

## **Appendix 2: Experimental Stimulus**

### **Control**

#### **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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Soldiers from the same unit are also accused of having desecrated the bodies of the victims. According to the reports, the soldiers posed for photographs in front of several of the corpses. These allegations come at a time when relations between the United States and Afghanistan governments are increasingly strained.

Since taking command over U.S. military operations in Afghanistan last year, General Allen has emphasized that the protection of Afghan civilians is a high priority. But these latest allegations reveal the extraordinary sensitivity surrounding civilian casualties in Afghanistan. On Wednesday, Afghan President Hamid Karzai strongly condemned the killings and on Thursday, anti-American protests swept across many parts of Afghanistan.

### **Minimization (Echo)**

#### **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

U.S. officials call killings isolated and blame low-ranking soldiers

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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An Army official responded this week by suggesting that the scope of these incidents was limited. "These were isolated incidents, committed by a handful of soldiers," said General John R. Allen, commander of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, in a press briefing Wednesday.

“This despicable behavior does not extend beyond these individuals in that remote village in Kandahar. I can promise you that.”

On Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney refused to confirm any details of the allegations, but he strongly rejected claims that the soldiers may have been following orders. “These actions were the work of a few bad apples,” Carney said. “They defied the orders and training given to them. It is as simple as that.” Carney added, “Let’s not forget that 99.99% of our service members in Afghanistan have not behaved this way. You know this, I know this, and the Afghan people know this. These actions are terrible, but they are the actions of a few and nothing more.”

In Congress, Senate Republicans on Thursday also blamed the low-ranking soldiers involved. “This was obviously not a failure of policy or military leadership; it was a failure of character among those few deranged individuals who committed these heinous acts,” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator John McCain added, “Any suggestion that these soldiers may have been following orders is ridiculous. Just look at what they did. Now the rest of our troops are going to face increased hostility over here just because of the behavior of a few sick individuals during a single combat mission. These individuals should be ashamed of themselves.”

House Republicans emphasized the need to place this incident in the proper context. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “There is no need to reassess military policy or our involvement over there because of these actions. Blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the handful of soldiers who committed these atrocities.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “It is inexplicable why these individuals would have disobeyed their orders and engaged in such disgusting behavior. Still, we cannot let this isolated incident overshadow or derail what we are trying to accomplish in Afghanistan.”

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### **Minimization (Contestation)**

## **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

Some U.S. officials call killings widespread and place blame on higher-ups

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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reports detailed one combat mission in which U.S. soldiers conducted an ambush in a small village, killing several of the local villagers. Among the dead were children and elderly men.

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Republicans in Congress, however, strongly challenged these claims Thursday. “This incident is anything but isolated,” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. “I would bet that dozens of other similar incidents have occurred over there in the last year or so due to our policies. This one just happened to get attention because of the photos,” said Lugar. Senator John McCain added, “The soldiers involved here were doing what they were ordered to do. That’s a fact. It’s reprehensible that this administration would suggest otherwise. Our policies in Afghanistan are allowing, if not encouraging, this kind of conduct and these soldiers are being blamed just because they’re easy targets.”

House Republicans also placed blame for the incidents on the White House. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “Responsibility for these actions goes beyond a ‘few bad apples’; it extends to the very top—the White House. This is a systemic problem and it sickens me to think about how many other incidents like this have probably occurred over there due to the policies of this administration.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “We demand answers from this administration. Innocent civilians are dying because of our ‘shoot first, explain later’ policies. It has to stop.”

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## Contextualization (Echo)

### U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan

U.S. officials say stress and confusion within the unit led to the killings

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

Multiple news reports claimed Wednesday that American soldiers from the U.S. Army's 5th Stryker Brigade killed several unarmed Afghan civilians in Kandahar Province in late 2011. The reports detailed one combat mission in which U.S. soldiers conducted an ambush in a small village, killing several of the local villagers. Among the dead were children and elderly men.

