

### *Liberal Internationalism and Partisan Discontents into the Post-Trump United States*<sup>1</sup>

Essay by George N. Georgarakis, Columbia University and Sciences Po, Paris; and Robert Y. Shapiro, Columbia University

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#### *Introduction*

We completed this article in September 2021, just as the Taliban defeated the American-supported government of Afghanistan, and the United States worked to transport all of its citizens out of the country along with the people of Afghanistan who worked for and with its troops, contractors, and officials. On the liberal internationalism front, this is a set-back for the United States. Not only was an ostensibly aspiring democratic U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan defeated, but the withdrawal from the country was arguably undertaken without full consultation with the United States' allies who had sent troops and aid in this American-led effort. What, then, can we now say about the future of liberal internationalism (LI)?

Here we follow up where one of us left off in a previous article examining this topic when Donald Trump was elected president. It asked whether the “partisan conflict at the level of political leadership and the mass public [had] undermined the pursuit of liberal internationalism in American foreign policy—a pursuit that has emphasized multilateral economic and security relations and the judicious use of military force?”<sup>2</sup> Shapiro found that even with the increase in partisan conflict that had occurred as of the end of 2016:

“...some of the data still show continued majority support for international institutions and the use of diplomacy—somewhat increasingly in some cases. In this debate public opinion has become increasingly important. While the partisan divergences that have occurred in public opinion may have initially been driven largely by elite leadership—in particular by the Republican leadership affecting its partisan supporters—this opinion may now significantly constrain what leaders can do in foreign policymaking.”<sup>3</sup>

These data included new issues that became highly relevant. What emerged was a mixed picture since forces were at work with the election of Trump that pushed against LI. While there remained underlying public support regarding liberal internationalism, there were tensions tied to partisan conflict and Trump's form of saber-rattling that resonated with Republicans and especially Trump's supporters. This could constrain the effects of those who wanted to pursue LI, and made possible the Trump administration's moves in a direction opposed to the liberal internationalism of President Barack Obama.

Specifically, Trump, during the 2020 presidential campaign or later in office, opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris climate agreement, the United States' participation in the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Iran nuclear agreement; and thus as

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Y. Shapiro, “Liberal Internationalism and Partisan Conflict,” ed. Robert Jervis and Diane Labrosse, *H-Diplo: ISSF Policy Roundtable 1-6* (2017): *Is Liberal Internationalism Still Alive?*, 2017, 46–80, here, 56.

<sup>3</sup>Shapiro, “Liberal Internationalism and Partisan Conflict”, 56.

President withdrew the United States from these. He also used more militant anti-immigration policy rhetoric and actions – especially his proposal to ‘build the wall’ on the U.S./Mexican border. Trump and members of his administration diminished the State Department and its expertise. Through it all, however, it remained an open question as to how LI would fare in the mind of the public at large and how this might vary based upon partisanship. The answer to this awaited new public opinion survey data. We examine these new data and other developments here, as they bear on the status of liberal internationalism among the American public at the end of Trump’s presidency.

### *How We Got Here and What Happened during the Trump Years*

The political history of these developments is a striking one and we can only summarize it very briefly.<sup>4</sup> Partisan political polarization of public opinion in the United States has been on the rise for more than twenty years,<sup>5</sup> after first becoming apparent in the 1990s, and then increasing. The political forces leading to this involved earlier divisive elite-level conflict that crystallized by the 1970s, followed by the penetration of this conflict to the level of public opinion. In particular, it involved an internal realigning of divisions within the Democratic and Republican parties along liberal/conservative ideological lines that went beyond the existing party differences on New Deal-type social welfare, “big government,” and regulatory issues.

This realigning emerged for racial civil rights and civil liberties in the 1960s, and it proceeded to expand to a wide range of issues, from abortion and law and order, to environmental protection, gay rights, and almost all other major domestic policy matters. National security and certain foreign policy issues, surprisingly, came to be added to the mix; partisan politics no longer stopped at the water’s edge.<sup>6</sup> Further, Americans’ increasingly visibly aligned their social identities with their partisan identities, as political divisions on issues became sharper and partisan animosity deepened.<sup>7</sup> What has added to the emotional heat is that during this time both major parties became increasingly competitive for control of both the House and the Senate, thereby making either unified Republican or Democratic government more likely than before. With unified party government, elections mattered more than before – they became more likely to have significant policy and partisan political consequences, as changes in party-controlled government could lead more directly than in the past to changes in government actions.

