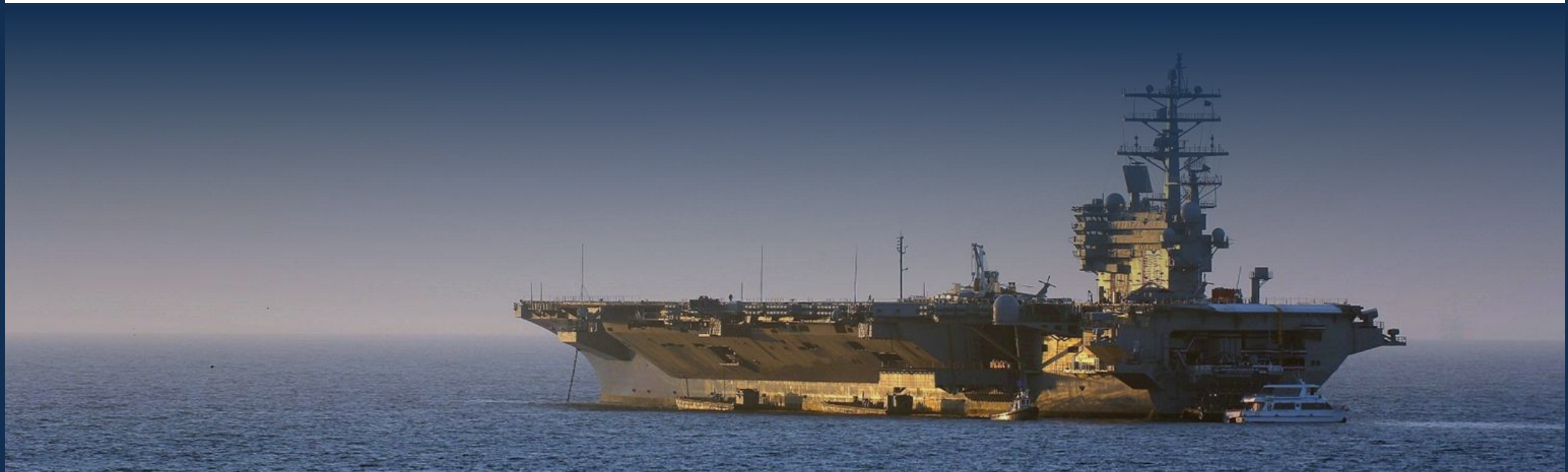




Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute


Annual National Defense Survey *Detailed Findings*



Prepared by Beacon Research and Shaw & Company Research, February 2021



About the Survey

Mode	Combined telephone (n=1011) and online panel (n=1516) survey. Telephone interviews conducted by trained professionals calling landlines (46%) and cellphones (54%).
Sample	2,527 U.S. Adults.
Dates	February 4-14, 2021.
Weights	Slight weights were applied to ensure the sample accurately reflects the demographic profile of the U.S. population.
Margin of Error	$\pm 2\%$ at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample. Most questions were split sampled (n \approx 1250, $\pm 2.8\%$). The margin of error for subgroups is higher.
Research Partnership	 The logos for the research partners: SHAW & Company research and BEACON RESEARCH.
Note	Some data may not add to 100% due to rounding.

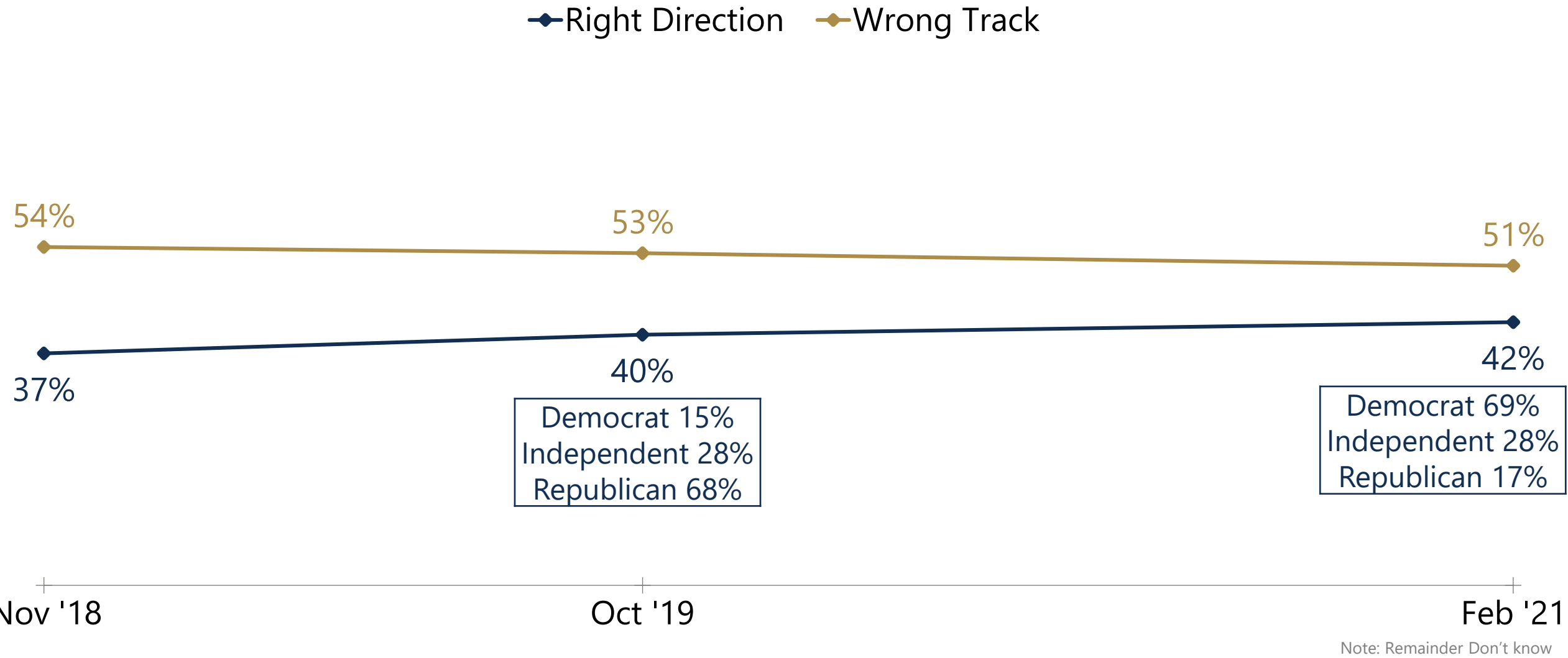


MOOD OF THE COUNTRY





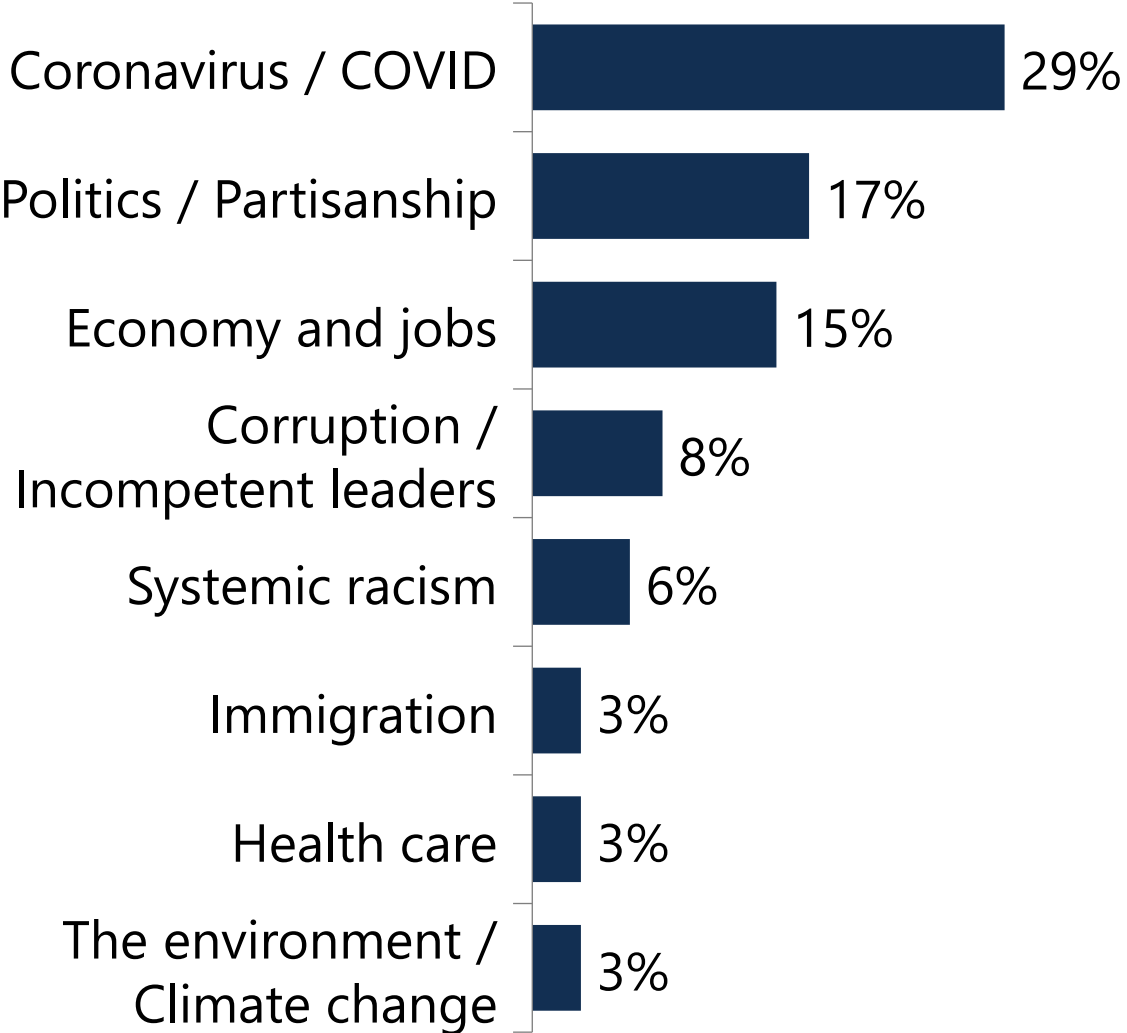
Views on country's direction slightly improved but still negative; partisan outlook reversed post-election.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q2. Would you say things in the United States today are:

COVID is the top issue, followed by partisan division and the economy.



Note: Asked as an open-ended question. Responses under 2% are not shown.

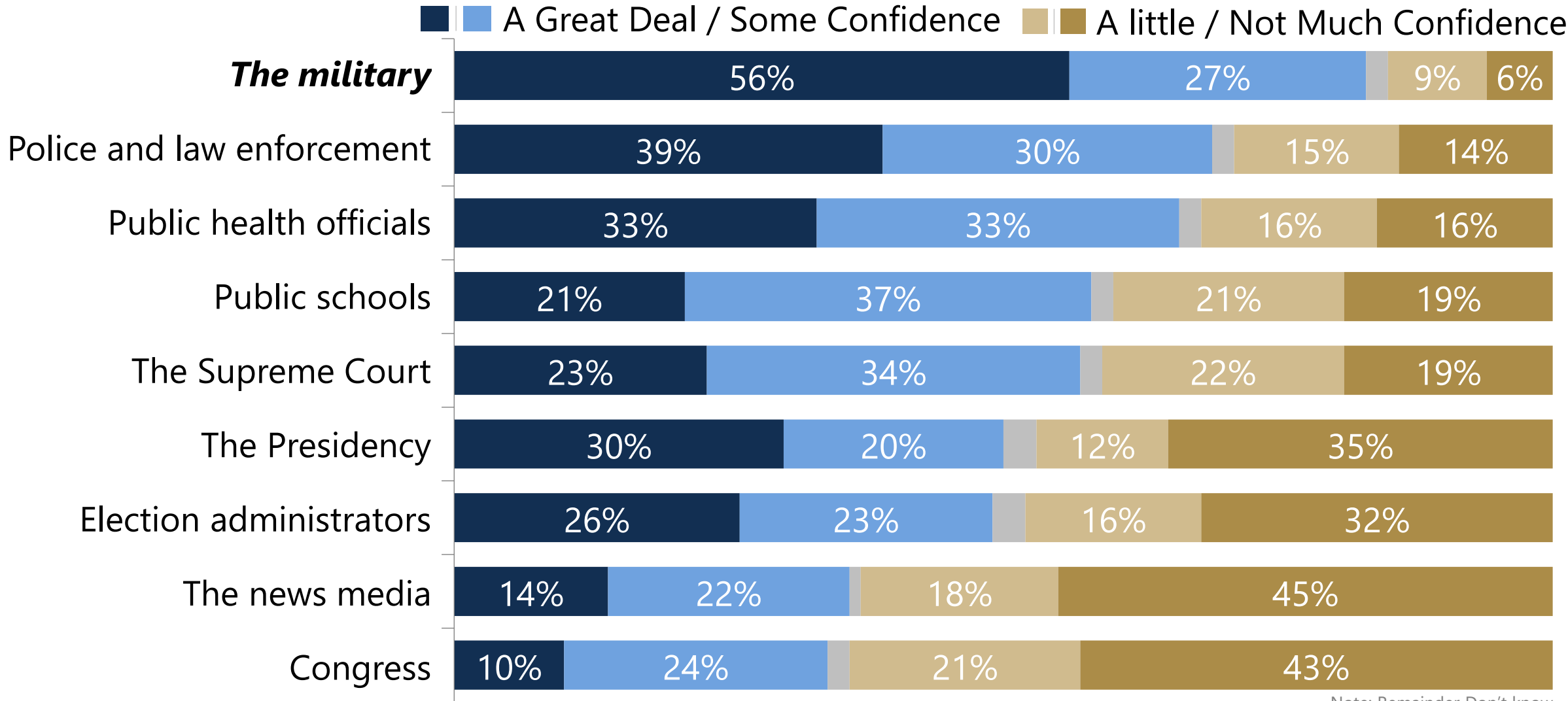
Q3. What would you say is the most important problem facing this country today? [OPEN END]



VIEWS OF INSTITUTIONS



Military remains the most-trusted institution; media and Congress inspire little confidence.

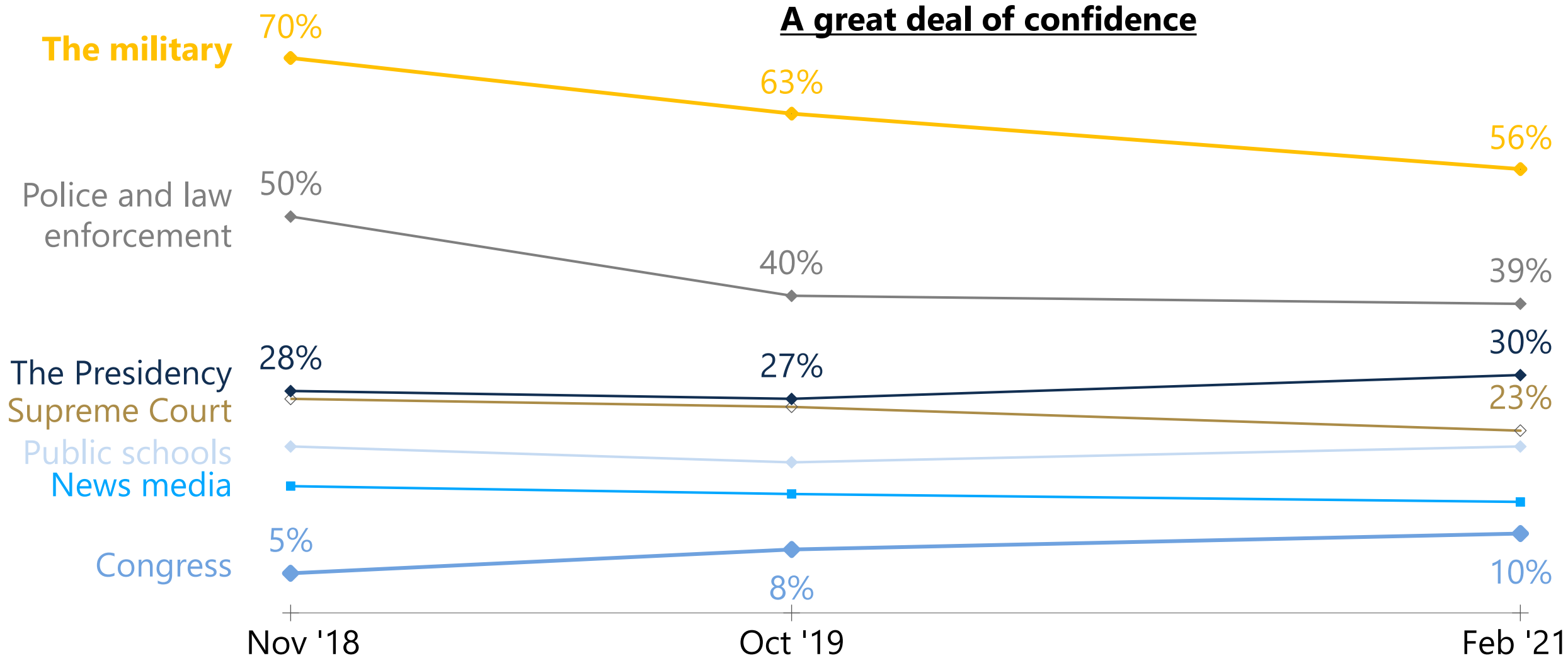


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q4-Q12. For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them.



Despite high marks, trust in the military declined for second consecutive year.



Q4-Q12. For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them.

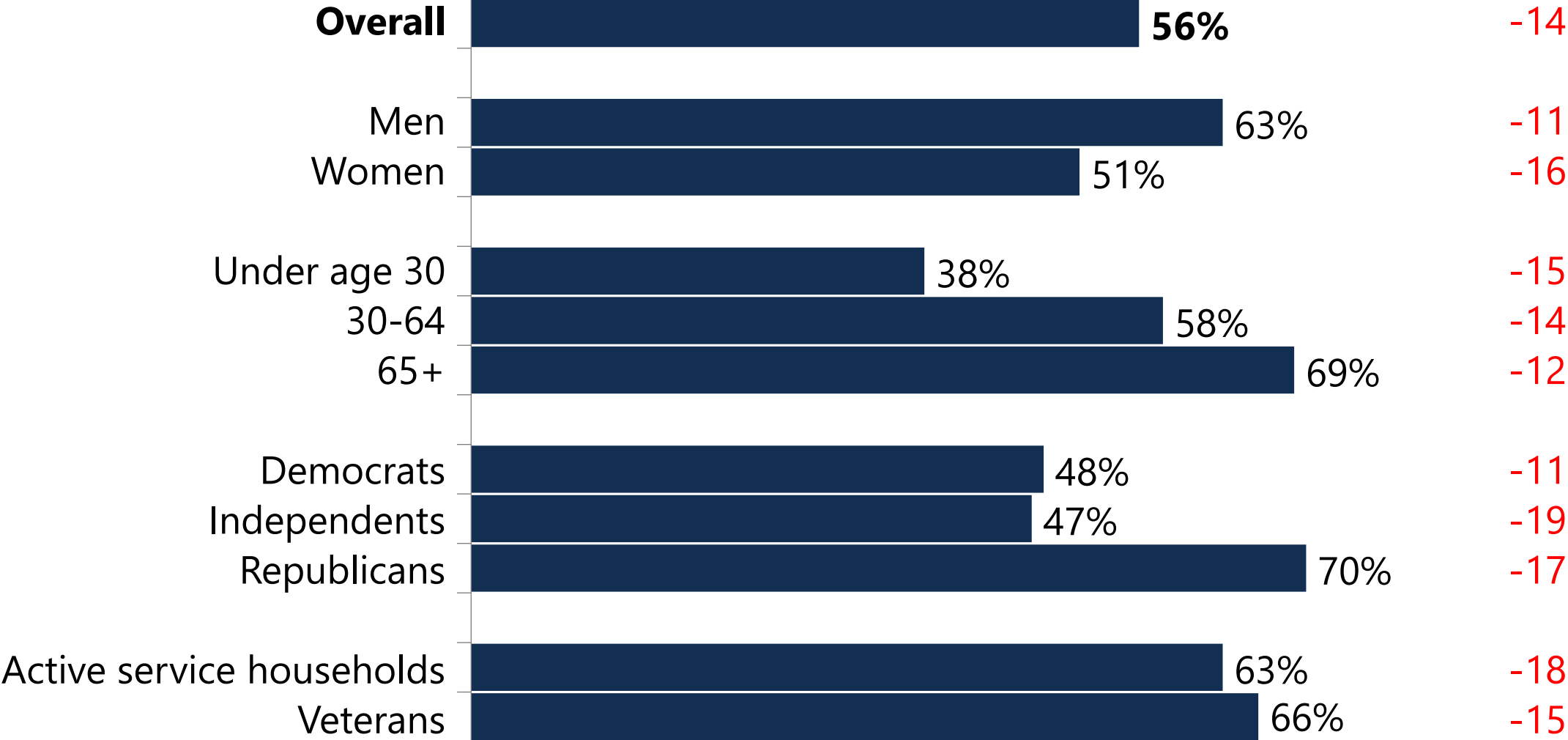


Confidence in military is down amongst all subgroups.

The Military

■ A great deal of confidence

Change from 2018



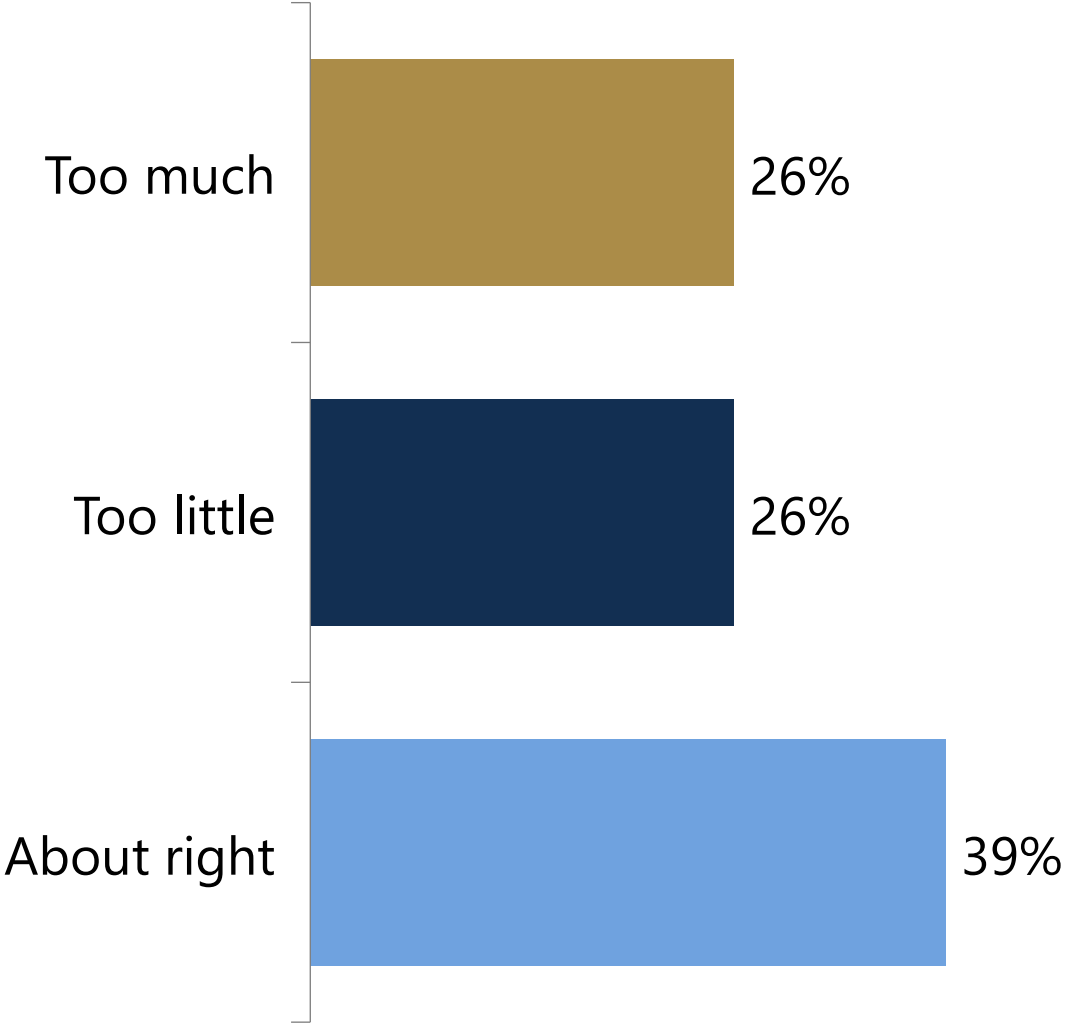
Q4. For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them. The Military



MILITARY SPENDING AND CAPABILITIES



A plurality think defense spending is about right; the rest split between too much and too little spending...

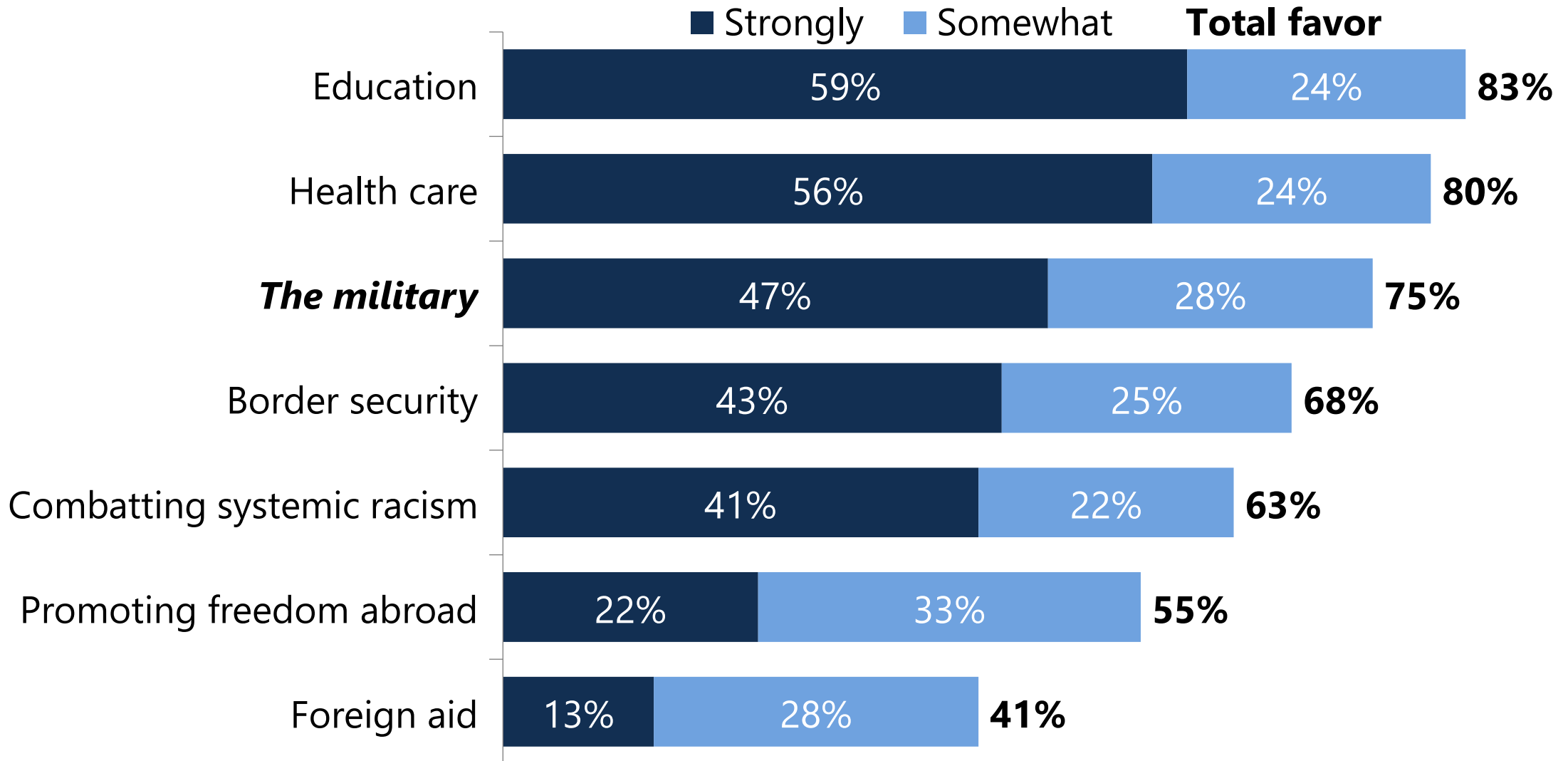


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q27. Do you think the U.S. spends too much on national defense, too little, or about the right amount?



...Yet three-quarters favor increased military spending.



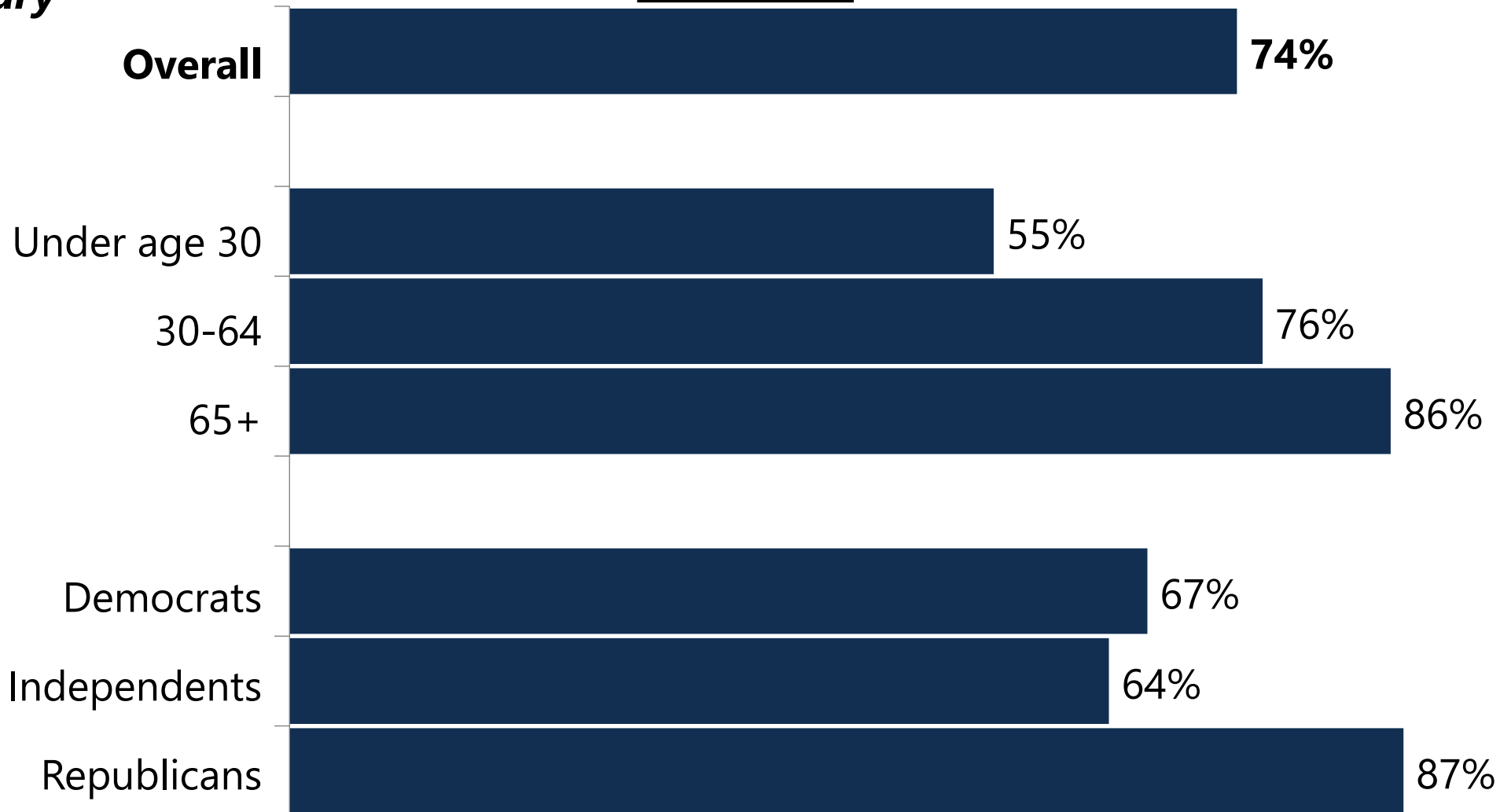
Q13-19. Please tell me if you favor or oppose increasing government spending in each of the following areas.

