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## **PUBLIC SAYS IT'S ILLEGAL TO TARGET AMERICANS ABROAD AS SOME QUESTION CIA DRONE ATTACKS**

By a two-to-one margin (48%-24%) American voters say they think it is illegal for the U.S. government to target its own citizens living abroad with drone attacks, according to a recent national survey of registered voters by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind. Just 24 percent say it is legal, agreeing with the position taken by the US Attorney and the Obama administration.

"The public clearly makes an assumption very different from that of the Obama administration or Mr. Brennan: the public thinks targeting American citizens abroad is out of bounds," said Peter Woolley, professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University and analyst for PublicMind.

Support or opposition to the legality of drone attacks on Americans does not vary by party identification. Republicans are just as likely as Democrats or independents to say it is illegal, or that the U.S. government can do it. And men are just as likely as women (47% and 48%) to think it is illegal, though more men than women say it is legal (30% versus 18%). Non-whites are significantly more likely than whites (57% versus 44%) to think it is illegal to target American citizens abroad.

However, by a wide six-to-one margin (75%-13%) voters approve of the U.S. military using drones to carry out attacks abroad "on people and other targets deemed a threat to the U.S." Republicans, men and whites approve more strongly than Democrats, women, and non-whites, but approval is robust in all demographic categories.

Voters also approve by a strong three-to-one margin (65%-21%) the CIA using drones to carry out attacks abroad, but this approval is significantly less than approval for the U.S. military carrying out such attacks.

"Clearly some people think it's important to make a distinction between the military and the CIA," said Woolley. "In fact, in any given demographic category, approval of CIA drone attacks is 8 to 17 percentage points less than support for U.S. military attacks."

One clear finding is that U.S. voters are paying attention to drones. About two-thirds (65%) say they've heard some or a lot about the pilotless machines. Fewer than one-in-six (15%) say they've heard nothing. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that they've heard a lot about the drones (45% compared to 29%). And twice as many men as women (51% versus 23%) claim to have heard "a lot" about the drones.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 814 registered voters was conducted nationally by telephone with both landline and cell phones from December 10 through December 16, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>  
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

## Methodology

The most recent national survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from December 10 through December 16, 2012, using a randomly selected sample of 814 registered voters nationwide. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.4 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

**Table 1: Drones**

**You probably know that the United States uses remotely controlled aircraft called “drones” to spy on and sometimes attack people and other kinds of targets around the world. How much have you heard or read about these drones?**

	All	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women
A lot	37%	29	38	45	51	23
Some	28%	29	24	29	25	31
Just a little	21%	23	24	18	15	27
Nothing	15%	18	15	8	9	19

**Table 2: Use of drones abroad**

**To the best of your knowledge, can the U.S. target U.S. citizens living in other countries with drones, or is that illegal?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			Race	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-34	35-44	55+	White	Non-white
Can target	24%	23	26	26	30	18	27	26	20	24	23
Is illegal	48%	50	50	44	47	48	53	42	50	44	57
Unsure	28%	27	24	30	22	33	20	31	29	31	20
Refused	1%	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1

**Table 3: Use of drones by U.S. Military**

**In general, do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. Military using drones to carry out attacks abroad on people and other targets deemed a threat to the U.S.?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			Race	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Wom	18-34	35-44	55+	White	Non-white
Approve	75%	66	82	84	82	69	72	76	77	78	69
Disapprove	13%	19	8	7	9	16	20	11	10	10	19
Unsure/mixed	12%	15	10	9	9	14	7	13	13	12	11
Refused	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1

**Table 4: Use of drones by C.I.A.**

**In general, do you approve or disapprove of the C.I.A. using drones to carry out attacks abroad on people and other targets deemed a threat to the U.S.?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			Race	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Wom	18-34	35-44	55+	White	Non-white
Approve	65%	57	65	76	72	58	63	68	64	67	59
Disapprove	21%	26	24	14	17	25	27	18	21	19	26
Unsure	13%	16	11	10	9	16	10	14	13	13	15
Refused	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1

**Exact Question Wording and Order**

US1, US2, US4 released December 19, 2012

US3 series released December 18, 2012

US5 and US6 released December 21, 2012

*DR1 You probably know that the United States uses remotely-controlled aircraft called “drones” to spy on and sometimes attack people and other kinds of targets around the world. How much have you heard or read....about these drones... READ?*

- 1 Quite a lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little or
- 4 Practically nothing?
- 8 DK/Refused

*DR2 To the best of your knowledge, can the U.S. target U.S. citizens living in other countries with the drones, or is that illegal?*

- 1 Can target
- 2 Is illegal
- 8 DK/Refused

**ROTATE DR3A and DR3B, RECORD ORDER**

*DR3A. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. Military using drones to carry out attacks abroad on people and other targets deemed a threat to the U.S.?*

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Mixed (vol)
- 4 Neither (vol)
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

*DR3B. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the C.I.A. using drones to carry out attacks abroad on people and other targets deemed a threat to the U.S.?*

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Mixed (vol)
- 4 Neither (vol)
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

**DR3a/b by order**

	Military asked 1 <sup>st</sup>	C.I.A. asked 2 <sup>nd</sup>	C.I.A. asked 1 <sup>st</sup>	Military asked 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Approve	73%	69%	63%	78%
Disapprove	13%	19%	24%	12%
Unsure	14%	12%	13%	10%

**Sample characteristics – Registered voters****Gender**

Male	48
Female	52

**Age**

18-29	14
30-44	26
45-59	29
60+	30
Refused	1

**Race/Ethnicity**

White	72
Black/African-American	13
Latino or Hispanic	9
Asian	2
Other/refused	4

**Census region**

Northeast	19
Midwest	22
South	32
West	27

**Education**

HS or less	29
Some college	34
College graduate	37

**Party identification**

Democrat	34
Independent	39
Republican	26
Other	1
DK/Refused	1