Soldiers from the same unit are also accused of having desecrated the bodies of the victims. According to the reports, the soldiers posed for photographs in front of several of the corpses. These allegations come at a time when relations between the United States and Afghanistan governments are increasingly strained.

An Army official responded this week by emphasizing the difficulty of differentiating friend from foe in Afghanistan. "The infiltration of the Taliban into the local population has made identification of the enemy extremely difficult for our soldiers and it has increased the likelihood of injury to innocent civilians," said General John R. Allen, commander of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, in a press briefing Wednesday. "Often, those carrying out operational missions for the Taliban may not even be armed. They may be old men and women, or even young children who possess the means and know-how to detonate IED's (Improvised Explosive Devices) at a safe distance," said Allen. "Thus, our troops face immense challenges and risk on a daily basis over there."

On Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney refused to confirm any details of the allegations, but he did indicate that those involved had been under enormous stress in the days leading up to the incident. "The unit involved here had been engaged in fierce combat prior to this incident," said Carney. "They had also recently lost one of their men due to an IED attack so they were very upset about that." Carney added, "These conditions do not justify what was done in that village, but they do help us understand the psychological state of these men as they entered that village."

In Congress, Senate Republicans on Thursday agreed that U.S. soldiers face extraordinary pressures in Afghanistan. "Our soldiers over there are constantly threatened by IED attacks and enemy sniper fire," said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. "The Taliban operates in the shadows, blending into the civilian population by day and launching attacks by night. Under these circumstances, one can understand why our soldiers might be quick to the trigger," said Lugar. Senator John McCain added, "Speaking from experience, war is hell. The uncertainty and confusion that soldiers face in combat is often overwhelming and can sometimes cause them to do terrible things. That's important to remember here."

House Republicans also said the incident needed to be placed in the proper context. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, "These soldiers were expecting to encounter a fierce firefight when they entered the village. This might explain why those involved in this incident did what they did." Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, "In the fog of war, bad things can happen. The chaotic environment in which these soldiers were operating and the threats that they encounter on a daily basis could very well have caused them to act out. So it is very important to consider the context within which these acts occurred."

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### **Contextualization (Contestation)**

## **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

Some U.S. officials reject claims that confusion and stress may have led to the killings

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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Republicans in Congress, however, strongly challenged these claims Thursday. “This was murder in cold blood,” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. “Innocent civilians, including at least one child, were deliberately targeted and killed. Yet, this administration is focused on legitimizing this behavior by highlighting situational factors that might explain why they did it. It makes me sick.” Senator John McCain added, “I’ve witnessed first-hand the horrors of war. I know combat can be confusing and stressful. But there is no excuse for deliberately killing unarmed, unresisting elderly men and children under any circumstances. We must not allow the ‘fog of war’ idea to creep into our understanding of this atrocity.”

House Republicans also rejected the suggestion that the killings were a result of the chaotic environment in which those involved were operating. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “This administration would have us believe that these killings were caused by confusion and stress among those involved. That’s outrageous. Using that logic, virtually any action could be justified in war. These were deliberate acts of murder, nothing more.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “Spare me the war is hell argument. This administration should be ashamed of itself. There is no excuse or justification for what took place in that village. It was murder in cold blood.”

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### **Disassociation (Echo)**

## **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

U.S. officials vow to punish those involved

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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An Army official responded this week by emphasizing that the military justice system has worked in this case and that those involved will be severely punished. “As soon as we discovered these incidents, we immediately launched an investigation,” said General John R. Allen, commander of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, in a press briefing Wednesday. “The U.S. military takes these allegations very seriously and we are getting to the bottom of this. Those un-American individuals who committed these heinous acts are going to be brought to justice.” Allen added, “The problem is being fixed and the world will see that we do not tolerate this kind of sick behavior.”

On Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney refused to confirm any details of the allegations, but he did draw a clear distinction between the soldiers involved in the incident and the U.S. military as a whole. “The despicable behavior of these soldiers goes against the values and principles of the United States military,” said Carney. “American soldiers just do not behave this way. This is a shock to you, me and every other American. We are thoroughly investigating what happened and those involved will be punished swiftly and to the fullest extent of the law. I can promise you that. We will make sure that this never happens again.”