Increased military spending supported across party lines, though lower among youngest voters.



The military

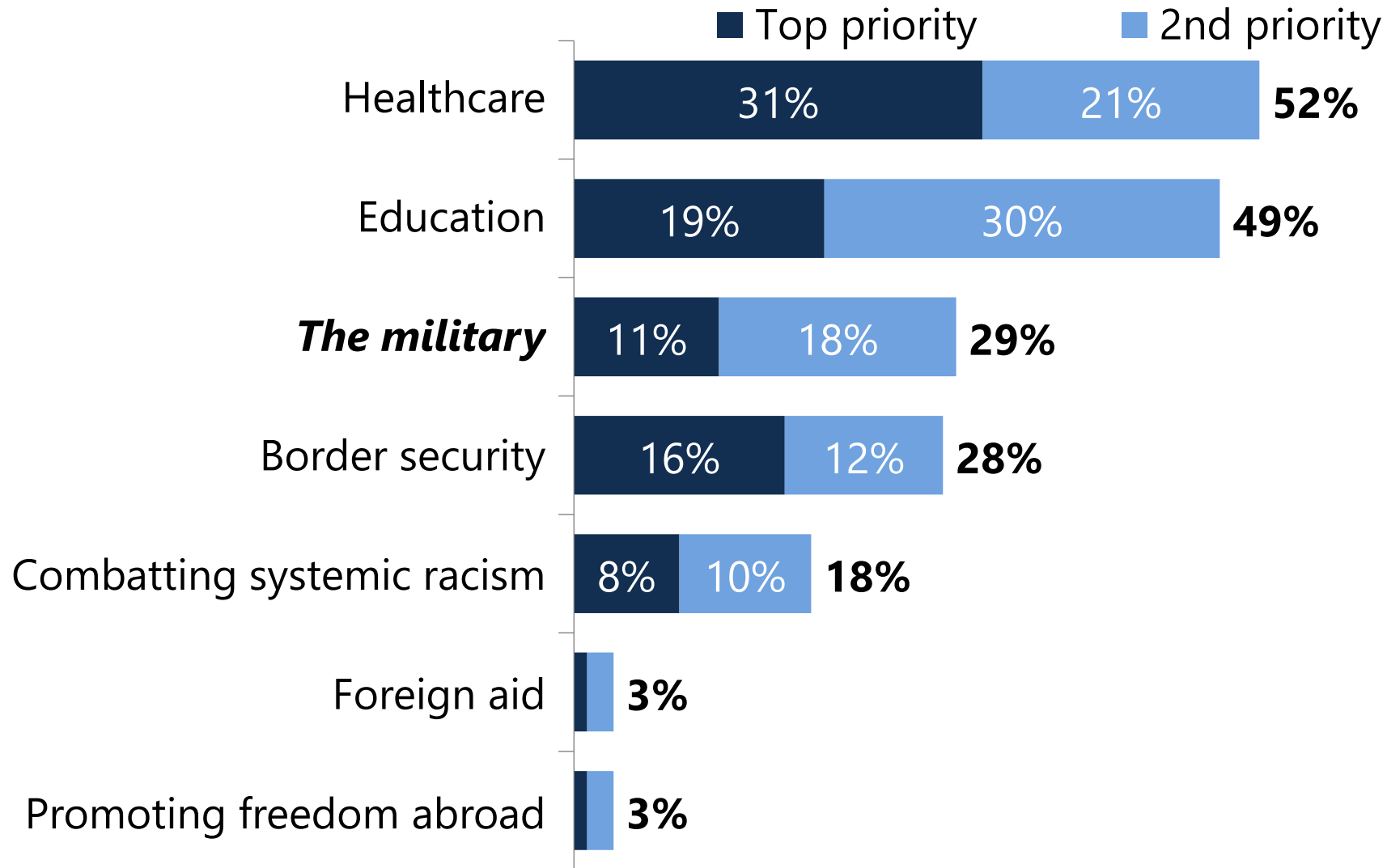
Total Favor



Q13. Please tell me if you favor or oppose increasing government spending in each of the following areas. The military



Military ranks behind healthcare and education as a spending priority.

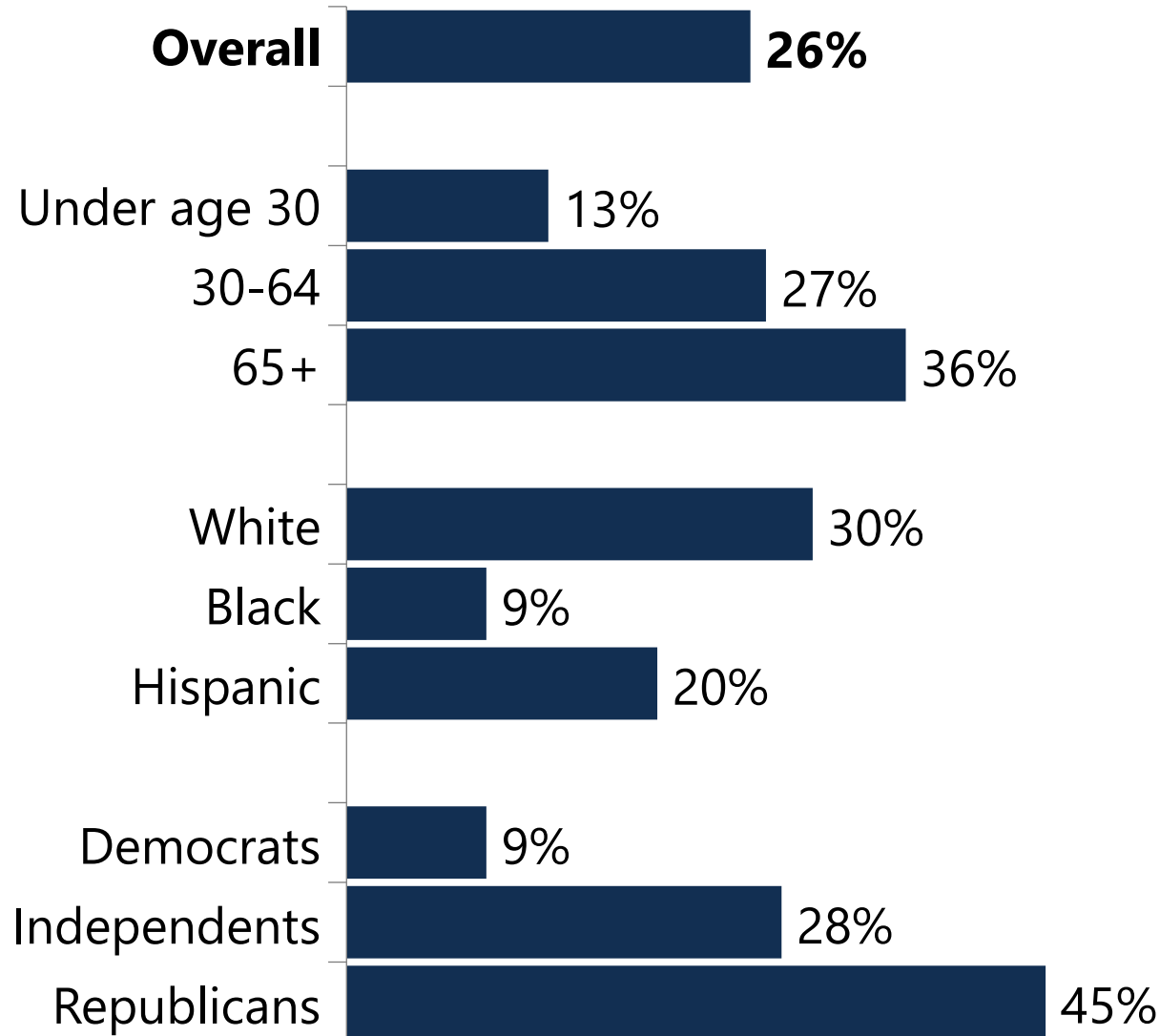


Q20. Of all the areas I just mentioned, which one should be the highest priority for increased funding?
AND Q21: And which should be the next-highest priority?



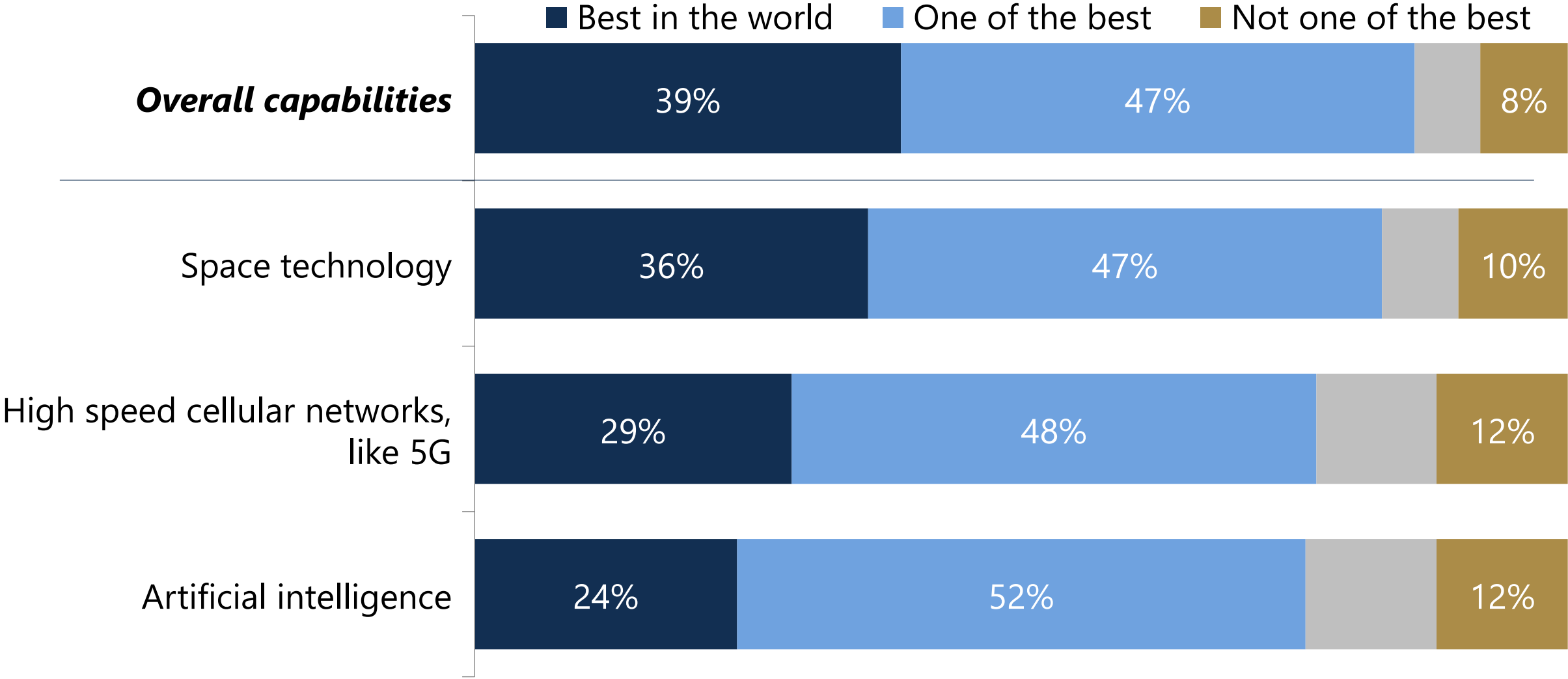
Military funding is a notably low priority for young voters, Black voters, and Democrats.

Military funding a top-2 priority



Q20. Of all the areas I just mentioned, which one should be the highest priority for increased funding?
AND Q21: And which should be the next-highest priority?

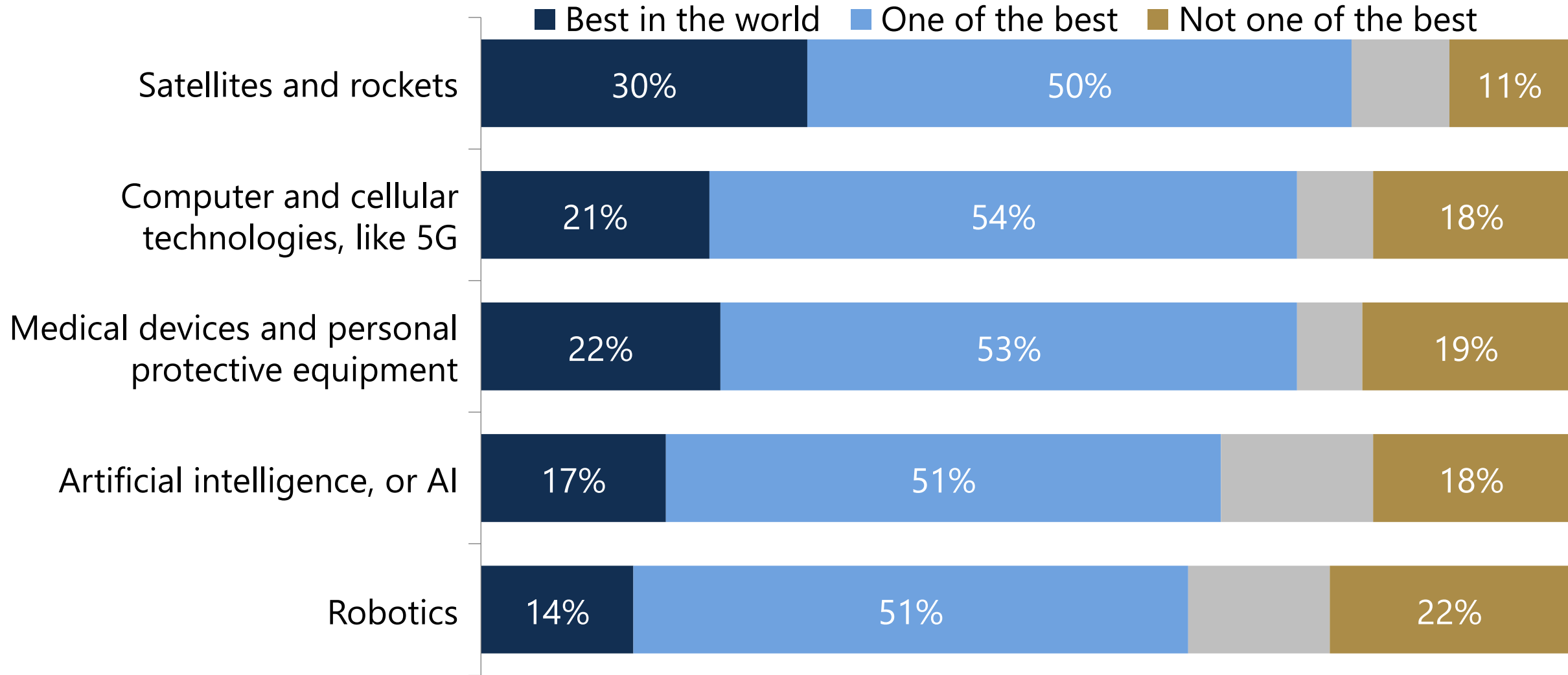
US military seen as the best – or one of the best – overall and in key technical areas.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q22 – Q25. For each of the following, please tell us how you think the U.S. military is doing compared to the military in other countries. Are we the best in the world, one of the best, or are we not one of the best?

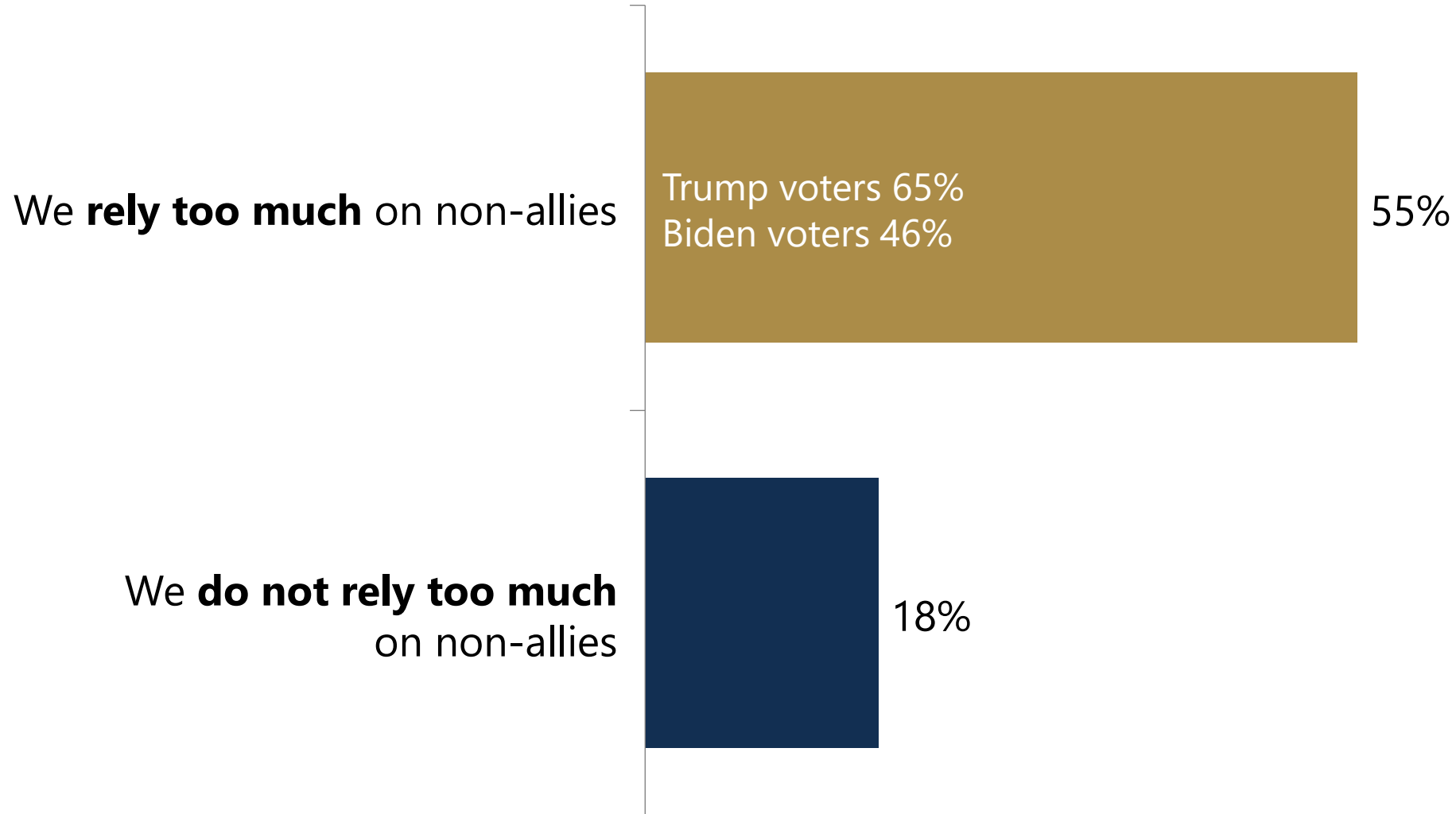
US seen as a leader, but not the best, in production of key national security technology.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q28 – Q32. Thinking specifically about materials and technologies that are important for national security – how do you think the U.S. is doing when it comes to developing and producing each of the following? Is the US the best in the world, one of the best, or not one of the best?

Majority believes US is too reliant on non-allies for key national security materials.



Note: Remainder Depends, Don't know

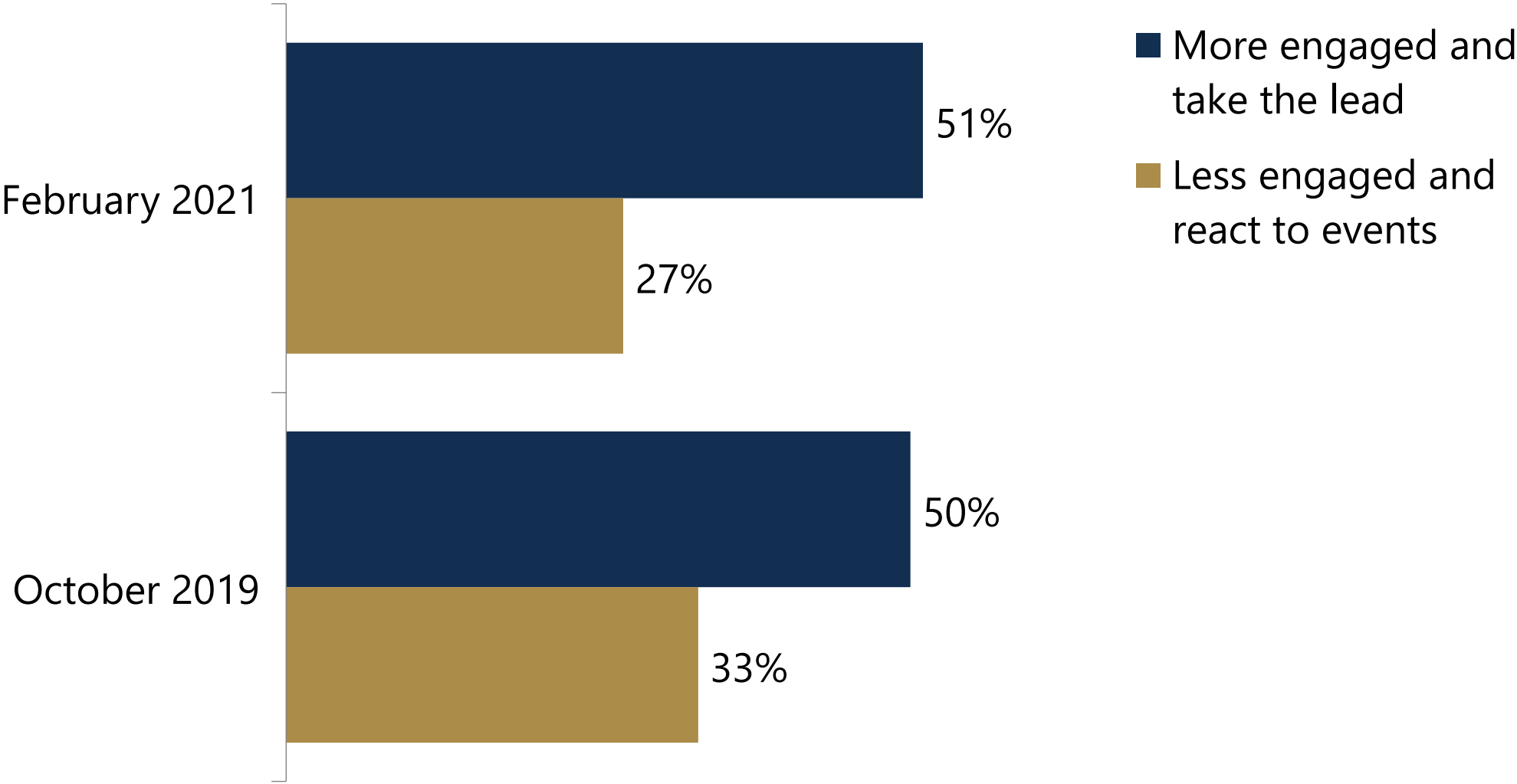
Q33. In general, when it comes to manufacturing the materials necessary for national security, do you think the U.S. relies too much on countries that are not our allies?



FOREIGN POLICY / DEFENSE POSTURE



Steady majority support for US taking a leadership role in foreign affairs.

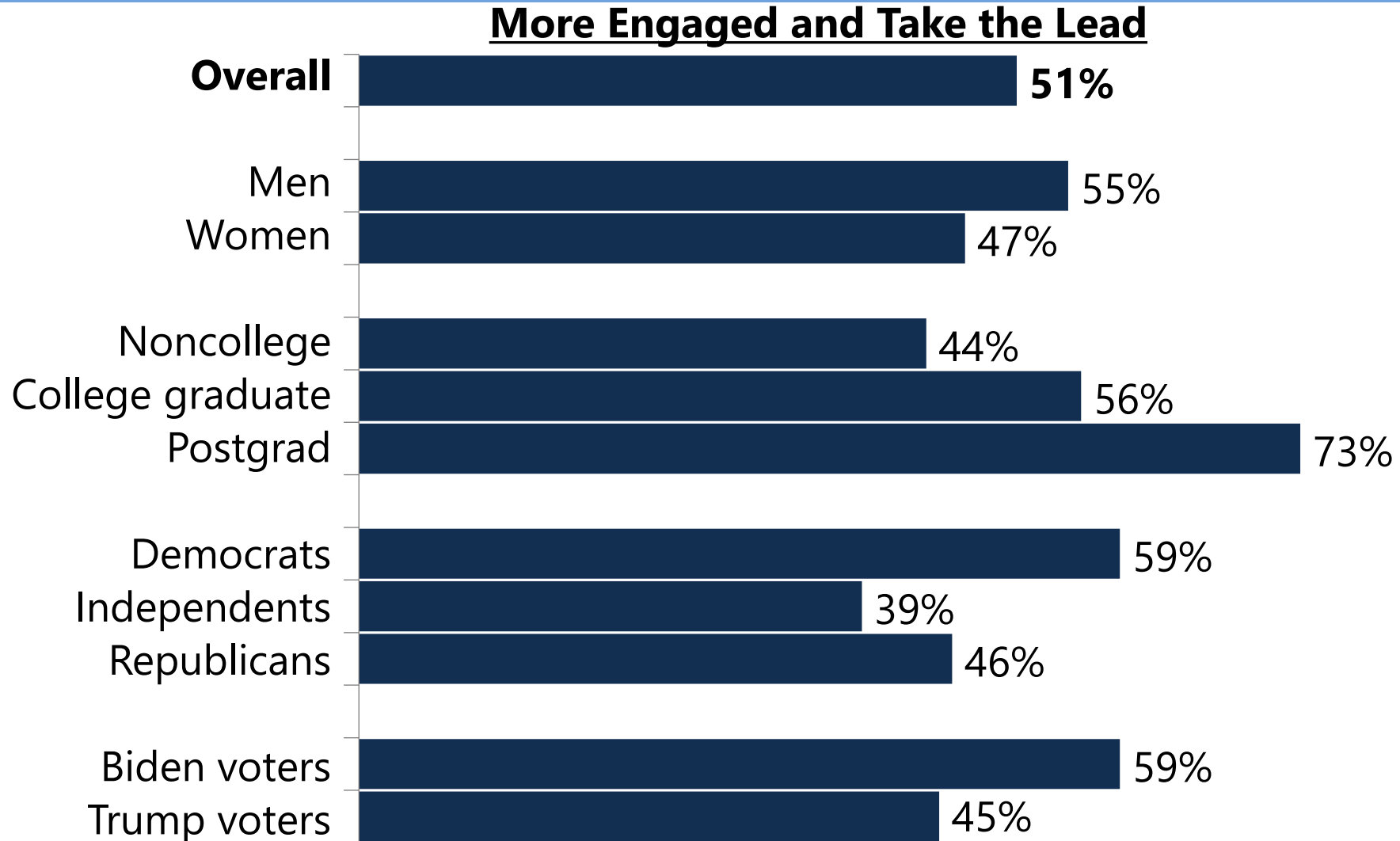


Note: Remainder Depends / Don't know

Q34. When it comes to international events, do you think it is better for the United States to be more engaged and take the lead, or to be less engaged and react to events?

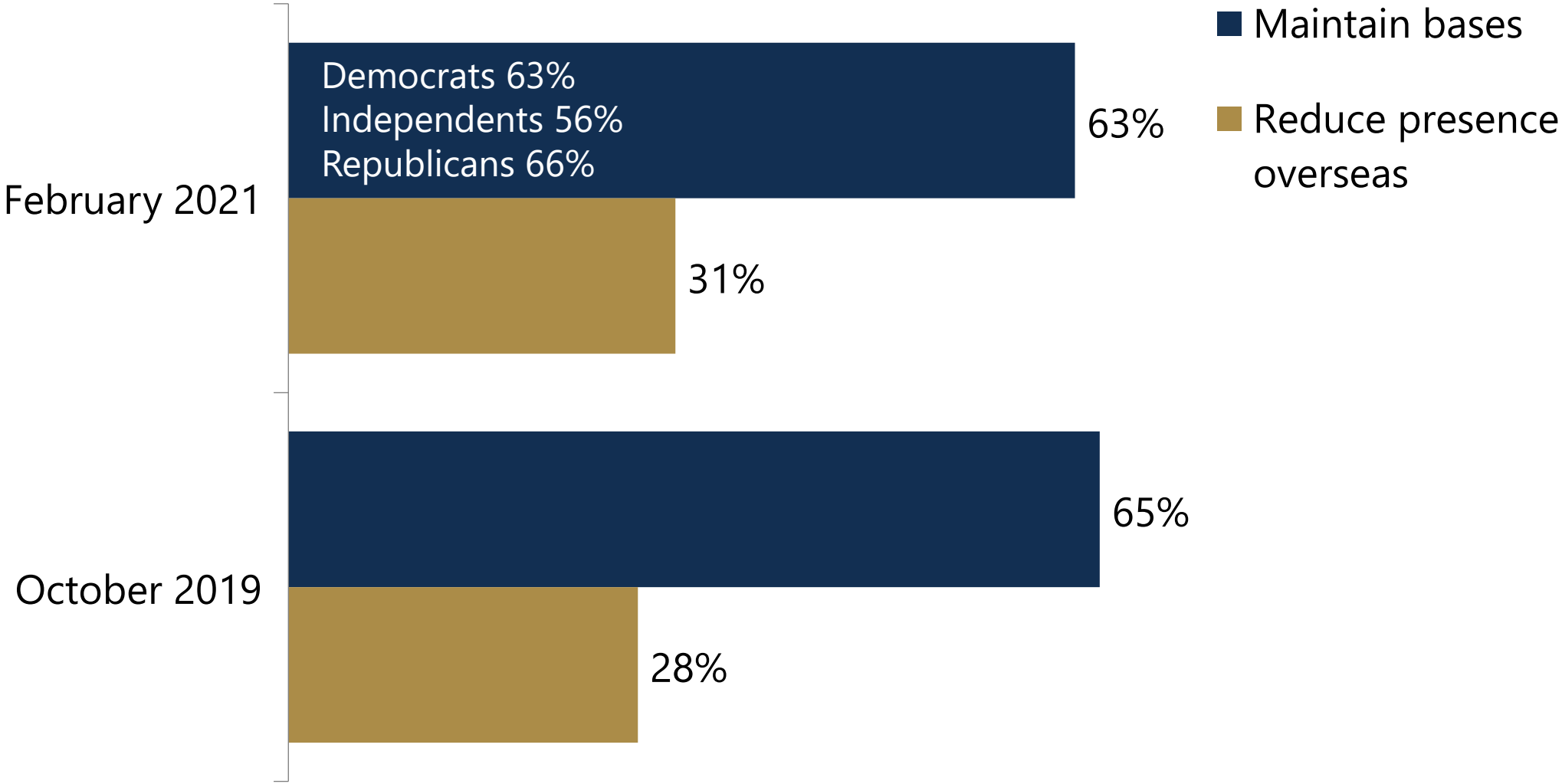


Support for engaged foreign policy is highest among postgraduates and Democrats.



Q34. When it comes to international events, do you think it is better for the United States to be more engaged and take the lead, or to be less engaged and react to events?

Nearly two-thirds would prefer the US maintain overseas bases.

