



Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute

2019 National Defense Survey *Executive Summary*



Prepared by Beacon Research and Shaw & Company Research, November 2019



About the Survey

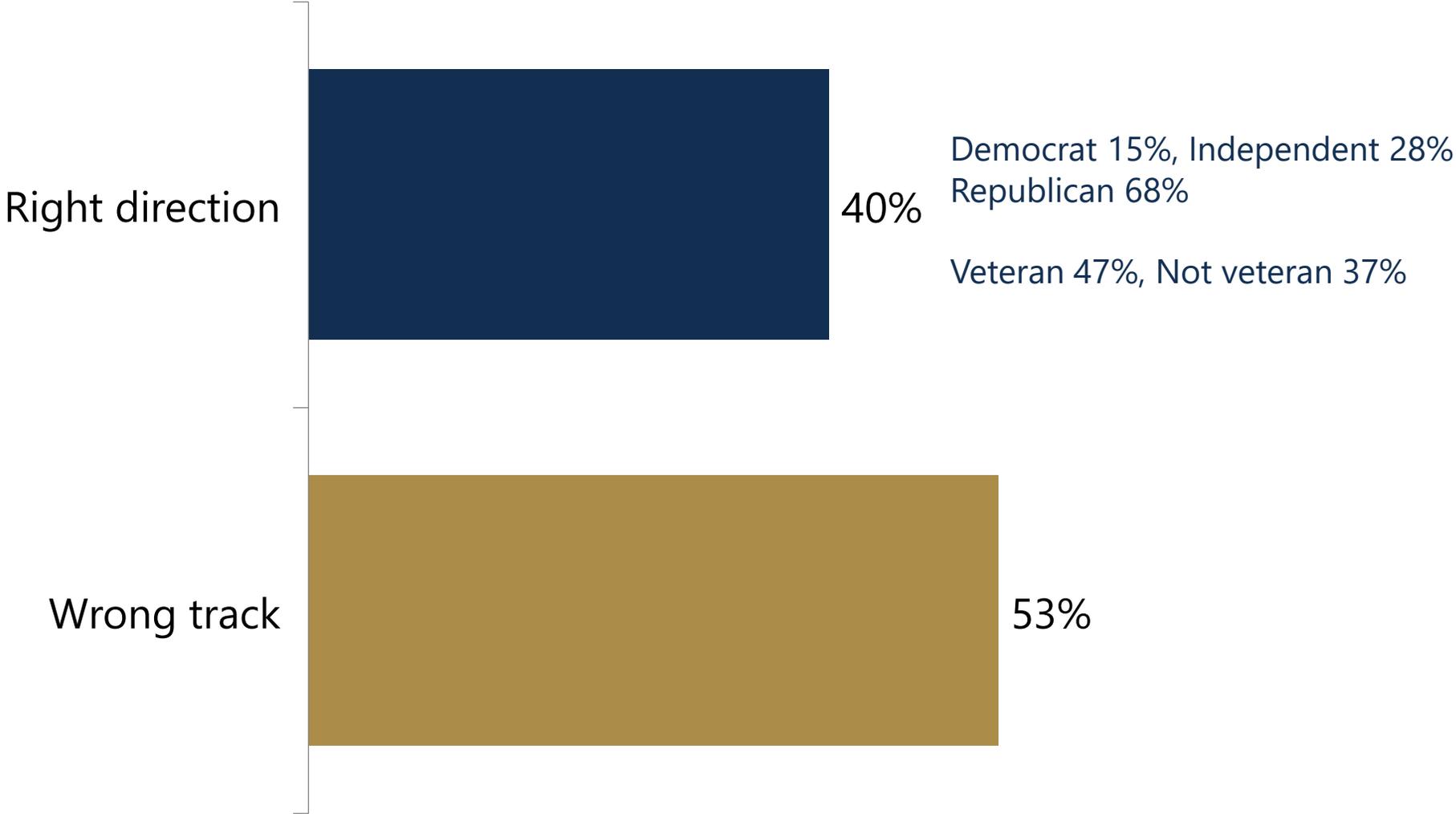
Mode	Telephone survey conducted by trained professional interviewers from a central, monitored location. Respondents interviewed on landlines (50%) and cellphones (50%).
Sample	1,003 U.S. Adults.
Dates	October 24-30, 2019.
Weights	Slight weights were applied to ensure the sample accurately reflects the demographic profile of the U.S. population.
Margin of Error	±3% at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample; the margin of error for subgroups is higher.
Research Partnership	 The logos for the research partners are displayed side-by-side. On the left is the logo for SHAW & Company research, which includes a blue square with a white grid pattern and the text "SHAW & Company research". On the right is the logo for BEACON RESEARCH, which features the word "BEACON" in a large, bold, blue font with a blue flame-like shape above the letter "O", and the word "RESEARCH" in a smaller, blue, spaced-out font below it.
Note	Some data may not add to 100% due to rounding.



MOOD OF THE COUNTRY



Majority of Americans continue to think the country is heading in the wrong direction.



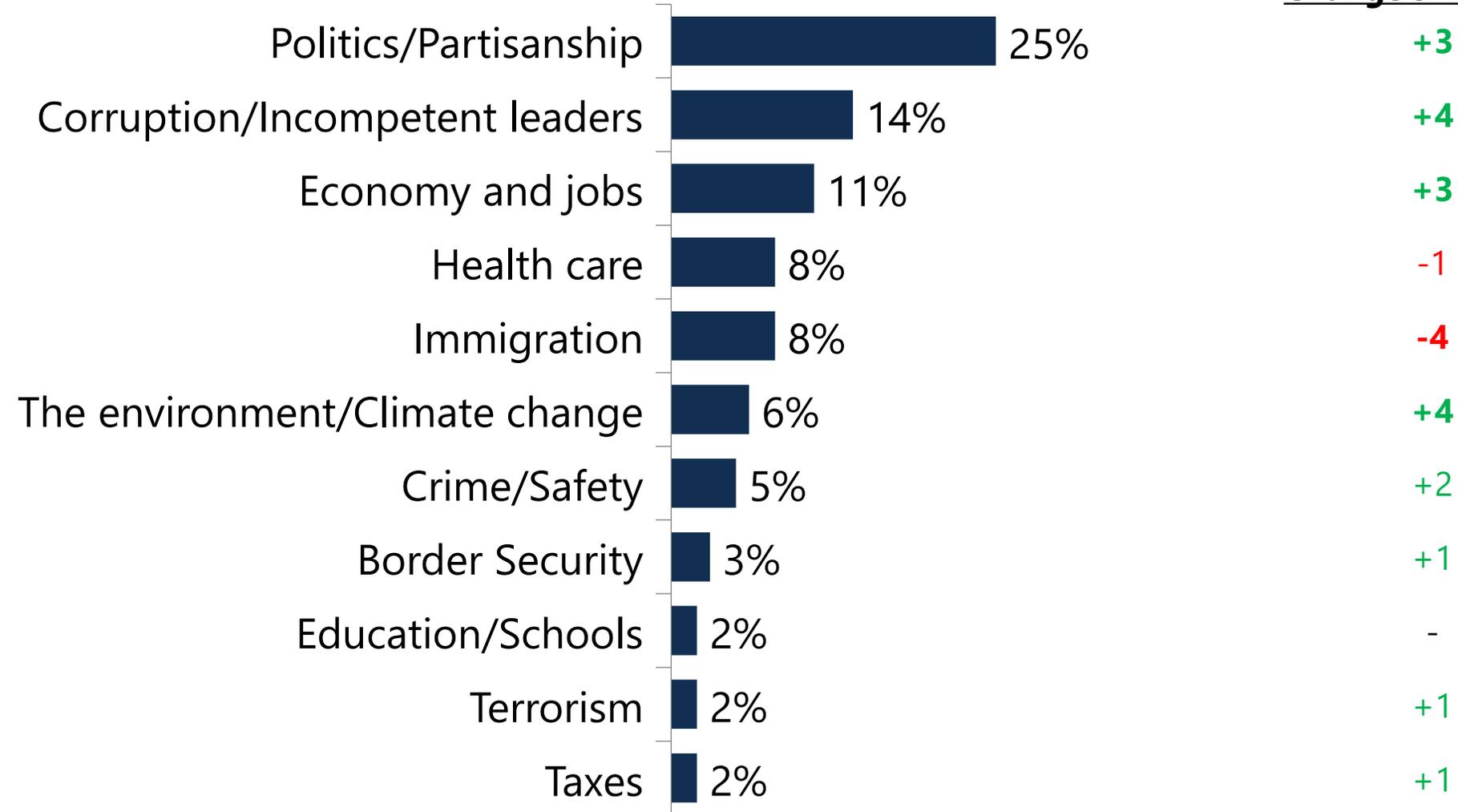
Note: Remainder Don't know

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

Partisanship and corruption increasingly seen as the top problems facing the country.



Change since 2018



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 ENDED].

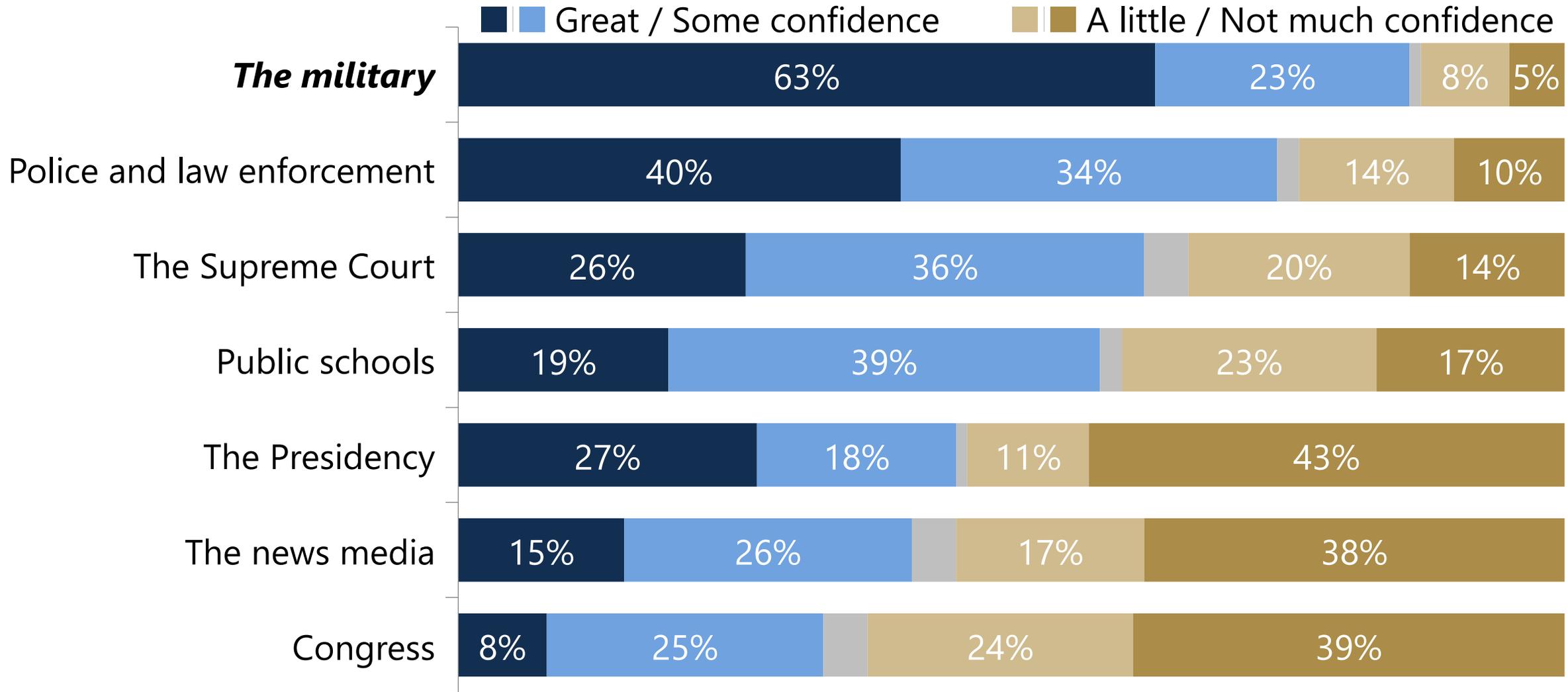


CONFIDENCE IN THE MILITARY AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS





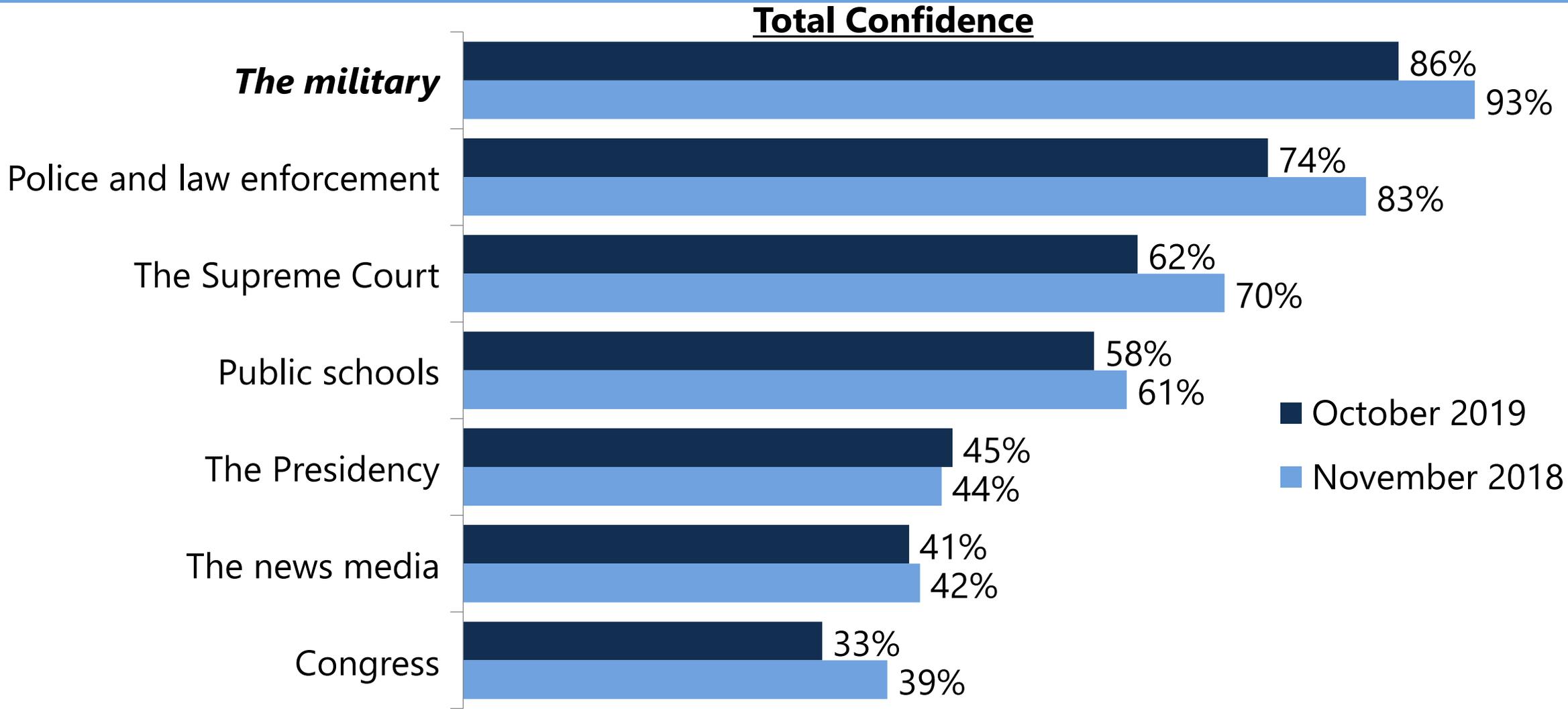
The military is highly trusted; Congress is not.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q4 – Q10: For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them?

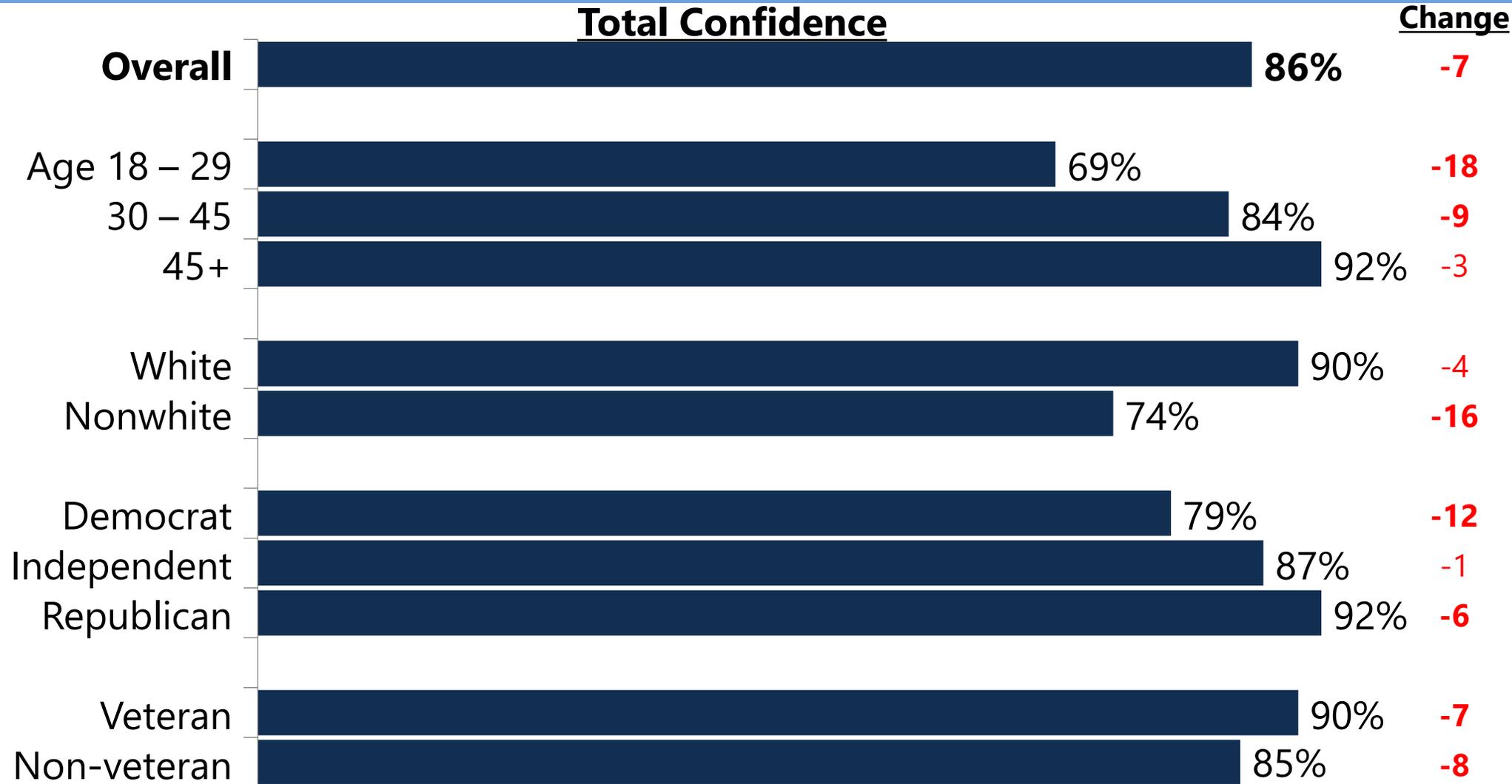
Confidence in most institutions, including the military, has eroded somewhat since last year.



Q4 – Q10: For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them?

