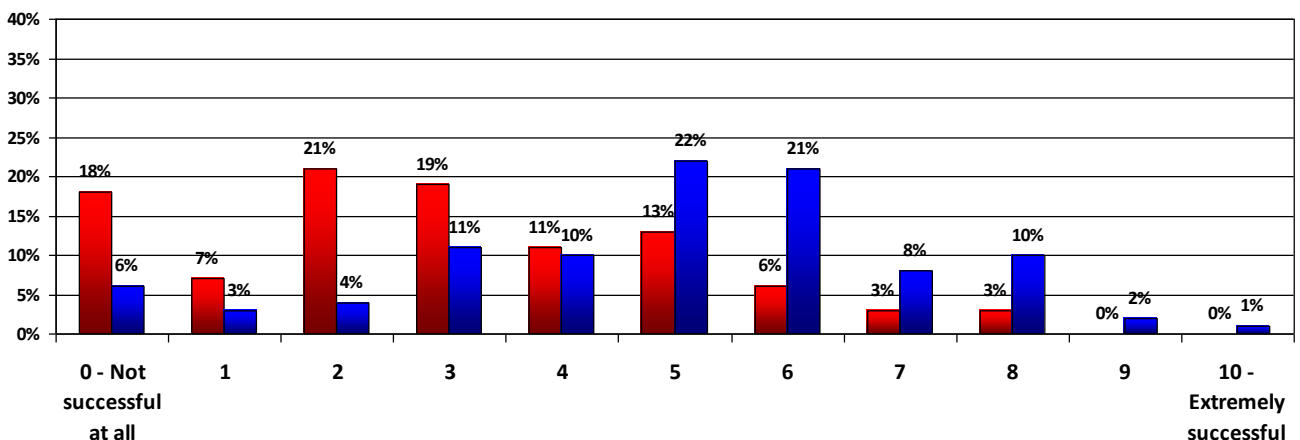
	Yes	No	Don’t know
McCain’s ‘League of Democracies’	28 %	52 %	19 %
Obama’s Iran Diplomacy	79 %	15 %	6 %

Base: 404 YouGovStone “influentials” Oct 2008

Q. “If elected how successful do you think John McCain’s will be in setting up this ‘League of Democracies’ in a viable way? Please answer on a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 is ‘not successful at all’ and 10 is ‘extremely successful’.

Q. “If elected how successful do you think Barack Obama’s diplomacy will be in dealing with Iran on a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 is ‘not successful at all’ and 10 is ‘extremely successful’.

■ John McCain’s ‘League of Democracies’ ■ Barack Obama’s Iran Diplomacy



Base: 404 YouGovStone “influentials” Oct 2008

Which president will be best for the economy?

Nearly two in three (63%) respondents believe Barack Obama would do a better job of managing the economy as President. Only one out five (19%) believe John McCain would do better.

Q. "Who do you believe would do a better job of managing the economy as President?"

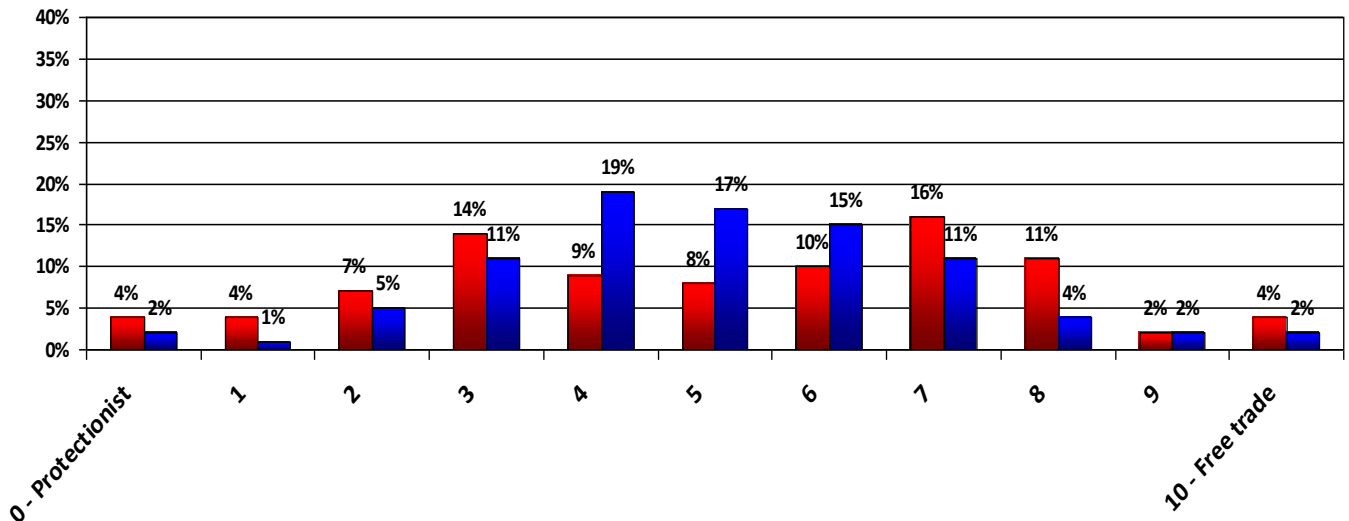
	All respondents	Business Influentials	Media Influentials	Govt/Political Influentials	Those who would like McCain to win	Those who would like Obama to win
John McCain	19 %	28 %	14 %	18 %	84 %	5 %
Barack Obama	63 %	56 %	67 %	68 %	5 %	83 %
Don't know	18 %	17 %	19 %	14 %	14 %	12 %