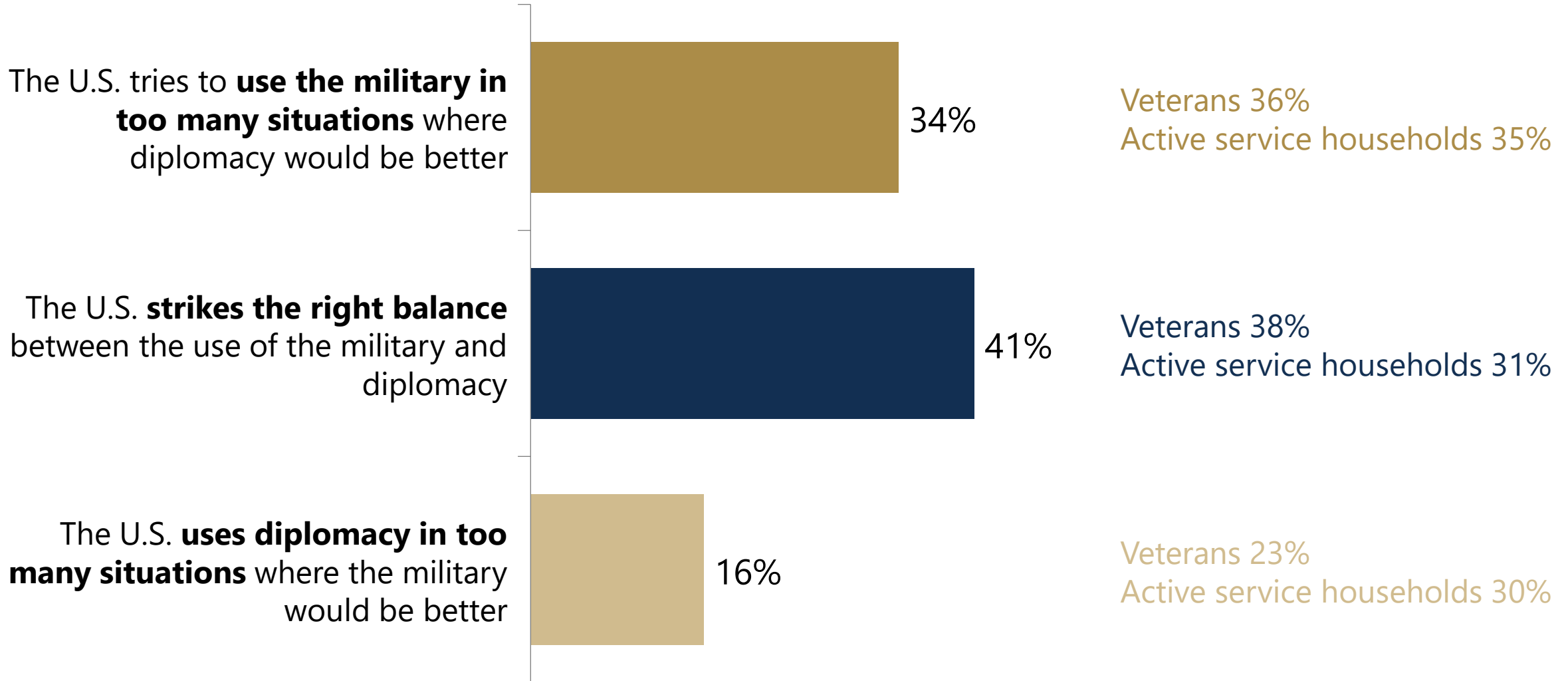


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q36. In general, do you think it is better for the US to maintain military bases around the world to deter attacks and respond quickly if something happens, or do you think the US should reduce our military presence overseas and only deploy troops in response to aggression?



One-third thinks the military is often used in lieu of diplomacy.

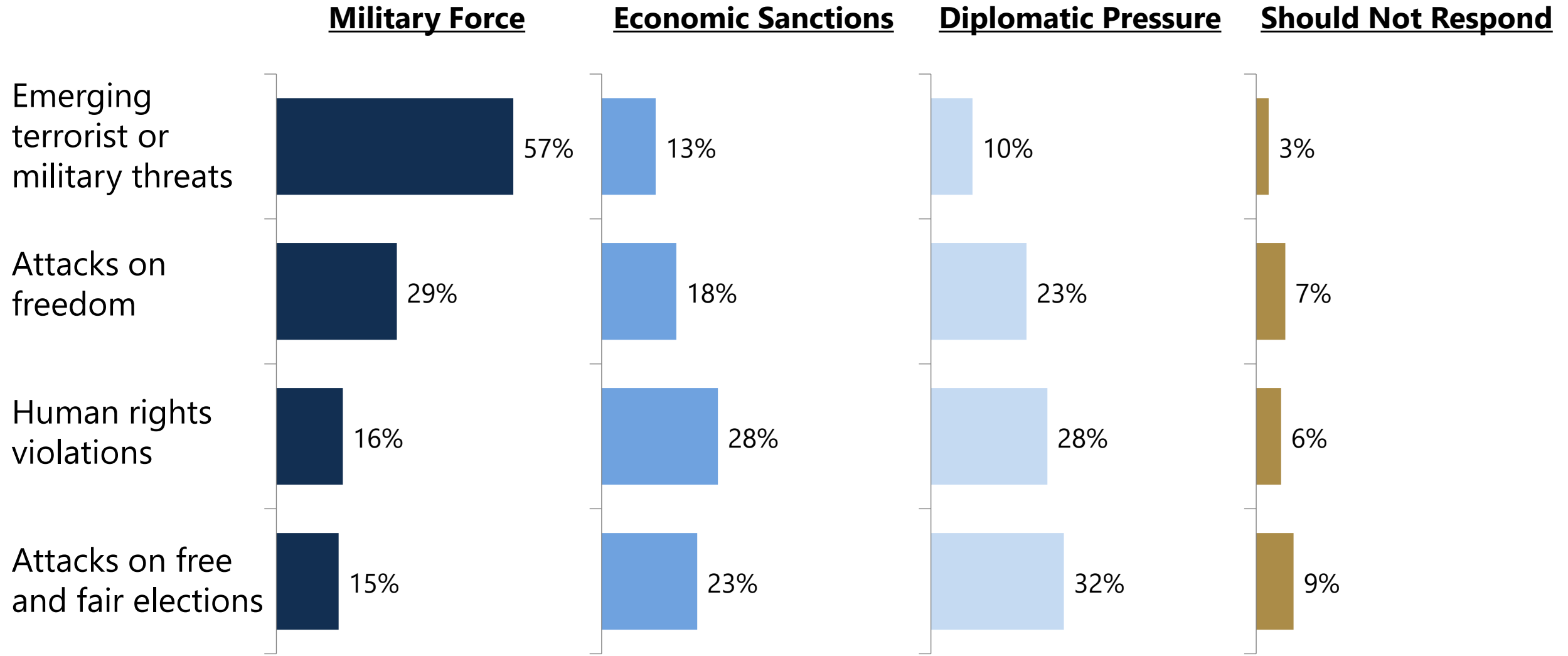


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q35. Which of the following is closer to your view?



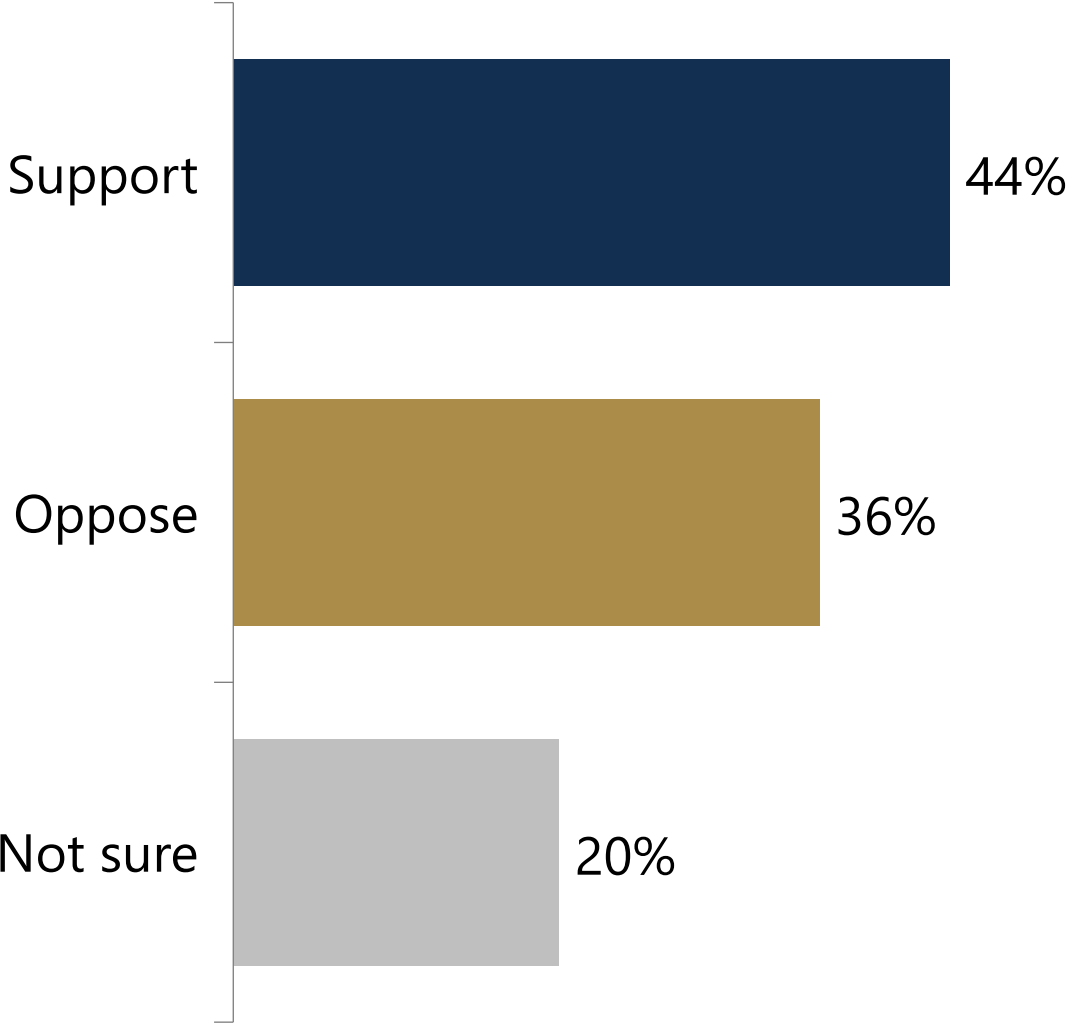
Majorities prefer a nonmilitary response to attacks on elections, freedom, and human rights.



Note: Remainder All / Mix, Not sure

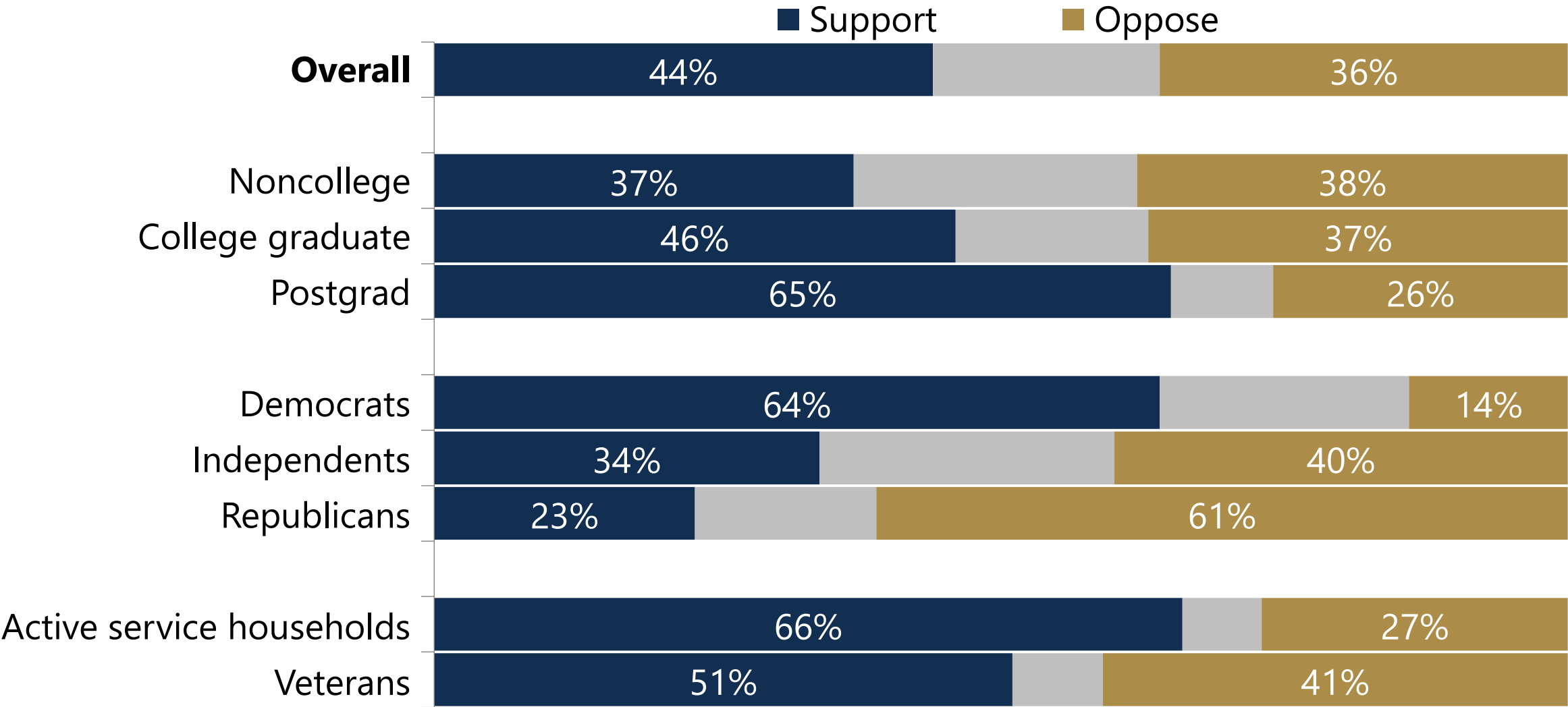
Q40-43. For each of the following situations that arise around the world, how should the U.S. primarily respond: with military force, with economic sanctions, with diplomatic pressure – or do you think the U.S. should not respond at all?

Plurality support for rejoining JCPOA; two-in-ten unsure.



Q37. Do you support or oppose the U.S. reentering the Iran nuclear agreement?

Deep partisan divide on reentering JCPOA; active service households notably supportive.

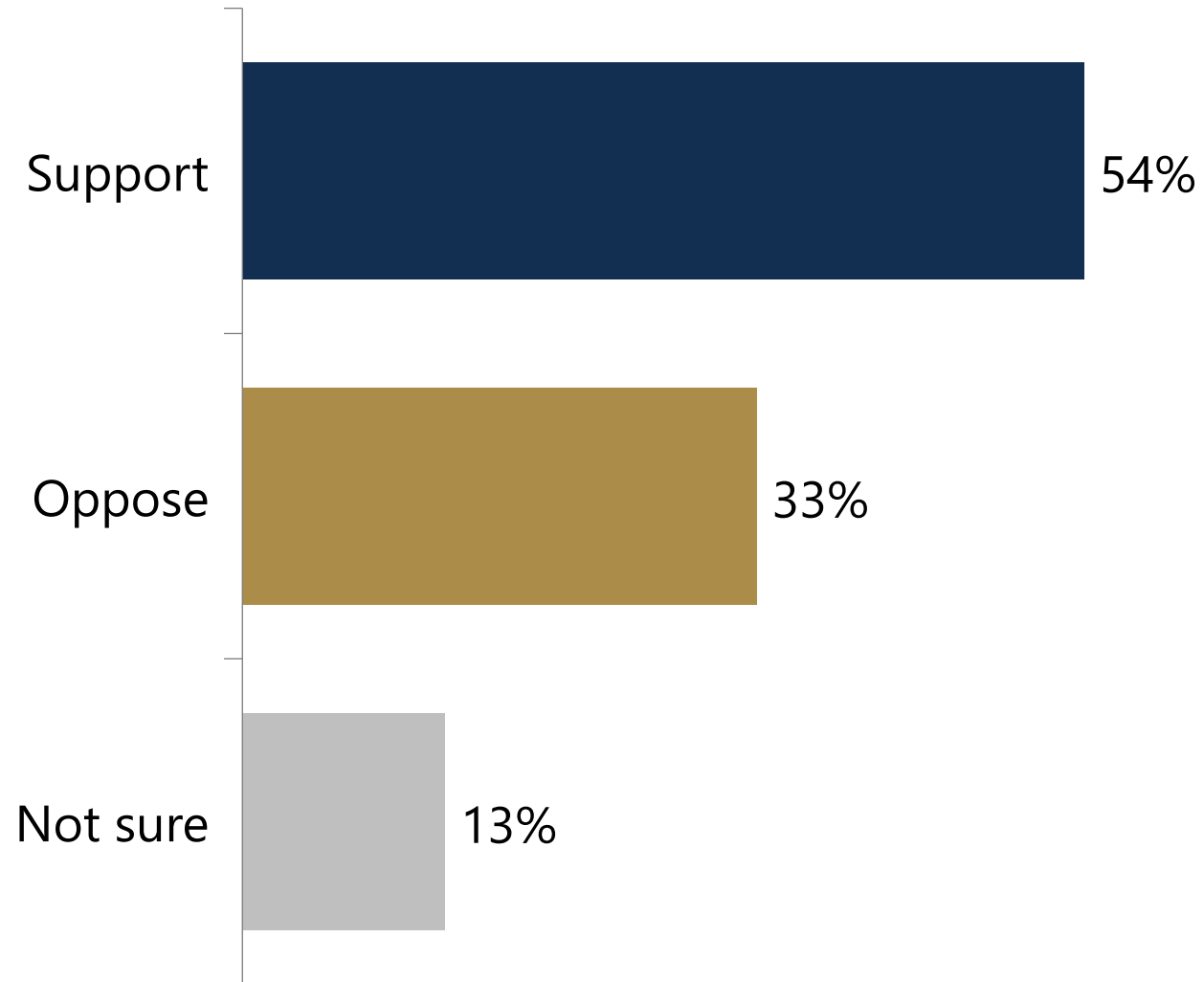


Note: Remainder Not sure

Q37. Do you support or oppose the U.S. reentering the Iran nuclear agreement?



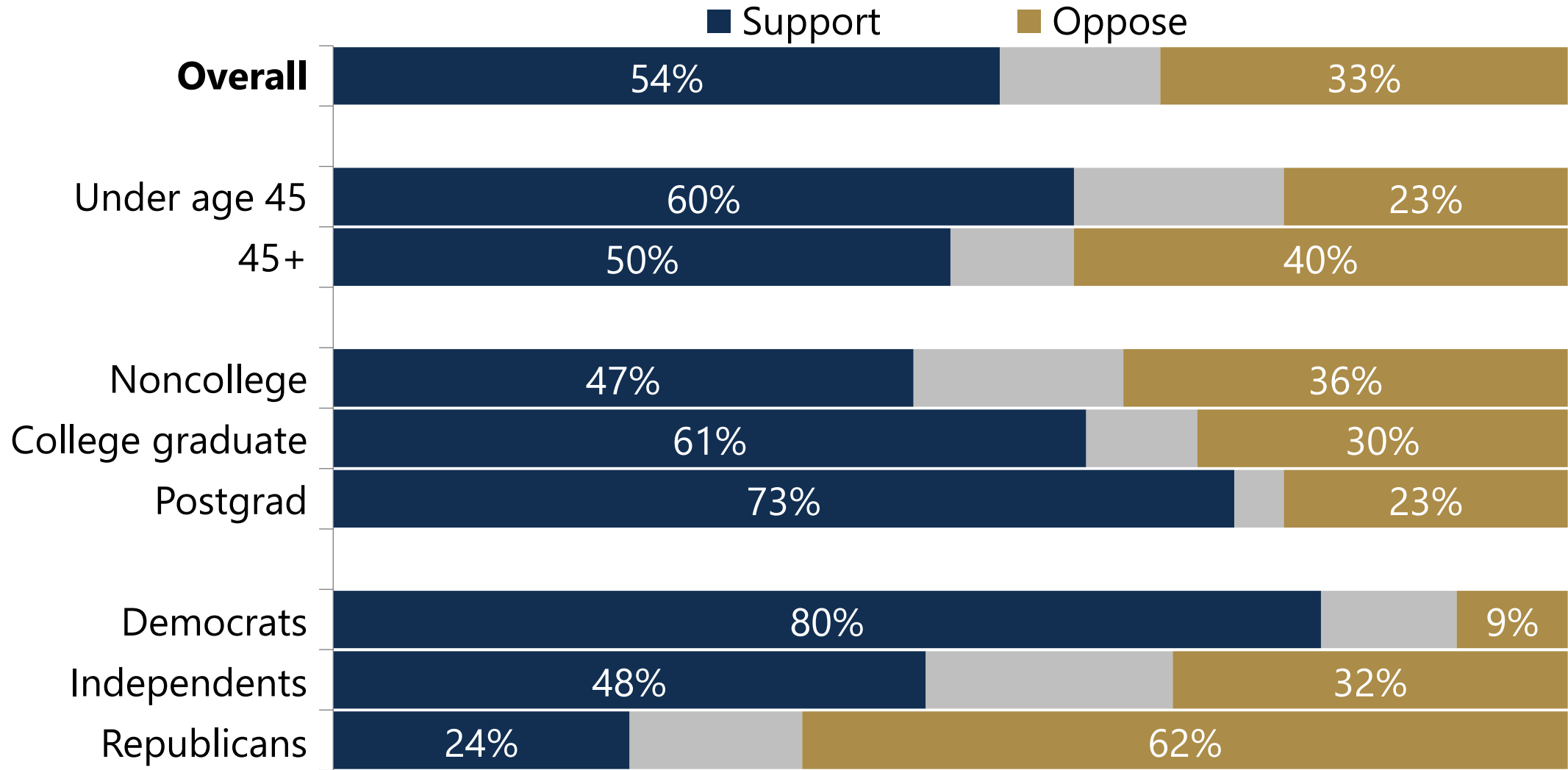
Majority support for rejoining Paris Agreement.



Q38. Do you support or oppose the U.S. reentering the Paris Agreement on climate change?



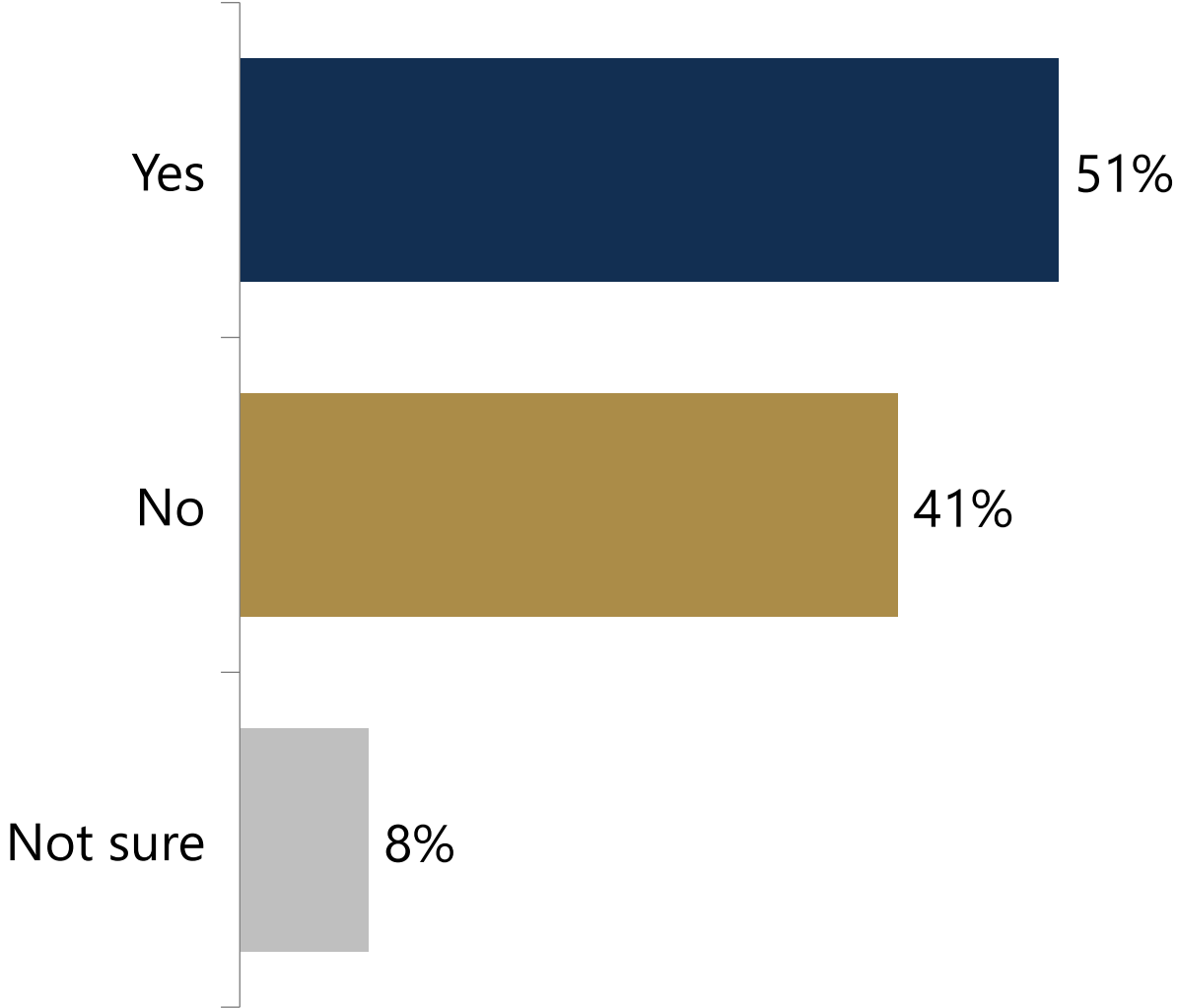
Partisanship forms primary dividing line on Paris.



Note: Remainder Not sure

Q38. Do you support or oppose the U.S. reentering the Paris Agreement on climate change?

Narrow majority considers climate change a national security threat.



Q39. Do you consider climate change to be a national security threat?

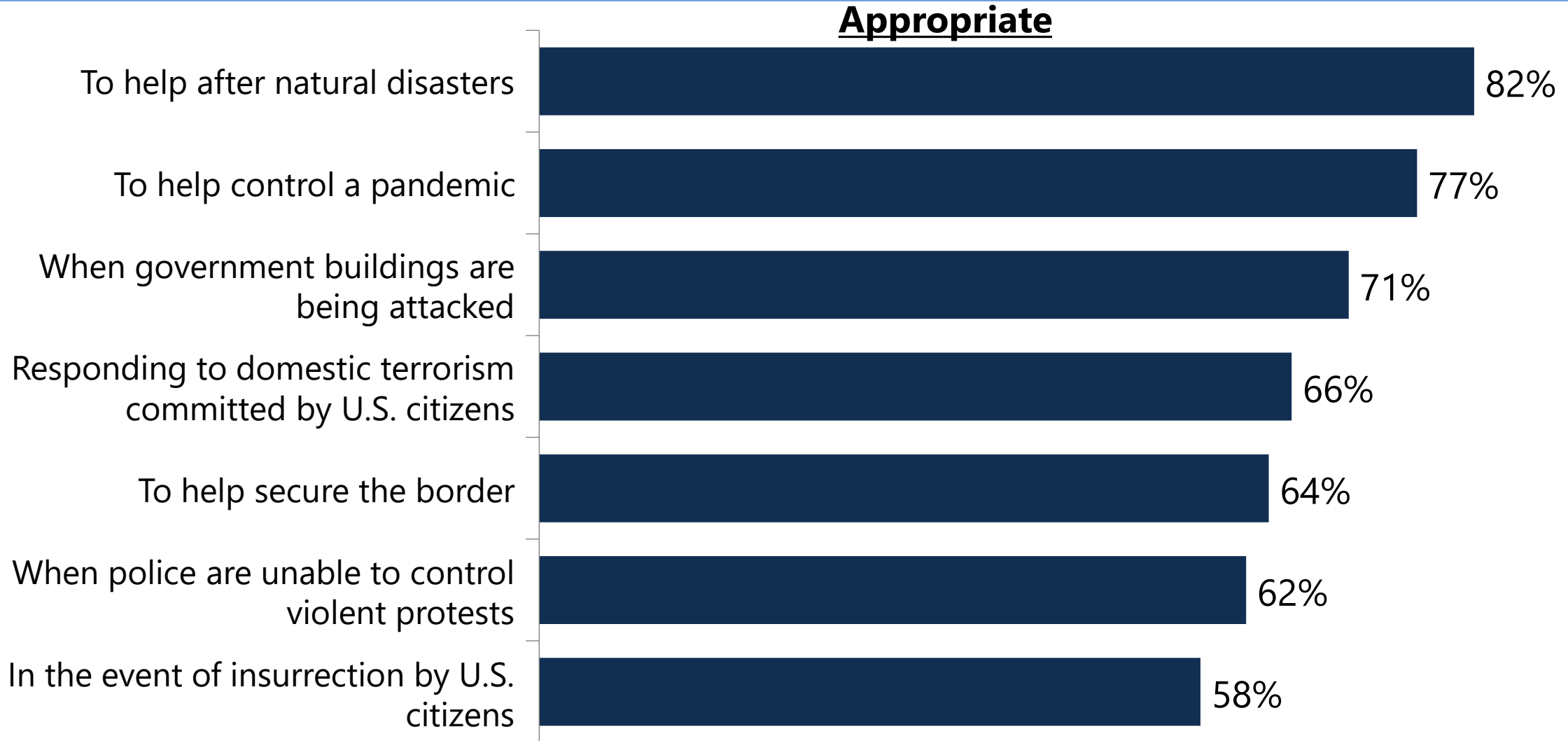


CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS





Widespread support for use of military on US soil in a variety of scenarios.

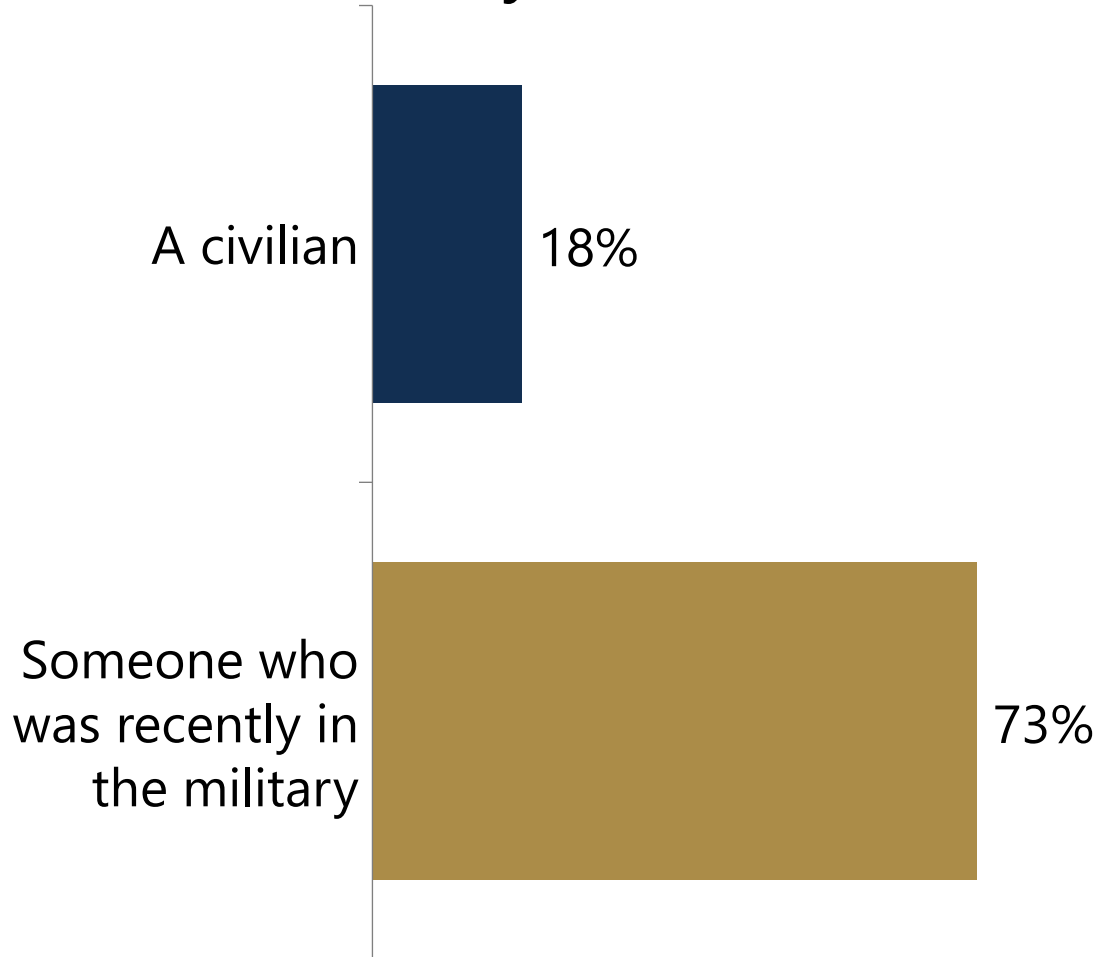


Q48 – Q54. For each of the following scenarios, please tell us if you believe deploying the military on U.S. soil would be appropriate or not.