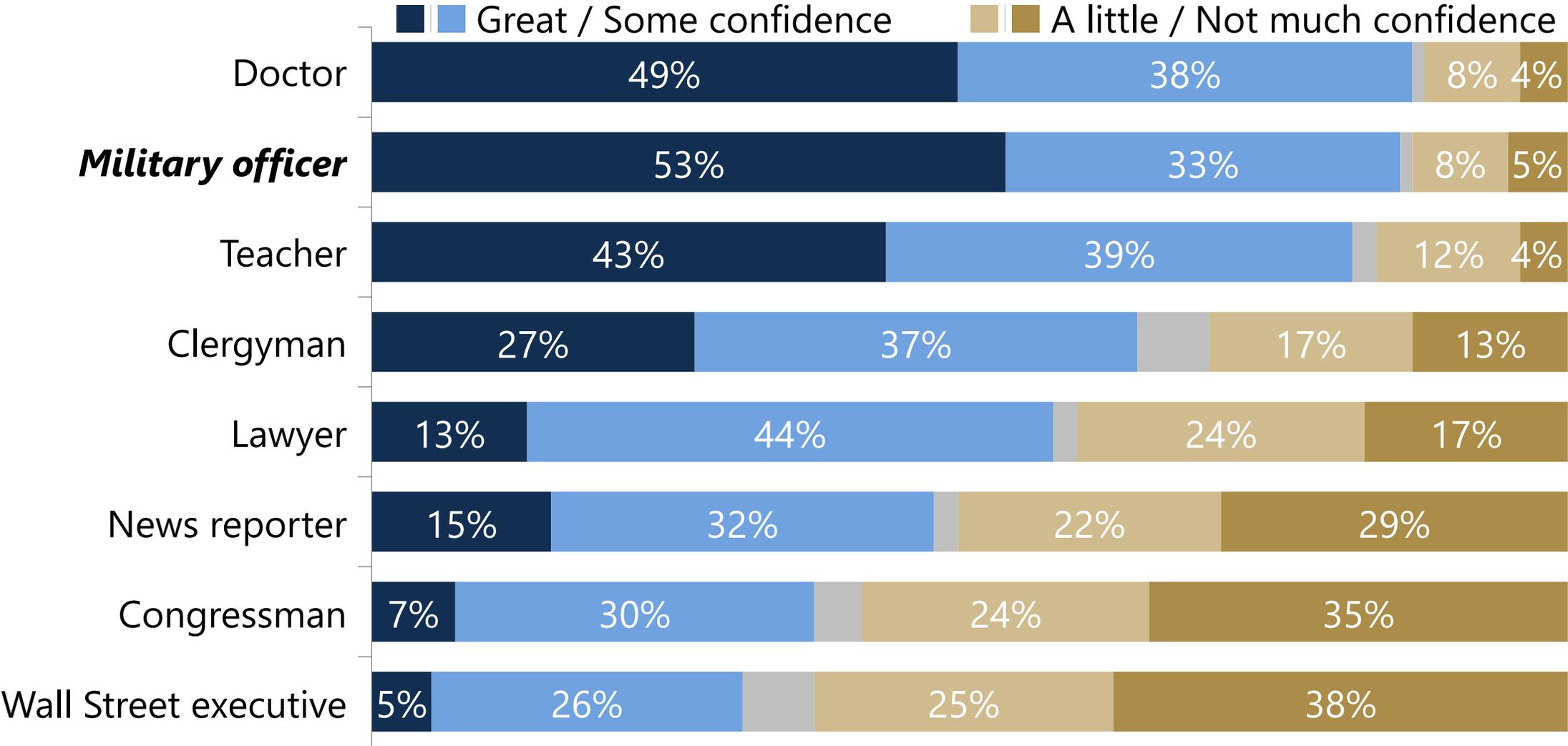


Loss in confidence in military largest among young voters, communities of color.



Q8: For each of the following groups or institutions, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them? The military.

Military leaders inspire similar levels of confidence as doctors and teachers.

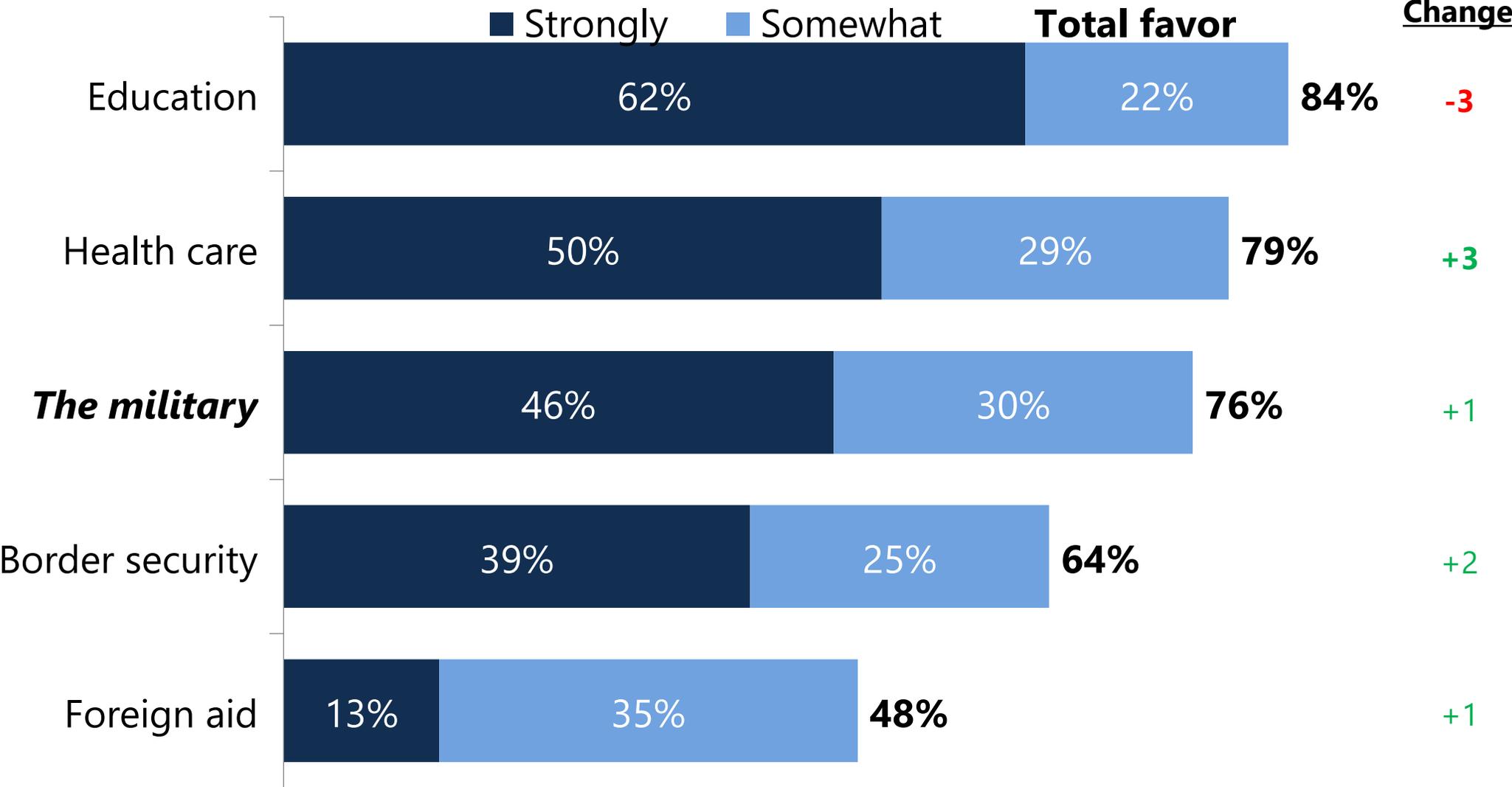


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q11 – Q18: What about specific types of people? For each of the following individuals, please tell us how much trust and confidence you have in them?



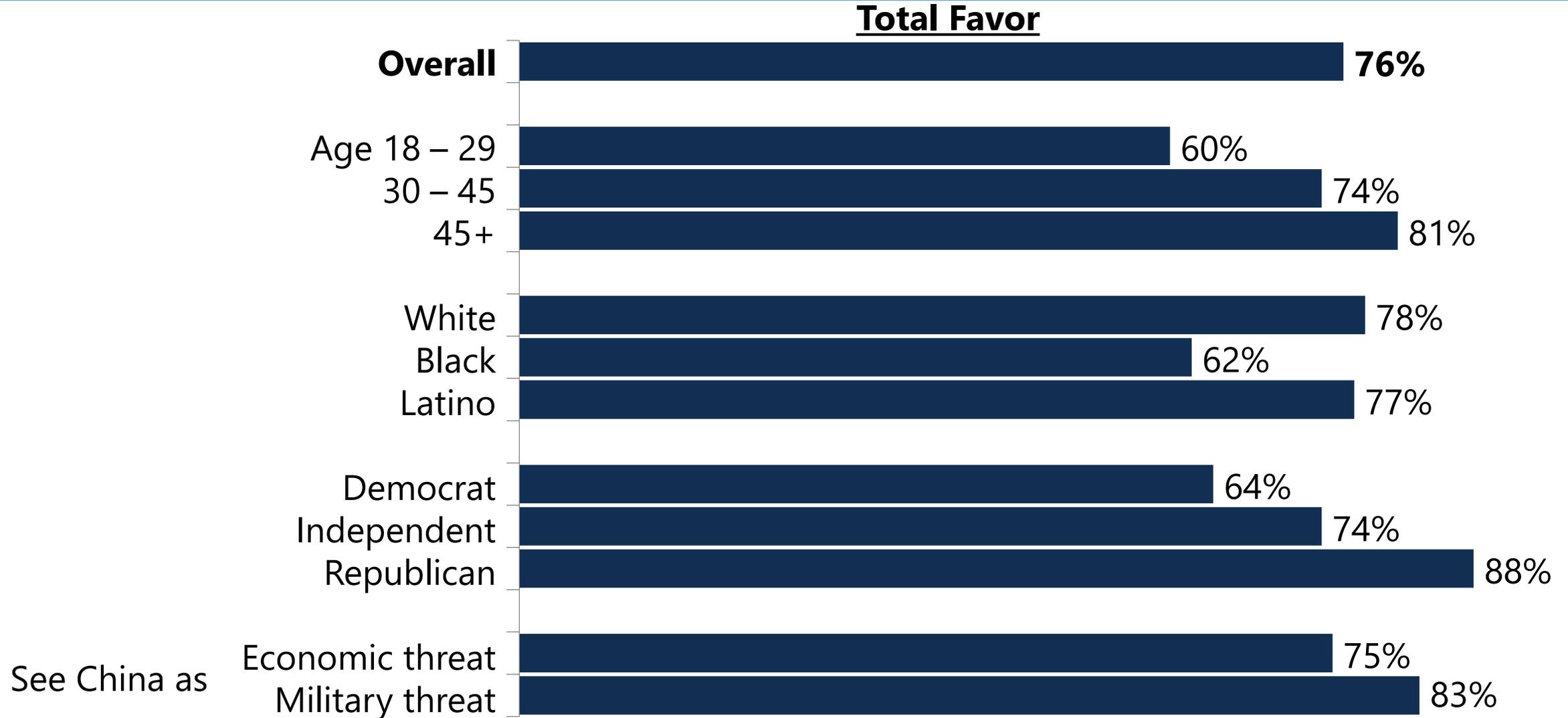
Three-quarters favor increased spending on the military.



Q19 – Q23: Please tell me if you favor or oppose increasing government spending in each of the following areas.

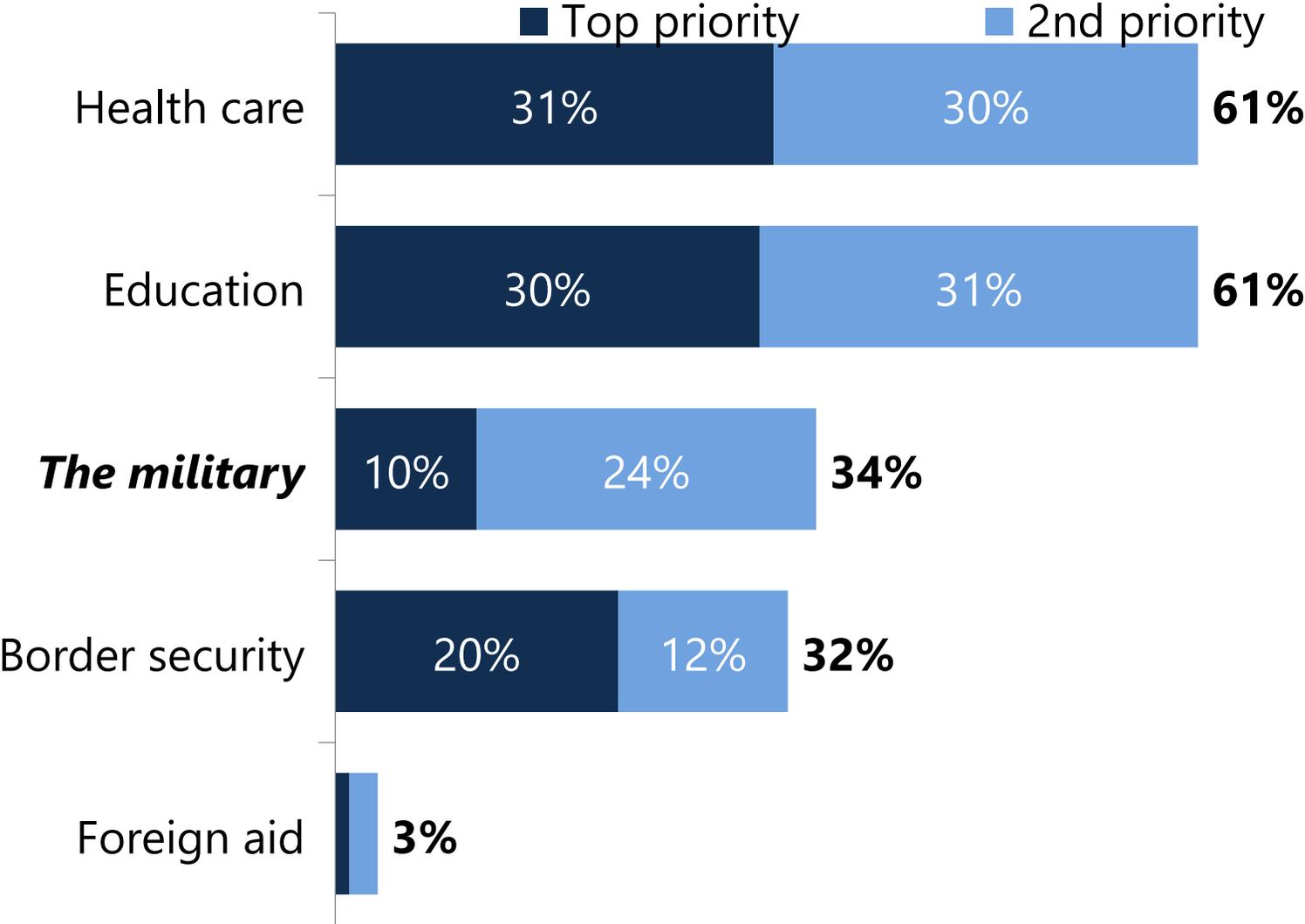


Older Americans and Republicans are most in favor of increasing government spending on the military.



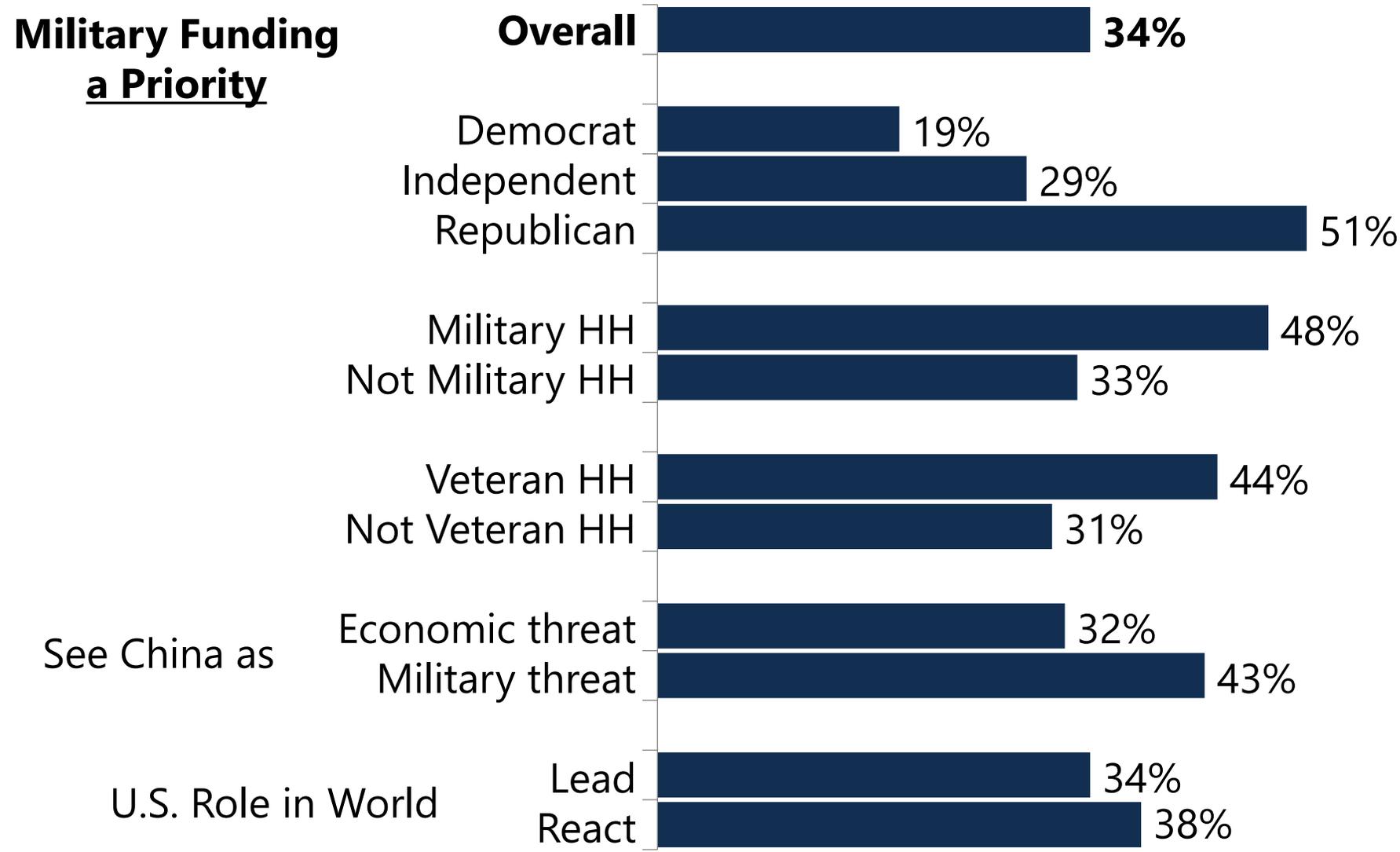
Q19: Please tell me if you favor or oppose increasing government spending in each of the following areas. The military.

Spending on healthcare and education are higher priorities than spending on the military



Q24: Of all the areas I just mentioned, which one should be the highest priority for increased funding?
AND Q25: And which should be the next-highest priority?

Republicans, military and veteran households think military spending should be a greater priority.