In Congress, Senate Republicans on Thursday supported the plan to investigate the incidents and punish those soldiers involved. “These soldiers have done a great dishonor to the men and women who wear the U.S. military uniform,” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. “Their behavior is inconsistent with American values and it violates everything that our military stands for. Americans just don’t do this to other people. We will thoroughly investigate and prosecute those involved,” said Lugar. Senator John McCain added, “Stiff punishment for those soldiers involved is coming. We must send the message that this behavior is never tolerated and that it will never happen again.”

House Republicans offered similar statements on Friday. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated, “This behavior is so out of character for our men and women in uniform. It’s fundamentally un-American. Whoever is responsible for it must be and will be held accountable.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “These acts are abhorrent to the conscience of all the American people. Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that this immoral behavior is dealt with in accordance with the strict rules of military justice.”

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## **Disassociation (Contestation)**

### **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

Some U.S. officials express doubt that those involved will be brought to justice

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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Republicans in Congress, however, strongly challenged these claims Thursday. "This administration should be ashamed of itself," said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. "It wasn't until the photos were released in the media that this administration began doing anything about it. And the current investigation has been nothing but buck-passing and damage control. This White House is more focused on doing public relations than addressing the cause of the problem or punishing those involved," said Lugar. Senator John McCain added, "At a time when the world must see that no one in the U.S. is above the law, this administration has arrogantly acted as if it answers only to itself. There is no justice in that."



House Republicans also claimed that a miscarriage of justice has occurred. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “The White House appears only interested in sacking some poor infantrymen, then calling it justice. I’m not buying this charade.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “While the administration has publicly stated that it will fully investigate these incidents and punish those involved, this is nothing but empty rhetoric. Such statements are designed to dupe Americans into thinking that the problem has been fixed when clearly it has not.”

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### **Reaffirmation (Echo)**

## **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

U.S. officials say America’s moral standing in the world remains strong

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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An Army official responded this week by emphasizing the need to place this incident in the proper context. “This incident is deeply regrettable, but what the United States has done in Afghanistan is nothing short of remarkable,” said General John R. Allen, commander of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, in a press briefing Wednesday. “Today, the Afghan people are no longer living in a society where public executions are the norm and women are forbidden from going outside their homes. They are on the path to peace and stability and none of this would have been possible without the courage, dedication and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. This is a testament to the generosity and determination of our nation,” said Allen.

On Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney refused to confirm any details of the allegations, but he strongly rejected claims that the United States’ image has suffered because of these acts. “America has always been a champion of human rights and source for good in the

world,” said Carney. “Our military strictly adheres to international law and we do everything in our power to avoid harming innocent civilians. The world knows this. This stands in stark contrast to the Taliban or Al Qaeda who never hesitate to kill civilians whenever it suits their needs.”

In Congress, Senate Republicans on Thursday highlighted the good deeds being performed by Americans in Afghanistan. “Let’s not forget that we are doing many good things in Afghanistan,” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. “We are building schools, roads and hospitals, and, most importantly, we are improving the lives of millions who have been subjected to so many years of misery and despair under a tyrannical regime,” said Lugar. Senator John McCain added, “The United States remains the international leader on human rights. This incident must not deter us from continuing our efforts to bring peace, stability and democracy to the people of Afghanistan.”

House Republicans also responded to the incidents by focusing on what is at stake in Afghanistan. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “These actions are terrible, but we remain a beacon of hope for the millions of people living in Afghanistan who desire freedom and democracy. We have done so much for the Afghan people. We must not lose sight of this.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “We cannot let these horrible acts overshadow the tireless, selfless work being done by our troops in Afghanistan. They are fighting to ensure that the Afghan people may have a better future. It doesn’t get more selfless than that.”