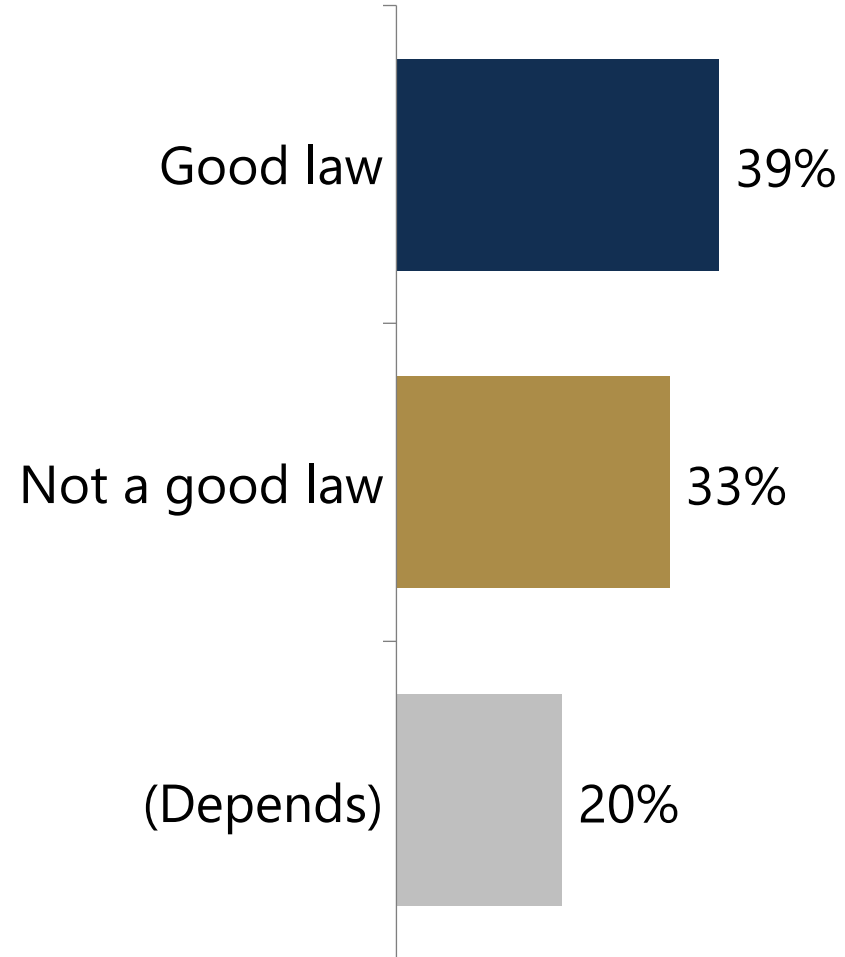


Three-quarters prefer a recent military member as SecDef.

Would prefer the U.S. Secretary of Defense to be...



Prohibiting Recently Active Service Members in SecDef Role



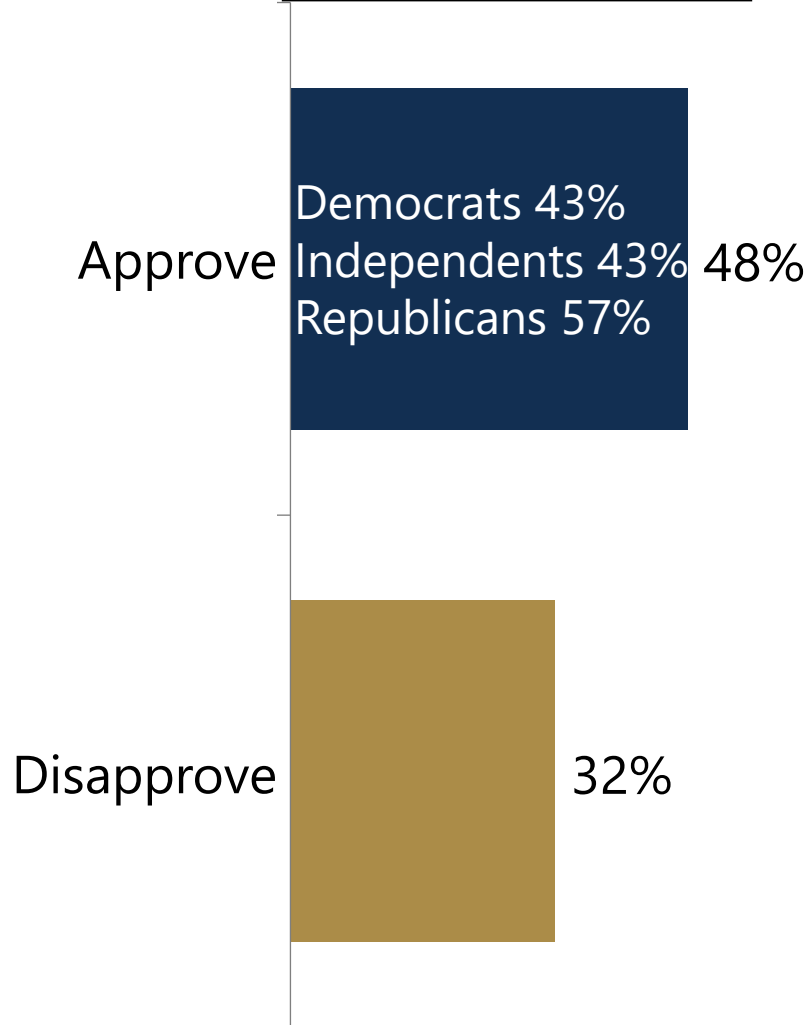
Note: Remainder Not sure

Q44. Would you prefer the U.S. SecDef be a civilian or someone who recently served in the military? AND Q45. U.S. law requires that the SecDef be someone who has NOT been an active member of the armed forces within the past seven years. Would you say this is a good law, or not such a good law?

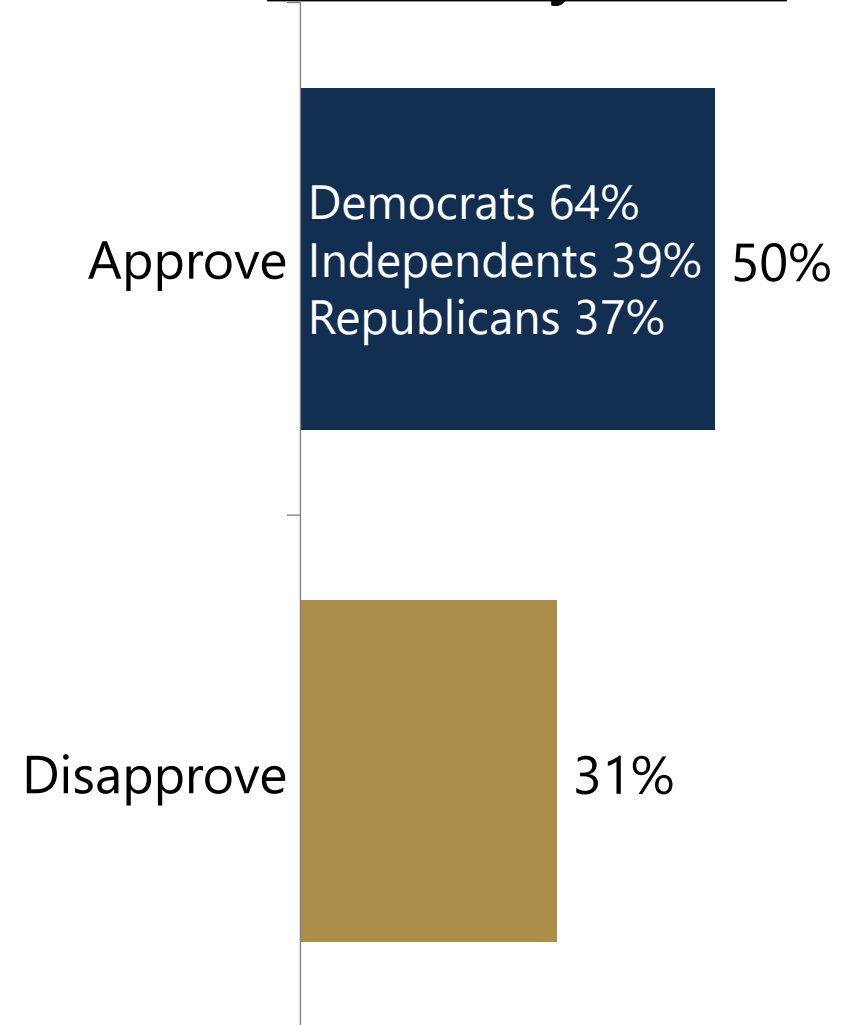


Half approve of waivers for Generals Mattis and Austin.

General Jim Mattis



General Lloyd Austin



Note: Remainder Not sure

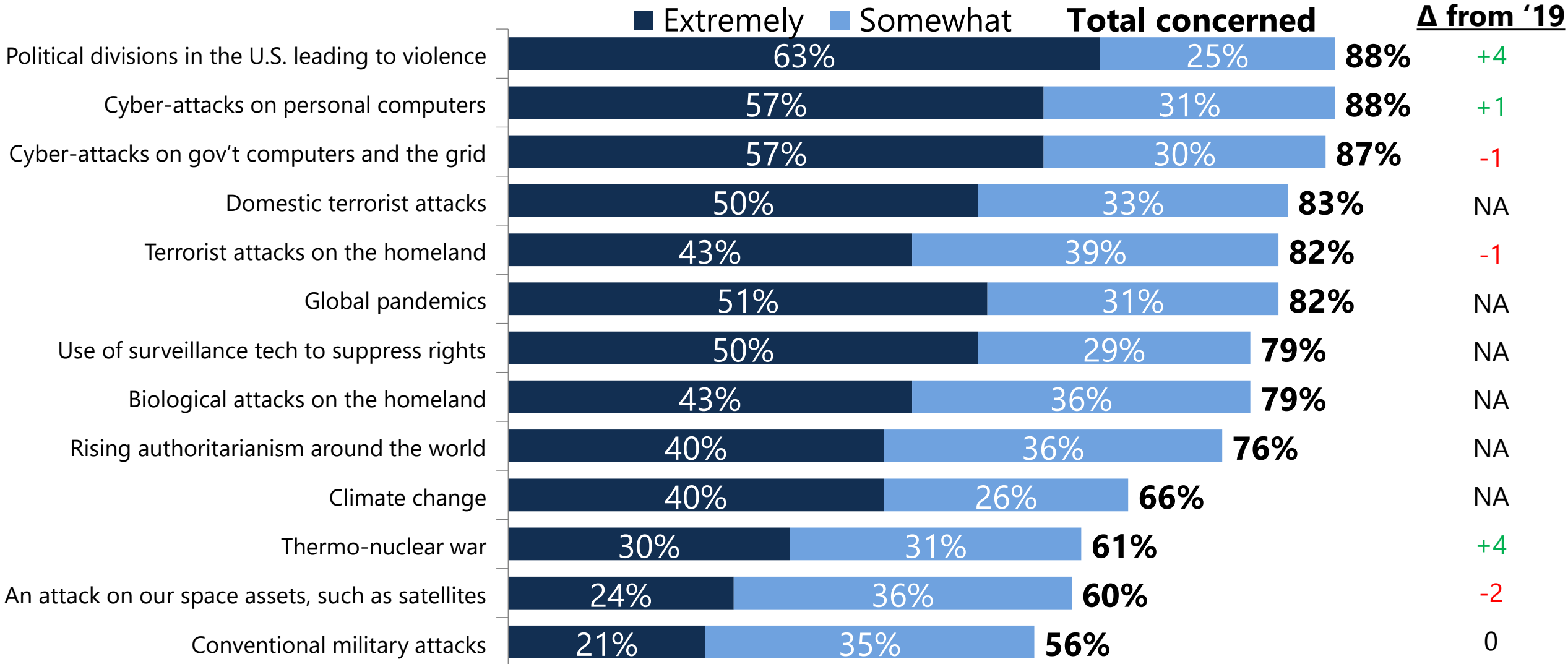
Q46. To confirm Trump's pick for SecDef, Congress voted to waive the civilian requirement for General Jim Mattis. Do you approve or disapprove? AND Q47. To confirm Biden's pick for SecDef, Congress voted to waive the civilian requirement for General Lloyd Austin. Do you approve or disapprove?



VIEWS OF THREATS



Deep concern about a wide variety of threats, with political violence and cyberattacks atop the list.



Q86 – Q98. How concerned are you about the threat of each of the following in the next five years?

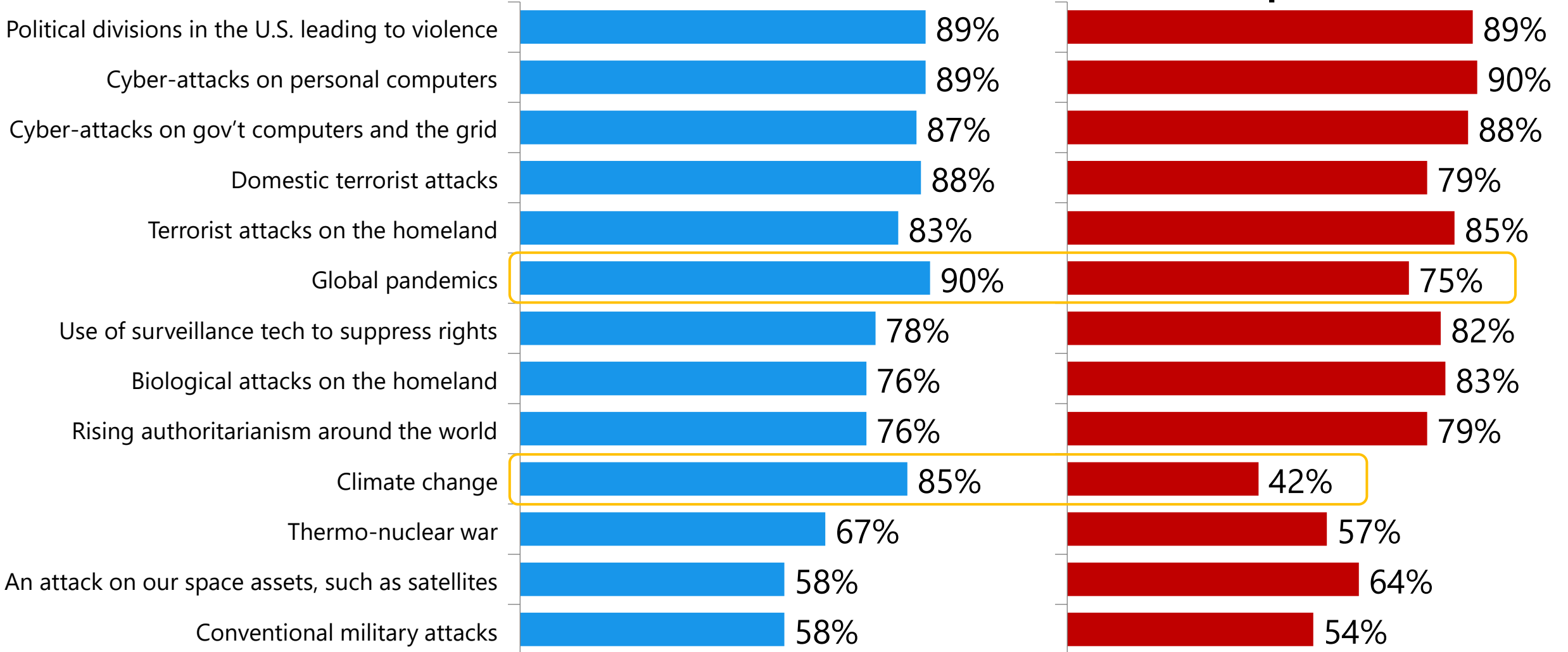


Partisans share similar concerns about most threats – save climate change and pandemics.

Total Concerned

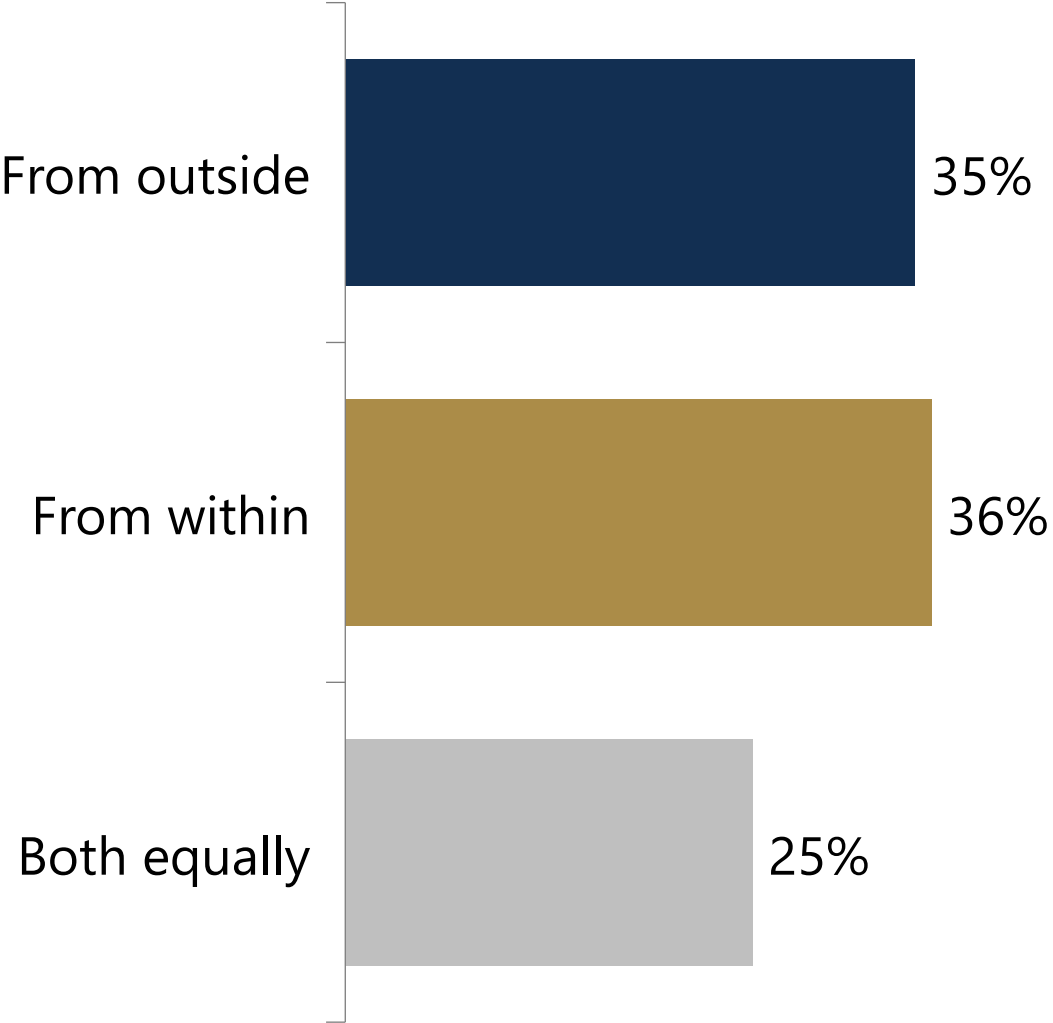
Democrats

Republicans



Q86 – Q98. How concerned are you about the threat of each of the following in the next five years?

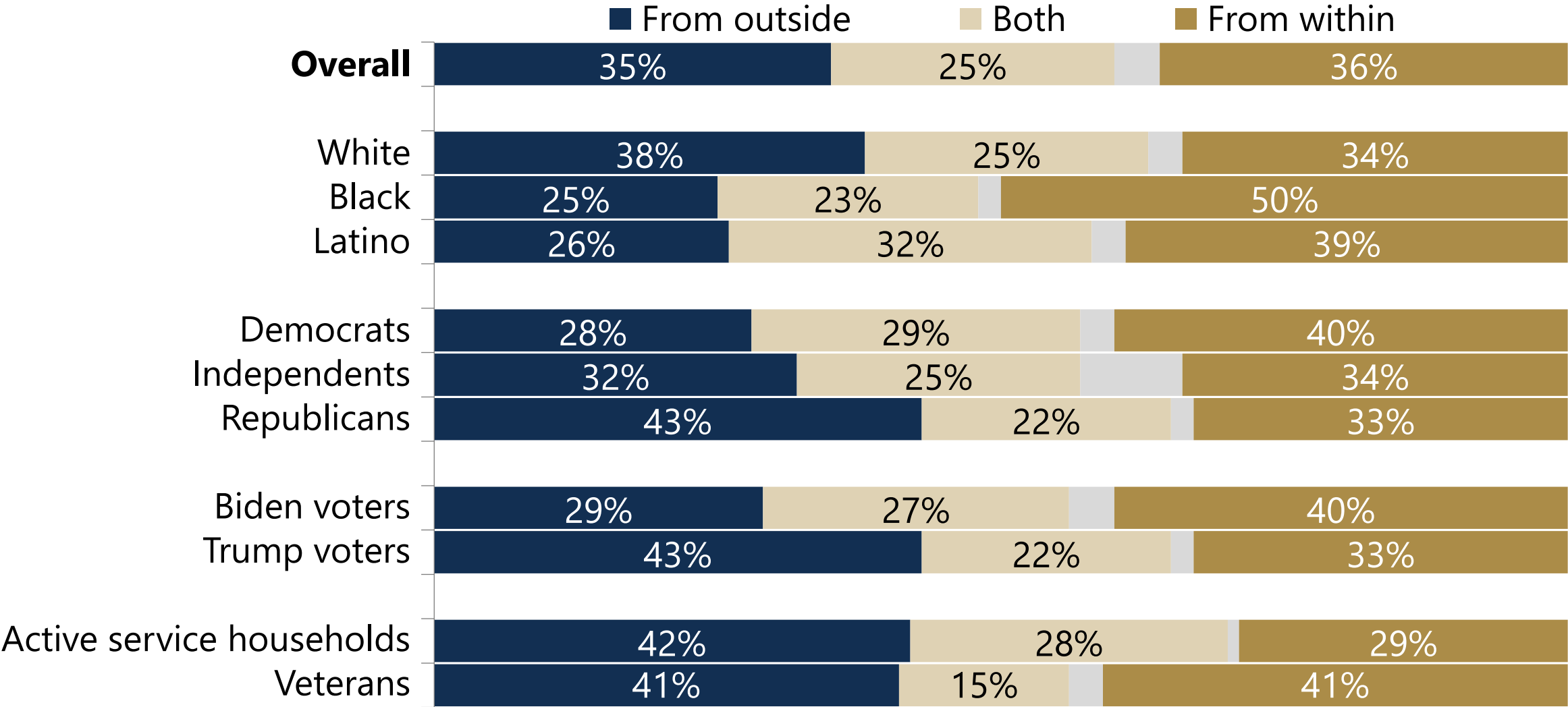
Voters see threats to the US as equally likely to come from within the country as from outside.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q81. Do you think the greatest threats to the U.S. come from outside of the country or from within the country?

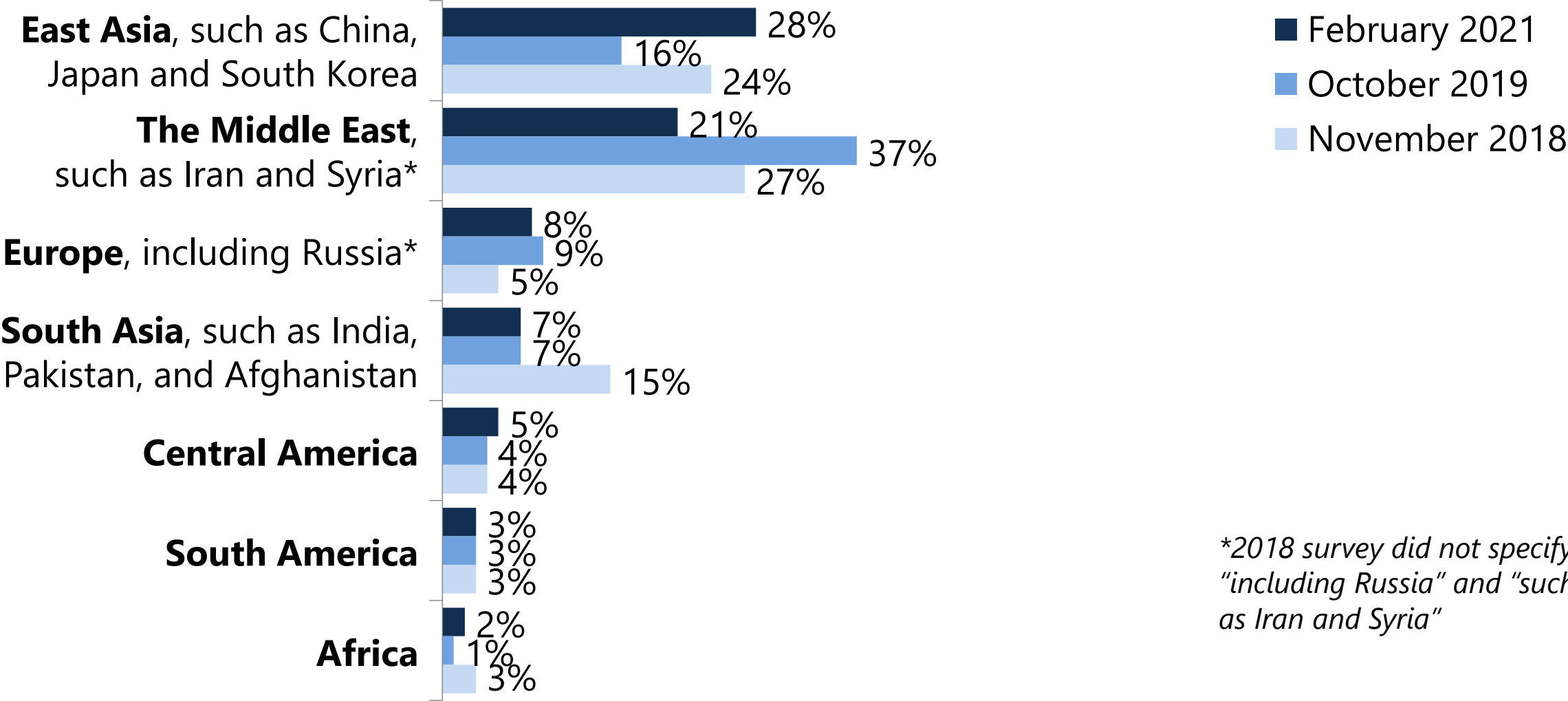
Republicans, White voters more likely see external threats.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q81. Do you think the greatest threats to the U.S. come from outside of the country or from within the country?

East Asia overtakes the Middle East as area US should focus military forces.

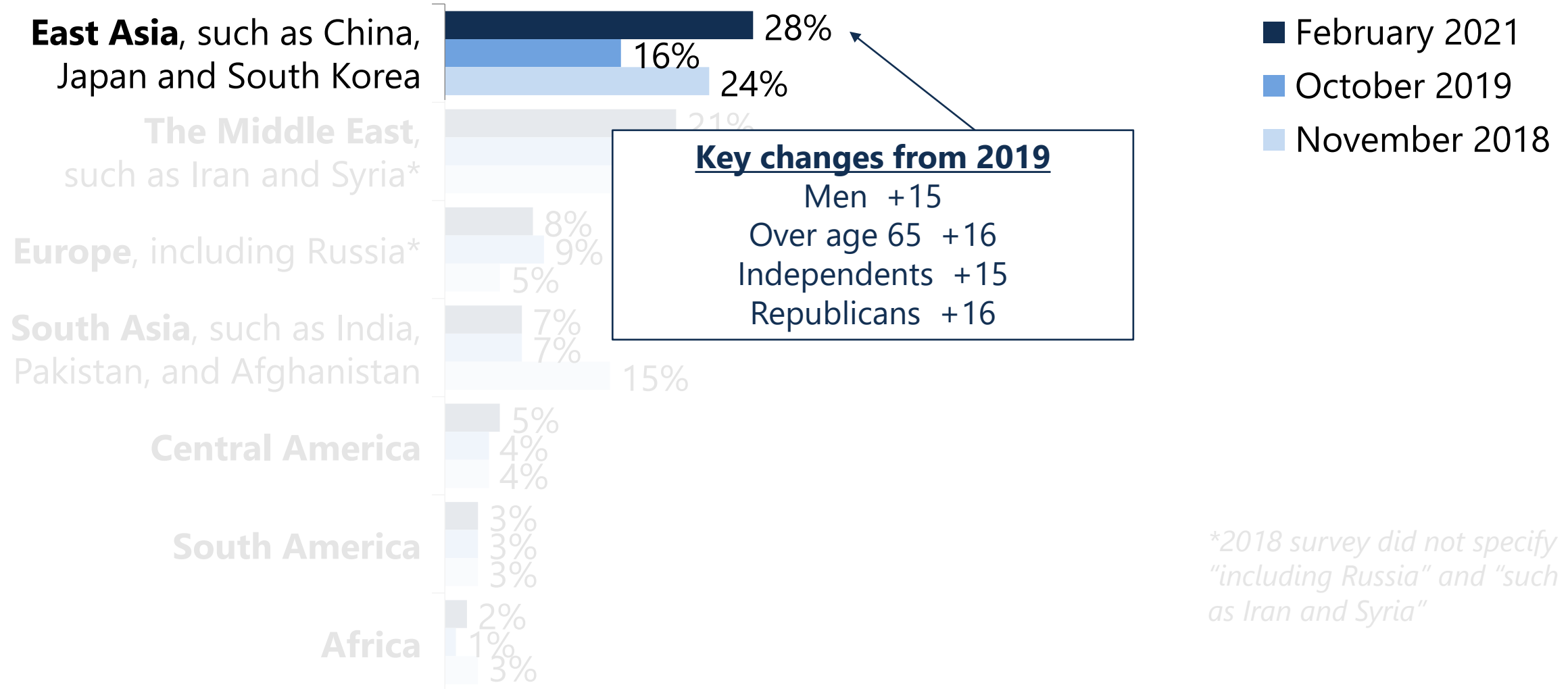


*2018 survey did not specify "including Russia" and "such as Iran and Syria"

Note: Remainder Don't know

Q55. Thinking about American interests and the threats that exist in the world today, where do you think the U.S. should focus its military forces?

Men, older voters, independents, and Republicans show greatest increase in viewing East Asia as key arena.