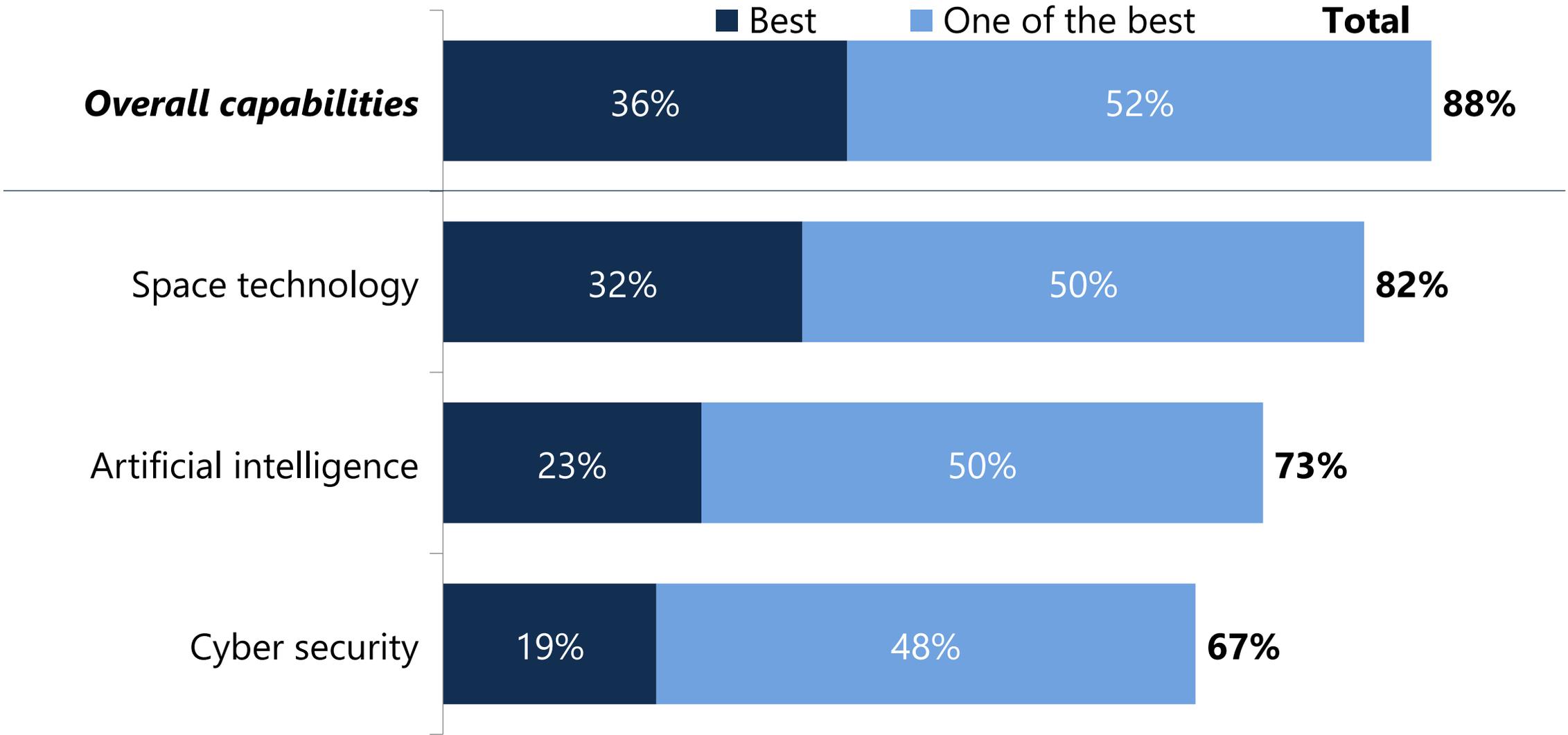
Q24: Of all the areas I just mentioned, which one should be the highest priority for increased funding?
AND Q25: And which should be the next-highest priority?



MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

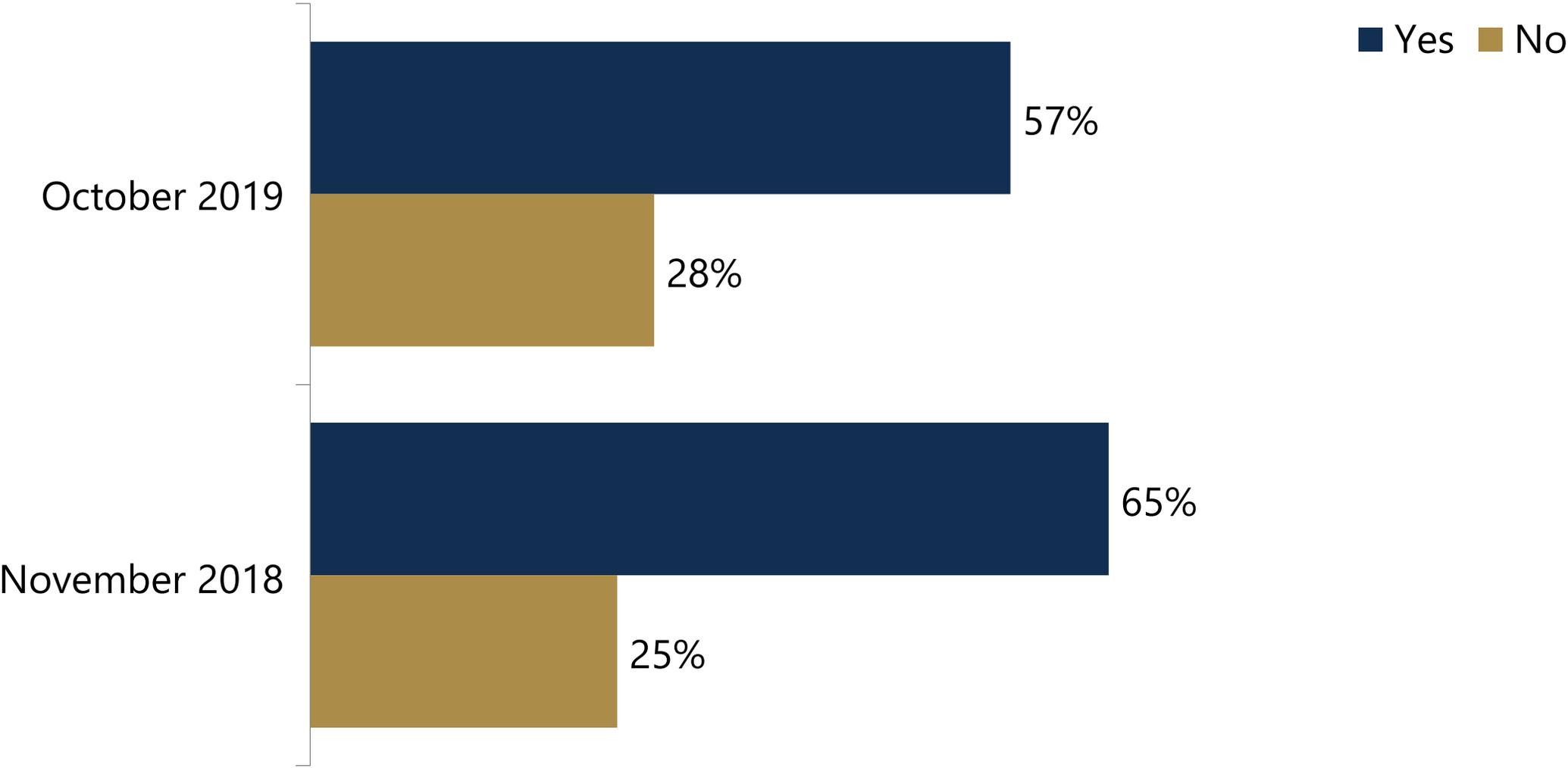


US military is seen as one of the best in the world, but not the unquestioned leader.



Q26 – Q29: 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?

Majority remains confident the US would prevail in war with a nuclear power.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q67: Do you think the U.S. would win a war with a nuclear power?

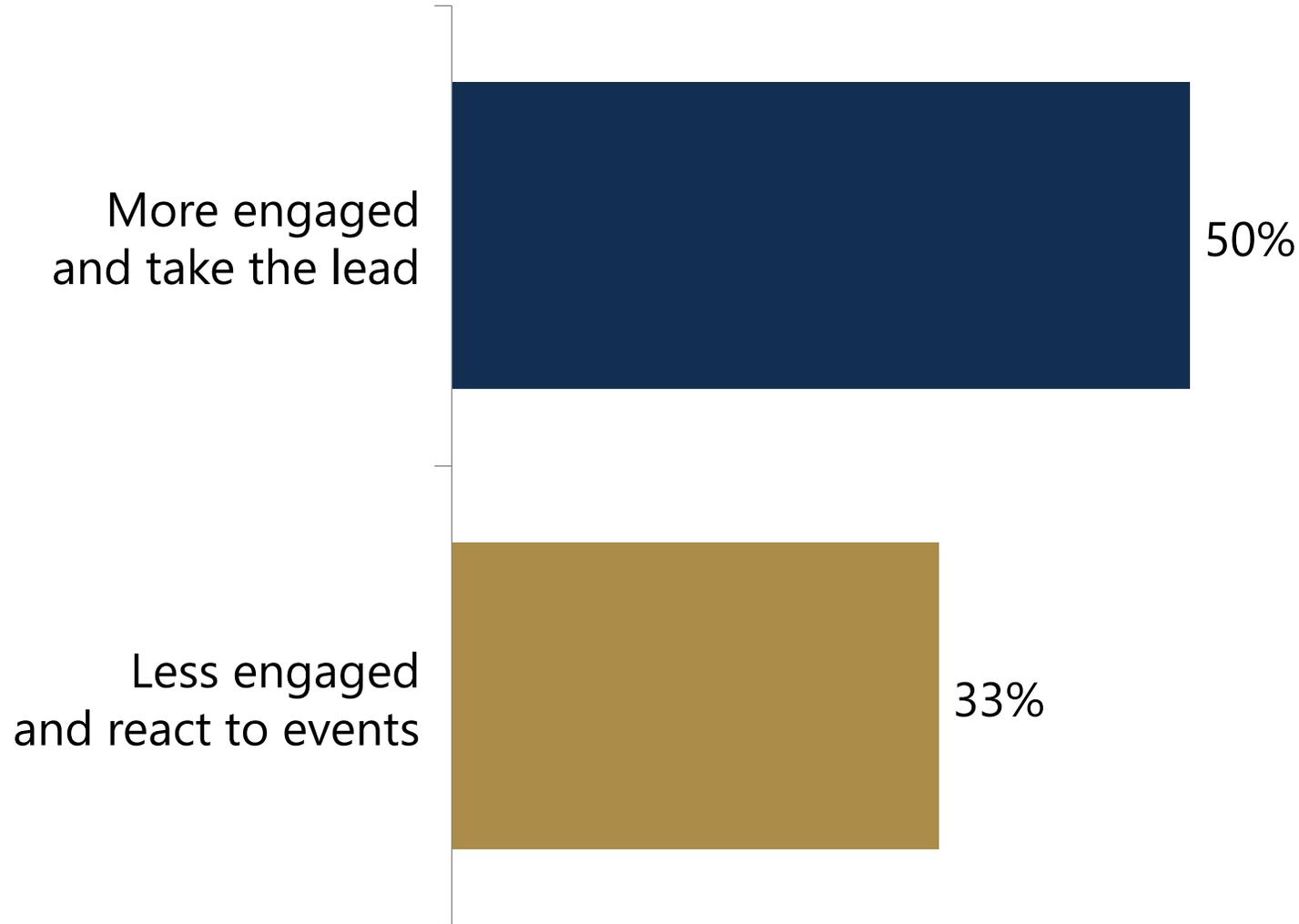


ISOLATIONISM Vs ENGAGEMENT





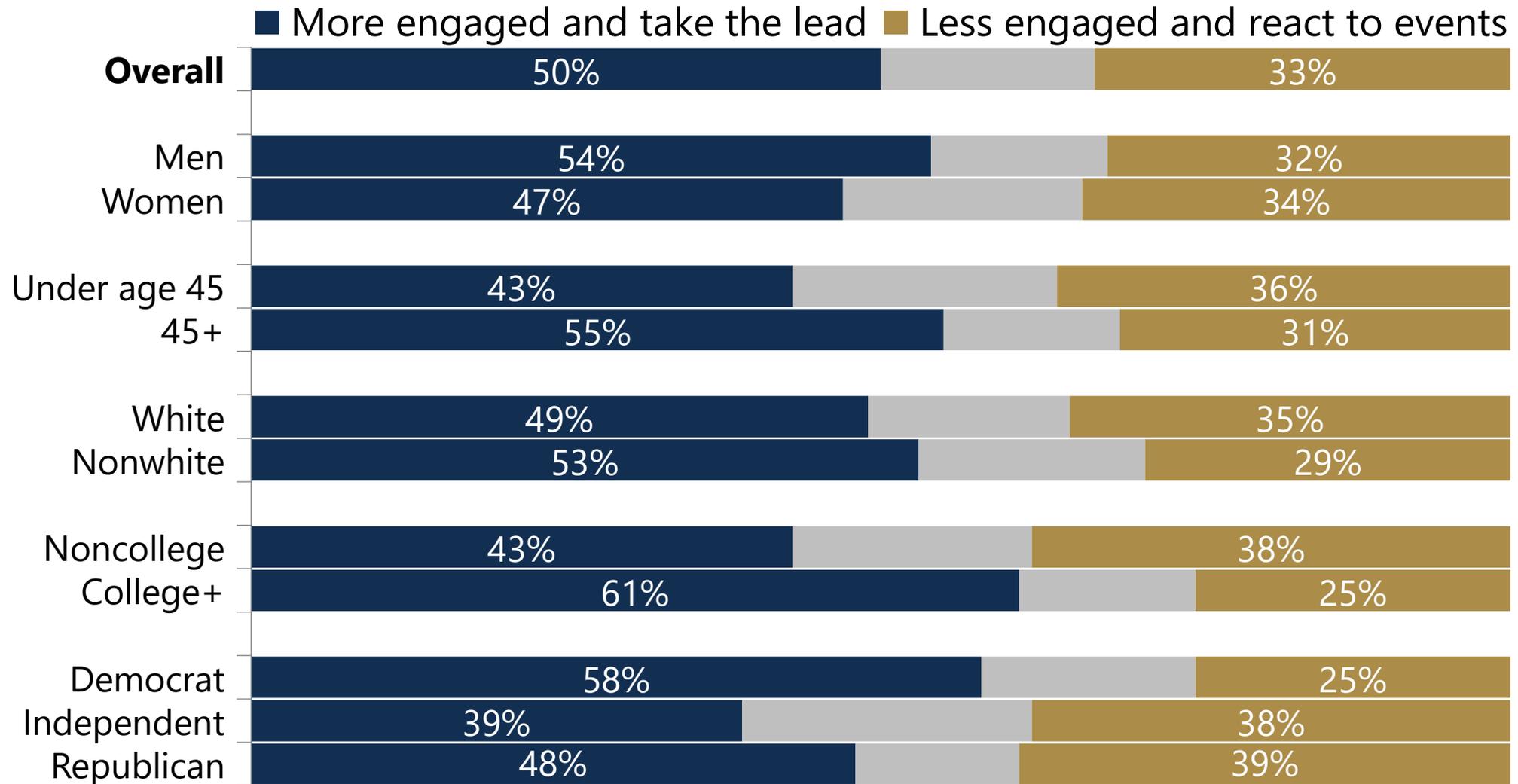
Engaged leadership in international events is preferred over a less engaged, reactive approach.



Note: Remainder Depends / Don't know

Q54A: 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?

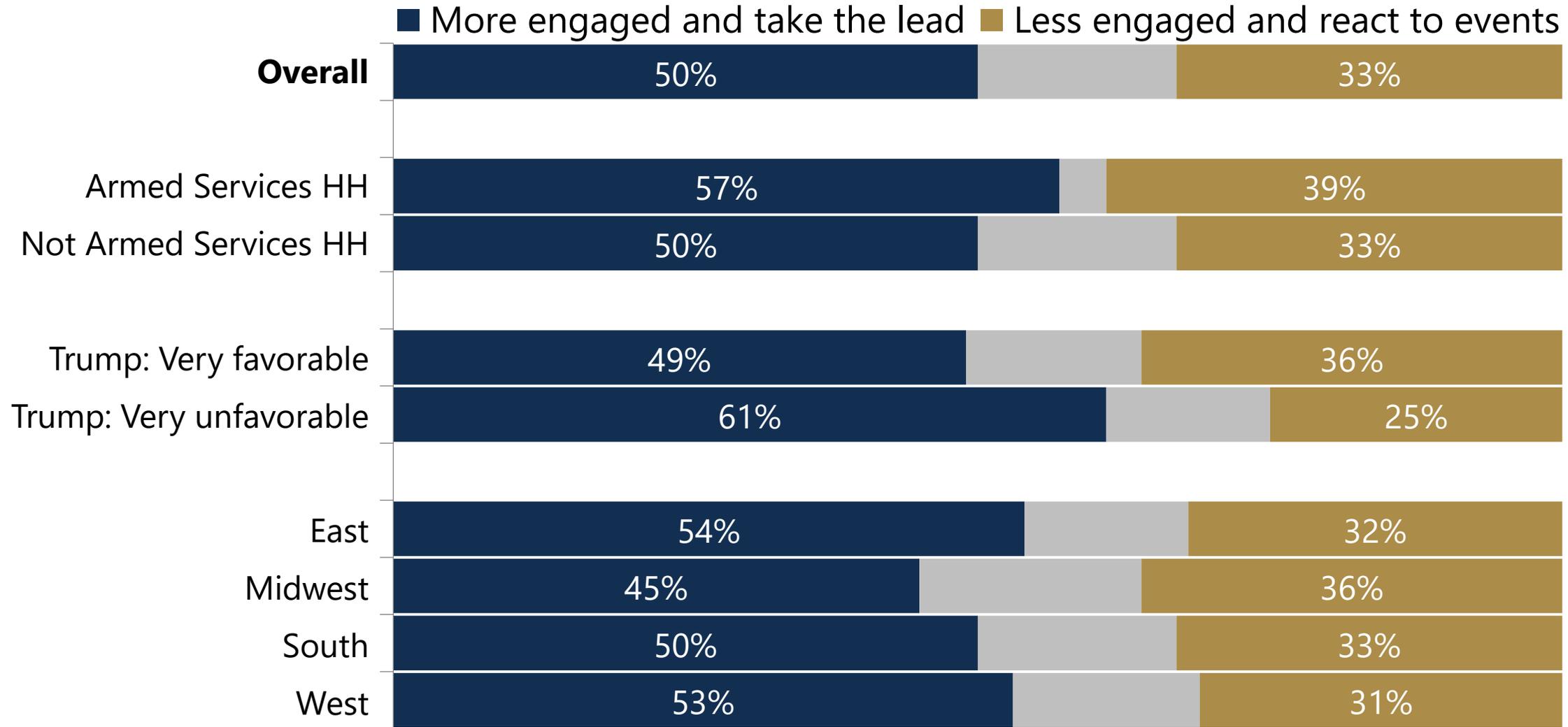
Men, the college-educated, and those over age 45 are most likely to prefer an engaged foreign policy posture.



Note: Remainder Depends / Don't know

Q54A: 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?