As to the voters’ identities, the current mass base of the Democratic Party is now largely made up of non-Whites, non-Christians (including the non-religious), and self-identified liberal urbanites, while the Republican Party is generally characterized as White, Christian, self-identified conservatives who live in small towns and rural areas.<sup>8</sup> These demographic differences are associated with the “partisan sorting” described above involving the increased association of partisanship and policy issue opinions among the public, which was preceded earlier by the same transformation among their partisan political leaders whom they elected into office. Individuals who are less well sorted and might be considered moderate are, of course, important as both leaders and voters, but it is the more ideological partisans who most visibly dominate elite and mass-level politics. The disappearance of cross-cutting identities is related to the ideological conflict among party elites and the partisan divergence in policy preferences among the general public.

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<sup>4</sup> There are too many works to cite here. For a summary of the transformation in partisanship that occurred, see, for example, Joseph Bafumi and Shapiro, “A New Partisan Voter,” *The Journal of Politics* 71:1 (January 2009): 1–24.

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center, “The Shift in the American Public’s Political Values,” *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy* (blog), 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/interactives/political-polarization-1994-2017/>. For a further review of the data, see, Shapiro, “The Evolution and Nature of Partisan Conflict in the United States,” presentation, Columbia University, April 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Rachel Myrick, “Do External Threats Unite or Divide? Security Crises, Rivalries, and Polarization in American Foreign Policy,” *International Organization* 75:4 (Fall 2021) 1–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818321000175>.

<sup>7</sup> Lilliana Mason, “A Cross-Cutting Calm: How Social Sorting Drives Affective Polarization,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80:S1 (January 1, 2016): 351-377.

<sup>8</sup> John Gramlich, “What the 2020 Electorate Looks like by Party, Race and Ethnicity, Age, Education and Religion,” *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed August 23, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/>.

Today, more than ever, partisan conflict and highly emotional identity politics can lead to stalemate, or “gridlock,” in government<sup>9</sup> and also, as we have strikingly seen, to political violence.<sup>10</sup> Partisan brinkmanship has undermined the ability of the government to respond to social needs and national emergencies, as the management of the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed.<sup>11</sup> The emergence of diametrically opposed worldviews, leading to perceptual biases in understanding real world conditions and realities has sown confusion over what is fact and what is fiction. The rhetoric and behavior of Trump exacerbated these developments beyond the effects of partisanship, and has shown that individual leaders can matter more than party leaders in moving public opinion.<sup>12</sup>

Trump was impeached for a second time for his alleged connection to violent protests and the rise of right-wing domestic terrorism,<sup>13</sup> culminating in the assault on the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, in an attempt to overturn the presidential electoral vote results. It is therefore not surprising (Figures 1 and 2; all Figures are included in the Appendix) that partisan differences in presidential approval that were at an all-time high during the Obama presidency, an average on the order of 70 percentage points or greater, rose to more than 80 percentage points for Trump. Trump took this aspect of partisan conflict to a new level that has remained stable during President Joe Biden’s his first year in office.

The data showing increases in partisan differences in all manner of policy opinions and related attitudes and perceptions among the public and leaders are stunning. Domestic policies are the primary battleground of partisan conflict, which is captured well in Figures 3-5.<sup>14</sup> Americans have increasingly grown apart on most salient issues, including government regulation of business, government efficiency and spending, the welfare system, the legitimacy of free markets, racial attitudes, and environmental protection. Partisan conflict is driven by polarization at the elite rather than general public level (Figures 6-8), and political divisions now go beyond the water’s edge and include stances toward national security and foreign affairs (Figure 9).