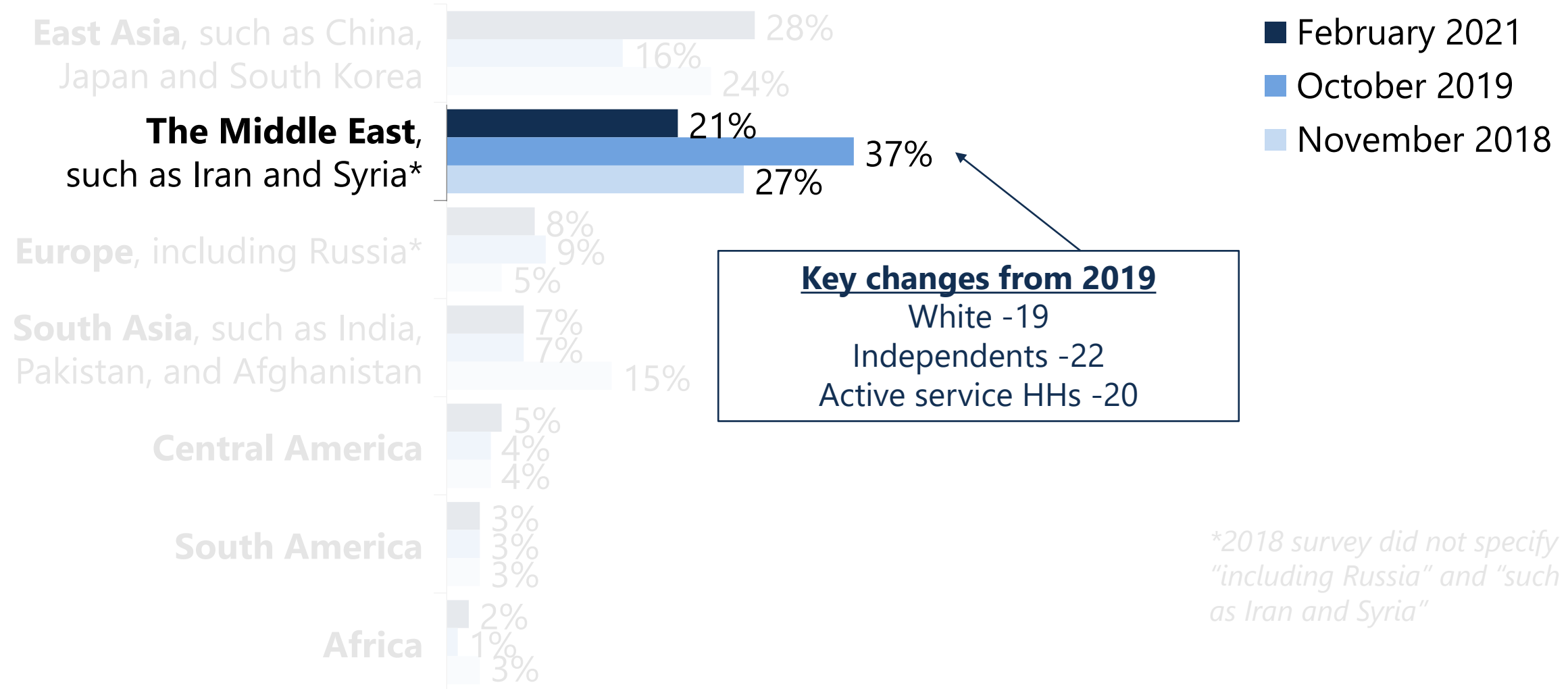


**2018 survey did not specify "including Russia" and "such as Iran and Syria"*

Note: Remainder Don't know

Q55. Thinking about American interests and the threats that exist in the world today, where do you think the U.S. should focus its military forces?

Decrease in prioritization of Middle East greatest among White voters, independents, active duty HHs.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q55. Thinking about American interests and the threats that exist in the world today, where do you think the U.S. should focus its military forces?

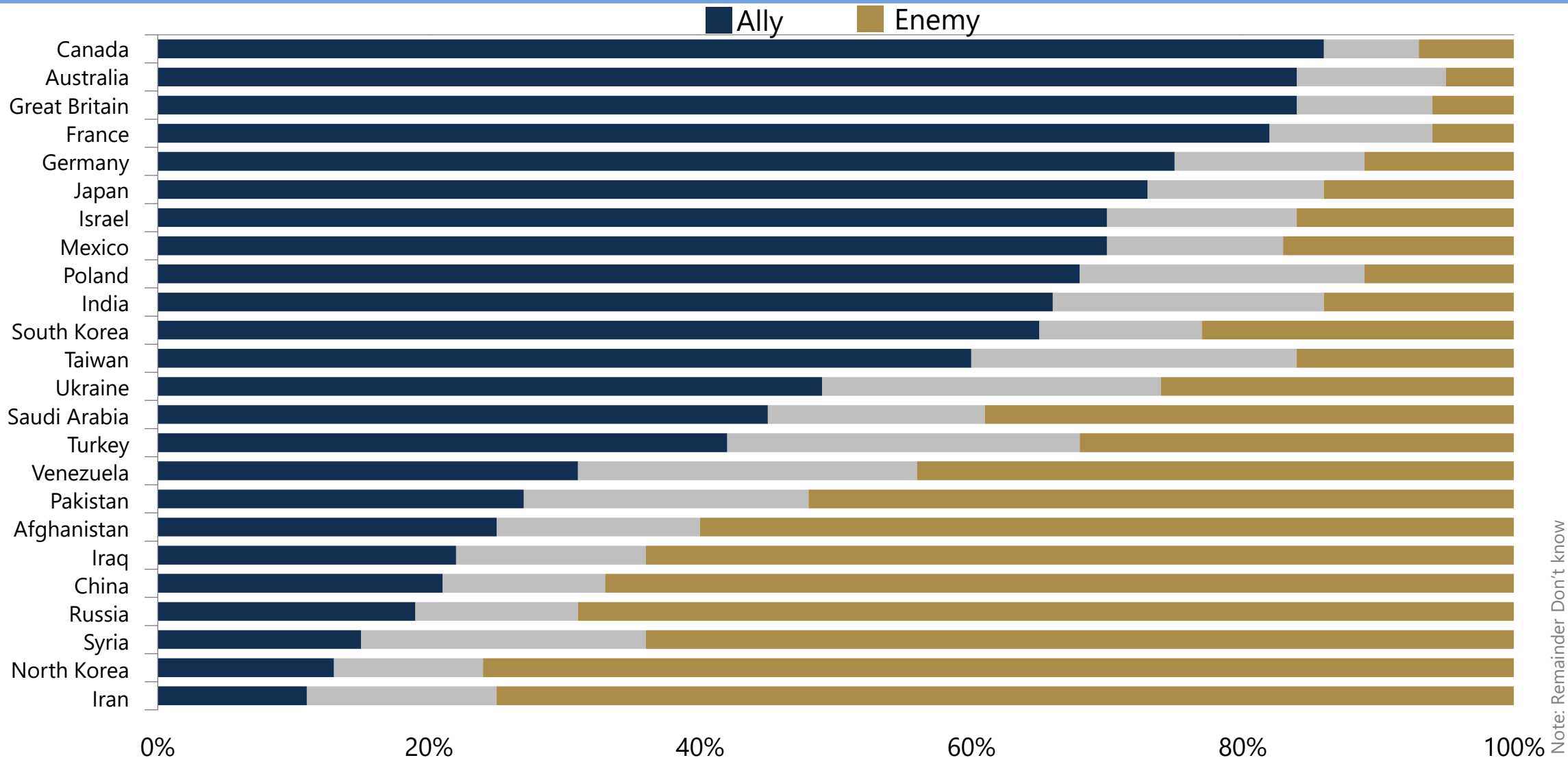


ASSESSMENTS OF ALLIES AND ENEMIES





Overview of Allies and Enemies

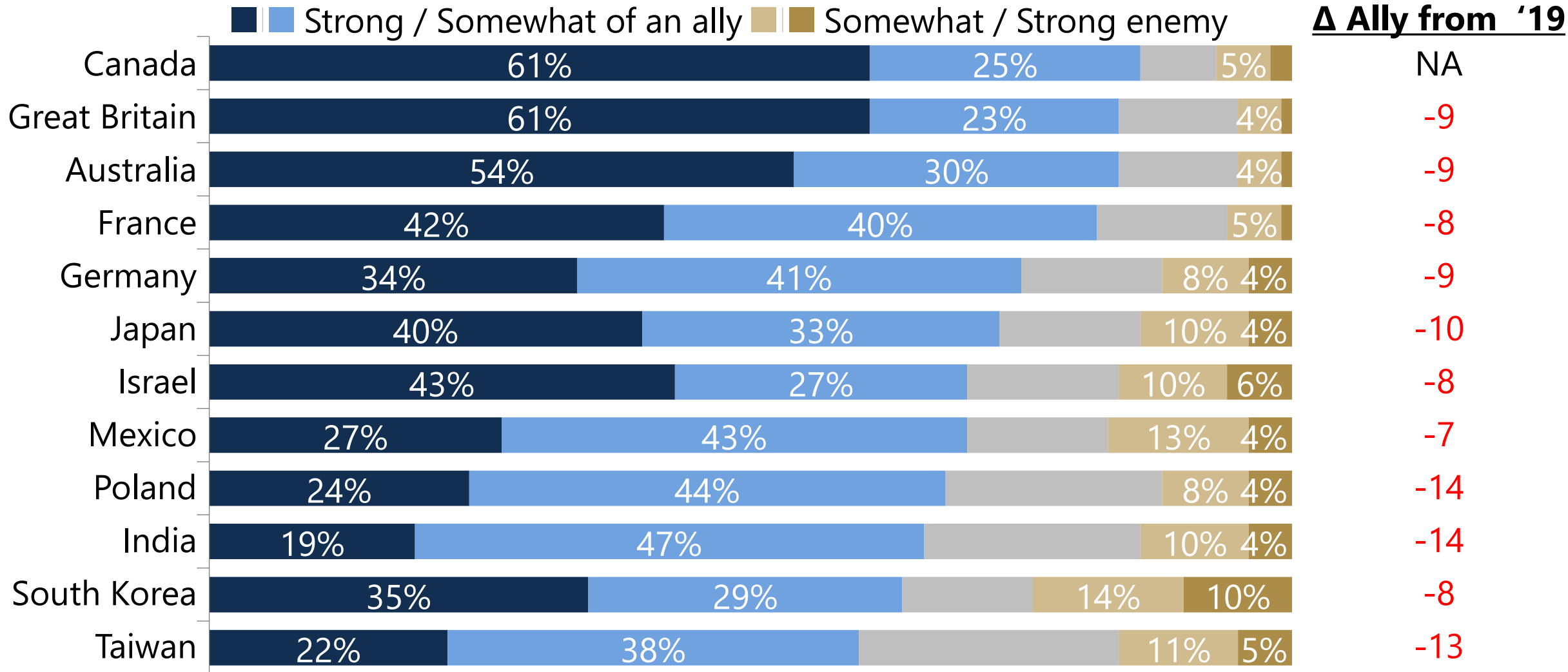


Q56 – Q79: For each of the following countries, please tell us whether you see them as a strong ally, something of an ally, something of an enemy, or a strong enemy?

Note: Remainder Don't know



Allies: Canada, Australia, European powers top the list; Americans are less sure of allies compared to last year.

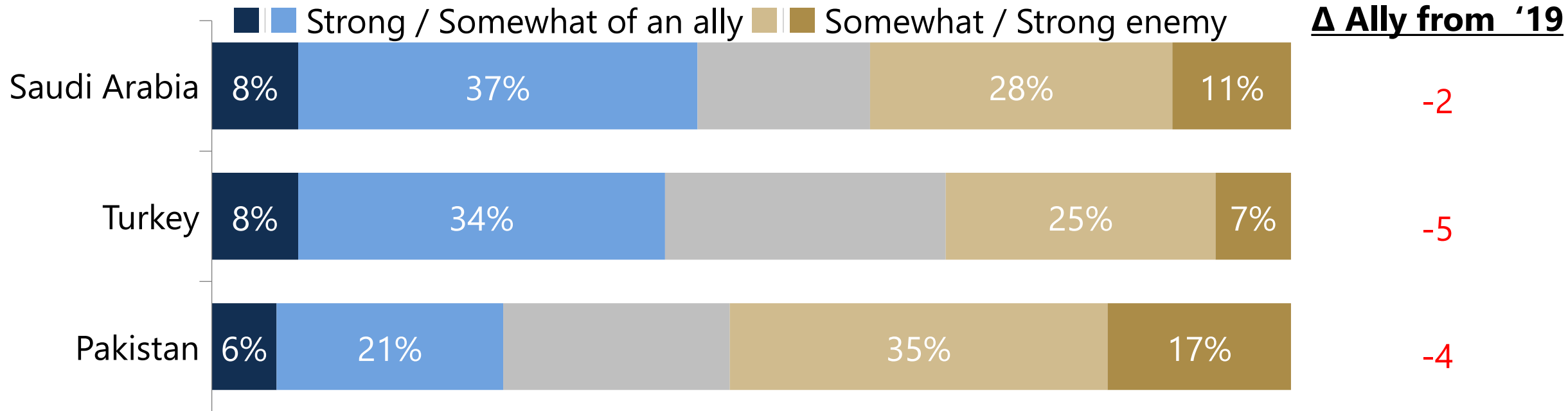


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q56 – Q79: For each of the following countries, please tell us whether you see them as a strong ally, something of an ally, something of an enemy, or a strong enemy?



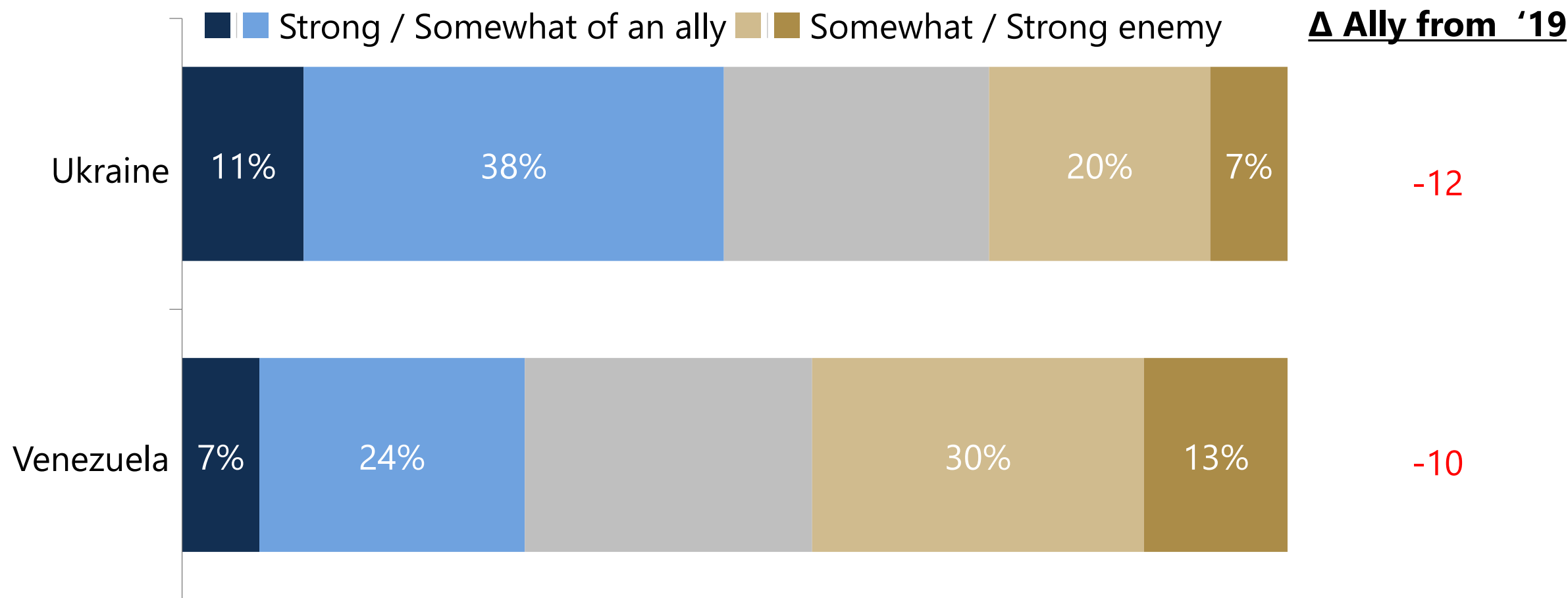
Mixed views of partners in the Middle East / South Asia.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q56 – Q79: For each of the following countries, please tell us whether you see them as a strong ally, something of an ally, something of an enemy, or a strong enemy?

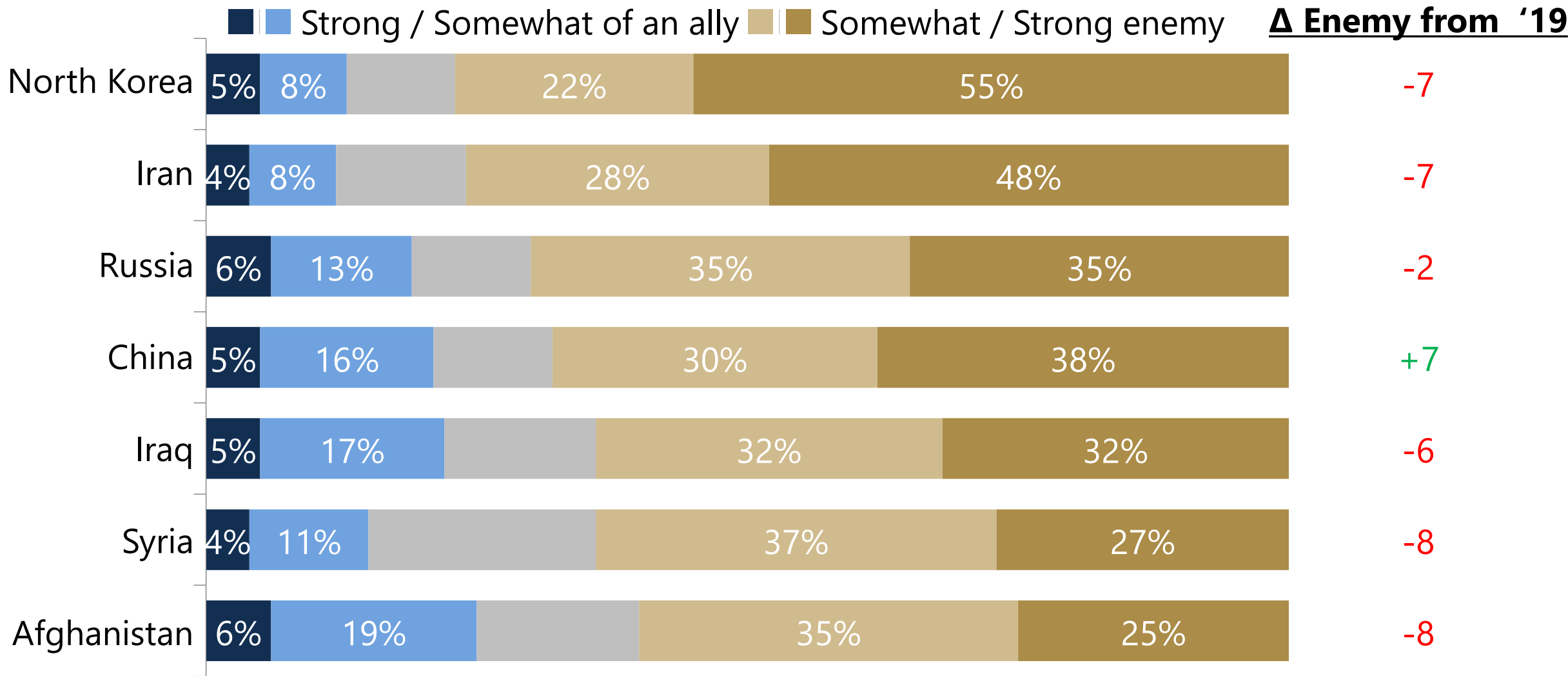
Views of Ukraine and Venezuela notably worse than a year ago.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q56 – Q79: For each of the following countries, please tell us whether you see them as a strong ally, something of an ally, something of an enemy, or a strong enemy?

Enemies: North Korea and Iran top the list, suspicion of China on the rise.

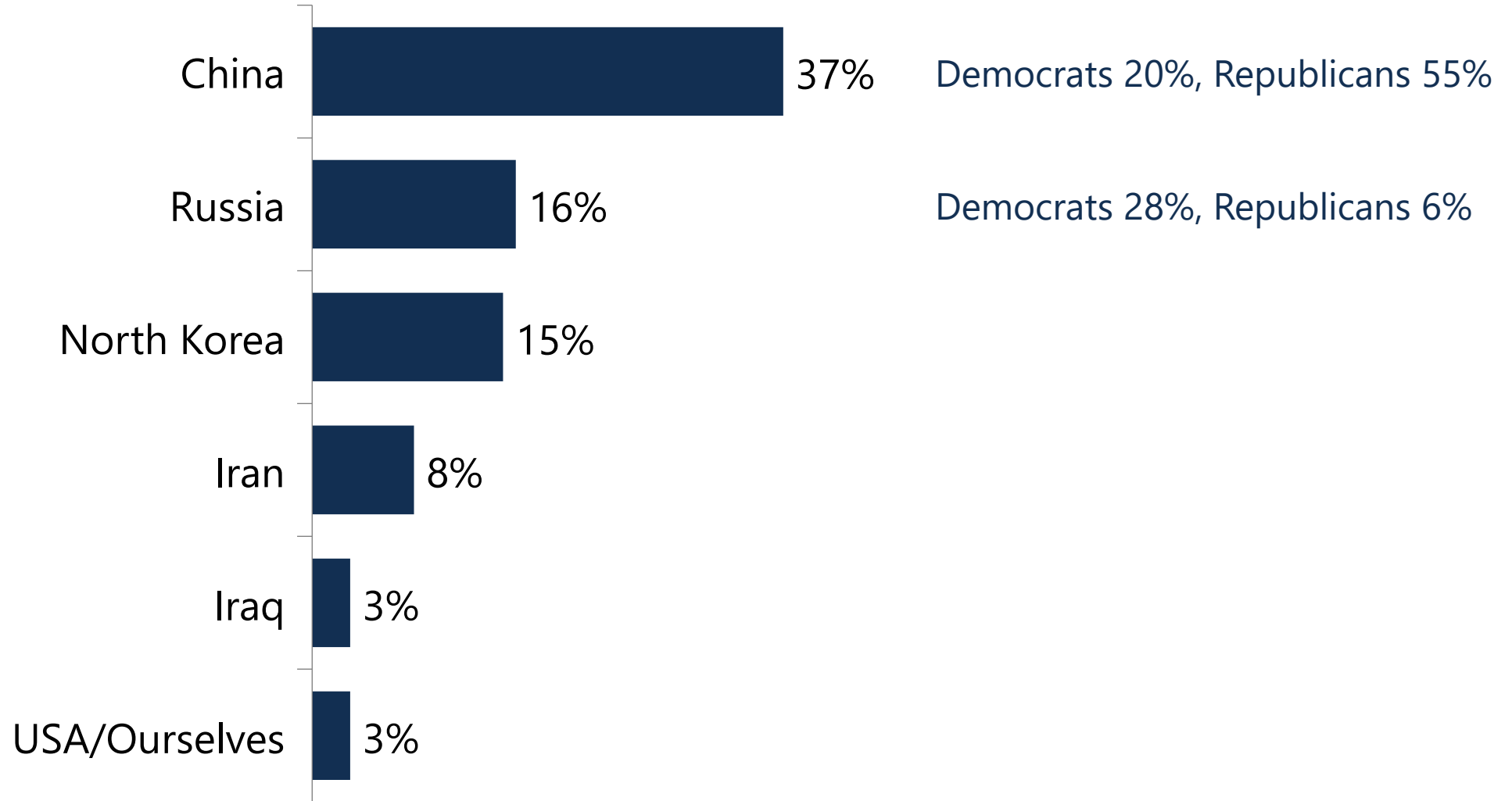


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q56 – Q79: For each of the following countries, please tell us whether you see them as a strong ally, something of an ally, something of an enemy, or a strong enemy?



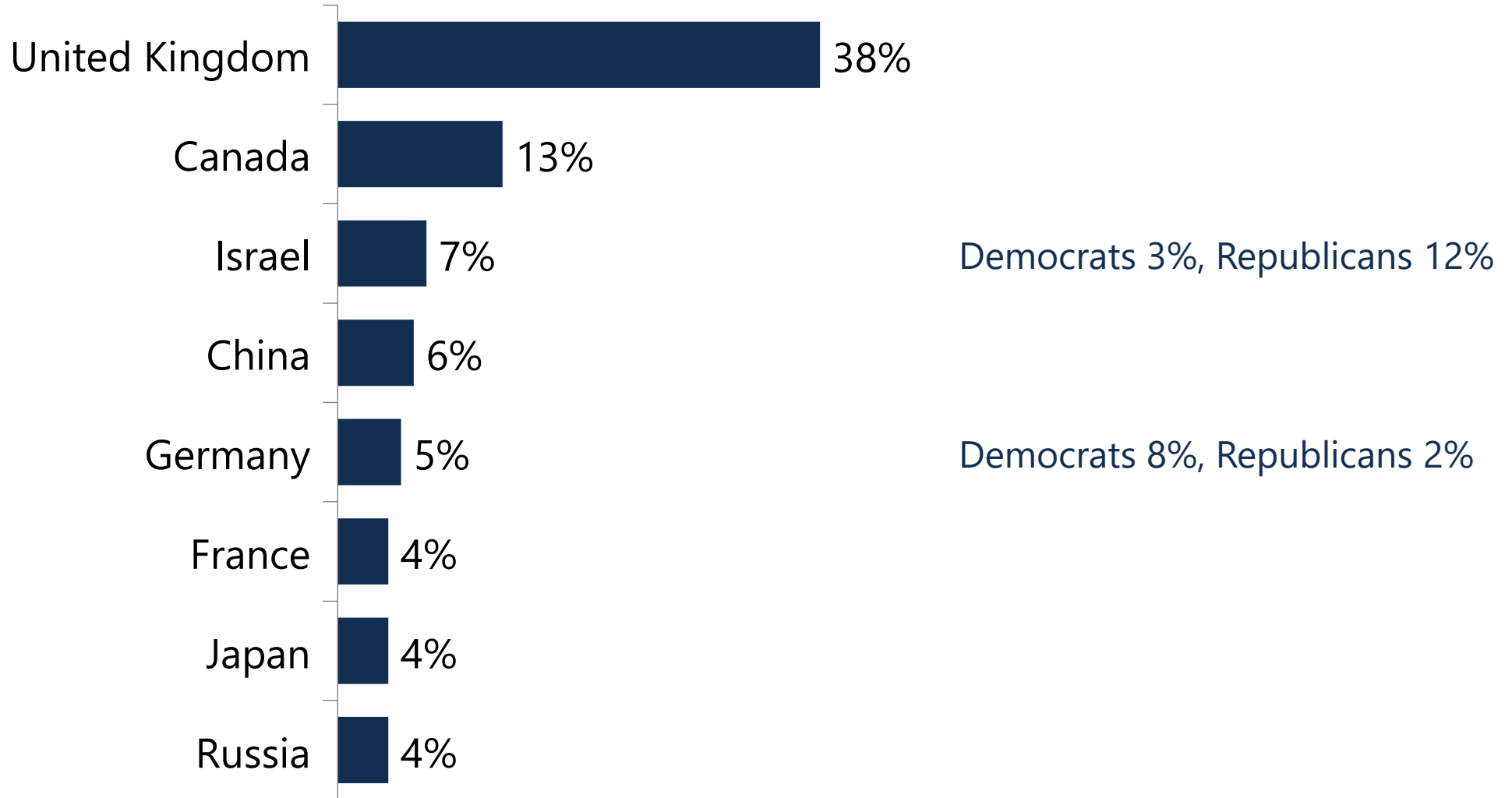
China by far seen as the greatest threat (open-ended) – though partisan differences abound.



Note: Asked as an open-ended question. Responses under 2% are not shown. Note: Remainder Not sure / Refused

Q80: Which country do you see as the greatest threat to the U.S.?

UK is the foremost top-of-mind ally; with notable partisan differences on some allies.

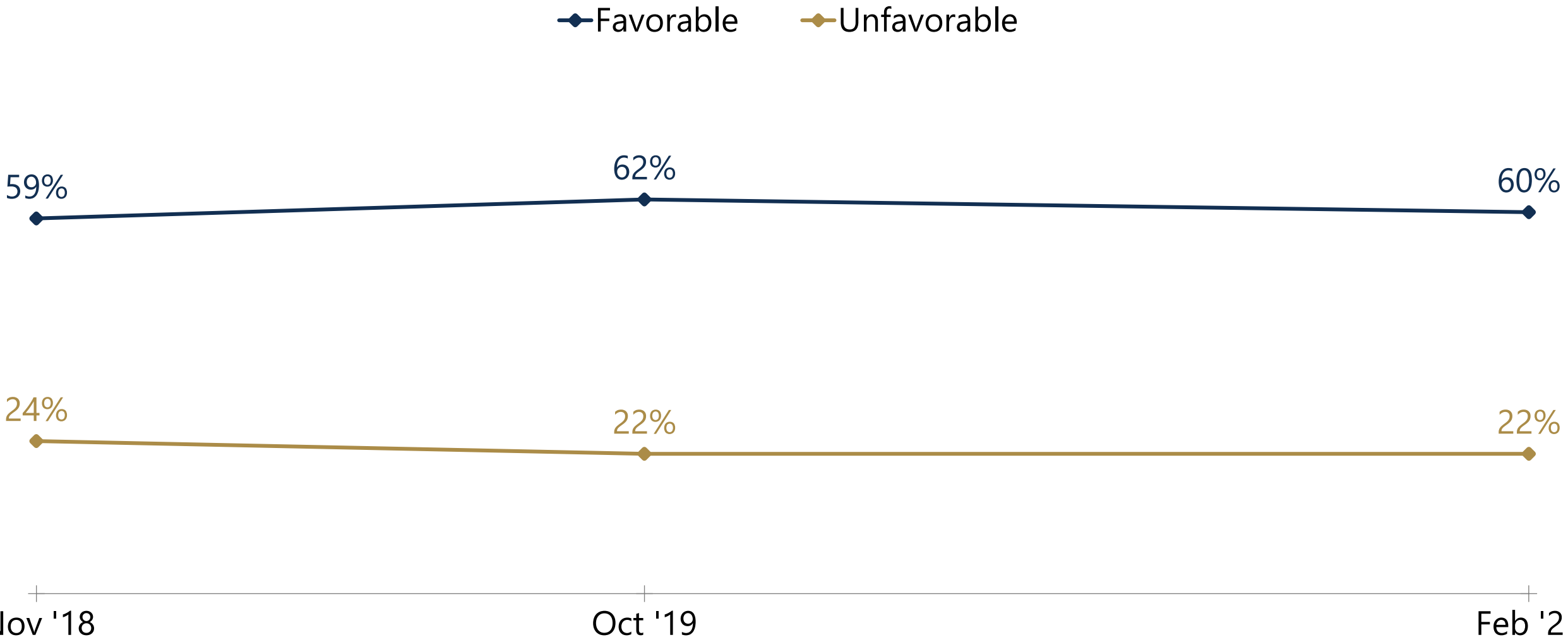


Note: Asked as an open-ended question. Responses under 2% are not shown. Note: Remainder Not sure / Refused

Q82. Which country do you see as the most important ally to the U.S.?



Favorable views of NATO holding steady.