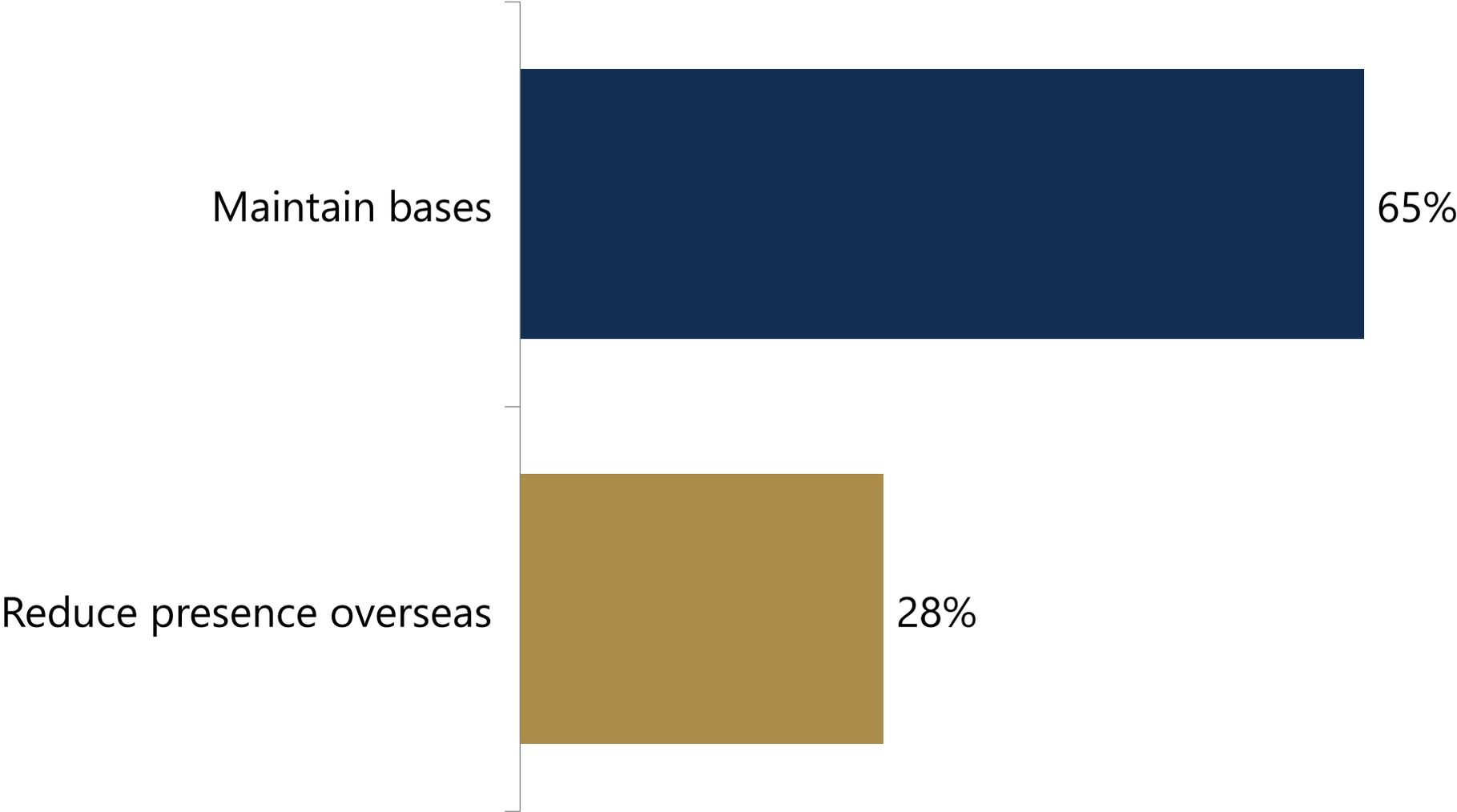
Even those with a very favorable view of the President prefer an engaged stance (albeit by a narrower margin).



Note: Remainder Depends / Don't know

Q54A: 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?

Two-thirds think the US should maintain military bases abroad.

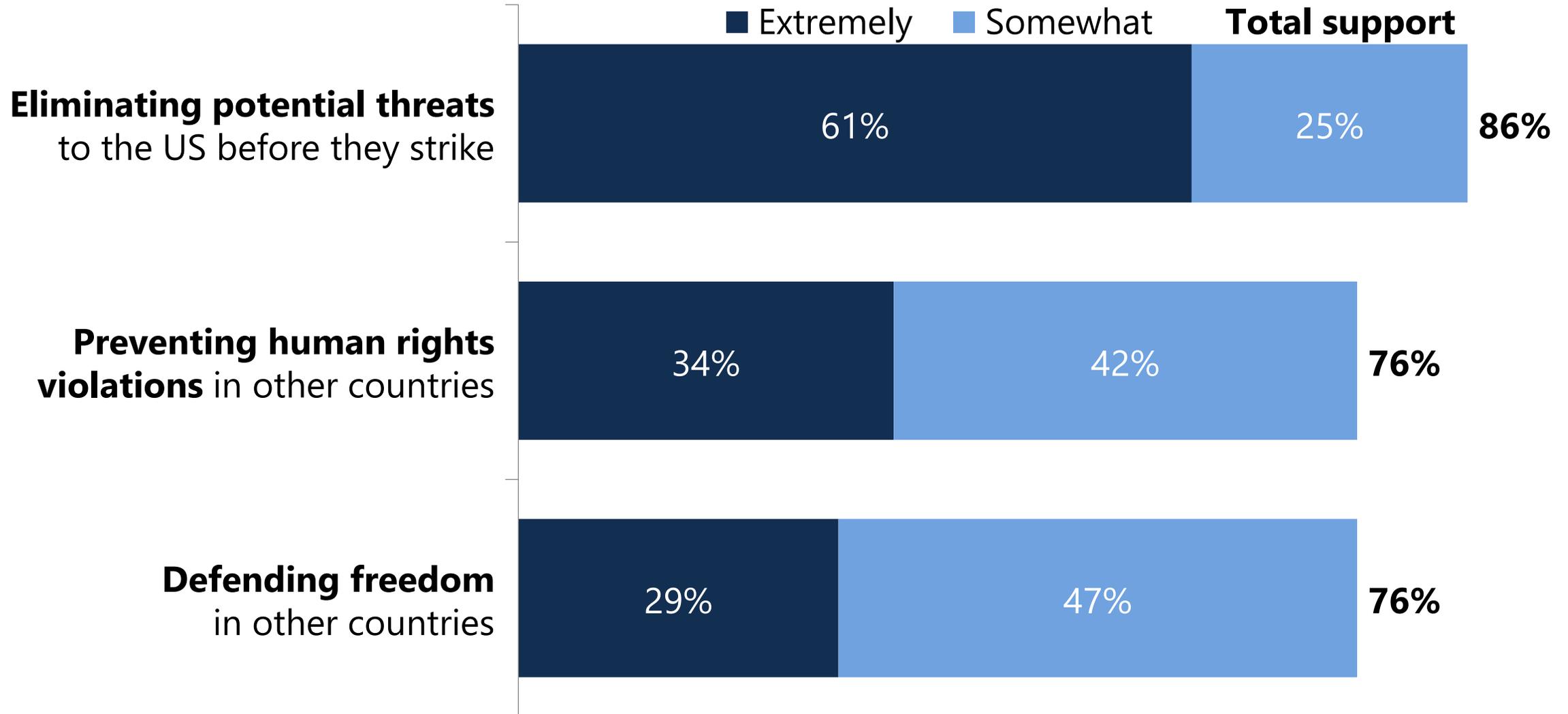


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q55: 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?



Large majorities support using US military to eliminate threats, protect human rights, and defend freedom.



Q56 – Q58: In general, how likely are you to support the use of the US military in each of the following situations?

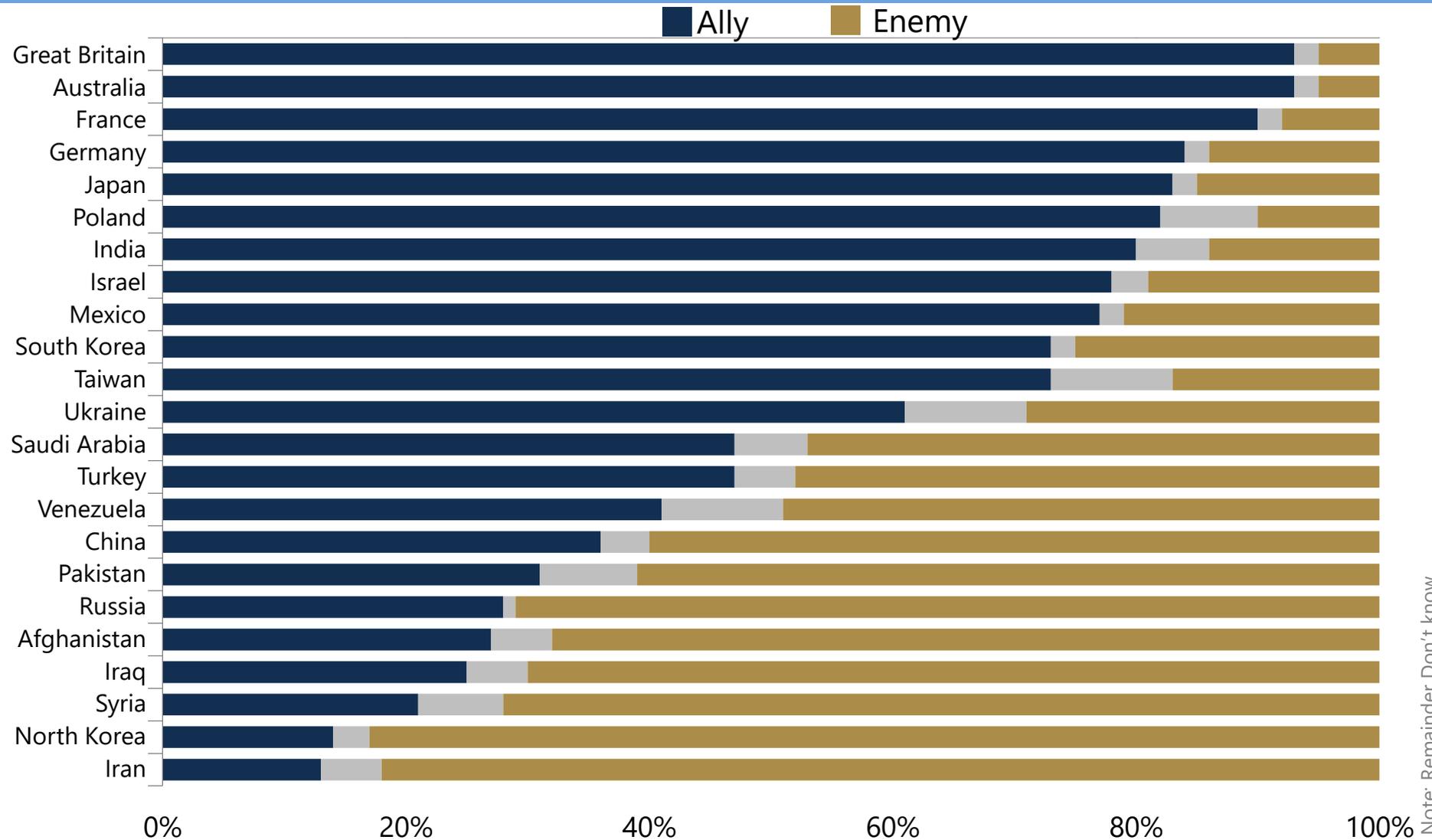


ASSESSMENTS OF ALLIES AND ENEMIES





Overview of Allies and Enemies

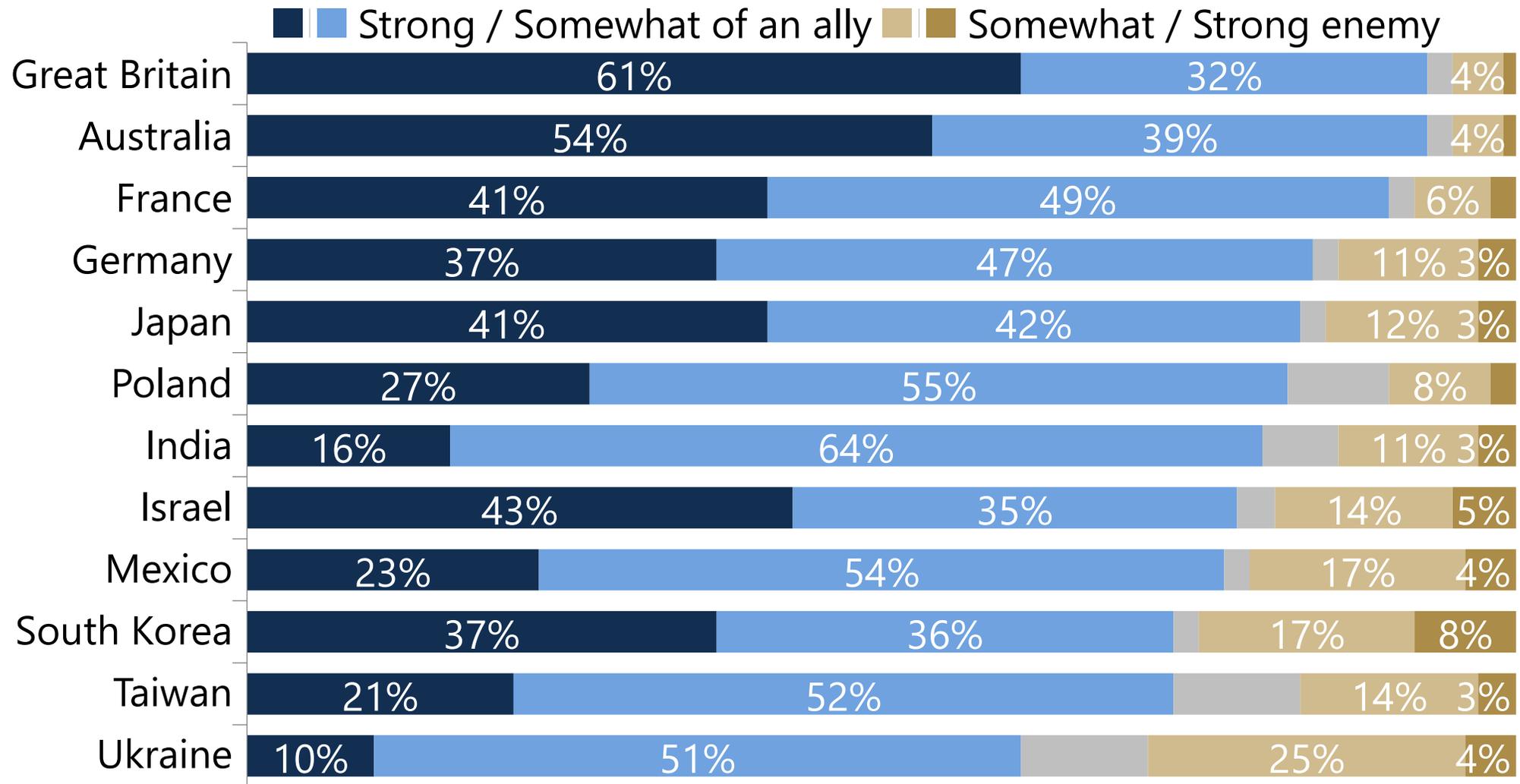


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q31 – Q53: 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?



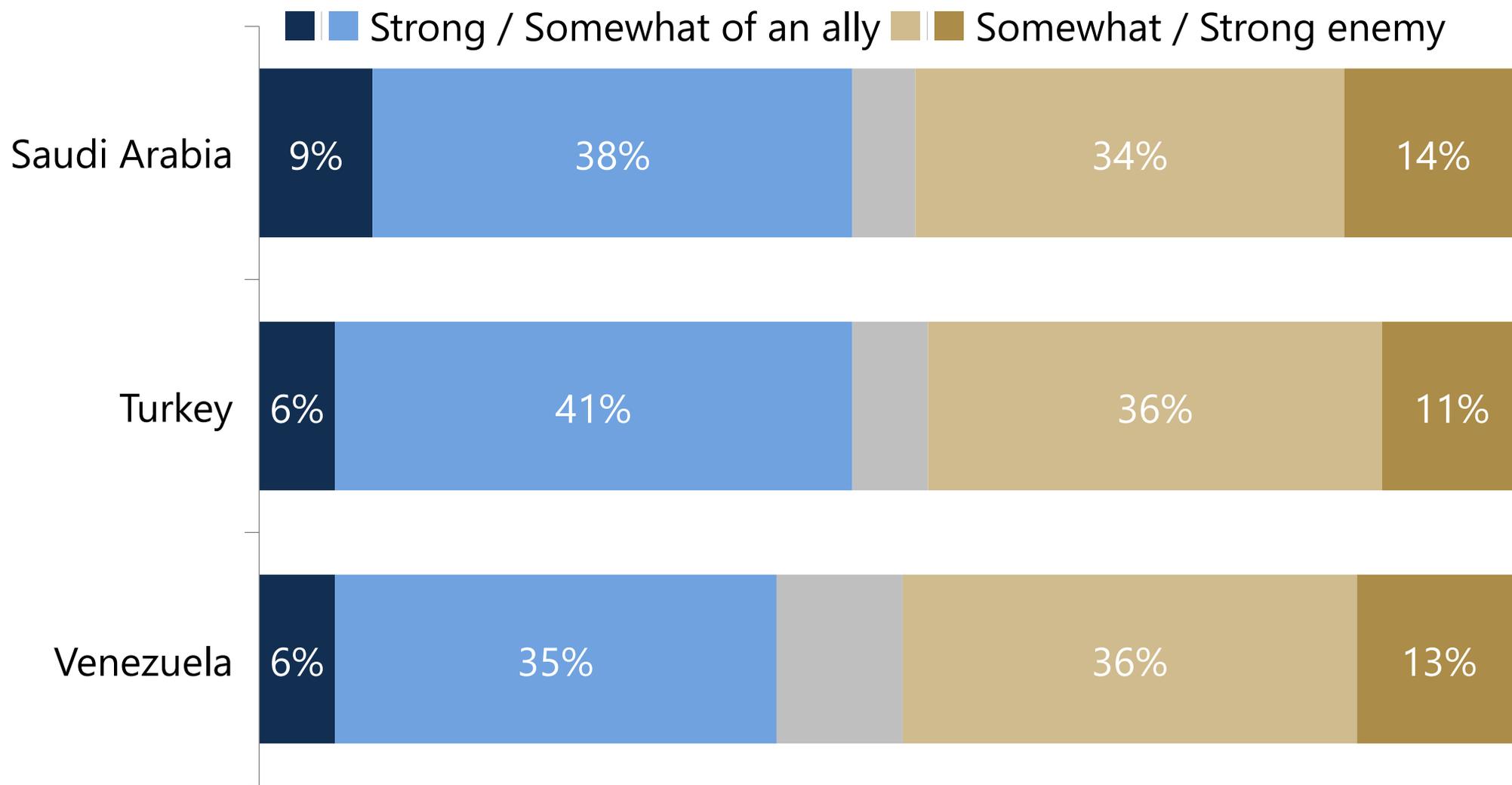
Allies: Britain and Australia lead the pack.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q31 – Q53: 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?

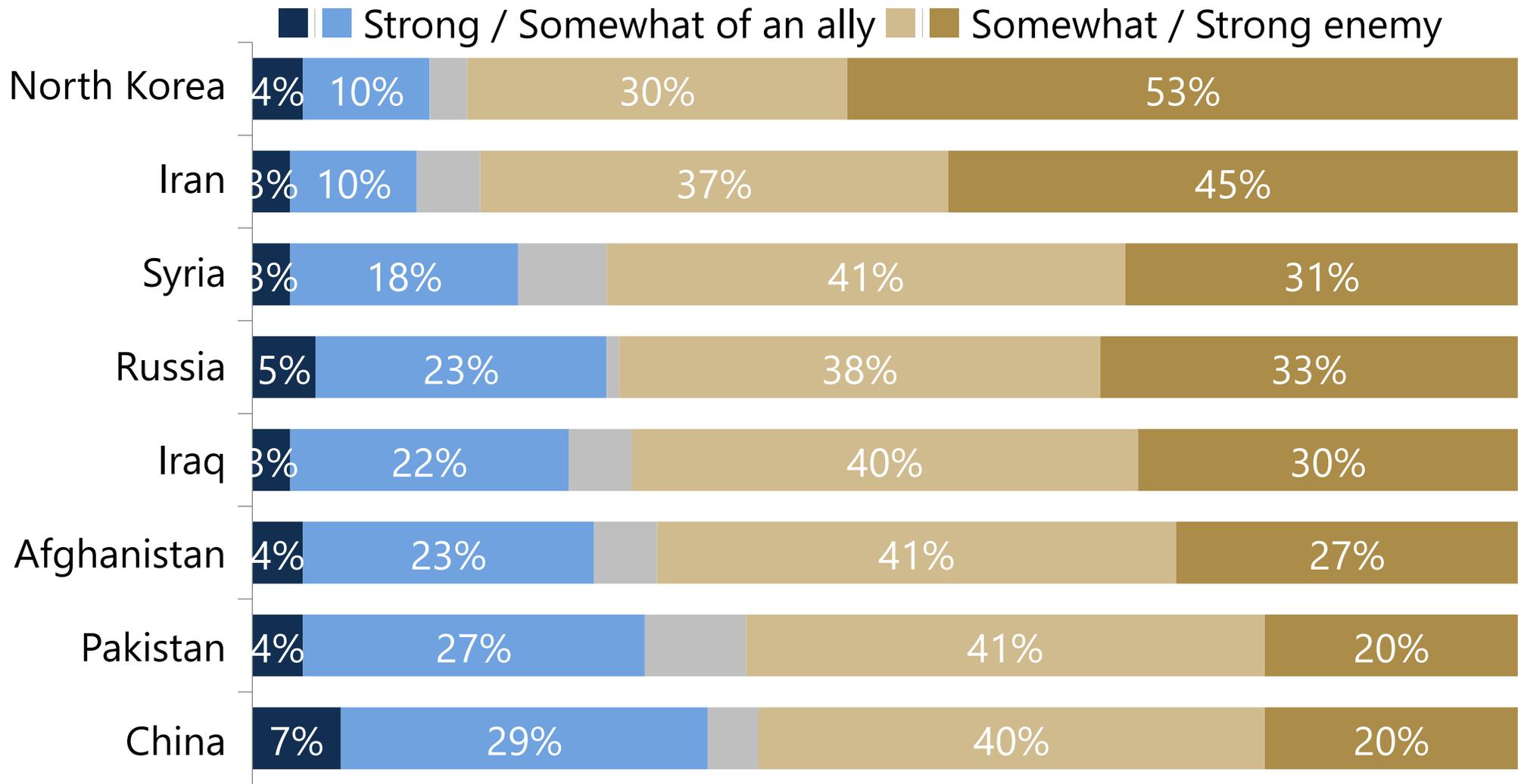
Friends or Foes? Mixed views of partners in the Middle East and Venezuela.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q31 – Q53: 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 stand out as key adversaries; growing concern of Russia and Syria.