Although this transformation dates to before the twenty-first century, the defining moment for the politicization of foreign policy was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Combined with its neoconservative approach to foreign policy, the George W. Bush administration’s Republican conservatism on domestic policies increased the salience of foreign affairs and divided the American public. As partisan conflict has been expanding from domestic politics to foreign affairs, the study of polarization has attempted to identify its origins, document its dynamics and contemporary changes, and anticipate its consequences.<sup>15</sup>

So where did public opinion stand toward LI by the end of the Trump administration and the beginning of the post-Trump period? Partisan conflict in public opinion over foreign policies and issues pertaining to liberal internationalism continued to increase during Trump’s administration. However, there are policy areas for which the divides between Democrats and Republicans have remained the

<sup>9</sup> Sarah A. Binder, “Polarized We Govern?” (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, Center for Effective Public Management, 2014), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/polarized-we-govern/>; Sarah Binder, “Personal Communication,” 12 December 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Nathan P. Kalmoe and Lilliana Mason, *Radical American Partisanship: Mapping Violent Hostility, Its Causes, & the Consequences for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Zeke Miller and Andrew Taylor, “Pandemic Politics Leave DC in Gridlock as Virus Surges,” *AP News*, April 20, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-donald-trump-pandemics-coronavirus-pandemic-michael-pence-e345bb1df74ca1bcd4d4d1793deb2f90>.

<sup>12</sup> See the analysis and references cited in Neeraj Kaushal, Yao Lu, Shapiro, and Jennifer So, “American Attitudes toward COVID-19: More Trumpism than Partisanship,” Columbia University, August 2021, preprint: <https://doi.org/10.31124/advance.14481879.v1>

<sup>13</sup> Larry Buchanan, Karen Yourish, Ainara Tiefenthaler, Jon Huang and Blacki Migliozi “Lie After Lie: Listen to How Trump Built His Alternate Reality,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/02/09/us/trump-voter-fraud-election.html>.

<sup>14</sup> See also: <https://twitter.com/thomasjwood/status/1360053698018369536?s=20>.

<sup>15</sup> Myrick, “Do External Threats Unite or Divide?”; Catherine E. De Vries, Sara B. Hobolt, and Stefanie Walter, “Politicizing International Cooperation: The Mass Public, Political Entrepreneurs, and Political Opportunity Structures,” *International Organization* 75: 2 (ed 2021): 306-332, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000491>; J. Lawrence Broz, Jeffrey Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth, “Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash,” *International Organization* 75:2 (ed 2021): 464-494, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000314>; Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, “Foreign Policy, Meet the People,” *The National Interest* 97 (October 2008): 37-42; Jack Snyder, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon, “Free Hand Abroad, Divide and Rule at Home,” *World Politics* 61:1 (January 2009): 155-187, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887109000069>.

same or have been closing. The further partisan divisions occurred due to specific aspects of Trump's presidential and Republican Party leadership. Older divides over the Middle East and North Korea remained or perhaps became less pronounced, but new threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict with China, and climate change, tore the American public further apart. Overall, liberal internationalism survived with the defeat of Trump by Biden, but its future is uncertain as partisan conflict concerning the role of the United States in the international arena has deepened, especially as the partisan divide in presidential support has reached an all-time high and the stability of the U.S. foreign policy strategy has been challenged. The August 2021 fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban raised questions about the United States in its pursuit of liberal internationalism.

### *Partisan Conflict over Liberal Internationalism since 2016*

The Trump administration represented perhaps the hardest test yet for the liberal international order in the twenty-first century – a conjecture that Shapiro shared with Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten in their contribution to the 2018 volume.<sup>16</sup> The election of Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> U.S. president was met with disbelief and despondency among publics around the world. This was especially pronounced among key American allies and partners, who increased their confidence in the U.S. only after Biden's victory in 2020.<sup>17</sup> After Obama, who was a vocal advocate for liberal internationalism, Trump was unable or unwilling to take up the role of the leader of the free world that was soon claimed by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the increasing gridlock in Congress, Trump was able to push through a plethora of policies that aimed at unraveling (albeit not always successfully) many of the Obama-era foreign policy landmarks. Trump's "America First" vision of foreign policy resonated well with a small yet not negligible group that represented approximately 9% of the American public.<sup>19</sup> Having its ideological roots in GOP's isolationist posture of the 1930s, this group of populist neo-isolationists desired a foreign policy that was mostly non-interventionist but demanded a stronger U.S. defense. President Trump wanted the U.S. to focus on its own priorities rather than the problems of other countries and to withdraw from foreign entanglements while increasing the defense budget and reinforcing military superiority to protect U.S. interests.