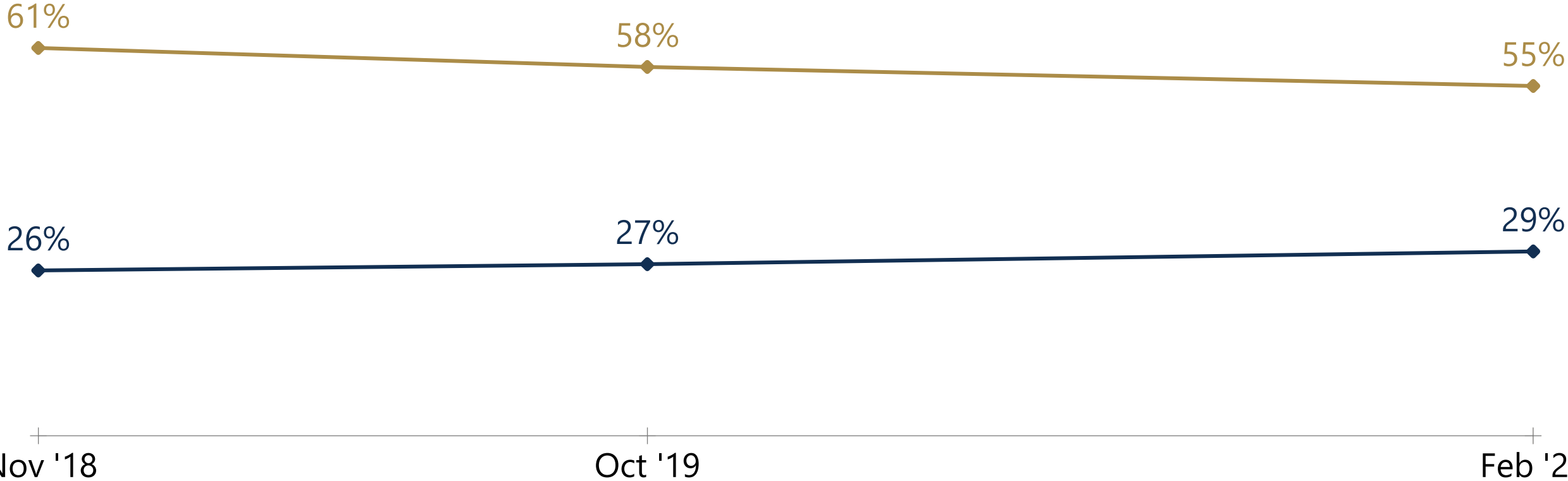
Note: Remainder Don't know

Q83. Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable view of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also known as NATO?

Majority wants NATO allies to do more – though some erosion in that view.



◆ Do their fair share ◆ Should do more

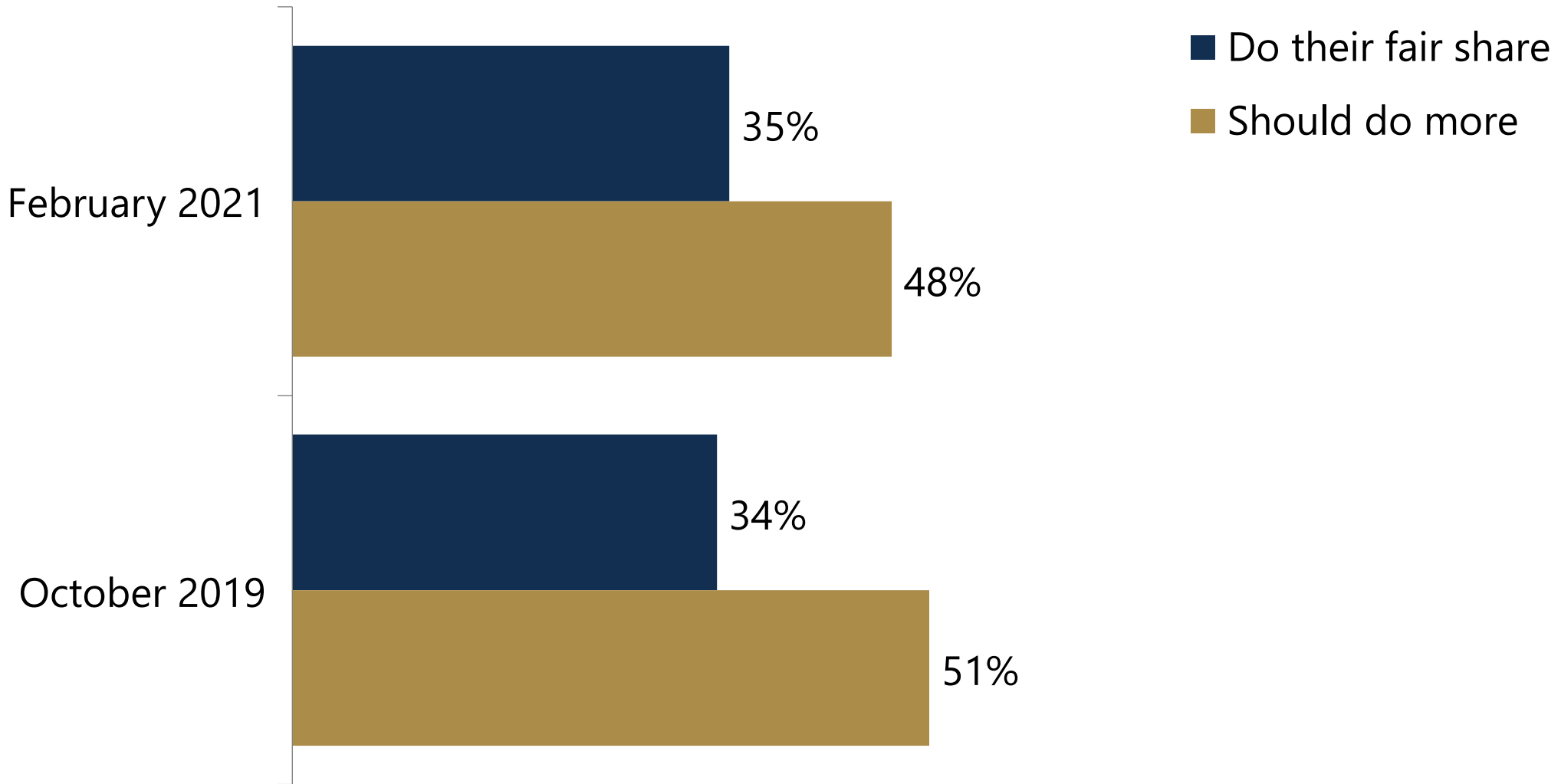


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q84. Do you think our NATO allies do their fair share or should they do more?



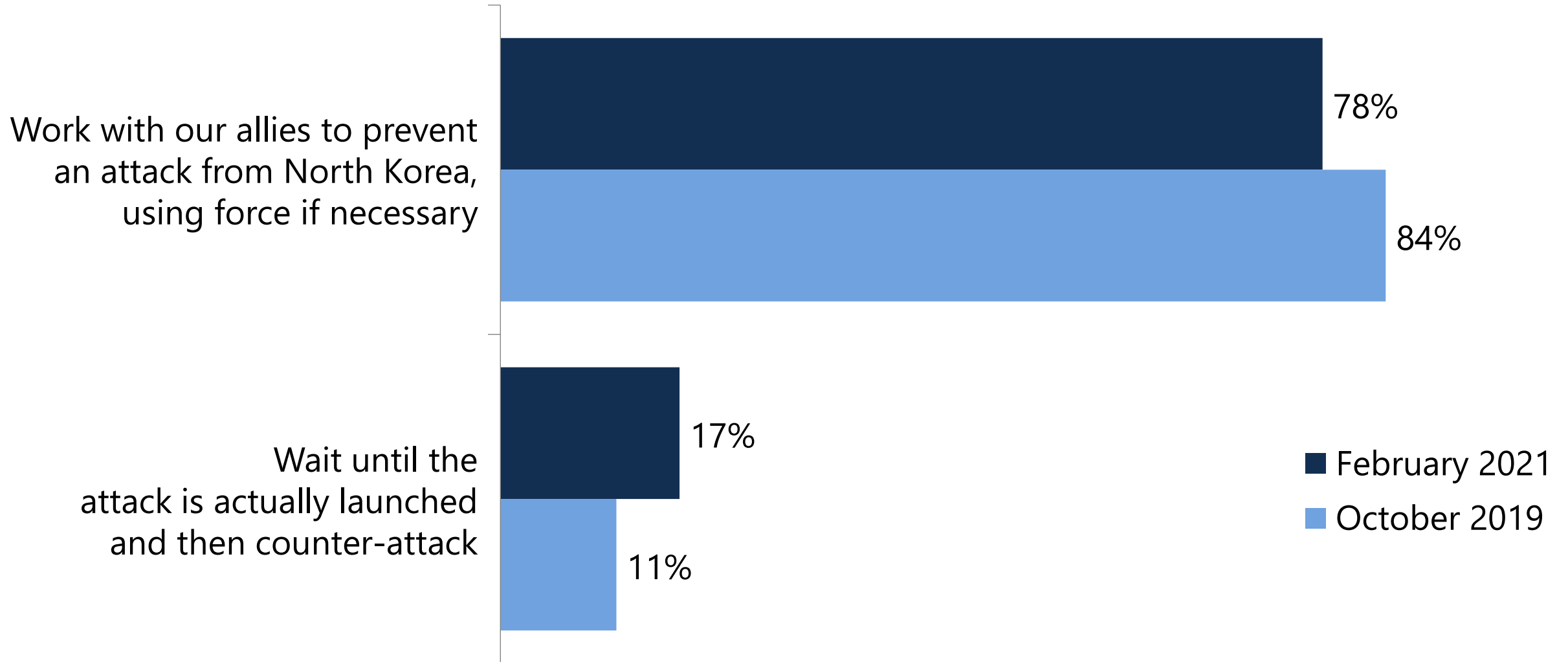
Half think Pacific Rim allies should do more.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q85. Do you think our allies on the Pacific Rim, including Australia, Japan, and South Korea do their fair share or should they do more?

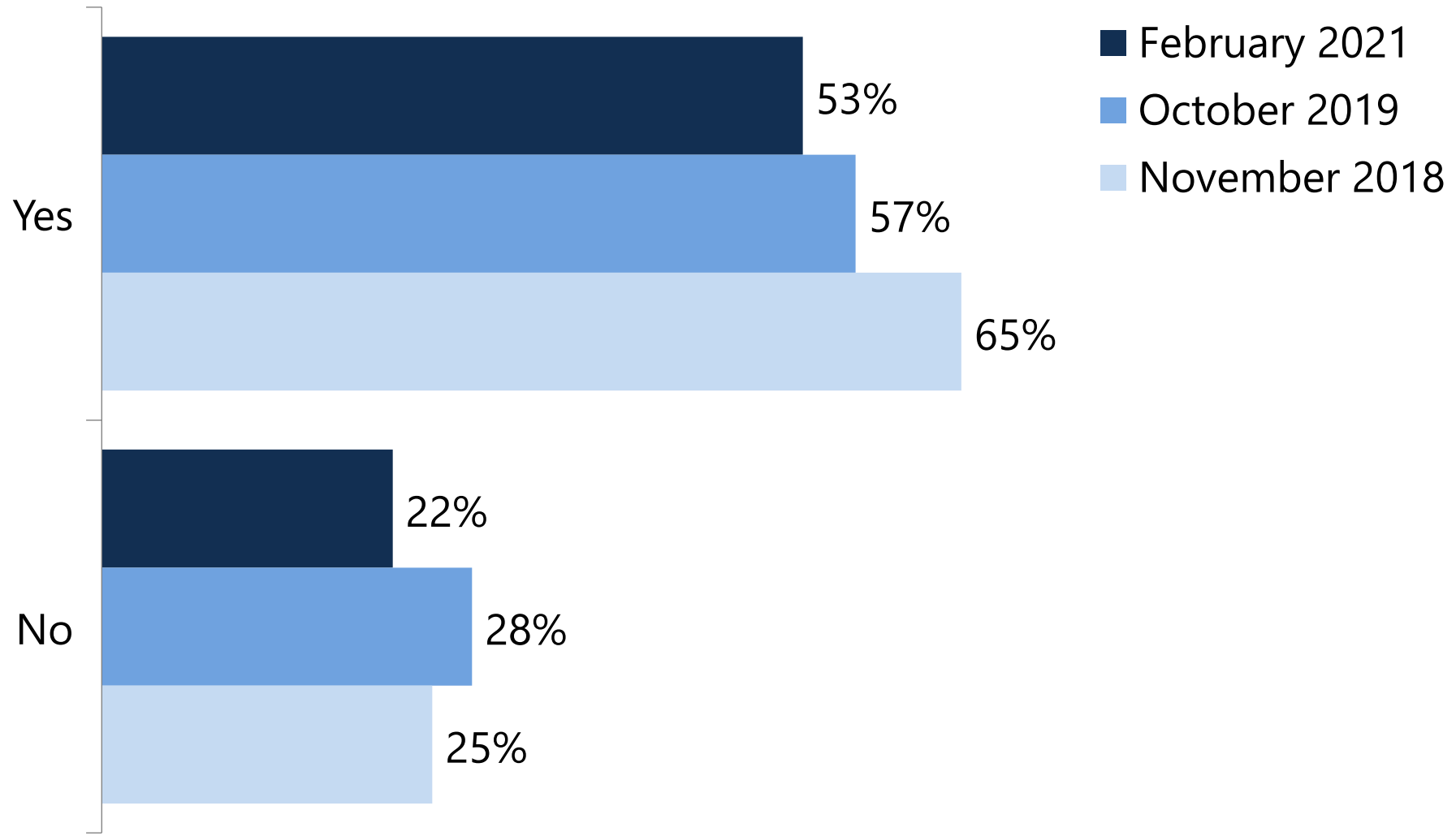
Eight-in-ten would work with allies *and* use force to prevent a North Korean attack.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q99. If the U.S. suspected that North Korea was going to launch an attack against the U.S. and its allies, South Korea and Japan, which of the following options would you prefer?

Declining confidence US would win a war with a nuclear power.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q100. Do you think the U.S. would win a war with a nuclear power?

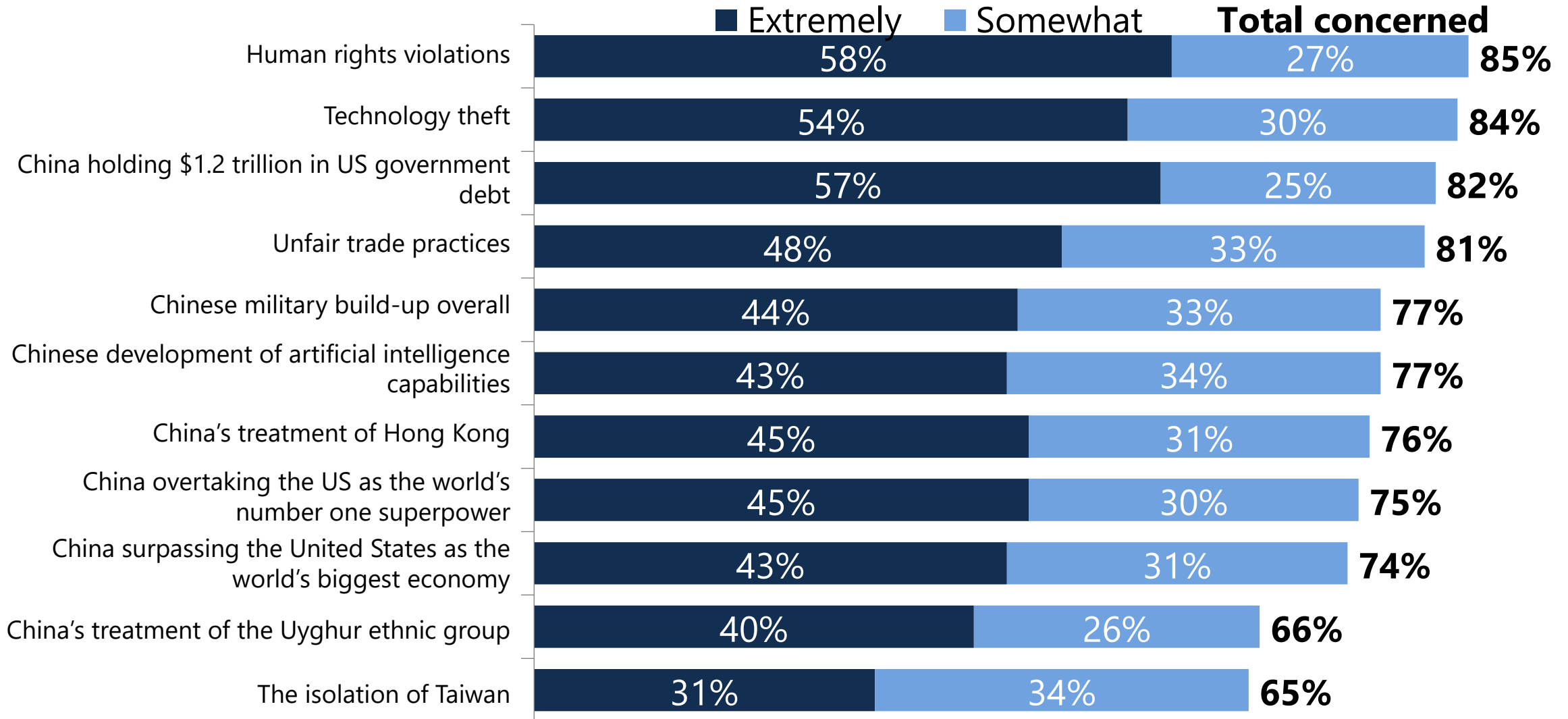


CHINA



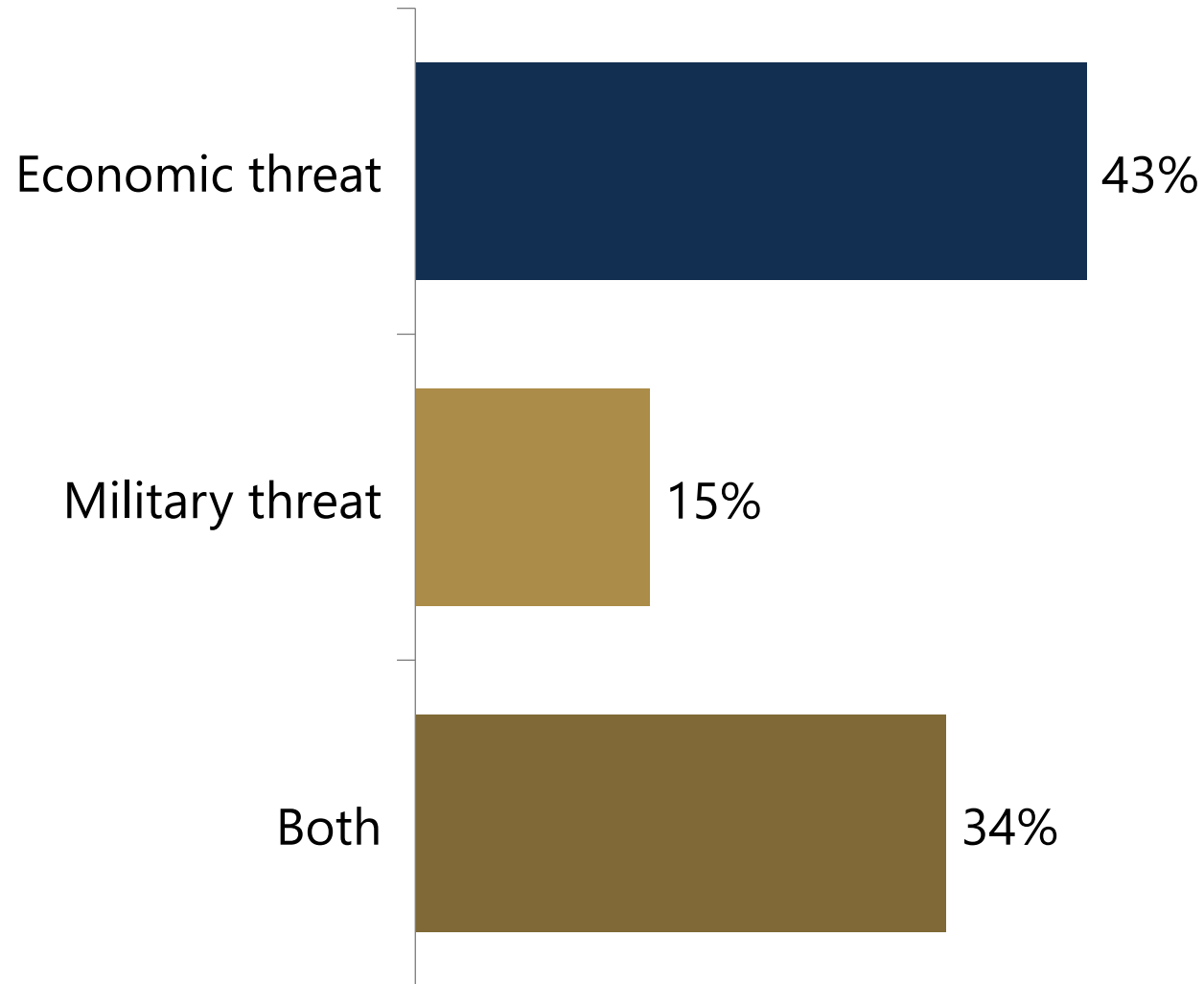


Top concerns with China: human rights violations, technology theft/trade, ownership of US debt.



Q103 – Q113. Thinking specifically about China, how concerned are you about each of the following?

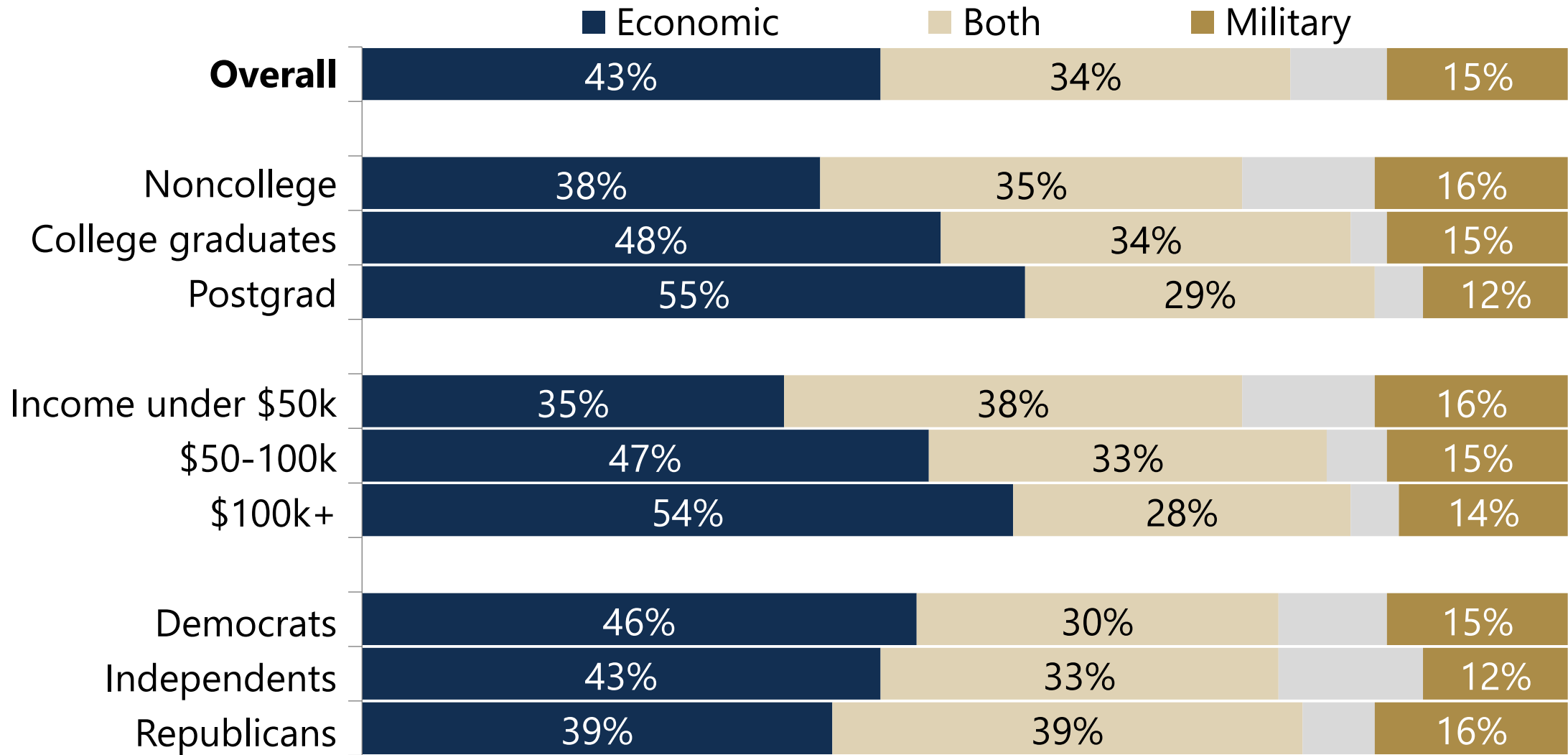
China seen as more of an economic threat than a military one – though a third think it is both.



Note: Remainder Neither / Don't know

Q114. Do you view China as more of an economic threat to the United States or more of a military threat?

Democrats, more educated/affluent more likely to think of China as primarily an economic threat.



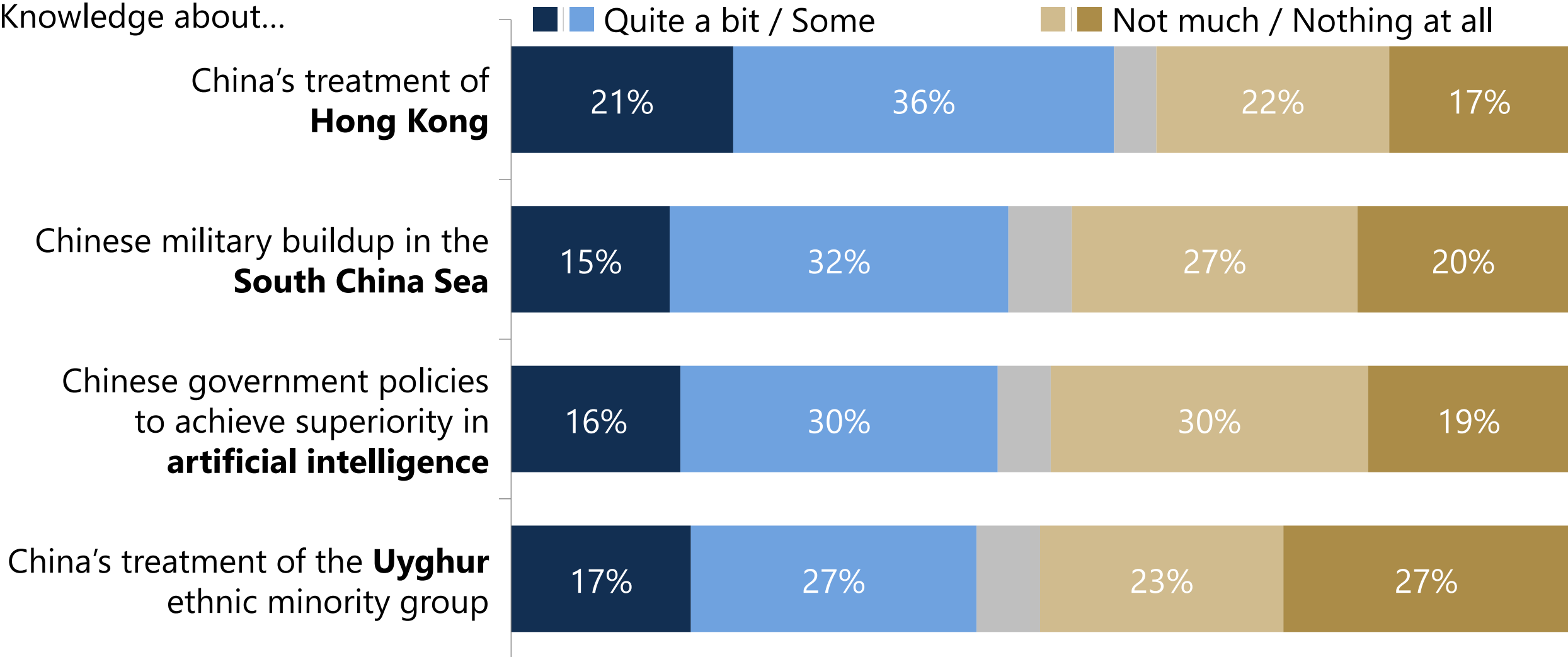
Note: Remainder Neither / Don't know

Q114. Do you view China as more of an economic threat to the United States or more of a military threat?



Few Americans feel knowledgeable of key China issues.

Knowledge about...



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q115, 117, 120, 122. How much do you know about [ISSUE]?

Seven-in-ten support backing pro-democracy forces in Hong Kong.



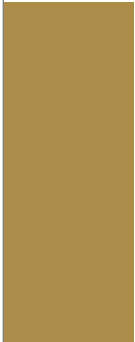
Support the pro-democracy movement, even if it angers China



72%

+4 change in support from 2019

Support the Chinese government, even if it means abandoning a pro-democracy movement



8%

Note: Remainder Don't know

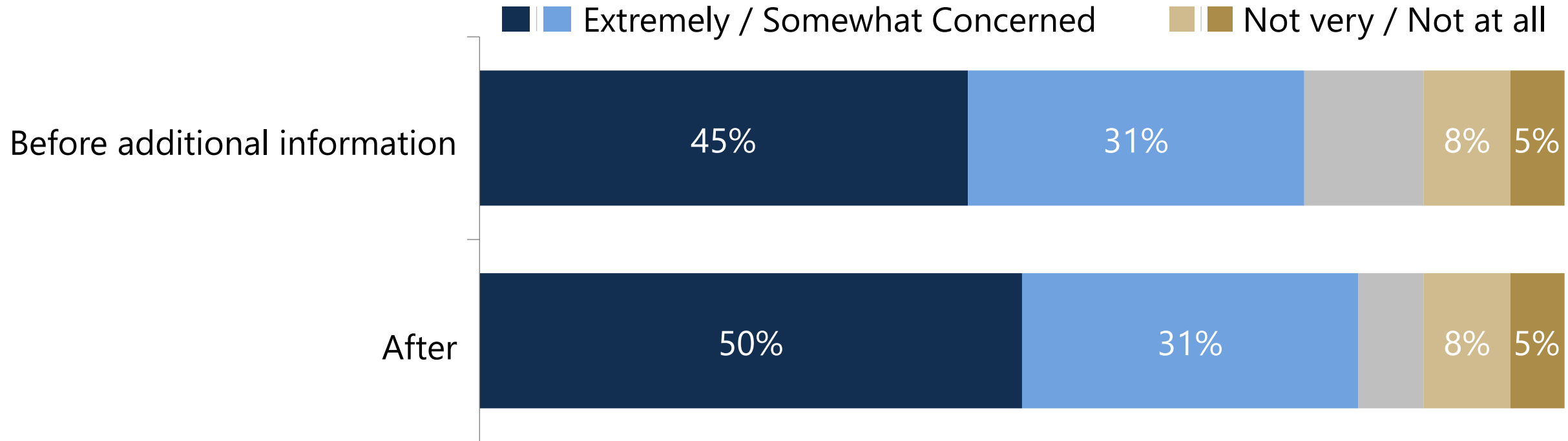
Q119. Which of the following is closer to your view about what the U.S. should do with regard to the situation in Hong Kong?



After learning more about Hong Kong, concern with Chinese activity increases slightly.

As you may know....

As you may know, China recently imposed a series of laws outlawing political dissent in Hong Kong, arresting hundreds of pro-democracy activists and effectively ending Hong Kong's status as an autonomous territory. The Chinese government claims this is an internal matter and has blamed foreign governments for the situation.