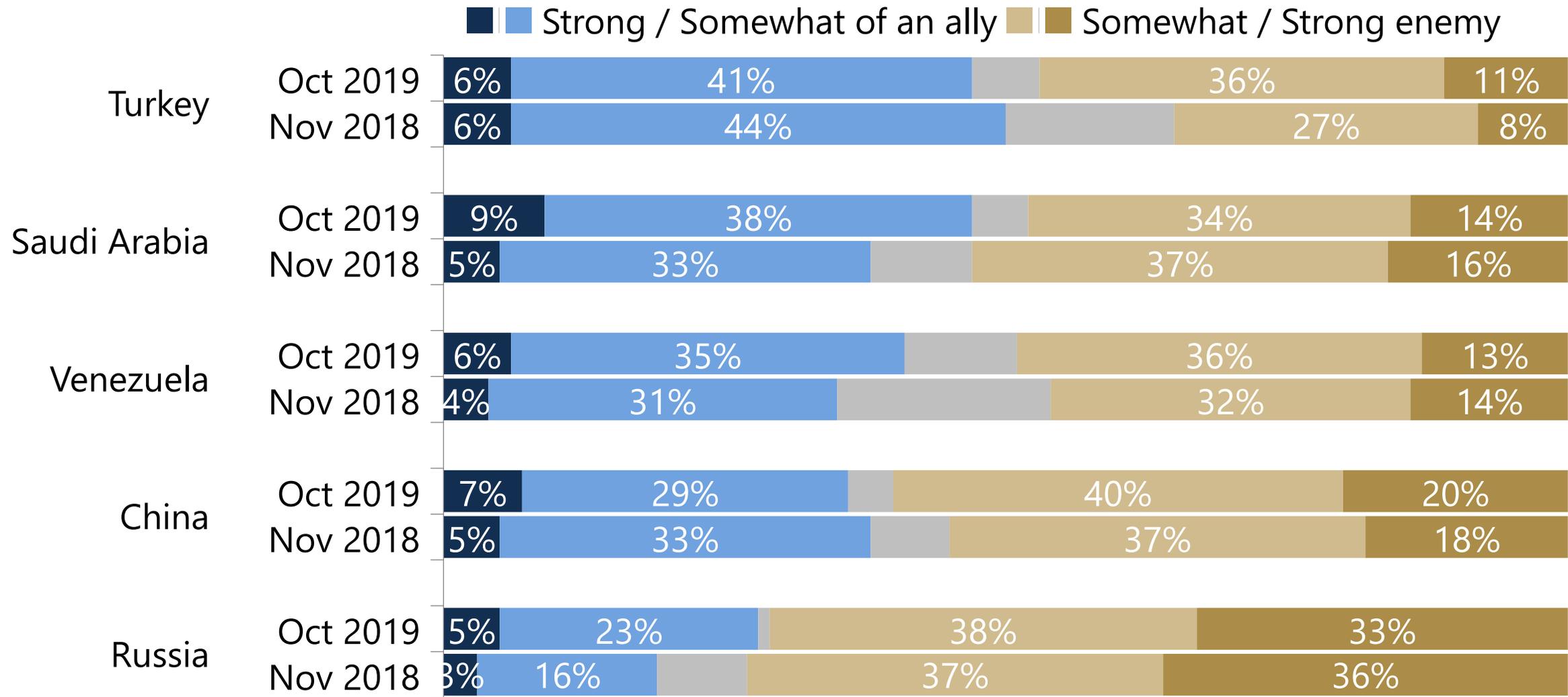


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q31 – Q53: 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?



Largest changes since 2018.

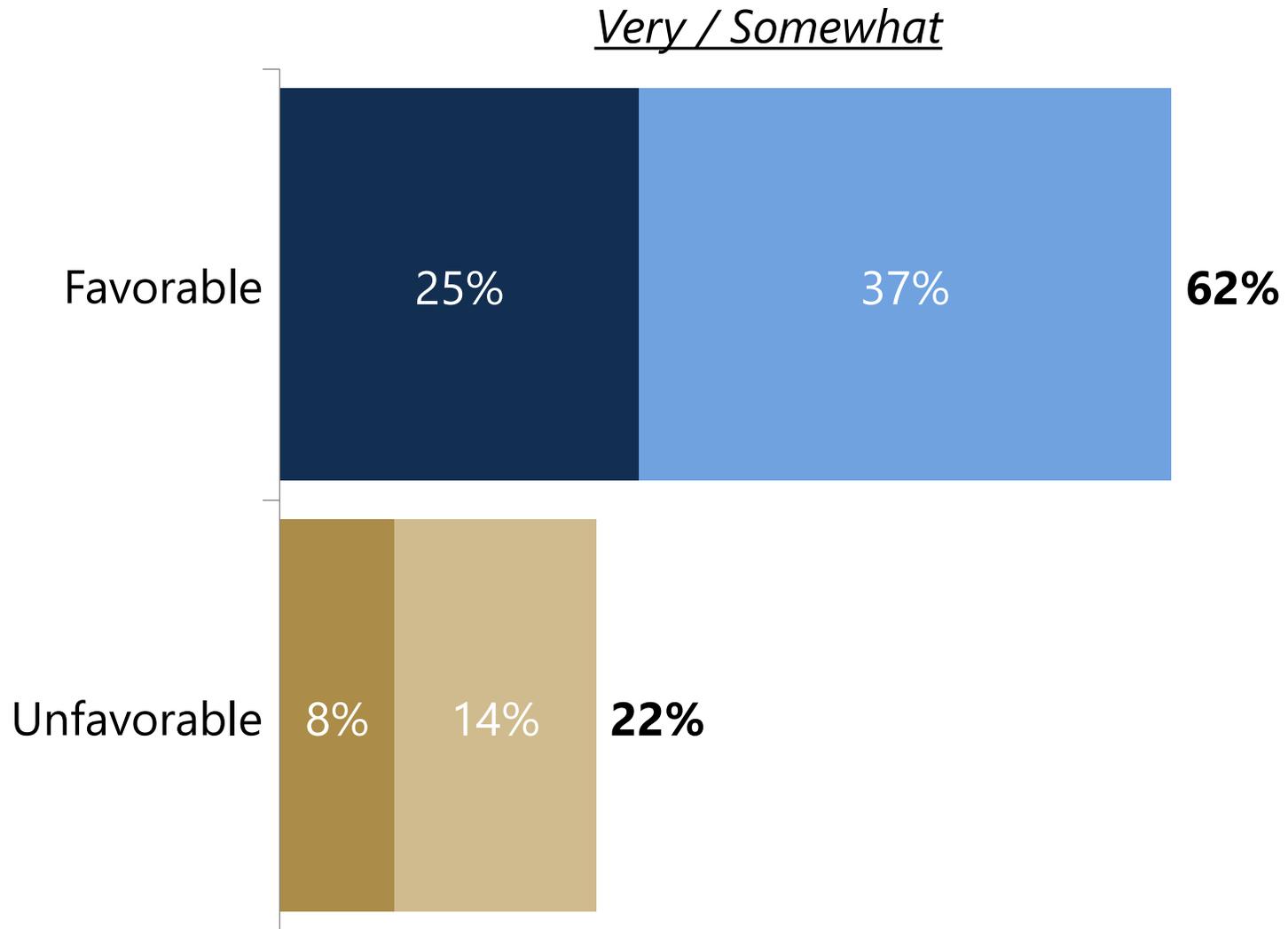


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q31 – Q53: 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?



Wide majorities favorable towards NATO.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q89: Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable view of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also known as NATO?

Majorities think NATO and Pacific Rim allies should do more.



NATO allies

They do their fair share

27%

They should do more

58%

Pacific Rim allies

They do their fair share

34%

They should do more

51%

Note: Remainder Don't know

Q90: Do you think our NATO allies do their fair share or should they do more? AND

Q91: Do you think our allies on the Pacific Rim, including Australia, Japan, and South Korea do their fair share or should they do more?

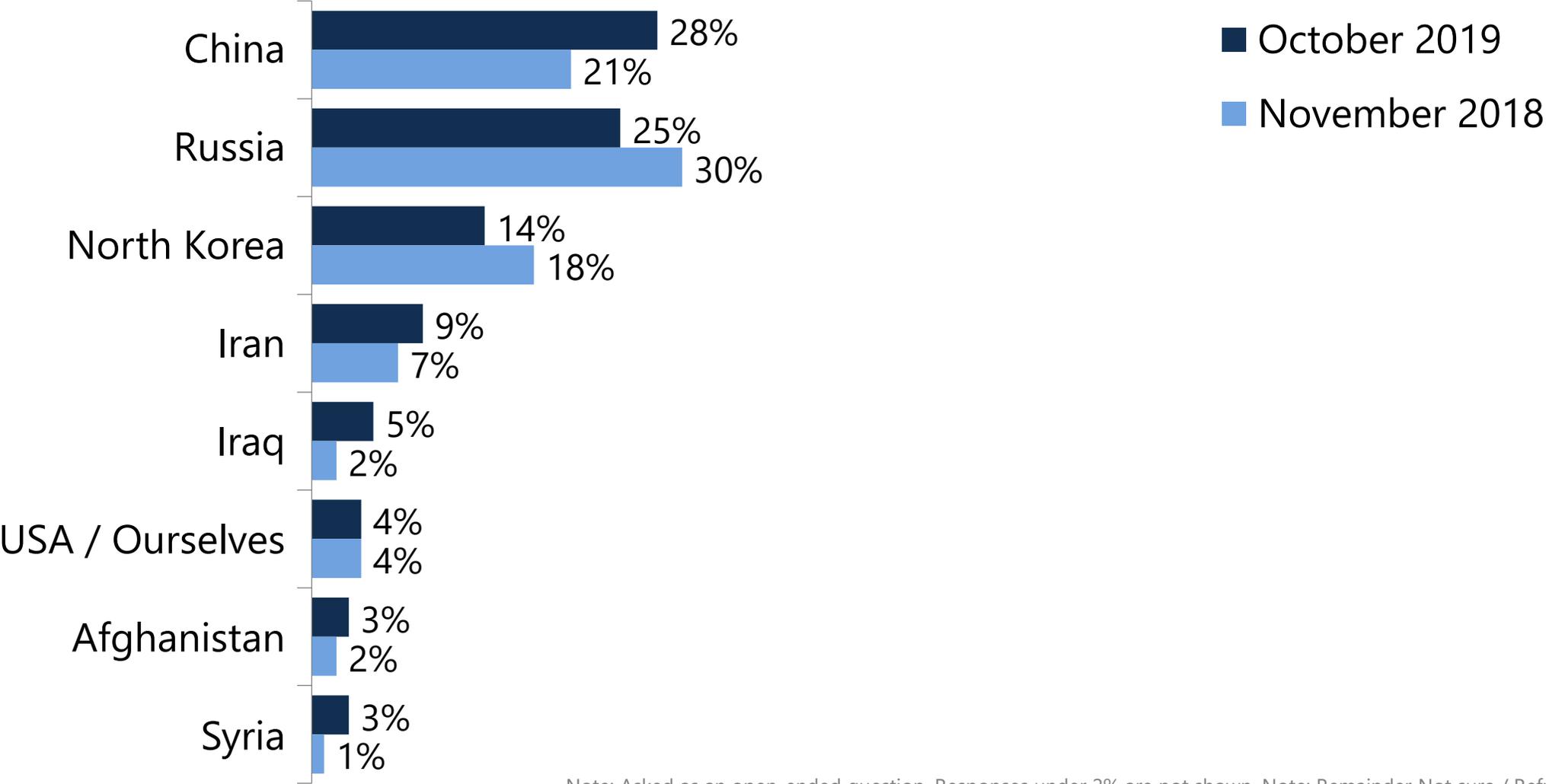


PERCEIVED CHALLENGES & THREATS





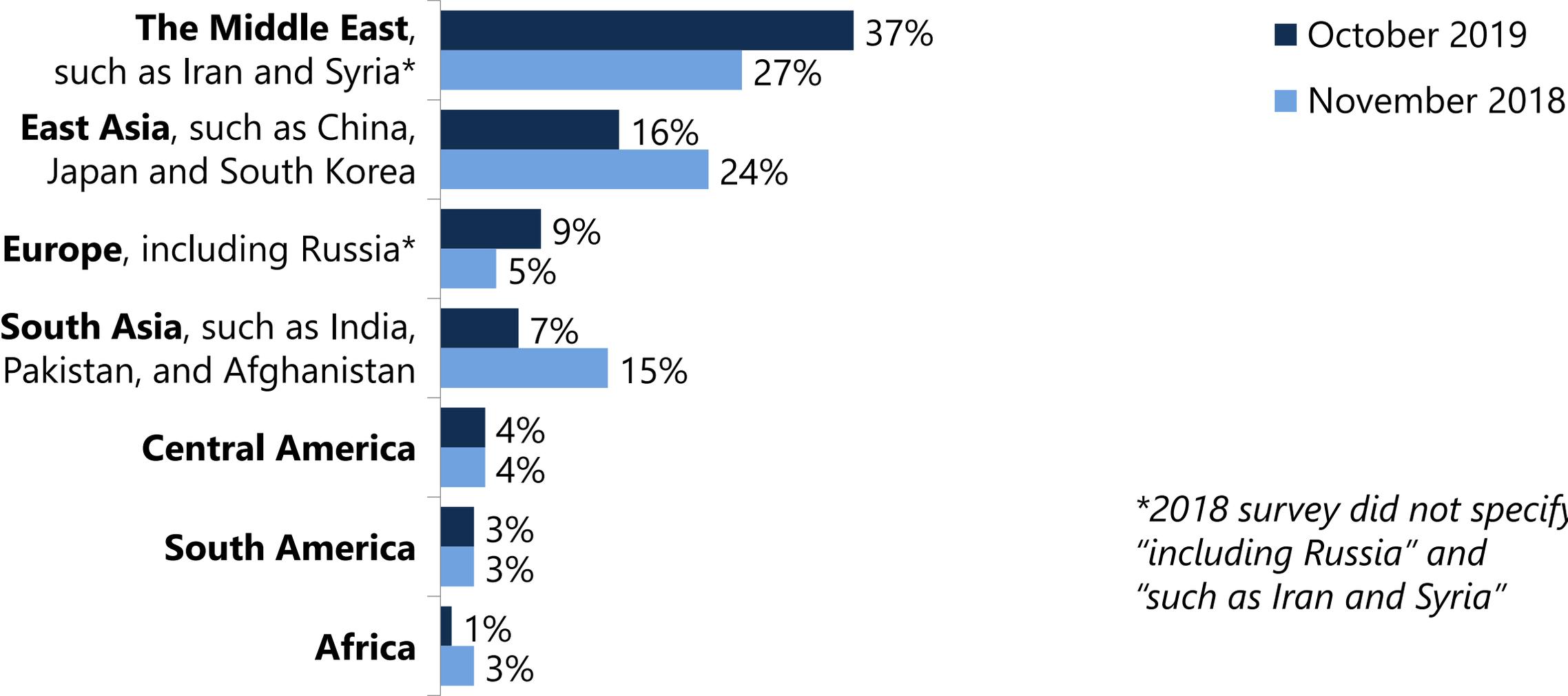
China and Russia seen as greatest threats to the US.



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

Q54: Which country do you see as the greatest threat to the U.S.?

Americans increasingly think U.S. military forces should be focused on the Middle East.

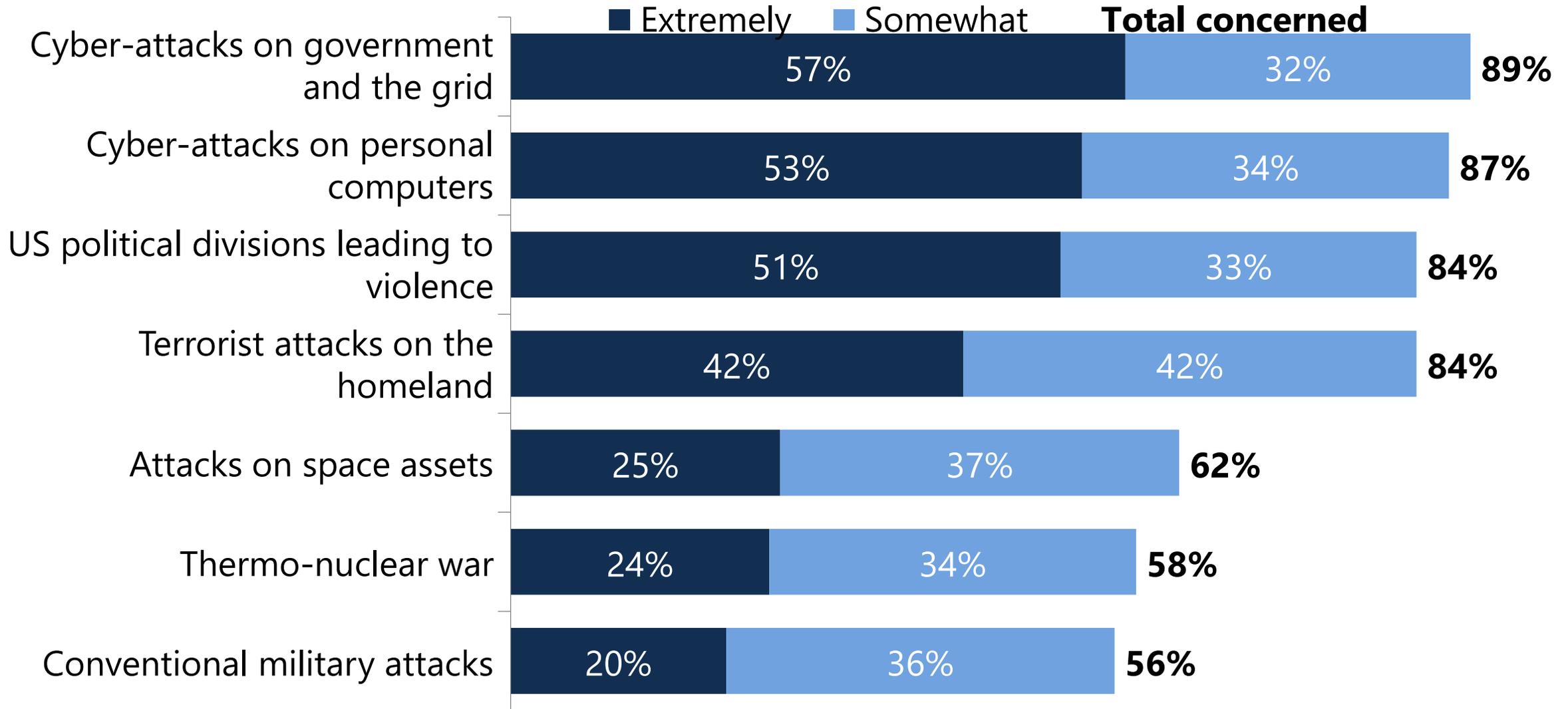


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q30: 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?