Trump's "America First" vision manifested itself into foreign policies that aimed to disengage the U.S. from global politics and shook long-standing alliances. On the one hand, the Trump administration withdrew from or reversed many important agreements that regulated international cooperation. In just four years, Trump withdrew from numerous international agreements he deemed as "job-killing deals,"<sup>20</sup> such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017, the United States – Korea Free Trade Agreement in the same year, the North American Free Trade Agreement (which was subsequently replaced by the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement in 2018), and the Paris Agreement to combat climate change in 2017. Moreover, he threatened to leave the U.N. Human Rights Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) insisting on the need for all NATO members to "finally contribute their fair share"<sup>21</sup> to the alliance. Trump also took a firm stance against China by entering into a long and costly trade war and later blaming Chinese authorities

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<sup>16</sup> Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten, "Has Liberal Internationalism Been Trumped?" *H-Diplo* Policy Roundtable 1-6 (2017), <http://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-6-liberal-internationalism>; Busby and Monten, "Has Liberal Internationalism Been Trumped?" in Robert Jervis, Francis J. Gavin, Joshua Rovner, and Diane Labrosse, eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018): 49-60.; Shapiro, "Liberal Internationalism, Public Opinion, and Partisan Conflict in the United States," in Robert Jervis et al., eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, 104-122, <https://issforum.org/essays/cr4>.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Wike et al., "America's Image Abroad Rebounds With Transition From Trump to Biden," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, June 10, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/06/10/americas-image-abroad-rebounds-with-transition-from-trump-to-biden/>.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Wike et al., "Trump Approval Worldwide Remains Low Especially Among Key Allies," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, October 1, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/trumps-international-ratings-remain-low-especially-among-key-allies/>.

<sup>19</sup> V. Lance Tarrance, "Measuring the Fault Lines in Current U.S. Foreign Policy," Gallup, April 10, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/248354/measuring-fault-lines-current-foreign-policy.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> Drew Harwell, "Trump's Trade Talk Is Scaring One of America's 'greatest Friends,'" *Washington Post*, 12 August 2016, accessed 28 April 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Rubin Emmott and Steve Holland, "Trump Directly Scolds NATO Allies, Says They Owe 'massive' Sums," *Reuters*, 25 May 2017, accessed 1 October 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-europe-idUSKBN18K34D>.



for the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Trump suspended funding to the WHO over its coronavirus response and its alleged failure to attribute responsibility to China for not containing the coronavirus outbreak and letting it spread to other countries to become a pandemic.

On the other hand, Trump had a mixed and somewhat unpredictable approach to solving international conflicts. In 2017, he aggressively confronted the administration of North Korea and Vice President Mike Pence even paid a visit to the Korean demilitarized zone. During the first years of his presidency, he adopted a similar hard line in the Middle East. In retaliation for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's atrocities against civilians, Trump authorized a cruise missile strike on Syrian soil and accelerated the U.S.-led campaign against the Islamic State, which led to the territorial collapse of it in Syria. In a controversial move, he officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and announced the relocation the U.S. embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. Trump also had a confrontational approach to Iran which manifested itself into the suspension of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, and the unilateral assassination of Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian major general, in January 2020.

Nonetheless, the Trump administration took many steps in foreign policy that were aligned with its neo-isolationist agenda. In the Middle East, he withdrew a significant number of U.S. forces in Syria and Afghanistan and pushed through the Abraham Accords that established direct diplomatic and economic relations between Israel and Arab/African countries (the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco) for the first time in 25 years. Further, he tried to deescalate tensions with North Korea by repeatedly meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and even becoming the first U.S. president to set foot in North Korea. Throughout his presidency Trump had a conciliatory approach to Russian President Vladimir Putin, which smoothed out the differences between the two countries but also raised questions of U.S. national security and vulnerability to international pressure.