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### **Reaffirmation (Contestation)**

## **U.S. Soldiers Accused of Killing Civilians in Afghanistan**

Some U.S. officials say America has lost its moral standing in the world

Associated Press, January 11, 2012

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Republicans in Congress, however, strongly challenged these claims Thursday. “What does this incident say about the United States and our values as a nation?” said Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. “Can you imagine how Americans would respond if some foreign nation were to come into our communities and kill defenseless civilians? We’d be outraged. We’ve lost our moral standing in the world,” said Lugar. Senator John McCain added “This incident has given ammunition to those around the world who claim that America is hypocritical and flawed, and it has cast a long shadow over our persistent claims of only wanting to bring peace and stability to the Afghan people.”

House Republicans also said there will be a negative impact on the United States’ image. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated on Friday, “It is imperative that we achieve the moral high ground when attempting to defeat the Taliban. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. We are now no better in the eyes of the Afghan people than the insurgents we seek to eliminate.” Congressman Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, added, “Sadly, this incident conjures up memories of My Lai and Abu Ghraib. How can we as a nation proclaim to be defenders of moral principles when we commit such heinous acts? This behavior tarnishes our reputation and destroys America’s moral authority in the world.”

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### Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire

**(1) To what extent do you think the following groups are responsible for this incident?**

**(a) The low-ranking soldiers directly involved in this incident.**

Not at all responsible  
Somewhat responsible  
Very responsible  
Completely responsible

**(b) The brigade commanders in charge of these low-ranking soldiers.**

Not at all responsible  
Somewhat responsible  
Very responsible  
Completely responsible

**(c) Top U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan.**

Not at all responsible  
Somewhat responsible  
Very responsible  
Completely responsible

**(d) The Defense Department/Pentagon.**

Not at all responsible  
Somewhat responsible  
Very responsible  
Completely responsible

**(e) The White House.**

Not at all responsible  
Somewhat responsible  
Very responsible  
Completely responsible

**(2) Other than this particular case, how often do you think U.S. military incidents like this happen in Afghanistan?**

Never  
Occasionally  
Often  
All of the time

**(3) How likely do you think that those responsible for this incident will be appropriately punished?**

Not at all likely  
Somewhat likely  
Very likely  
Extremely likely

**(4) How confident are you that the U.S. military will take the necessary steps to help prevent incidents like this from happening again?**

Not at all confident  
Somewhat confident  
Very confident  
Extremely confident

**(5) To what extent do you think that America is a champion of human rights around the world?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(6) To what extent do you think that the stresses of combat in Afghanistan led these soldiers to do this?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(7) To what extent do you think that the U.S. military overlooks this type of behavior?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(8) To what extent do you think that this incident was an isolated event?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(9) To what extent do you think that this incident was caused by the difficulties faced by U.S. soldiers in identifying the enemy during combat in Afghanistan?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(10) To what extent do you think that this incident is consistent with the way in which America conducts itself in war?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(11) To what extent do you think that the soldiers involved in this incident were just following orders?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(12) To what extent do you think that America has done more good than bad for the people of Afghanistan?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(13) To what extent do you think that the chaotic environment in which these soldiers were operating in Afghanistan caused this incident?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(14) To what extent do you think that America's military is a force for good in the world?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(15) To what extent do you think that this incident was caused by the actions of only a few soldiers?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(16) To what extent do you think that justice will be appropriately carried out in this case?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(17) To what extent do you think that the constant threat that these soldiers face in combat in Afghanistan led to this incident**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(18) To what extent do you think U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan has improved the long-term security of the United States?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(19) To what extent do you think the United States is making progress in the war in Afghanistan?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(20) To what extent do you think that the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan has been worth the costs?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(21) In general, how much confidence do you have in the U.S. military?**

None  
Not much  
A fair amount  
A lot

**(22) To what extent do you identify with other Americans?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(23) To what extent is being American important to you?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(24) To what extent do you feel close to other Americans?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(25) To what extent does the term “American” describes you?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely

**(26) How often do you say “we” instead of “they” when talking about Americans?**

Not at all  
Somewhat  
Very much  
Completely



**(27) Think back to the news story that you just read. Did Congressional officials agree or disagree with the views expressed by the White House in this news story?**