Eight-in-ten Americans are worried about political division in the US leading to violence.



Q59 – Q65: How concerned are you about the threat of each of the following in the next five years?

Strong support for working with allies to prevent North Korea attack, including using force, if necessary.



Work with our allies to **prevent an attack** from North Korea, using force if necessary

84%

Wait until the attack is actually launched and then **counter-attack**

11%

Note: Remainder Don't know

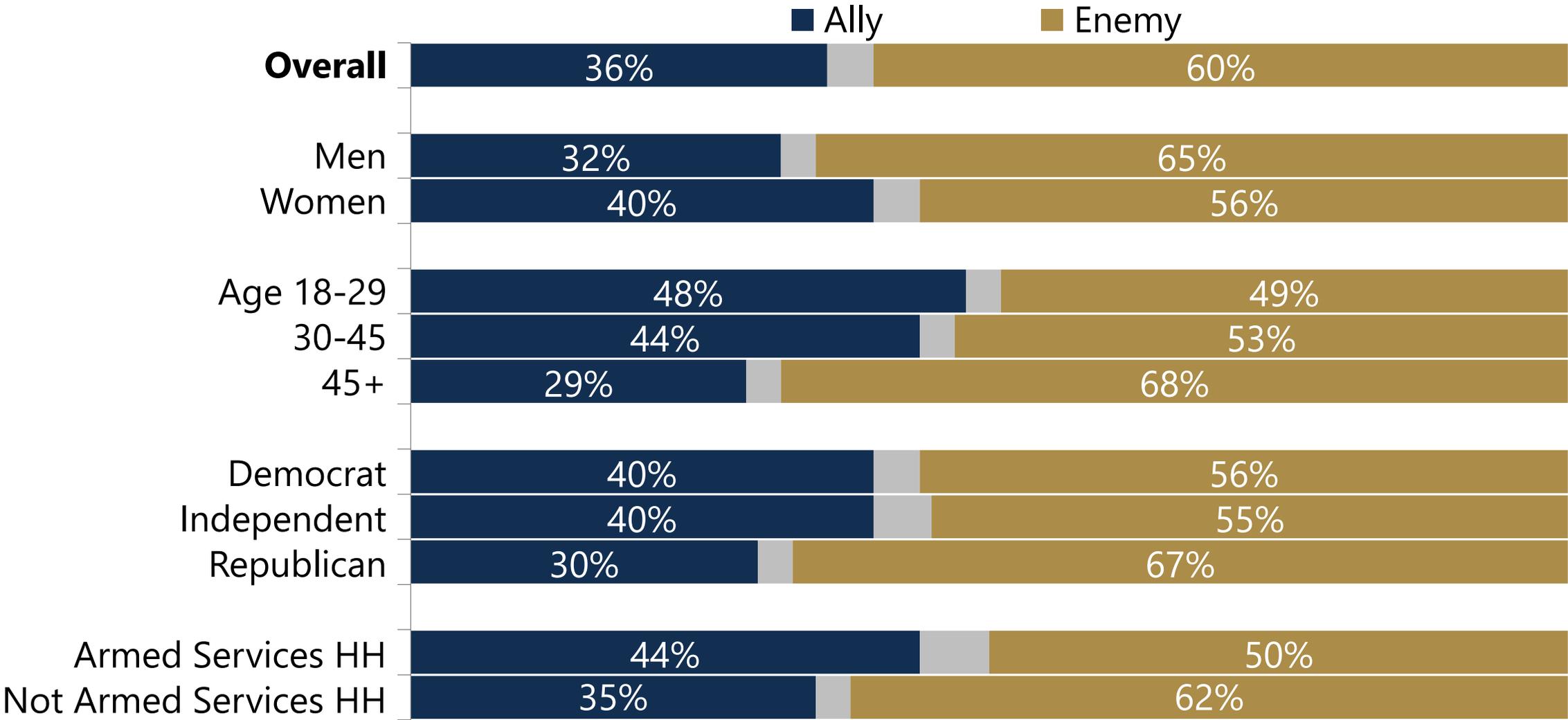
Q66: If the U.S. suspected that North Korea was going to launch an attack against the U.S. and its allies, South Korea and Japan, which of the following options would you prefer?



CHINA



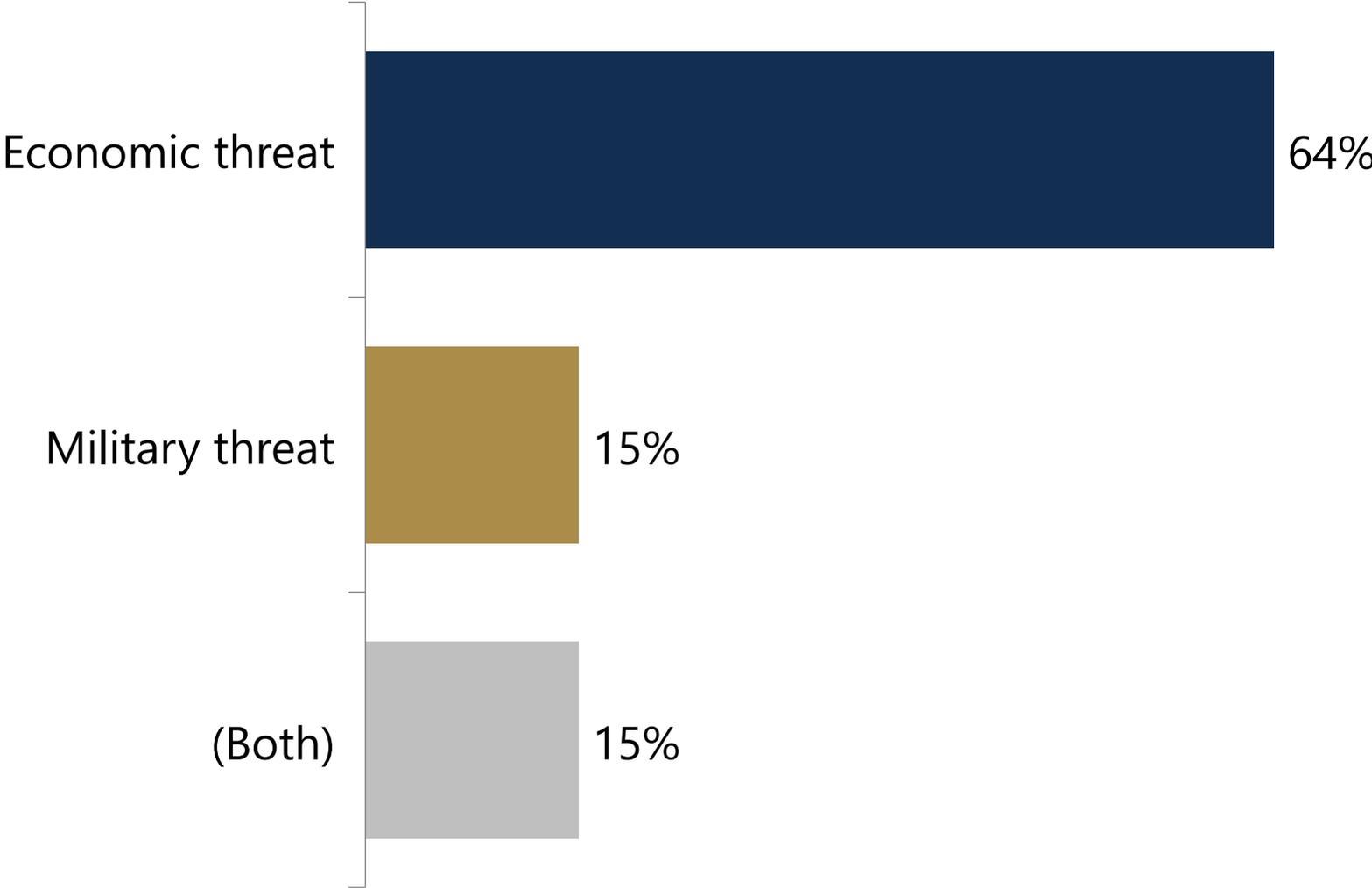
Americans under age 45 are the most likely to view China as an ally.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q46: 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

China seen as more of an economic threat than a military one.

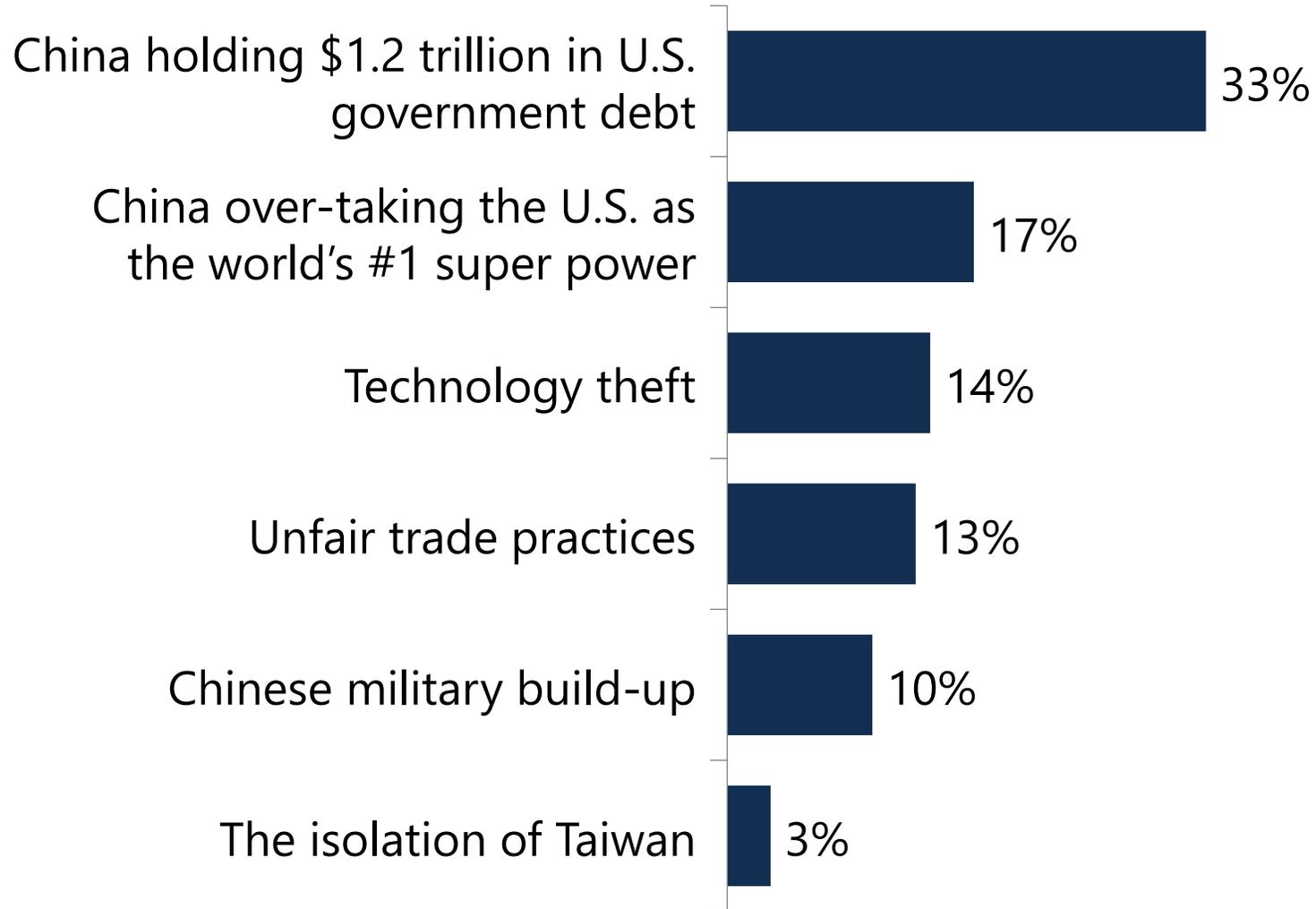


Note: Remainder Neither / Don't know

Q69: Do you view China as more of an economic threat to the United States or more of a military threat?



Biggest concerns with China center on economics/trade.

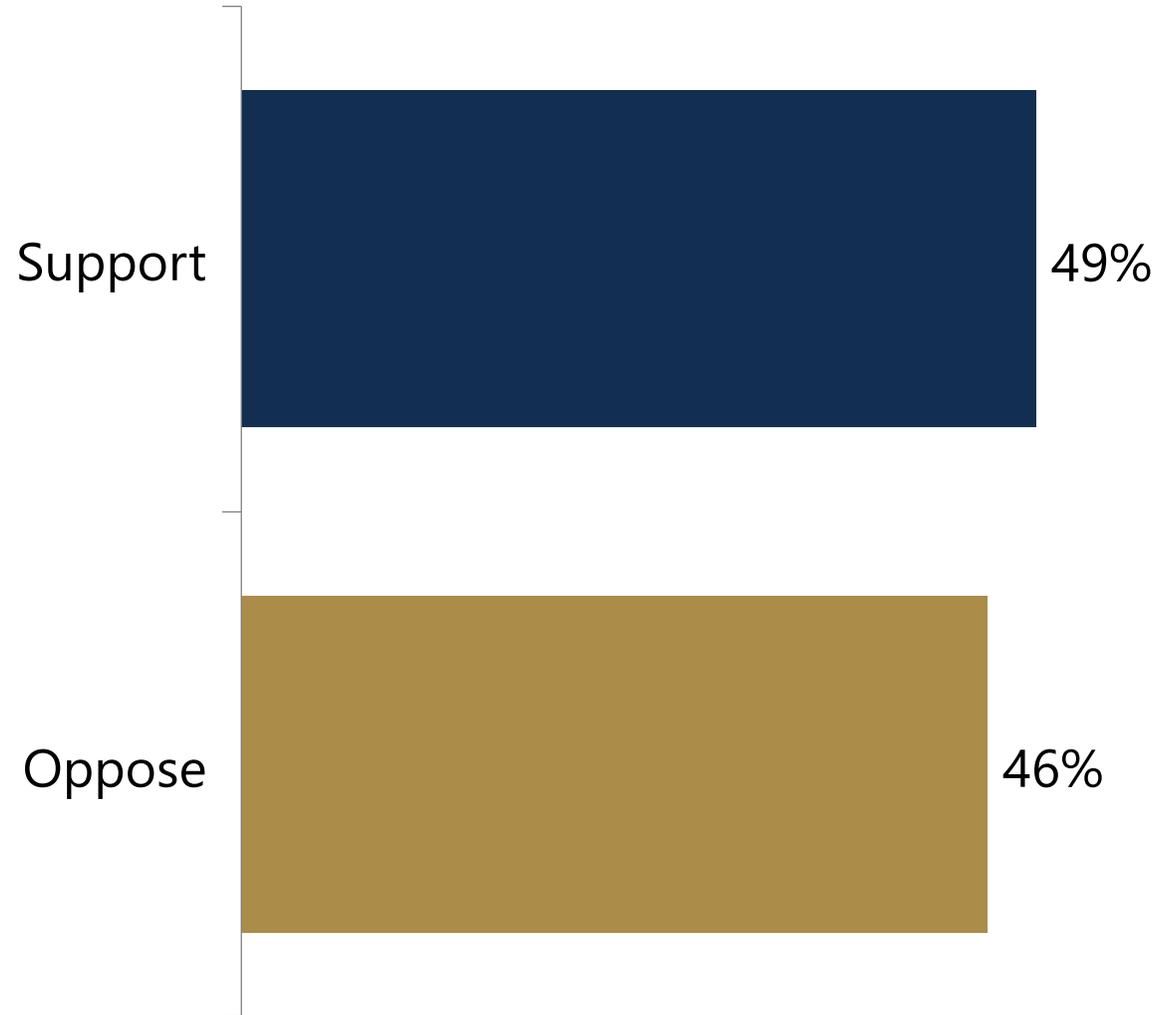


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q68: Thinking now about China, which of the following most concerns you about U.S. relations with China?



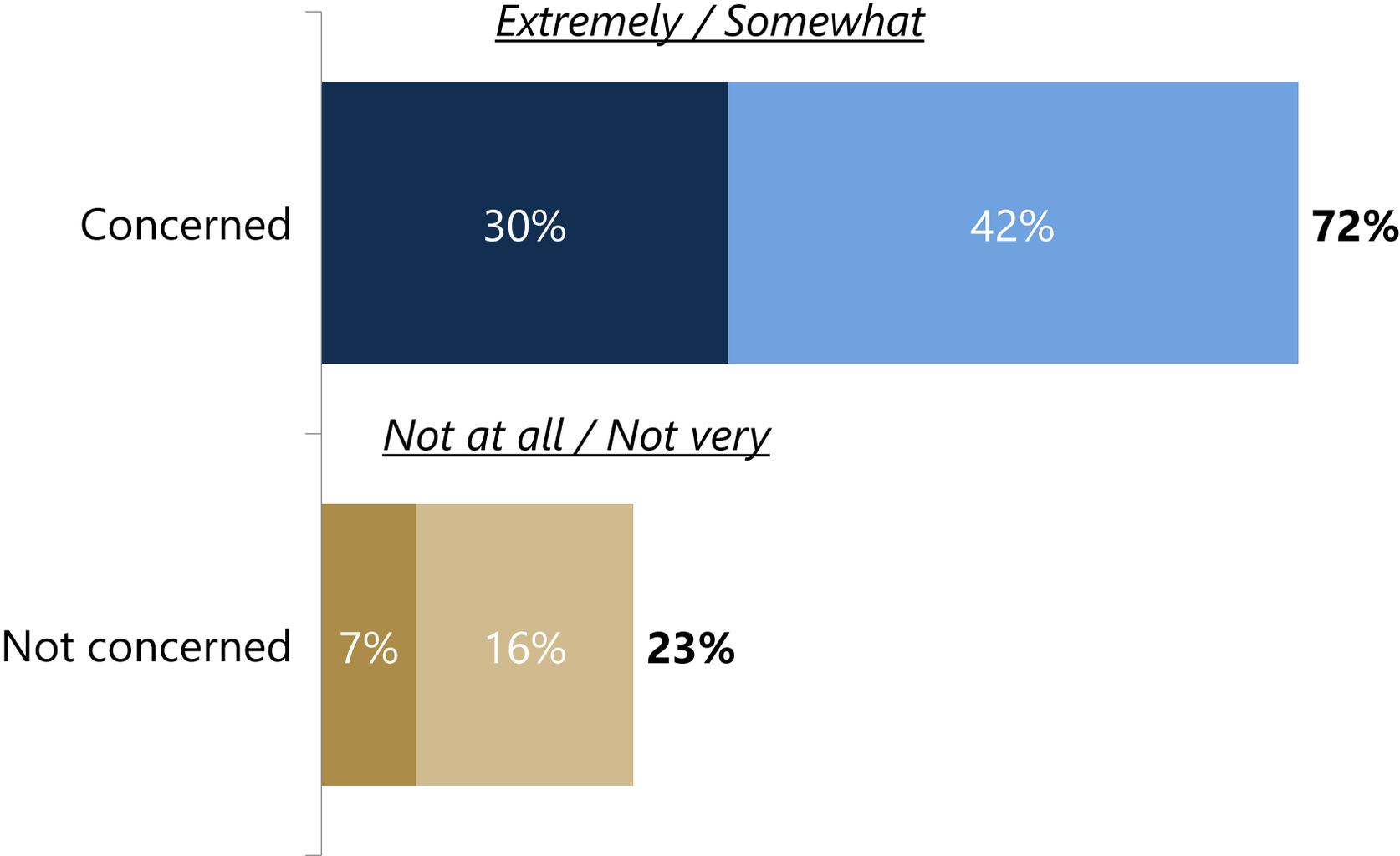
Split decision on the trade war with China.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q70: Do you support or oppose the trade war the United States is currently engaged in with China?