Just as Trump's foreign policy represented the negation of Obama's international vision, Biden's victory signaled the return of the U.S. to the frontline of liberal internationalism. Biden has been trying to build back a liberal democratic alliance that could effectively address the threat of the rising global autocracy. Indeed, the emerging Biden Doctrine argues that the defining challenge of this century is whether democracies will prevail over autocratic regimes.<sup>22</sup> This doctrine offers the political framework to link together Biden's foreign-policy agenda that emphasizes the needs of the U.S. middle class, cooperation among democracies, the defense of human rights, trade protectionism, and the improvement of U.S. competitiveness through investment in public infrastructure and research and development. However, these initiatives require broader partisan consensus than what currently exists. The challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of autocratic regimes, climate change, and globalization represent are substantial but their effects will become even more devastating unless partisan conflict subsides significantly. How do Democrats and Republicans position themselves on foreign policy today, in the post-Trump and early Biden era?

### *The State of Partisan Conflict and Liberal Internationalism*

In our analysis, we find mixed results about the state of liberal internationalism and the partisan conflict over it. In principle, Americans express support for the basic tenets of liberal internationalism but there is substantial partisan disagreement over the role of the U.S. in world affairs and defense spending. A large majority of Americans understand the need to coordinate domestic and foreign policy to secure the major role that the United States play in international arena (Figure 10 shows that there is still substantial support for the U.S. playing a leading or major role in solving international problems) but they do not want the U.S. to meddle with other countries or foreign powers to meddle with domestic affairs (Figure 11).

Since 2016 there has been a continuing, though not substantial, increase in partisan divergence in public opinion around foreign policy issues, but in certain policy areas these differences have remained the same or even decreased. Partisan divisions on North Korea, the Middle East, immigration, and climate change have in many cases remained similar during the Trump presidency. In contrast, Democrats and Republicans have grown increasingly apart on the COVID-19 pandemic, China, Russia, international organizations, and free trade. This political polarization is largely *symmetric* with Republicans and Democrats similarly moving in opposite directions; the few *asymmetries* that have occurred are driven mostly by Democrats changing opinions and Republicans remaining essentially unchanged. To look further at these dynamics, we organize our discussion by policy areas and examine changes over time where we can.

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<sup>22</sup> Hal Brands, "The Emerging Biden Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs*, June 29, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-29/emerging-biden-doctrine>.

*Foreign Policy and International Organizations.*

Overall, the big partisan split on whether the U.S. should play a major role in the international arena and coordinate and collaborate with international organizations to solve global issues continues. In fact, 83% of Democrats and only a third of Republicans thought that diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace (Figure 9). Although large majorities of Democrats and Republicans (85% and 60% respectively) wanted to either maintain the U.S. commitment to NATO or increase it, the 25-point partisan gap is the widest it has been since 1974 (Figure 12). Similarly, Democrats were consistently more favorable toward the United Nations, the WHO, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) than Republicans with partisan differences ranging between 23 and 39 percentage points in 2020 (Figure 13).

These large gaps may be attributed to the different priorities and views that Democrats and Republicans express concerning the role of the U.S. in global affairs. A majority of Republicans (80%) but only 35% of Democrats believed that the United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world, a difference which has been more than doubled since 2012 (Figure 14). Likewise, almost two-thirds of Republicans agreed that the U.S. was the world's leading economic power in July 2020 – 20 percentage points above Democratic support (Figure 15). These evaluations are reflected in the divergence of opinions about whether the U.S. is more respected by other countries these days compared with the past (Figure 16). Partisanship has strongly affected Americans' perceptions here – as occurred in different aspects of American domestic and foreign politics in the past, but more so in recent years.

Significant partisan divides exist on the priorities the U.S. should have in its foreign policy as well as its effectiveness in successfully coping with global threats. Figure 17 shows that Democrats placed a higher premium on combating global climate change (48%), stopping Russian interference in U.S. government (41%) and politics, and improving relationships with U.S. allies (40%), while Republicans were more concerned about reducing illegal immigration (64%), dealing with terrorist threats (53%), and protecting jobs for American workers (40%). During the last months of Trump's presidency, Republicans expressed much higher levels of confidence in the capacity of the American government to effectively deal with all of these threats much higher than did Democrats (Figure 18). Importantly, Democrats seemed to favor more conciliatory foreign policy tools than Republicans, who tended to agree that aggressive and punitive measures against adversaries are more effective than signing international agreements or maintaining existing alliances (Figure 19).