Note: Remainder Don't know

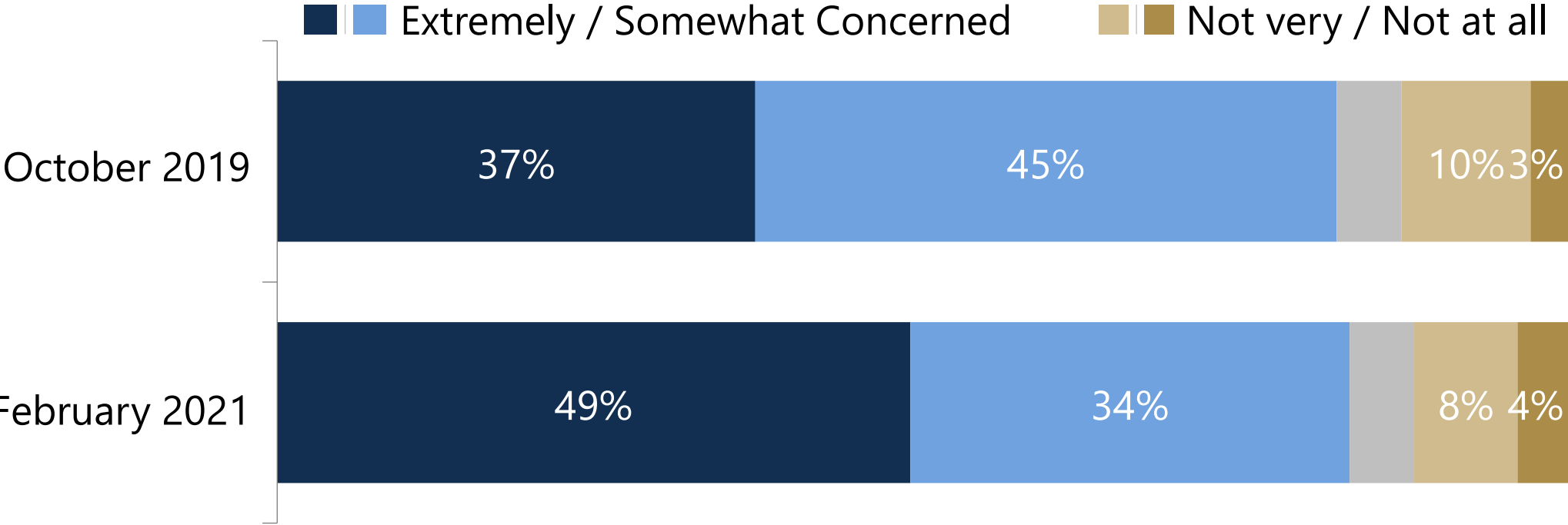
Q118. Knowing this, how concerned are you with these actions by China?

Voters are increasingly concerned to hear about Chinese naval buildup in the South China Sea.



As you may know...

As you may know, one-third of the world's ocean-based trade goes through the South China Sea, and there are disputes between several countries about who controls the area and its natural resources. Since 2013, China has built a series of naval and military bases in the region and moved to claim territory in the region.



Note: Remainder Don't know

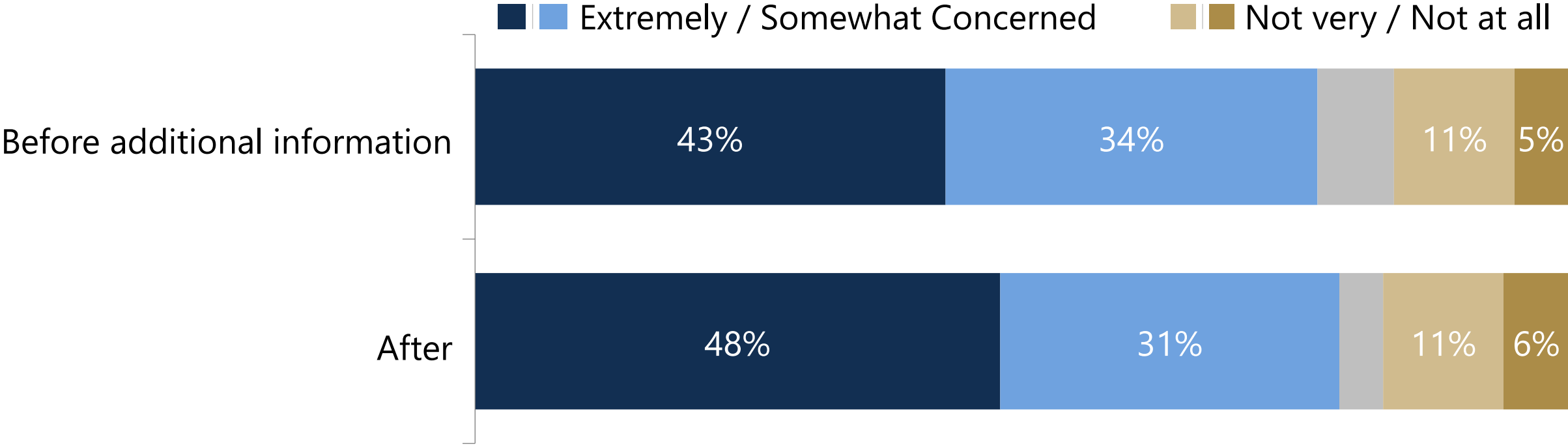
Q116. Knowing this, how concerned are you with these actions by China?

Learning about Chinese plans for AI superiority raises concerns slightly.



As you may know...

As you may know, the Chinese government has a policy designed to achieve technological supremacy over the U.S. when it comes to artificial intelligence, and recent estimates suggest China could achieve superiority in artificial intelligence as soon as 2022.



Note: Remainder Don't know

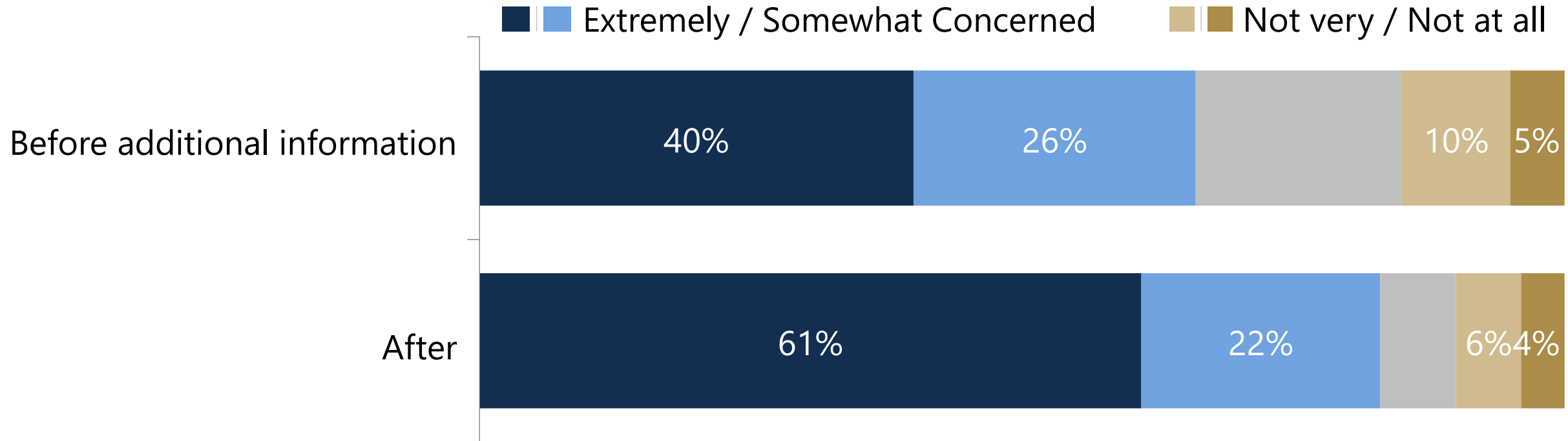
Q123. Knowing this, how concerned are you about the possibility of the U.S. falling behind China technologically?



Voters are very concerned over treatment of Uyghurs, once they learn of the situation.

As you may know....

China has imprisoned at least one million members of the Uyghur ethnic group, sent several million more to reeducation camps, and has placed much of the group under intense surveillance. Reports suggest hundreds of thousands of Uyghur have been killed or forcibly sterilized. The Chinese government claims the actions are necessary for internal security and are part of a broader anti-terrorism campaign.



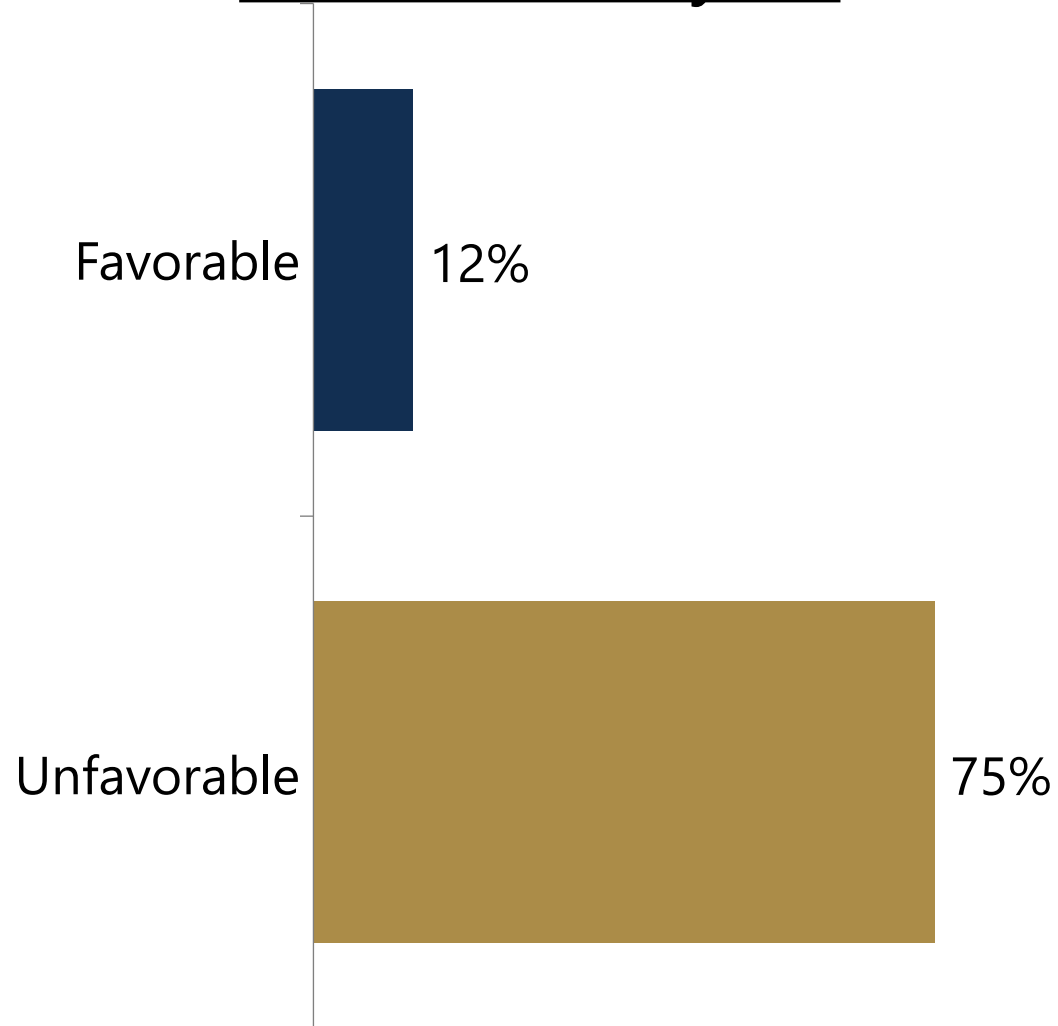
Note: Remainder Don't know

Q121. Knowing this, how concerned are you with China's treatment of the Uyghur people?

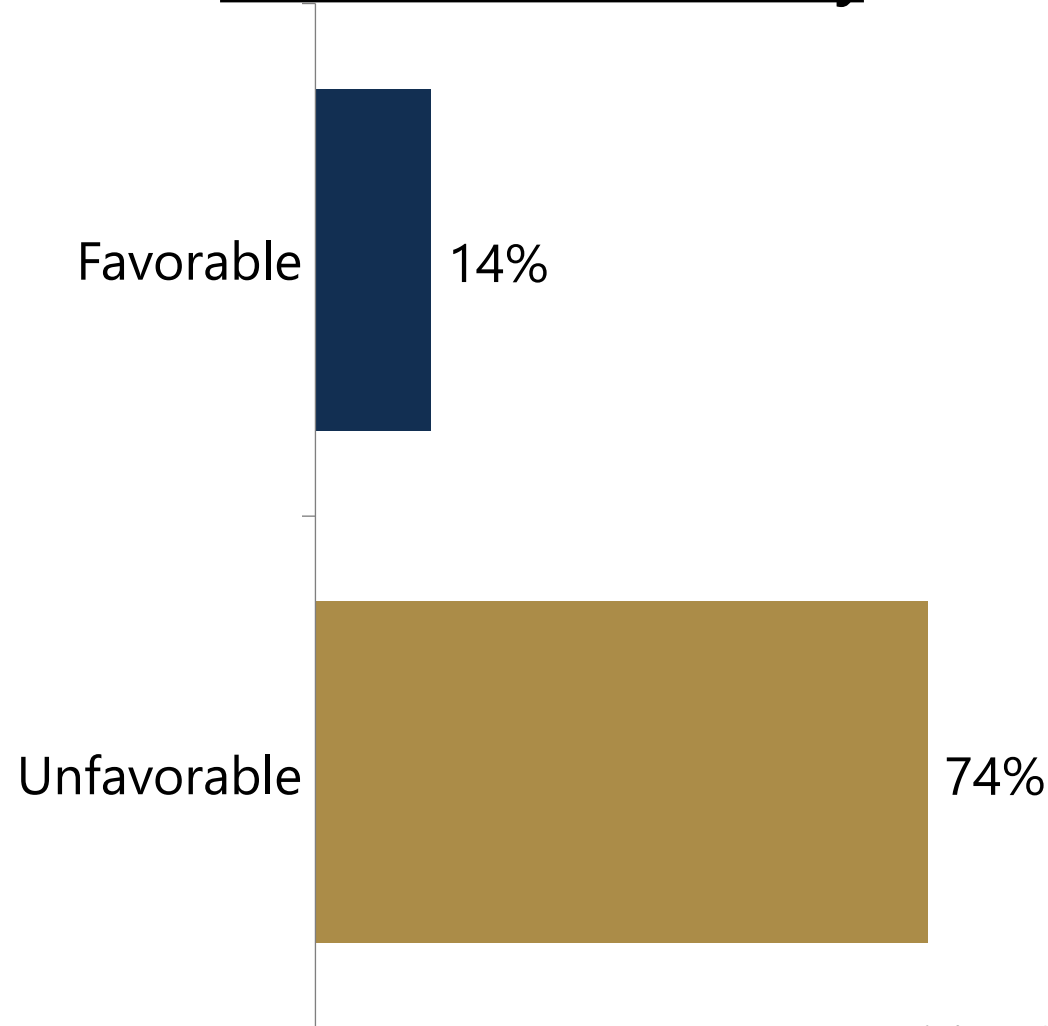
Most voters hold unfavorable views of the CCP, Chinese political system.



Chinese Political System



Chinese Communist Party



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q101. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the Chinese political system? AND Q102. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the Chinese Communist Party?

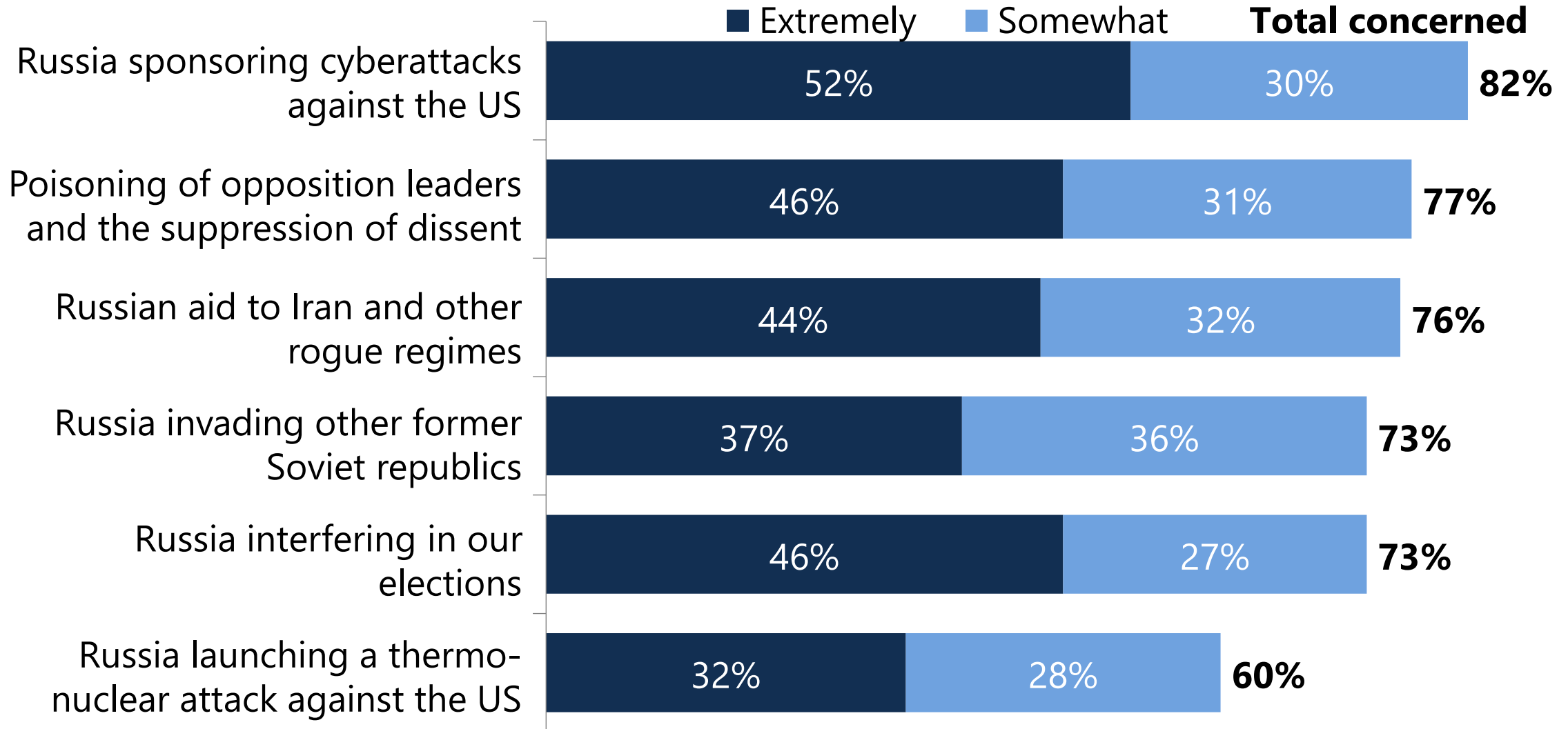


RUSSIA





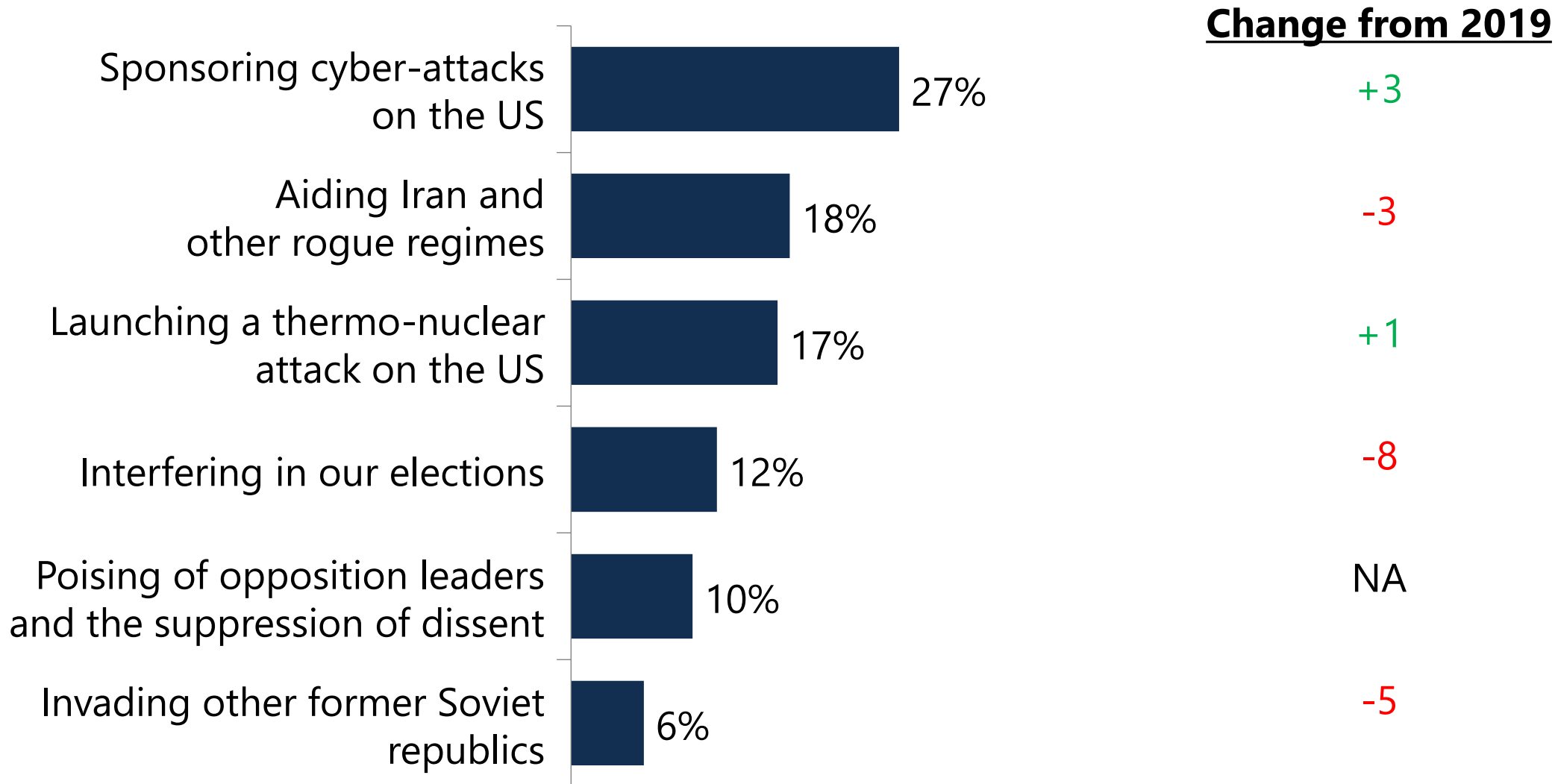
Three-quarters find a variety of Russian activity concerning.



Q125-Q130. Thinking specifically about Russia, how concerned are you about each of the following?



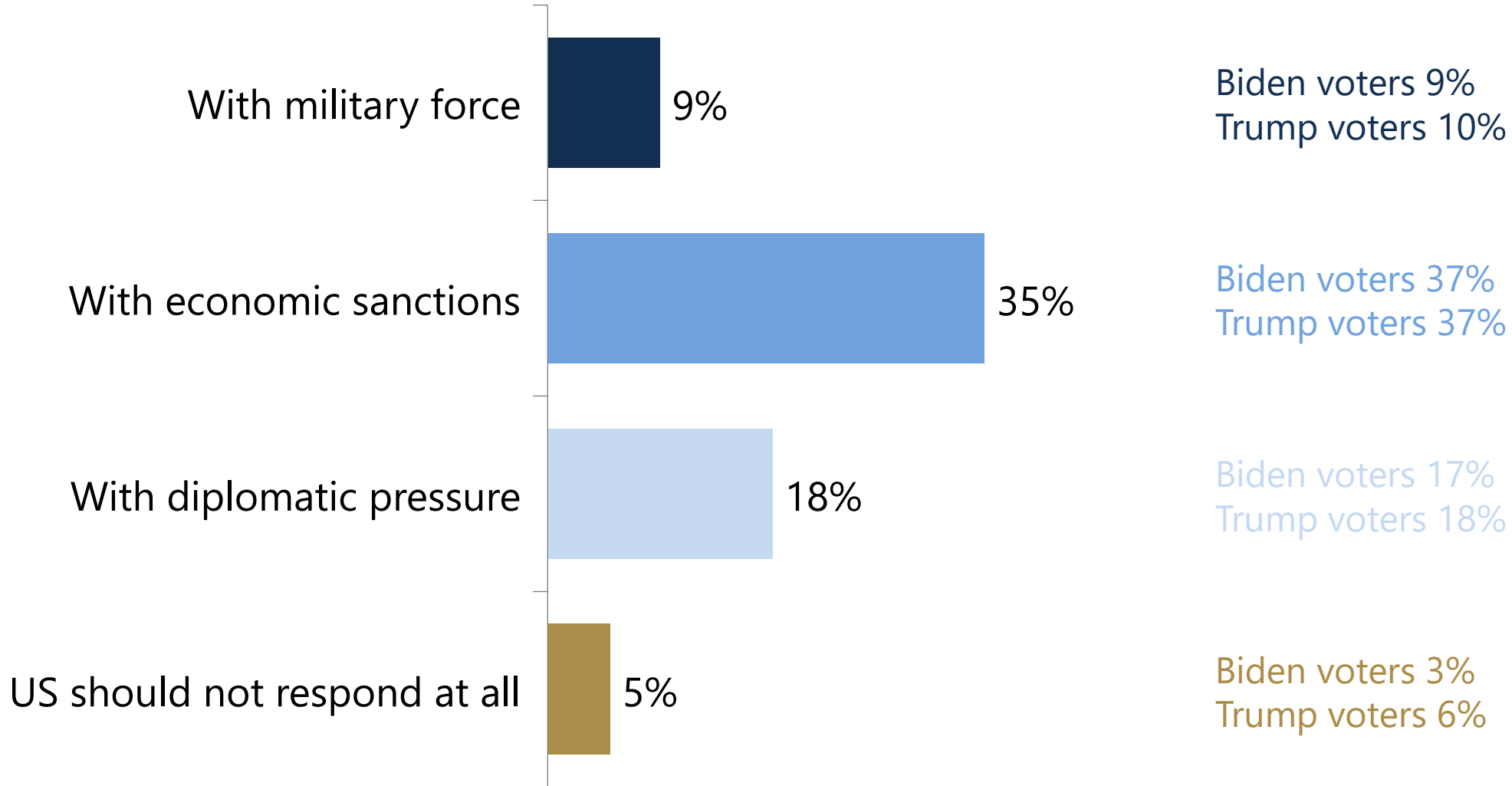
When forced to prioritize Russian threats, cyberattacks top the list of concerns.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q124. Which of the following most concerns you about Russia?

Biden, Trump voters tend agree on the best way to respond to election interference.



Note: Remainder Mix of Responses / Depends / Don't know

Q131. If a country interferes in U.S. elections, do you think the U.S. should respond:

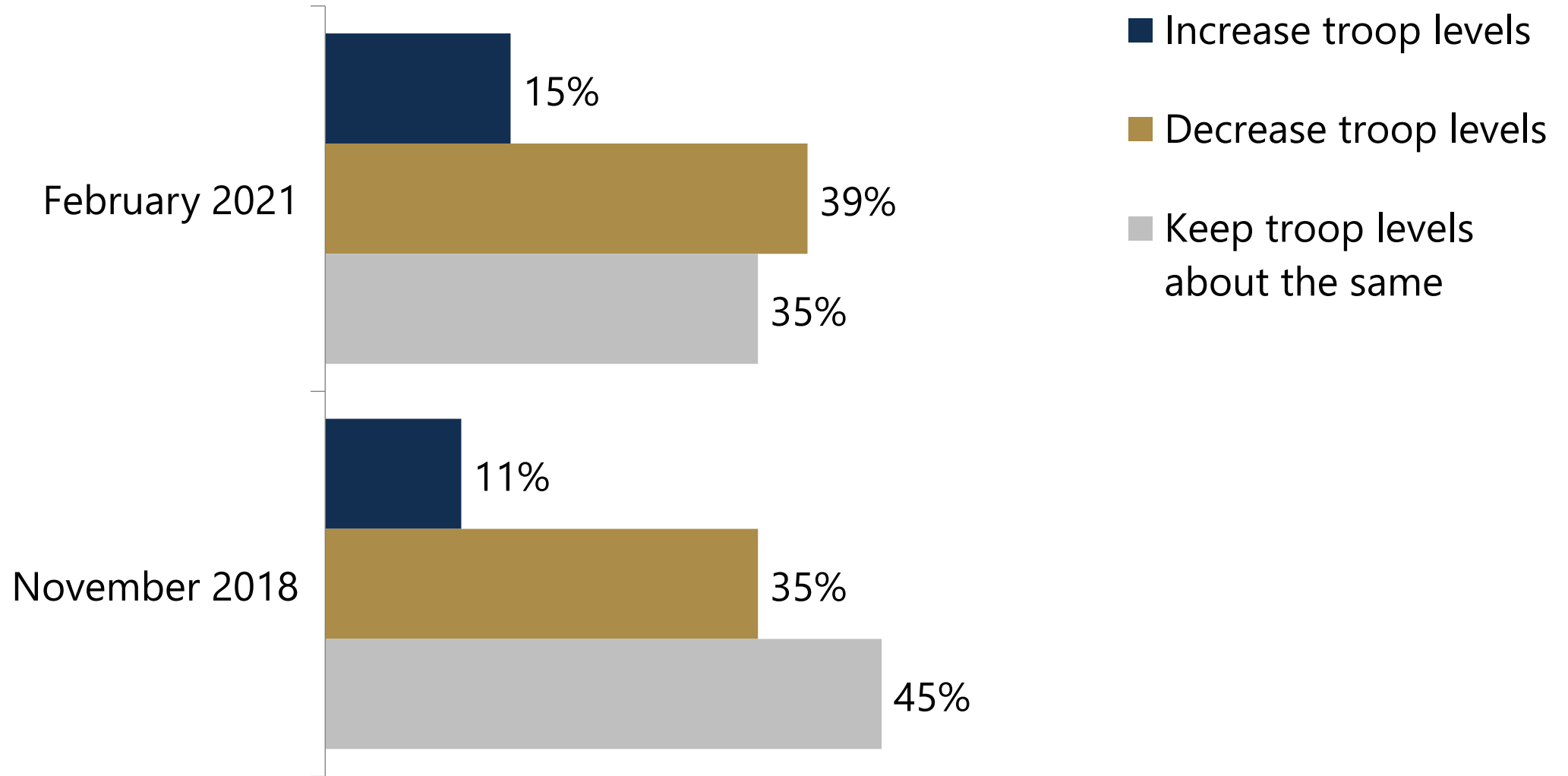


MIDDLE EAST / SOUTH ASIA





Little appetite for increasing troop levels in Afghanistan.