Will the future President be a Protectionist?

We asked the 'influentials' to rate where they thought each candidate stands in terms of international trade on a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 is 'Protectionist' and 10 is 'Free trade'. The responses indicate that either future President will be somewhere in between though John McCain stands slightly closer to the free trade end of the spectrum than Barack Obama. McCain received a +5% Net Rating toward free trade whilst Obama received a -4% Net Rating towards protectionism. Net Ratings are achieved by subtracting the sum of the percentages for the 'free trade' ratings (6-10) by the 'protectionist' ratings (0-4).

Q. "In terms of international trade, where do you think the candidates stand between free trade and protectionism? Please rate both candidates on a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 means 'Protectionist' and 10 means 'Free trade'?"

■ John McCain ■ Barack Obama

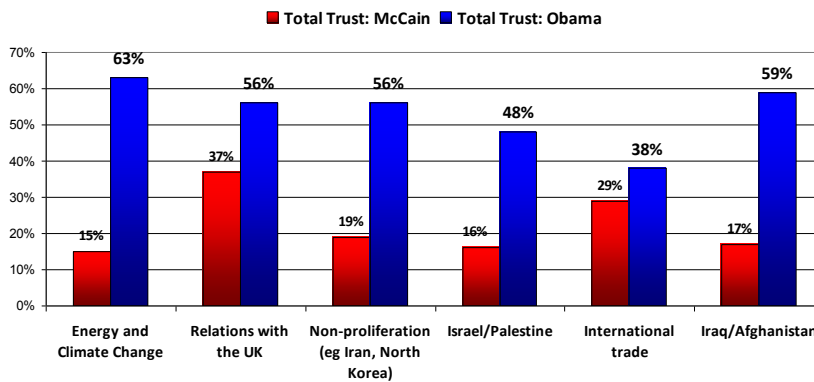


Who do Britain's 'influentials' trust to make the right decisions on issues affecting the UK?

Barack Obama. That is according to the 'influentials' when then asked how much they trust both McCain and Obama to make the right decision on a range of international issues.

Respondents trust Obama more than McCain to make the right decision on all six proposed issues. However, respondents are skeptical of both candidates and their future decisions on trade. When asked where the candidates stand of free trade v. protectionism, the respondents perceived both candidates to be some where in between with Obama slightly protectionist and McCain slightly more free trade.

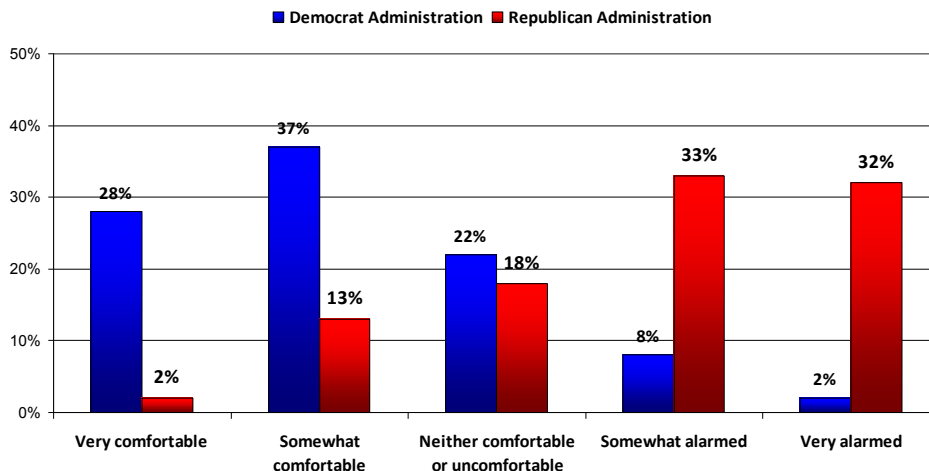
Q. "How much do you trust John McCain/Barack Obama to make the right decision on the following issues? (Total Trust = 'Trust a great deal'/'Somewhat trust', Total Distrust = 'Somewhat distrust'/'Distrust a great deal')