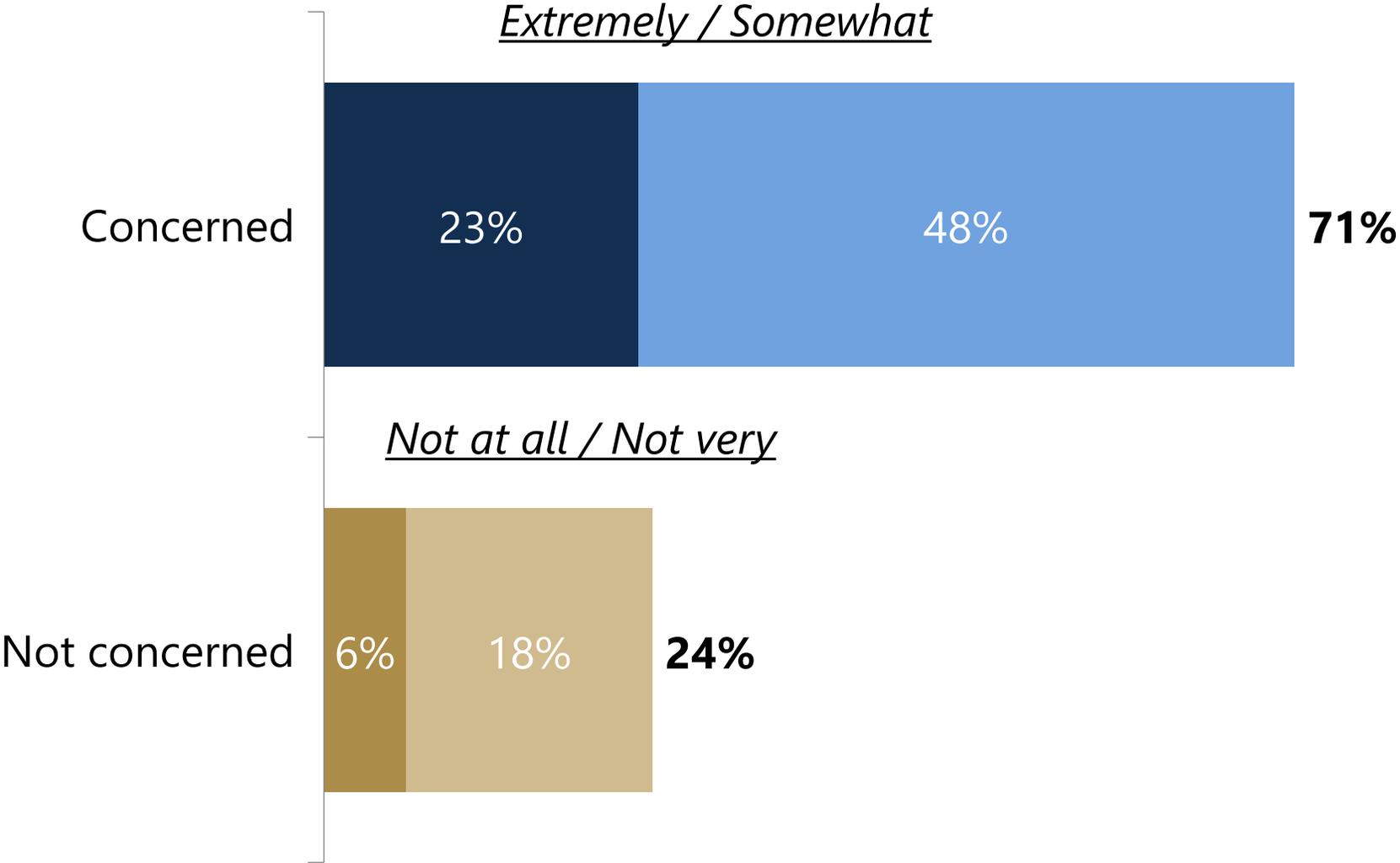
Large majority would be concerned if trade war further destabilizes relations with China.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q71: How concerned will you be if the trade war between the governments of China and the United States destabilizes relations between the two countries and increases the chances of conflict?

Many are concerned with Chinese military buildup in the South China Sea...



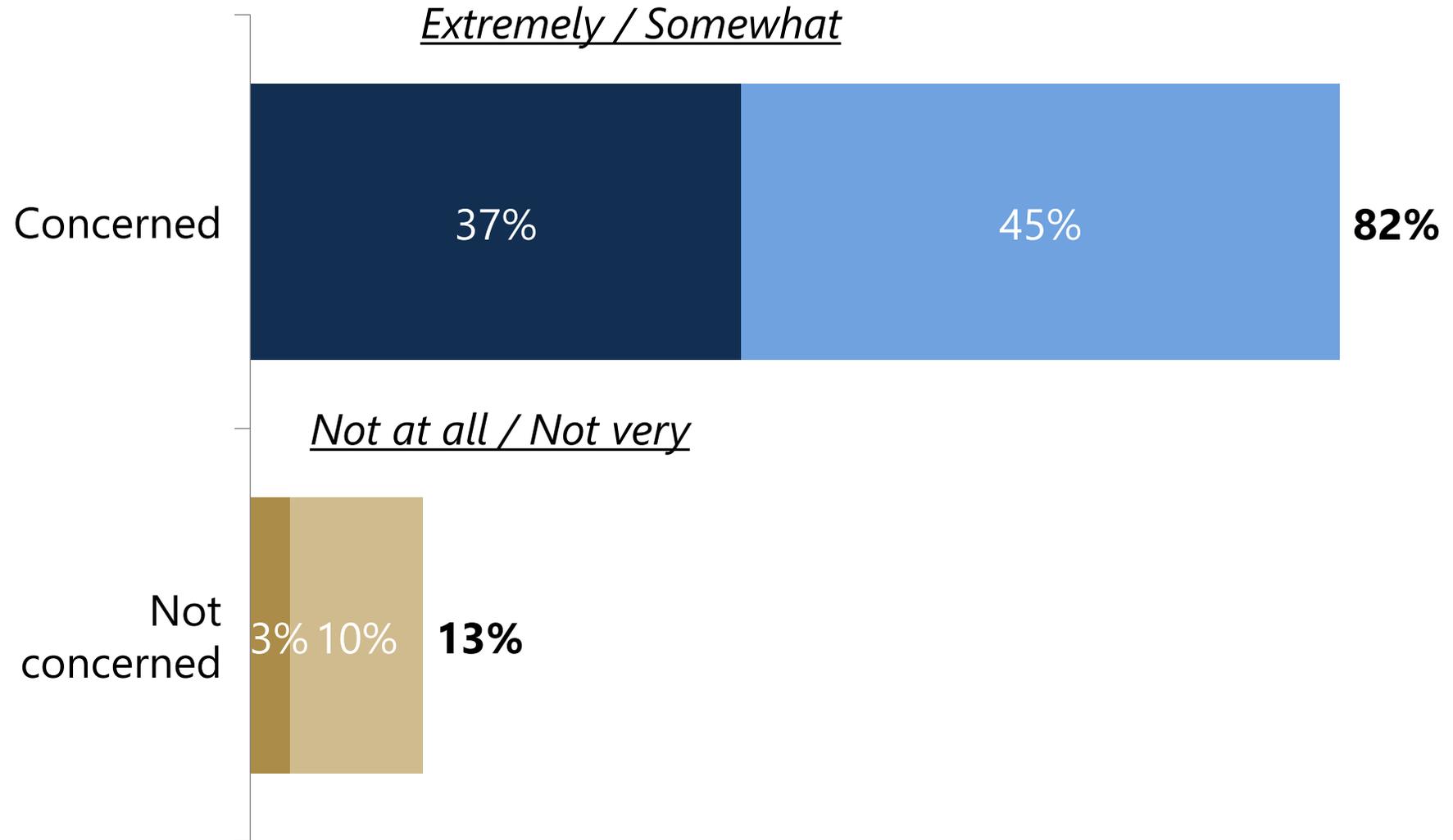
Note: Remainder Don't know

Q72: How concerned are you with Chinese military buildup in the South China Sea?



... And concern increases as voters learn more about Chinese actions.

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.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q73: Knowing this, how concerned are you with these actions by China?

Bipartisan majorities think the US should support Hong Kong activists at the expense of relations with China.



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

Democrat 70%
Republican 72%

68%

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

14%

Note: Remainder Don't know

Q74: Which of the following is closer to your view about what the U.S. should do with regard to the situation in Hong Kong?

Majorities favor sanctions and even security assistance if China escalates the use of force in Hong Kong.



■ Favor

■ Oppose

Imposing economic sanctions on China

69%

27%

Responding with US security assistance or aid

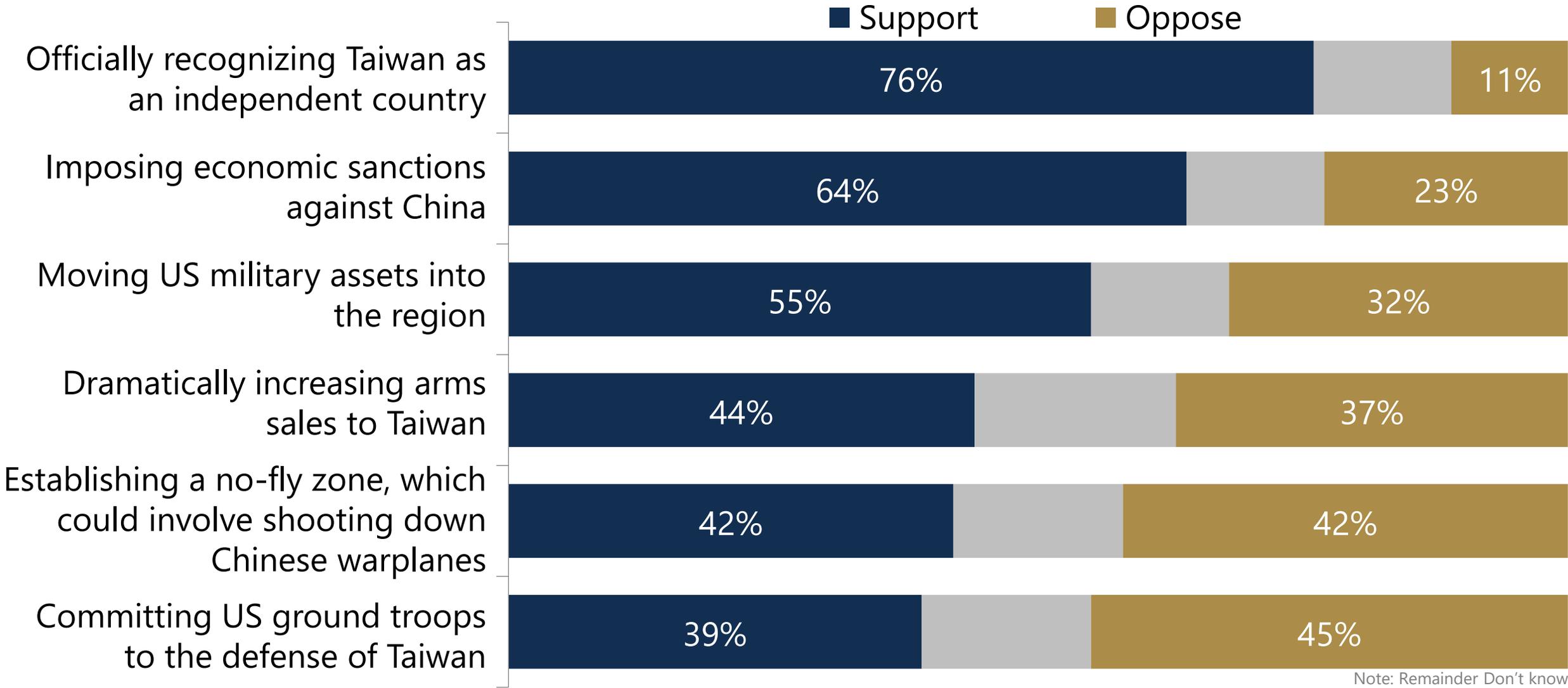
59%

35%

Note: Remainder Don't know

Q75-Q76: Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following actions by the United States if China were to escalate the use of its military to stop the political protests in Hong Kong?

Support for diplomatic and economic pressure if China invades Taiwan; uncertainty about military options.



Q77 – Q82: Although official Chinese policy is that Taiwan is part of China, Taiwan has operated as a relatively independent state for the last forty years. If China invaded Taiwan, please tell me if you would support or oppose the United States coming to Taiwan’s defense in each of the following ways

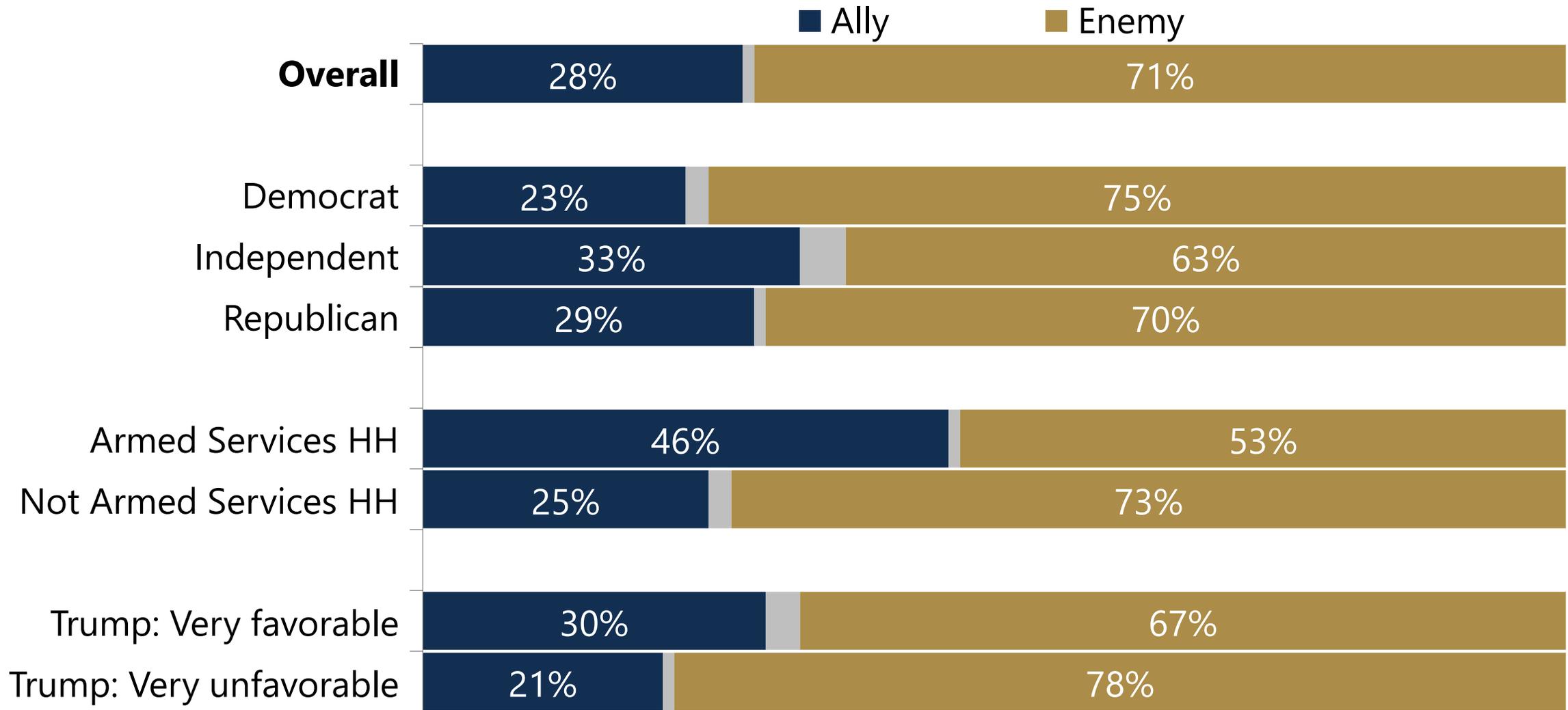


RUSSIA





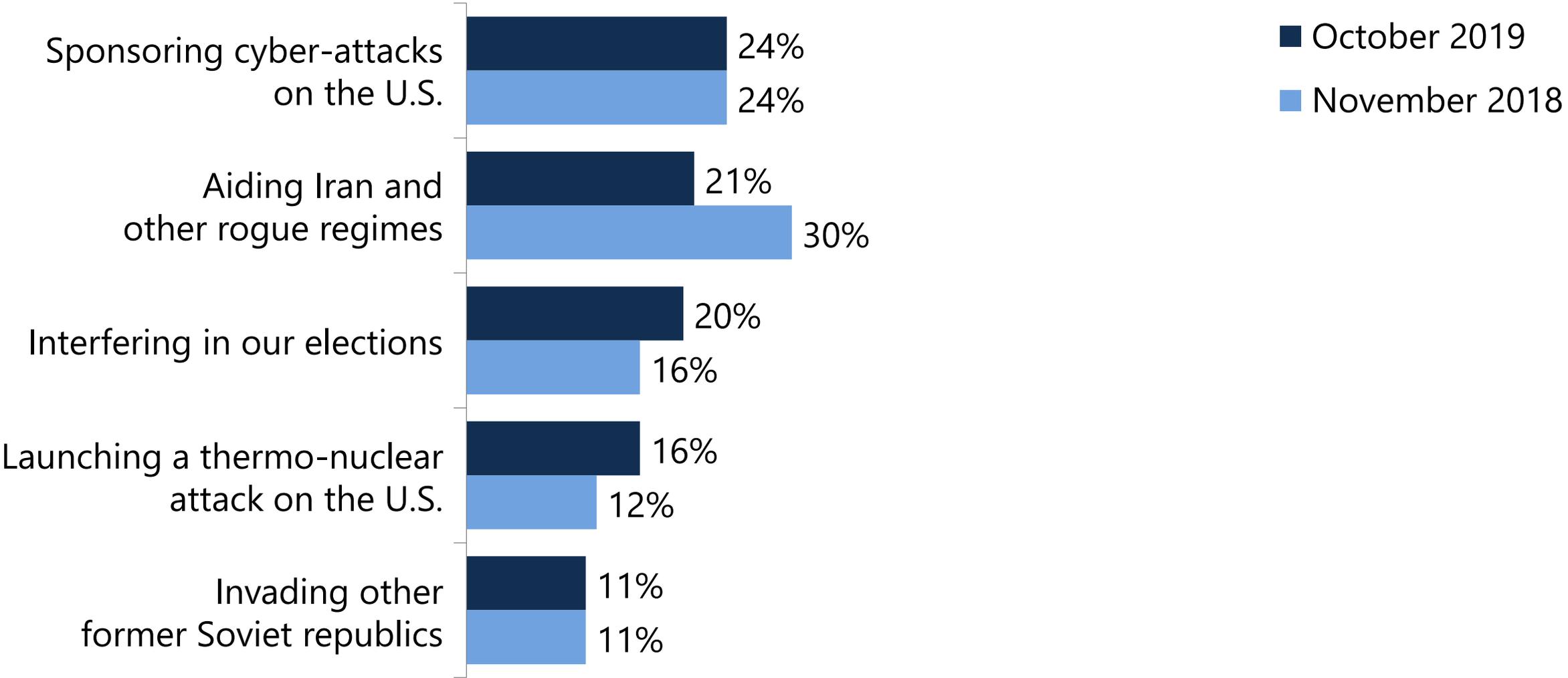
Armed services households and those very favorable toward Trump see Russia as more of an ally.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q51: 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? Russia

Biggest concerns with Russia center on cyber-attacks, election interference, and aid to rogue regimes.