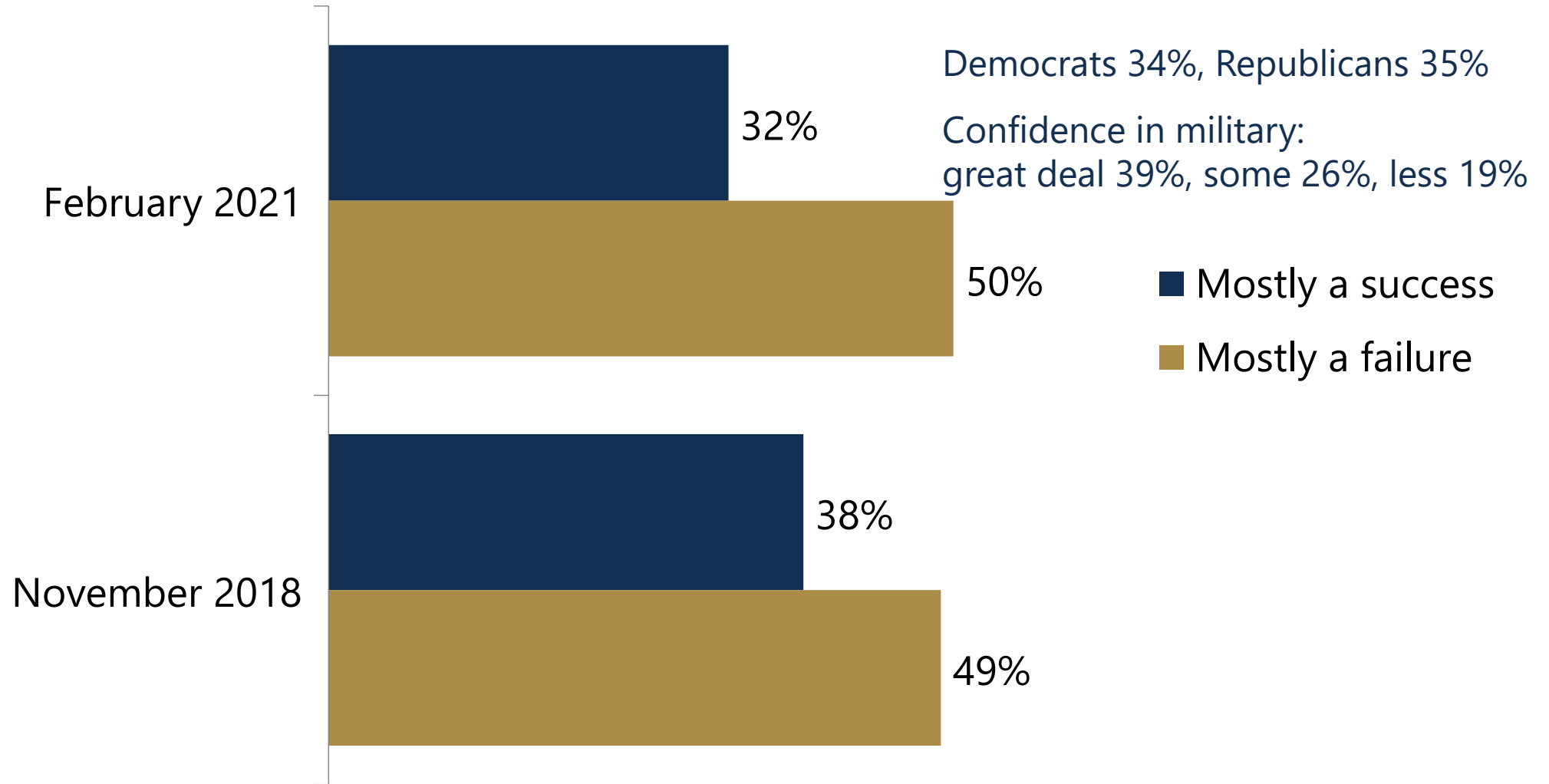


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q132. In Afghanistan, would you prefer that the U.S.:



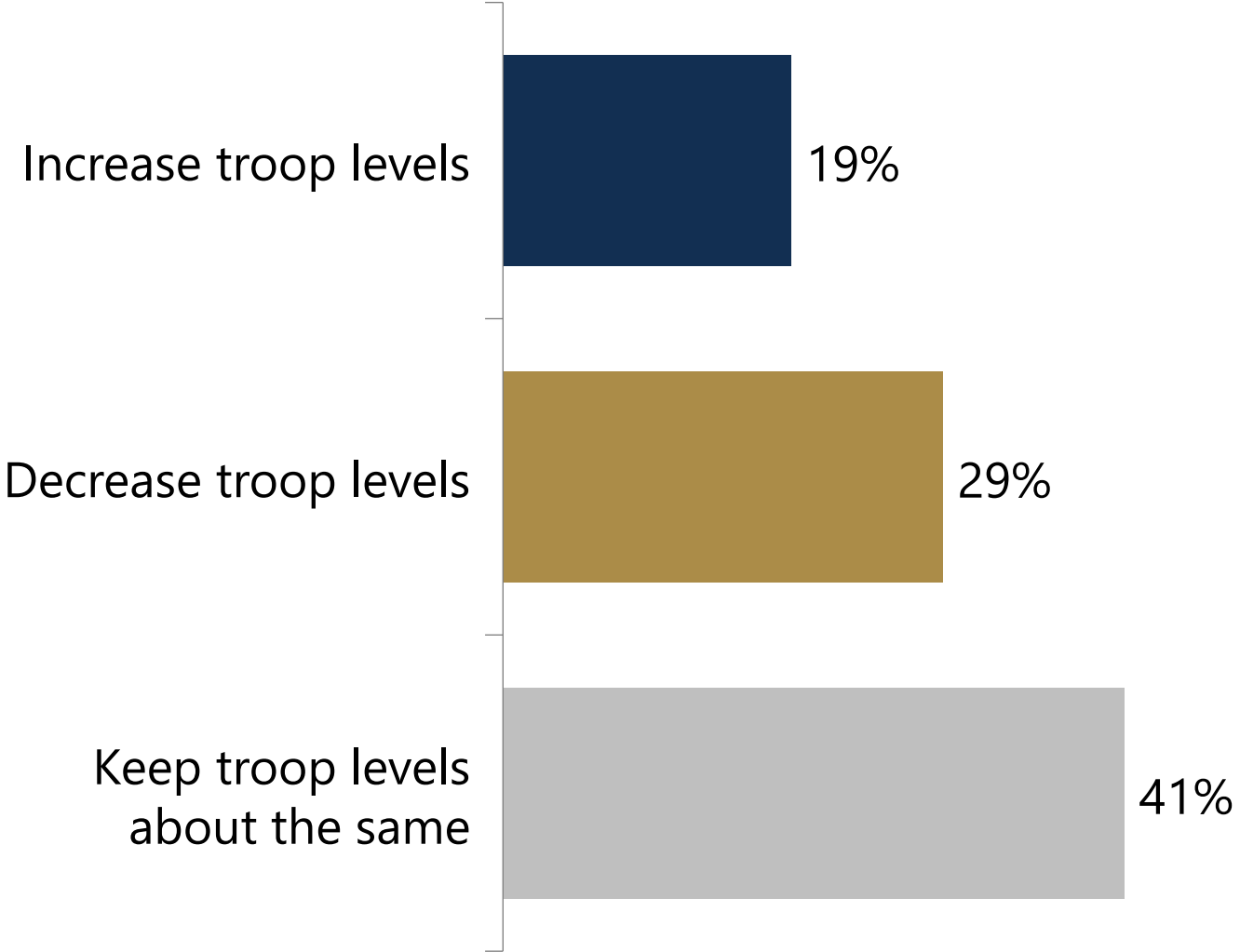
More see failure than success in Afghanistan.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q133. Do you think the war in Afghanistan has been mostly a success or mostly a failure?

Just two-in-ten thinks a troop level increase in Iraq is warranted.

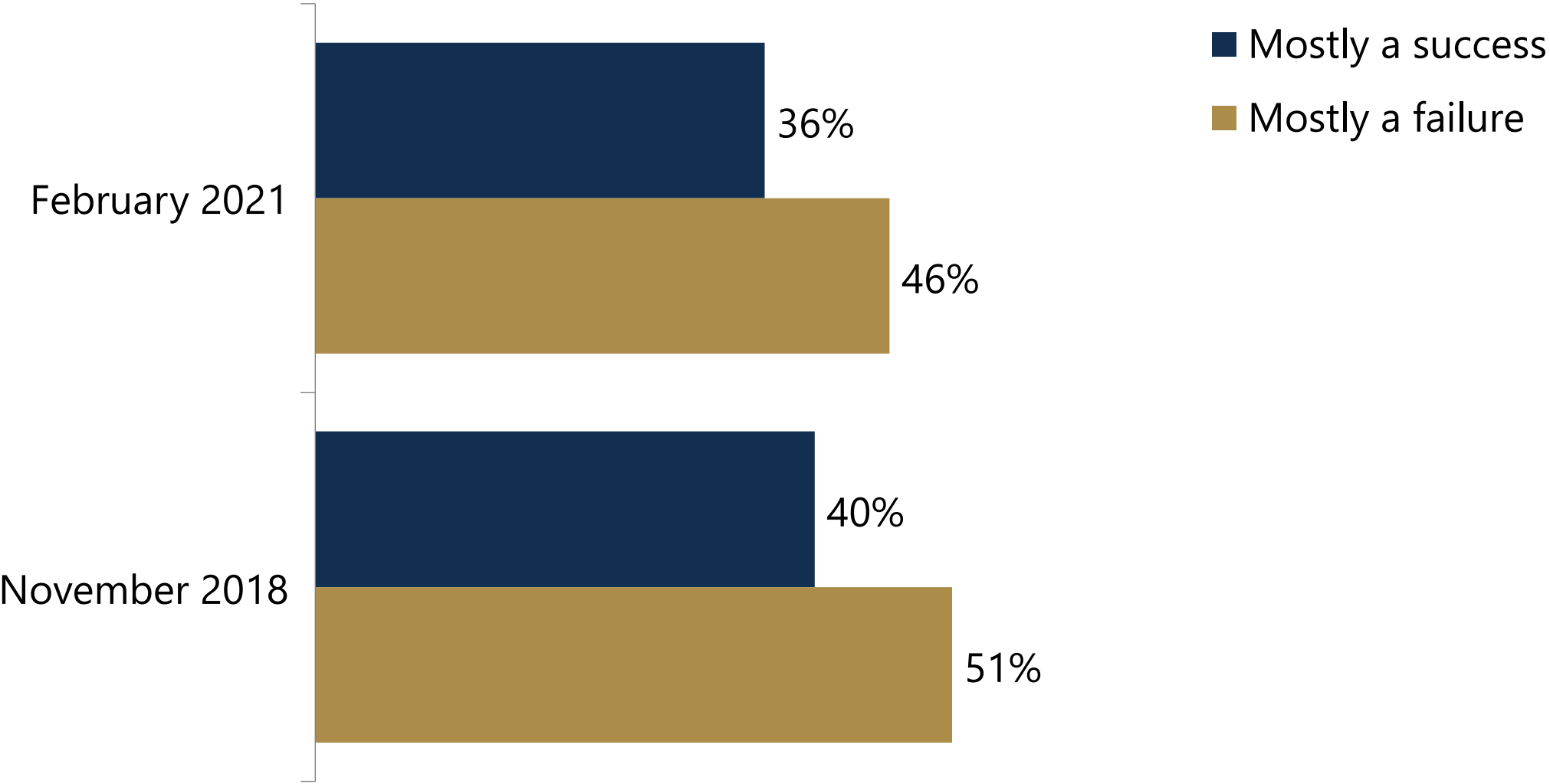


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q134. In Iraq, would you prefer that the U.S.:



Just over a third see the Iraq War as a success.



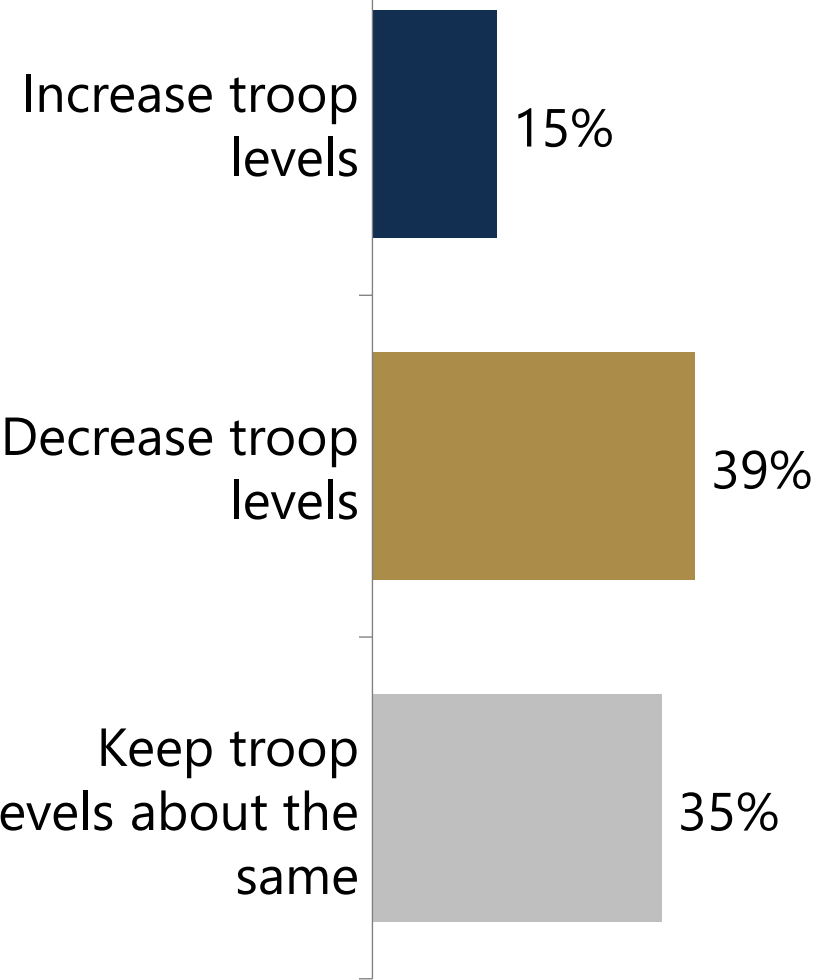
Note: Remainder Don't know

Q135. Do you think the war in Iraq was mostly a success or mostly a failure?

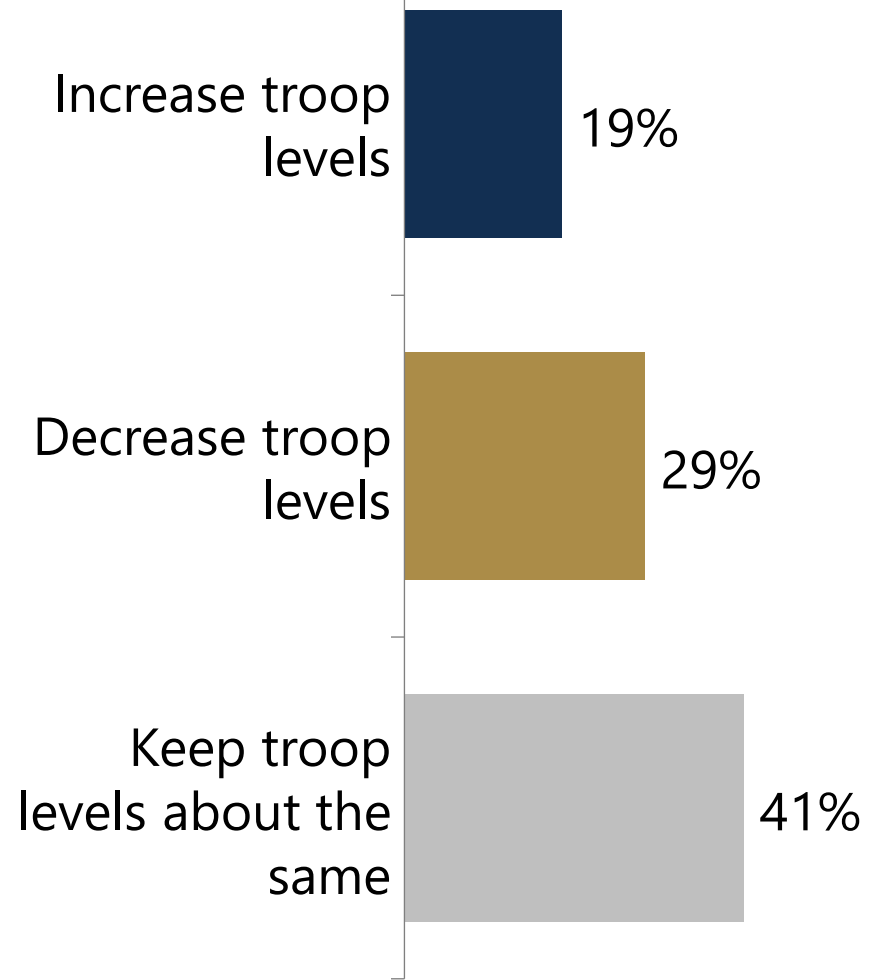


Slightly less support for decreasing troop levels in Iraq than Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan



In Iraq

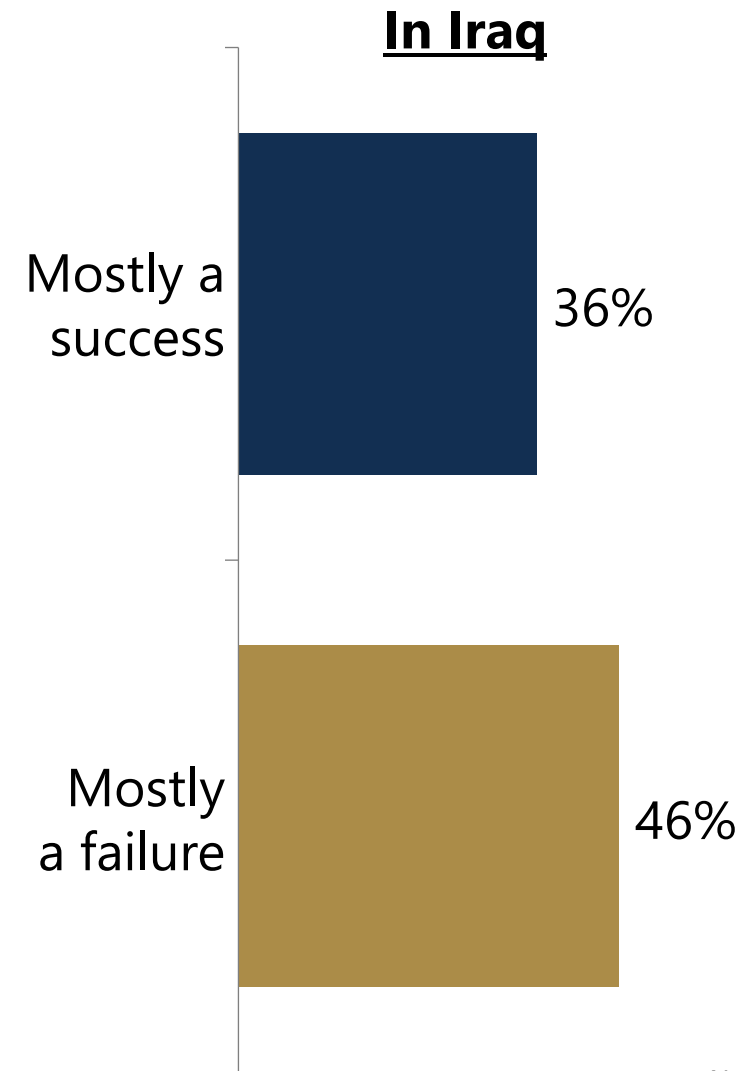
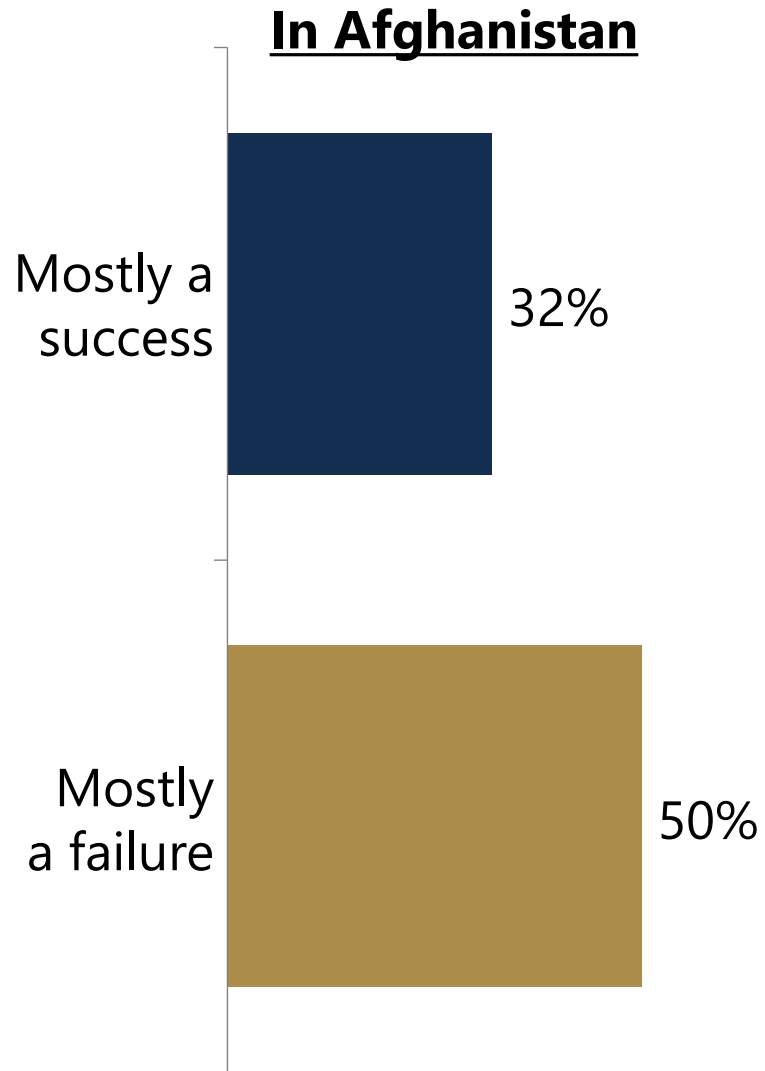


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q132. In Afghanistan, would you prefer that the U.S. AND Q134. In Iraq, would you prefer that the U.S.:



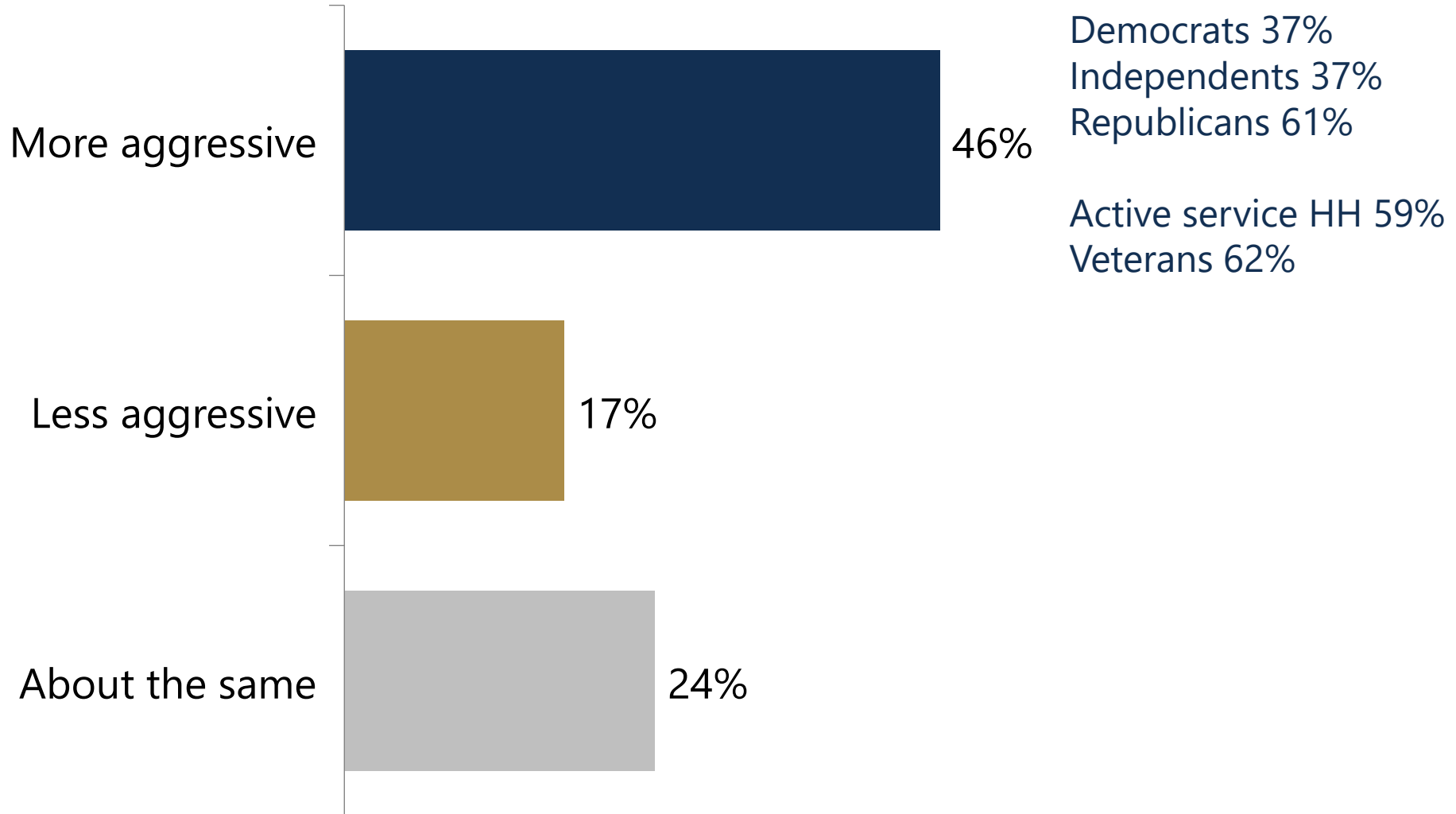
Assessments of both wars are negative, though views of Iraq efforts slightly better.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q133. Do you think the war in Afghanistan has been mostly a success or mostly a failure? AND Q135. Do you think the war in Iraq was mostly a success or mostly a failure?

Half want a more aggressive approach to Iran, with Republicans particularly hawkish.



Note: Remainder Not sure

Q136. When it comes to Iran, would you prefer that the Biden administration be more aggressive, less aggressive, or keep things about the same?

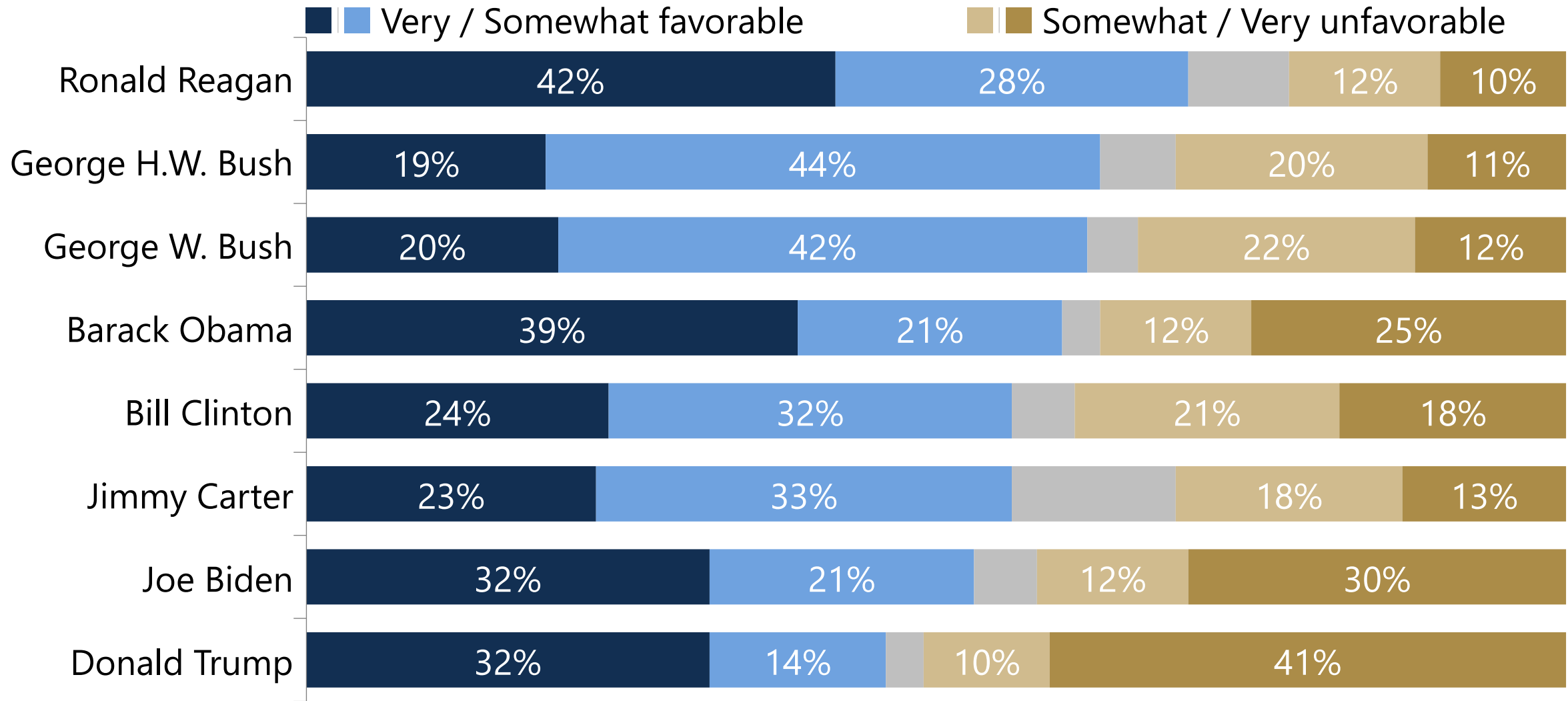


EVALUATIONS OF PRESIDENTS





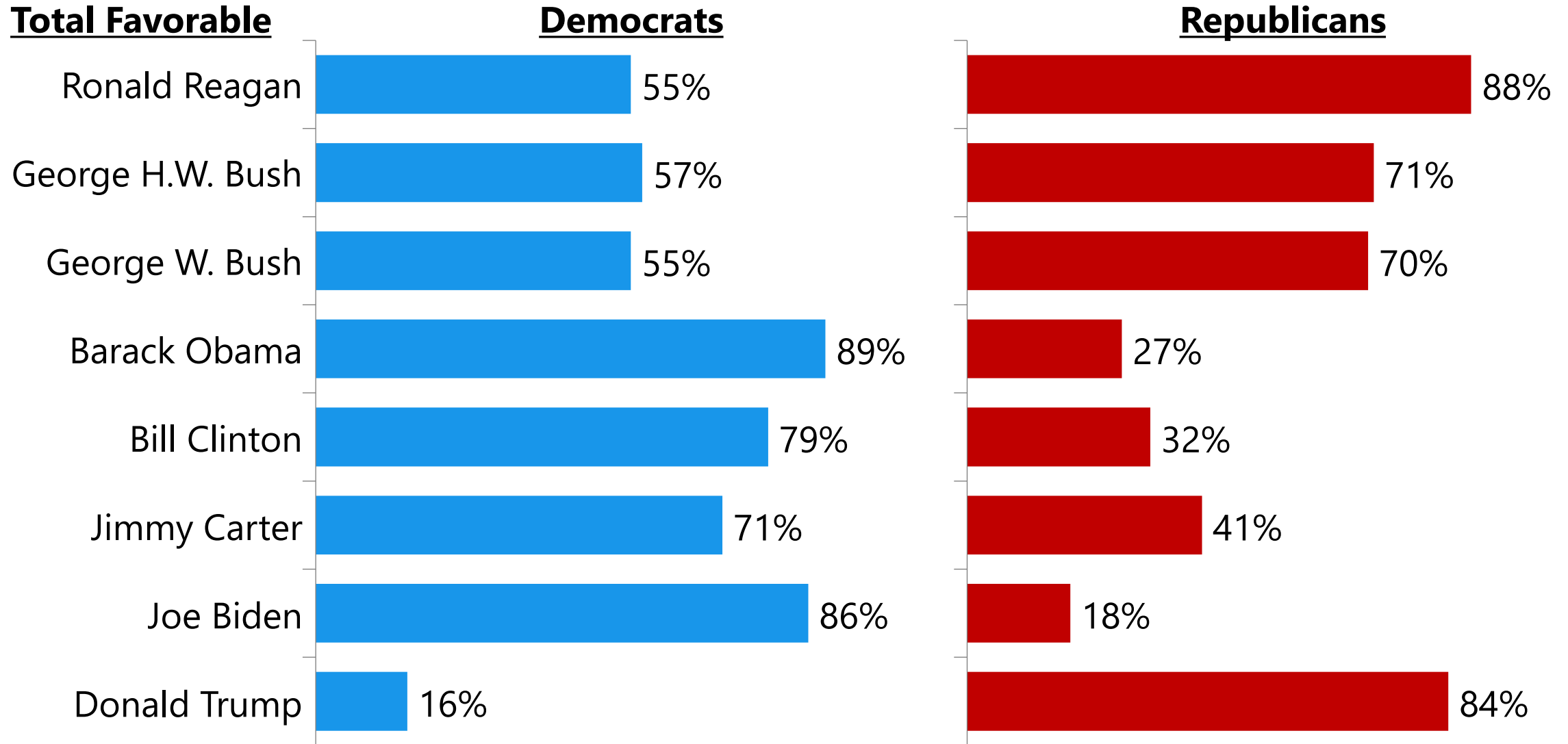
Reagan viewed most favorably among recent presidents.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q137-Q144. Thinking now about recent presidents, please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of each one I mention.

Reagan viewed favorably by a majority of voters in both parties.



Q137-Q144. Thinking now about recent presidents, please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of each one I mention.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
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