Feelings on the next four years?

Britain's 'influentials' are in the mood for change in the executive branch in Washington. Nearly two in three (65%) respondents say they would be personally alarmed to some extent if the next administration were to be Republican. Conversely, the same percentage (65%) would be personally comfortable with a potential Democrat administration.

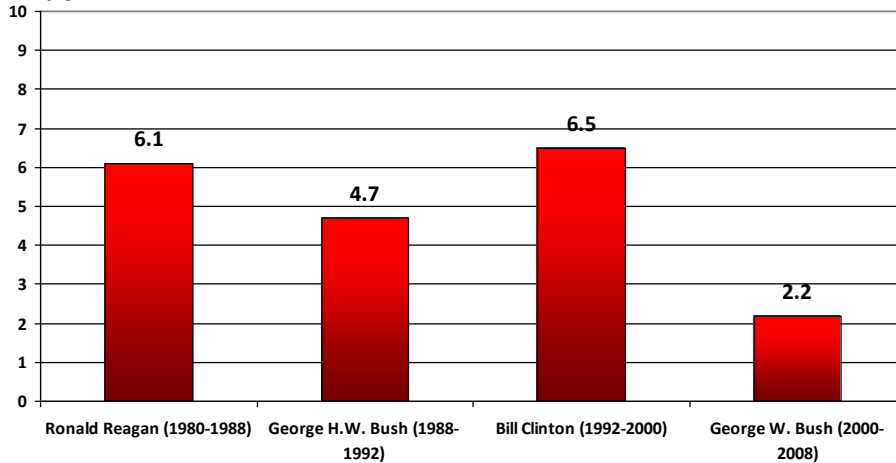
Q. "How comfortable or alarmed would you be personally with each potential administration over the next 4 years?"



Rating past presidential performances

Former President Bill Clinton received the highest rating from respondents when asked to rate the overall performance of the past four US presidents. Clinton received a mean score of 6.5 on a scale where 0 is 'extremely poor' and 10 is 'extremely good'. He was closely followed by President Ronald Reagan who received a mean score of 6.1. Current President George W. Bush received the lowest rating from respondents with a mean score of 2.2.

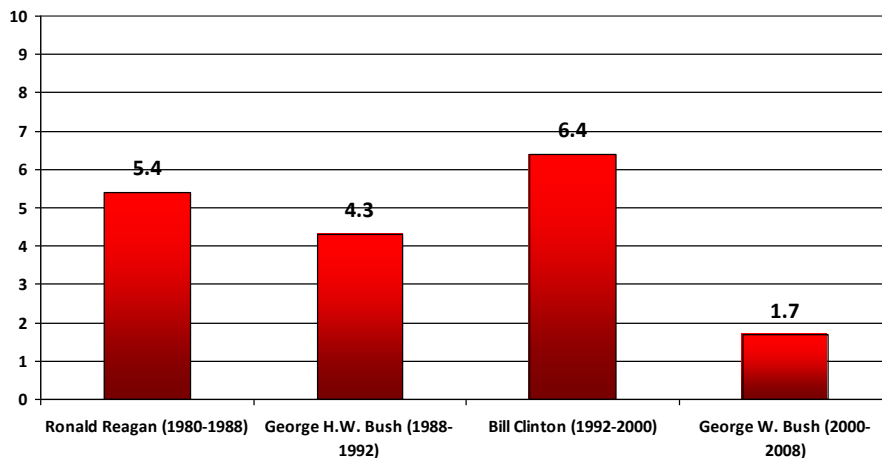
Q. "How would you rate the overall performance of these past US presidents on a scale of 0 -10, where 0 is 'extremely poor' and 10 is 'extremely good'?"