*Globalization and Free Trade.*

During the past 15 years, Americans have grown increasingly apart in their attitudes toward globalization and free trade. In 2020, three-quarters of Democrats stated that globalization, especially the increasing connections of the American economy with others around the world, was mostly good for the U.S. In contrast, only 55% of Republicans agreed with that statement, the lowest percentage in a decade (Figure 20). This divergence is particularly striking as two-thirds of both partisan publics admitted that the foreign policy decisions made by the American government affected their lives and those of their families (Figure 21). Similarly, a slim majority of the public across both parties understood that America was stronger when it took a leading role in the world to protect its national interests and advance common goals with other countries (Figures 22-23).

Despite the fact that Trump was elected as a staunch critic of free trade agreements, which he often described as the cause of massive job losses in the U.S., his presidency surprisingly transformed how the American public perceived free trade in a positive way. Between 2016 and 2020, Democrats and Republicans increased their support for the general idea of free trade by 20 and 28 percentage points respectively, reaching a 30-year high of almost 80%. This increase was particularly pronounced among Republicans, which suggests they have come to see prospects for free trade differently in the hands of the more protectionist Trump administration. In a 2021 Gallup poll, Republicans' skepticism about free trade being an opportunity for the American economy bounced back to a 12-year low at 44% (Figure 24).

Republicans have been supportive of certain protectionist measures even when they took up a positive stance toward free trade. In 2018 and 2019, they were five times more likely than Democrats to think that increasing the tariffs between the U.S. and its trading partners was a good thing for the U.S. (Figure 25). Accordingly, Republicans expressed strong support (60%) for producing critical goods in the U.S. and not buying or selling critical goods overseas, ensuring the national supply of goods, even if this meant higher prices (Figure 26). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 47% of Republicans but only a quarter of Democrats agreed that individual countries should themselves make all the goods they need in order to ensure that a crisis or disaster in one place would not hurt the supply of goods around the world (Figure 27).

*Russia.*

The Trump presidency reshaped how the American public viewed Russia and its relation to the United States. In a 2019 Pew Research survey, nearly 70% of the general public thought of Russia as an adversary or a serious problem, a rise of four percentage points since 2016. This large majority masked important partisan divergence, with 83% of Democrats versus 61% of Republicans thinking Russia in negative terms (Figure 28). Until Trump's election both Democrats and Republicans were similarly concerned about Russia representing a threat to the U.S. but during Trump's presidency the partisan gap grew wider and reached a 15-year high, with 65% of Democrats and only 35% of Republicans perceiving Russia as a threat (Figure 29). Gallup reported a comparable 30-point gap in 2019 (Figure 30). Large partisan gaps of 10 to 30 percentage points also exist in regard to favoring trade and strengthening ties with Russia (Figures 31-32). Although Russia's favorability rating steadily decreased among Democrats and Republicans (Figure 33), a third of the latter (vs. 10% of the former) had confidence in Putin (Figure 34) as Trump downplayed Russia's efforts to interfere with American elections. These differences in evaluations may be related to the fact that Democrats were roughly twice as likely as Republicans to be concerned about Russia or other foreign countries interfering with the 2020 presidential election (Figures 35-36).

### *China.*

An increasing share of Americans described China in negative terms. In January 2020, roughly 40% of Democrats and Republicans saw China as a critical threat to the vital interest of the U.S. However, in July 2020, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this share increased by 9 and 26 percentage points respectively, hitting a 20-year high (Figure 37). A solid majority of supporters of both parties perceived China as a rival of the U.S. (Figure 38), thought that China should be less involved in addressing the world's problems (Figure 39), and believed that limiting its power and influence should be given top priority as a long-range foreign policy goal (Figure 40). Republicans remained more unfavorable toward China (83%), but Democrats were also increasingly negative (Figure 41).

Overall, all partisans became reluctant to undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China in dealing with its rising power (Figure 42). Republican elites were more likely than their Democratic counterparts to identify China as a critical threat (Figure 43) and twice as likely to have agreed that the U.S. should actively work to limit China's power (Figure 44). Republicans were much more likely to support hardline policies on economic issues while majorities of all partisans favored negotiating arms control agreements, placing sanctions on the Chinese officials who were responsible for human rights abuses, working with China to limit climate change, and prohibiting U.S. companies from selling sensitive high-tech products to China and Chinese technology companies from building communication networks in the U.S. (Figure 45). Further, large majorities of Republicans, but not Democrats, favored increasing tariffs on products imported from China, reducing trade between the United States and China, even if that led to greater costs for American consumers, restricting the exchange of scientific research between the U.S. and China, and limiting the number of Chinese students studying in the United States (Figure 46).