Note: Remainder Don't know

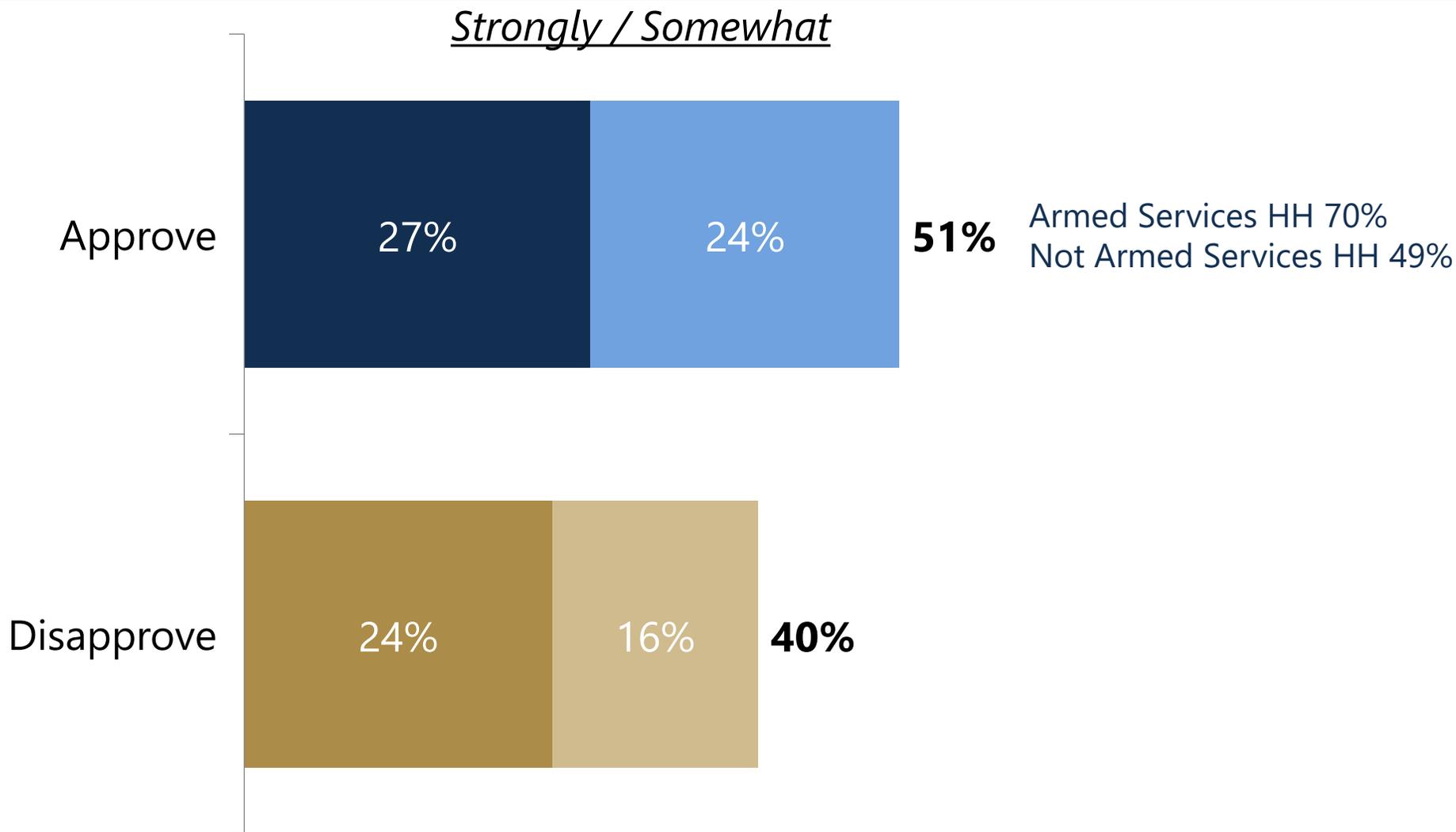
Q83: Which of the following most concerns you about Russia?



SYRIA



A narrow majority approves of the decision to withdraw from Syria...

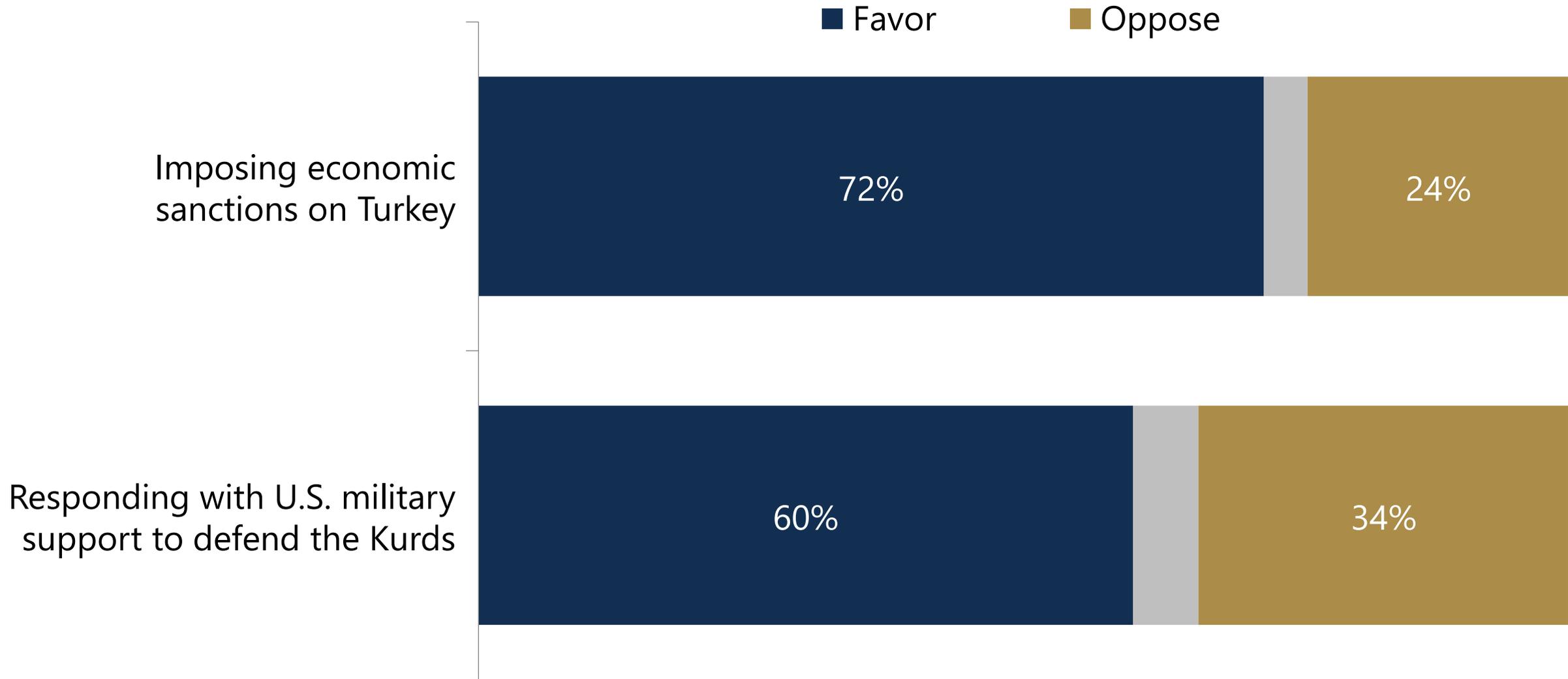


Note: Remainder Don't know

Q84: The U.S. recently announced it would withdraw its troops from Syria. Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. troop withdrawal from Syria?



... But majorities would punish Turkish aggression in Syria with sanctions or military support for the Kurds.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q85 AND Q86: As you may know, the Turkish military has advanced into Syria and attacked Kurdish forces who helped the United States fight ISIS.

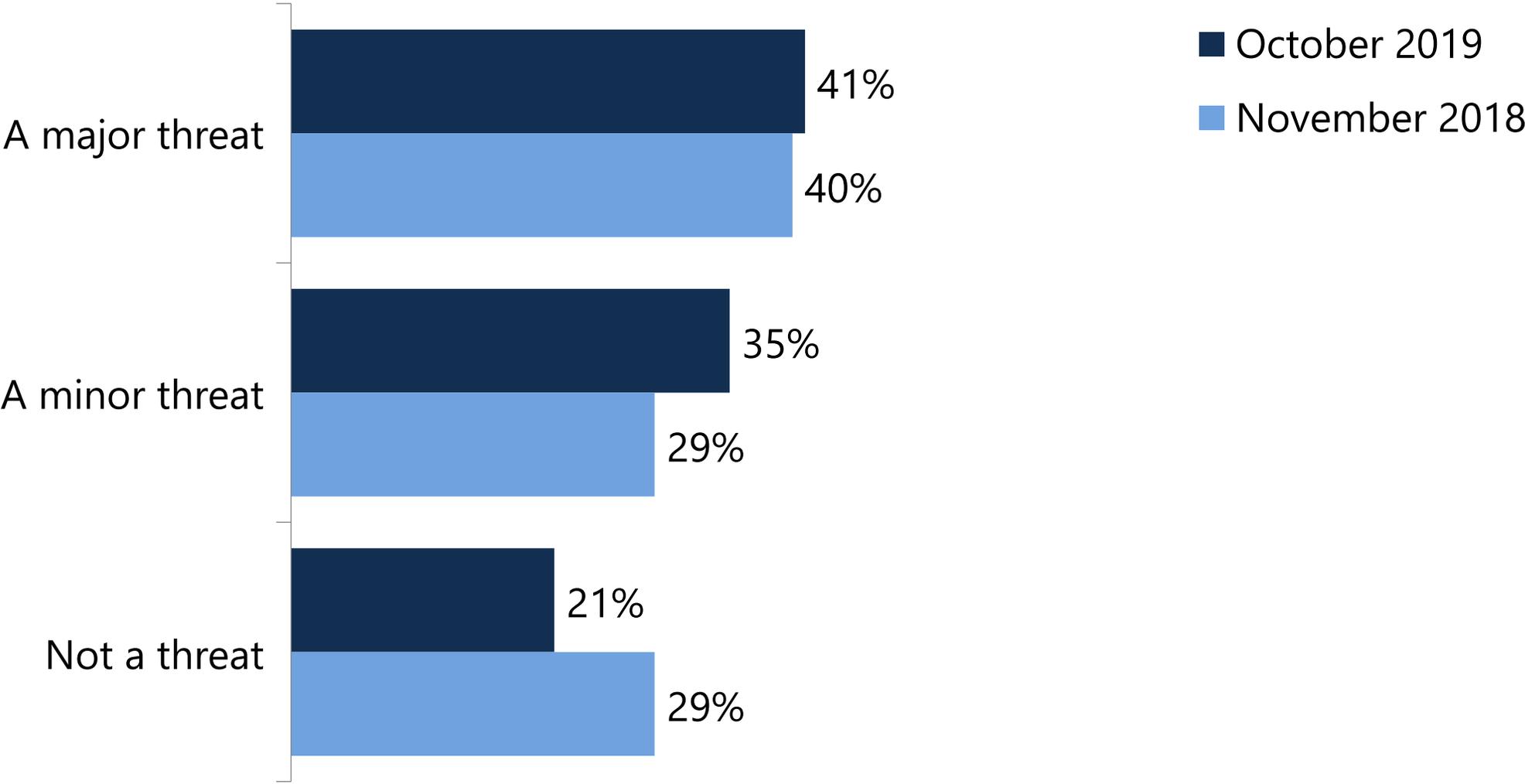
Do you favor or oppose each of the following potential responses to Turkey from the United States?



IMMIGRATION



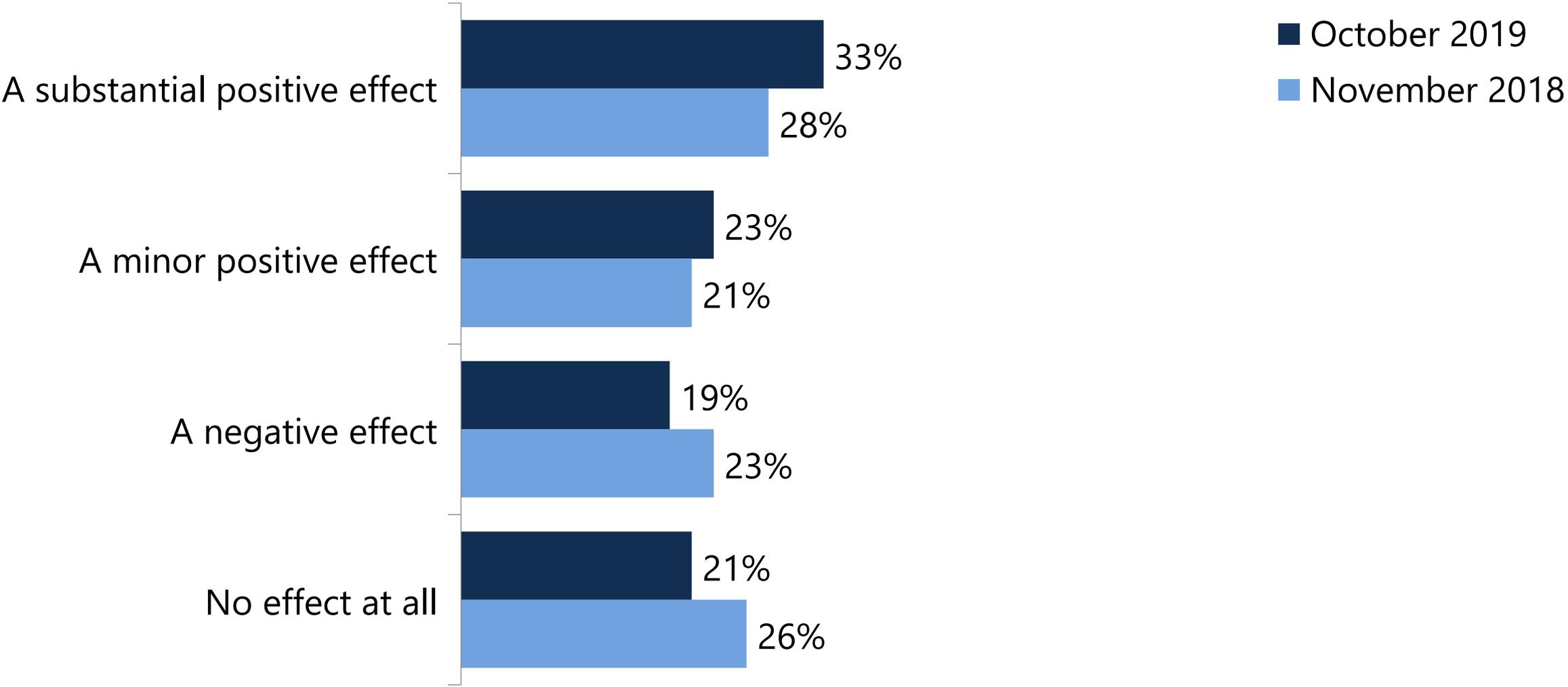
More than three-quarters see illegal immigration as a security threat.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q87: In your view, how much of a security threat is illegal immigration across our southern border?

One-third think a border wall would have a substantial positive effect on US security.



Note: Remainder Don't know

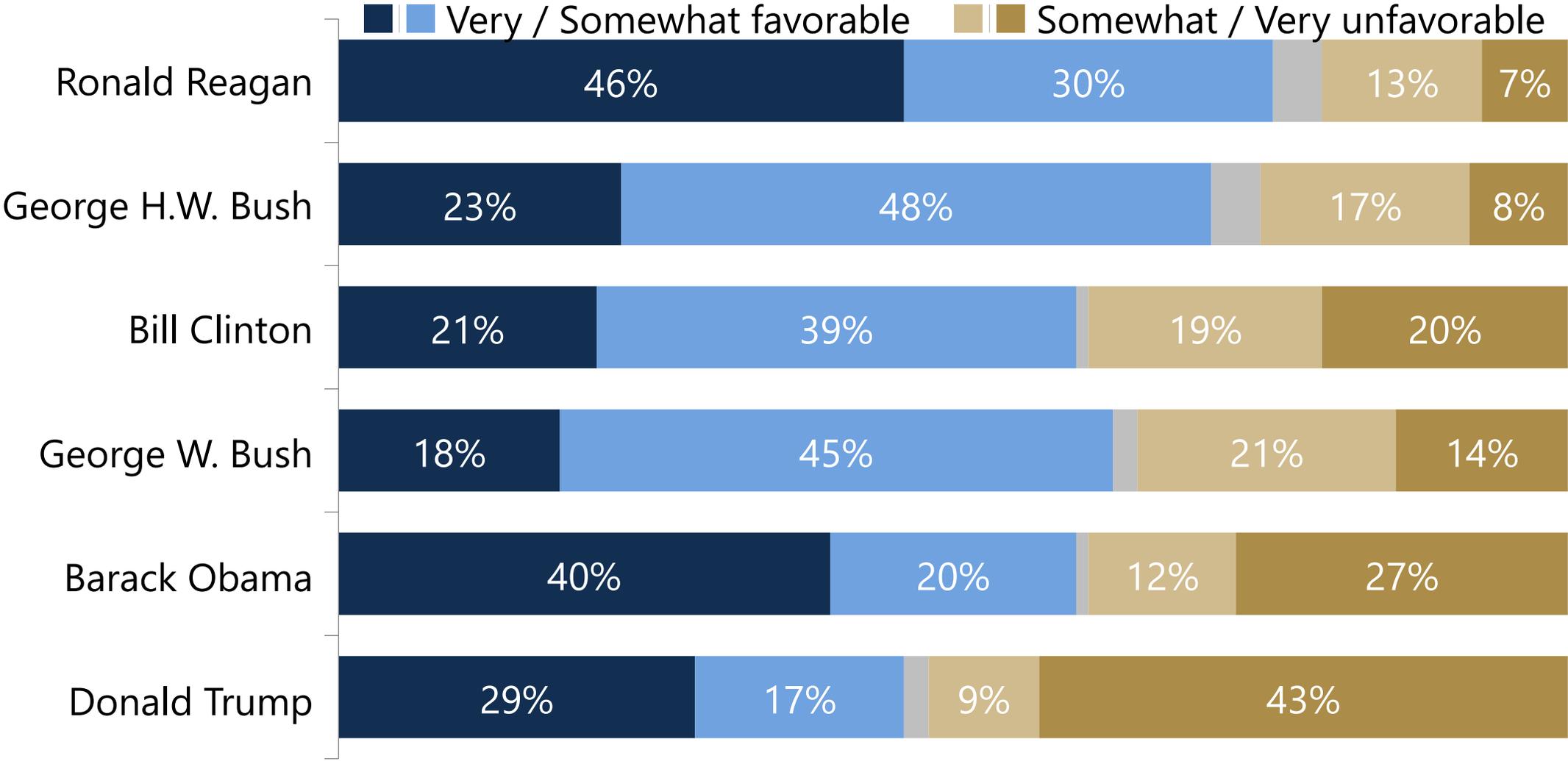
Q88: What effect would building a wall across our southern border have on U.S. security?



EVALUATIONS OF PAST PRESIDENTS



Reagan viewed most favorably among recent presidents; Trump viewed least favorably.



Note: Remainder Don't know

Q92 – Q97: 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.



Profile of the Sample

Category	Group	% of Sample
Gender	Male	47
	Female	53
Age	18-29	17
	30-44	25
	45-64	37
	65+	19
Ethnicity	White	75
	Black or African American	12
	Hispanic or Latino	8
	Asian or Asian-American	3
Education	Noncollege	60
	College graduate	25
	Post graduate	15
Household Income	Under \$50K	38
	\$50K - \$75K	20
	\$75K - \$100K	13
	\$100K+	24

Category	Group	% of Sample
Voter	Registered	89
	Not registered	9
2016 Vote	Trump	37
	Clinton	35
PID	Democrat	40
	Independent	18
Philosophy	Republican	42
	Very liberal	10
	Somewhat liberal	17
	Moderate	28
Region	Somewhat conservative	20
	Very conservative	20
	East	18
	Midwest	21
Region	South	38
	West	23

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
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