Past US presidents and their impact on the UK

On a scale of 0 – 10 where 0 is 'extremely negative impact' and 10 is 'extremely positive impact' respondents were asked to rate the past four US presidents performance in terms of their impact on the UK. President Clinton received the highest rating (6.4 mean score) of the four presidents. The lowest rating (1.7) was received by current President George W. Bush.

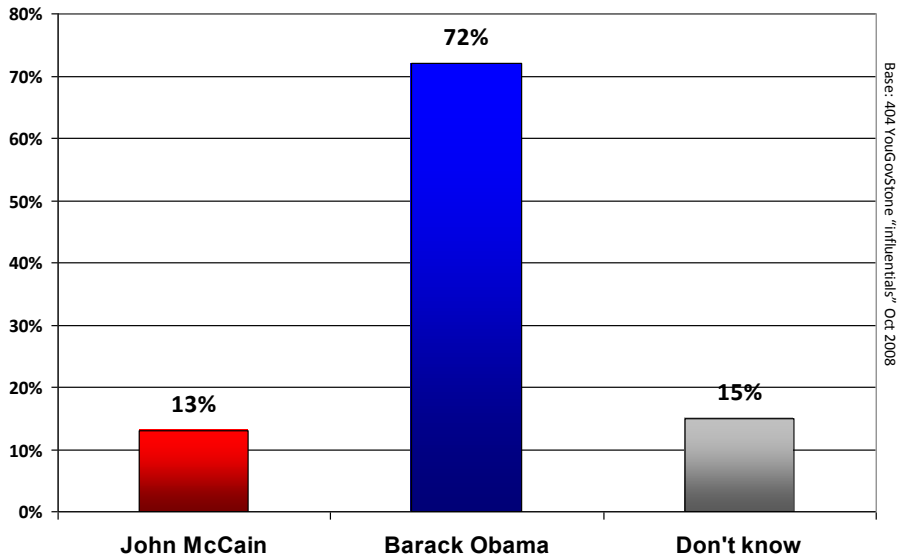
Q. "How would you rate the overall performance of these past US presidents in terms of a positive or negative impact they had on the UK on a scale of 0 -10, where 0 is 'extremely negative impact' and 10 is 'extremely positive impact'?"



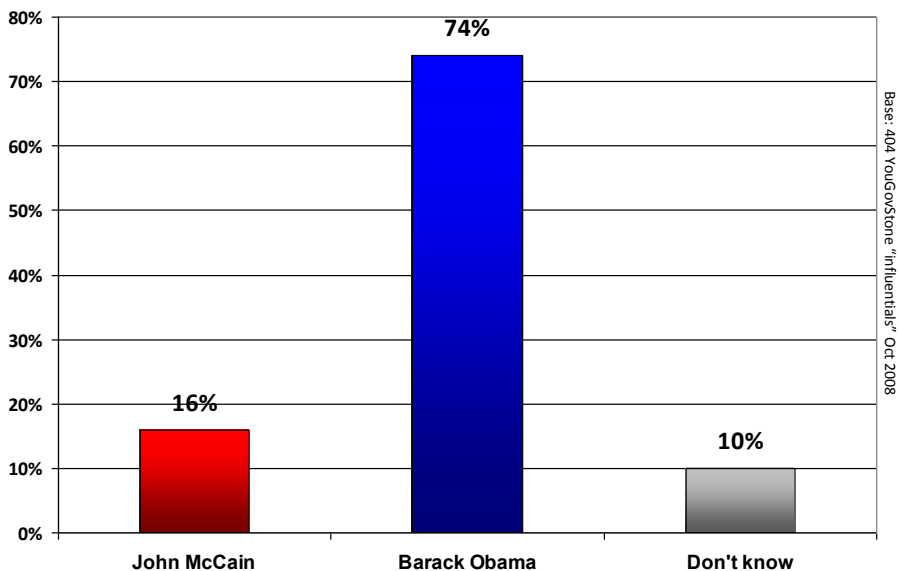
President McCain or President Obama?

The UK's 'influentials' believe and want it to be Barack Obama.. Respondents overwhelmingly (72%) believe that Senator Obama will be the next President of the United States compared to only 13% who believe Senator McCain will win on November 4th.

Q. "Who do you believe will win the US Presidential election this year?"



Q. "Who would you like to see win the US Presidential election this year?"



***PLEASE NOTE, YOUNGOVSTONE IS A PREDECESSOR OF
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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