Agree  
Disagree

**(28) Generally speaking, which of the following do you consider yourself?**

Strong Republican  
Moderate Republican  
Slight Republican  
Neutral  
Slight Democrat  
Moderate Democrat  
Strong Democrat

**(29) What is your gender?**

Male  
Female

**(30) What racial or ethnic group best describes you?**

Black  
Hispanic/Latino/a  
White  
Asian  
Native American  
More than one race  
Other

**(31) What was the last grade or class that you completed in school?**

Did not complete high school  
Completed high school or equivalent  
Some college  
Associates degree  
Completed bachelors degree  
Some graduate school  
Completed graduate degree

**(32) Last year (2010), what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?**

Less than \$10,000  
\$10,000 - \$24,999  
\$25,000 - \$49,999

\$50,000 - \$74,999  
\$75,000 - \$99,999  
\$100,000 - \$249,999  
Over \$250,000

**(33) What is your current age?**

18-24  
25-34  
35-44  
45-54  
55-64  
65 and above

#### Appendix 4: Composite Variables

<b>Limited Severity Measures</b>	Mean	SD
The brigade commanders in charge of these low-ranking soldiers.	2.31	0.81
Top U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan.	2.57	0.89
The Defense Department/Pentagon.	2.68	0.93
The White House.	2.81	1.00
Other than this particular case, how often do you think U.S. military incidents like this happen in Afghanistan?	2.73	0.64
To what extent do you think that the soldiers involved in this incident were just following orders?	3.23	0.81
	Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$	

<b>Situational Stress Measures</b>	Mean	SD
To what extent do you think that the stresses of combat in Afghanistan led these soldiers to do this?	2.87	0.80
To what extent do you think that this incident was caused by the difficulties faced by U.S. soldiers in identifying the enemy during combat in Afghanistan?	2.29	0.92
To what extent do you think that the military tactics used by the Taliban make incidents like this more likely?	2.80	0.84
To what extent do you think that the chaotic environment in which these soldiers were operating in Afghanistan caused this incident?	2.58	0.78
To what extent do you think that the constant threat that these soldiers face in combat in Afghanistan led to this incident?	2.68	0.81
	Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$	

<b>Punishment Measures</b>	Mean	SD
How likely do you think that those responsible for this incident will be appropriately punished?	2.36	0.86
How confident are you that the U.S. military will take the necessary steps to help prevent incidents like this from happening again?	2.12	0.86
Reverse Coded - To what extent do you think that the U.S. military overlooks this type of behavior?	2.79	0.78
To what extent do you think that justice will be appropriately carried out in this case?	2.38	0.82
	Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$	

<b>America as Moral Leader Measures</b>	Mean	SD
Reverse Coded - To what extent do you think that this incident is consistent with the way in which America conducts itself in war?	3.23	0.79
To what extent do you think that America is a champion of human rights around the world?	2.53	0.83
To what extent do you think that America's military is a force for good in the world?	2.71	0.85
To what extent do you think that America has done more good than bad for the people of Afghanistan?	2.64	0.90
	Cronbach's $\alpha$ =.78	

<b>National Attachment Measures</b>	Mean	SD
To what extent do you identify with other Americans?	2.79	0.73
To what extent is being American important to you?	3.43	0.73
To what extent do you feel close to other Americans?	2.93	0.78
To what extent does the term "American" describe you?	3.33	0.77
How often do you say "we" instead of "they" when talking about Americans?	3.33	0.83
	Cronbach's $\alpha$ =.84	

<b>Attitudes about War in Afghanistan Measures</b>	Mean	SD
To what extent do you think U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan has improved the long-term security of the United States?	1.90	0.80
To what extent do you think the United States is making progress in the war in Afghanistan?	1.85	0.71
To what extent do you think that the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan has been worth the costs?	1.68	0.77
	Cronbach's $\alpha$ =.86	

<b>Confidence in the U.S. Military Measure</b>	Mean	SD
In general, how much confidence do you have in the U.S. military	3.29	0.74