### *Use of Military Force and U.S. Bases Abroad.*

Republicans and Democrats shared similar perceptions concerning the potential for war. Almost half of all partisans expected the U.S. to fight in another world war within the next ten years (Figure 47). Nevertheless, Democrats and Republicans disagreed on how much to spend for national defense. Indeed, there was a 24-percentage point gap in opinions about national spending on national defense with 45% of Republicans but only 21% of Democrats saying that the U.S. spends too little on the military, armaments, and defense (Figure 48). Interestingly, the establishment of the U.S. Space Force in 2018 coincided with a record low of roughly 23% of all partisans stating that the U.S. spent too little on space exploration (Figure 49).

Overall, Americans' support for intervention abroad depended on which country was involved. Solid majorities of Democrats and Republicans supported the use of troops if a U.S. ally were invaded, if another country seized territory of a U.S. ally, or if North Korea invaded South Korea or Japan (Figures 50-51). However, partisans were more skeptical about a possible intervention if China invaded Taiwan or if China initiated a military conflict with Japan over disputed islands (Figures 50-51). In contrast to Democratic elites who partially shared the skepticism of the general public, 85-89% of Republican elites<sup>23</sup> reported that the U.S. should send troops to support Japan or Taiwan in case China threatened them (Figure 52-53).

Democrats and Republicans were most notably divided regarding military intervention and bases in the Middle East. Seven out of ten Republicans favored the use of U.S. troops if Israel were invaded by a neighbor, while only 46% of Democrats agreed with such a course of action (Figure 50). Large differences could also be observed in opinions about military bases in Iraq and Kuwait. Roughly 70% of

<sup>23</sup> "Leaders" as defined and sampled by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, see: <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/divisions-us-china-policy-opinion-leaders-and-public>

Republicans but only half of Democrats supported the U.S. having long-term bases in both countries (Figure 54). Finally, Republicans were 20-percentage points more likely than Democrats (a 10-year high of 61%) to favor long-term military bases in Afghanistan (Figure 55).

#### *Allies and Foreign Aid.*

Relations with U.S. allies and foreign assistance continued to be divisive issues. Since 2016, there has been a decline of 12 percentage points among Democrats (37%) who believed that the U.S. spent too much money on foreign aid and assistance to other countries; the 28-percentage point partisan gap is the widest of the last 50 years (Figure 56). In 2019, 48% of Republicans (vs. 28% of Democrats) said that allies in Europe should increase their spending on national defense. Notwithstanding, Republicans' support has waned by about 15 percentage points since 2017 (Figure 57). Majorities on both sides favored greater cooperation with Germany, though Democrats by 12 points more than Republicans: three-quarters of Democrats and 63% of Republicans expressed positive attitudes toward Germany (Figure 58). Partisans on both sides ranked Germany as the fifth most important foreign policy partner (Figure 59). Favoring greater economic cooperation with Germany did not necessarily mean that Americans also agreed to keep the U.S. military presence in Germany at current levels. In response to Trump's initiative to reduce the US military presence in Germany from 34,500 to 25,000 U.S. troops in 2020, 51% of Republicans, versus 29% of Democrats, approved this move (Figure 60).

South Korea and Japan have long been the principal allies of the U.S. in Asia. In 2020, almost 80% of partisans on both sides (up from 66% in 2018) agreed that it was important for the U.S. to build strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan, even if this might challenge U.S. relations with China (Figure 61). In addition, large majorities of partisans (80-90%) indicated that good relations with Japan were important for the economy and national security of the U.S. (Figure 62) and expressed positive views about Japan (Figure 63). Finally, 65% of Democrats and 72% of Republicans favored the U.S. having long-term military bases in Japan (Figure 64).

#### *Iran.*

The Trump presidency was a major test for the relations of the U.S. with Iran. Overwhelming majorities of Democrats (70%) and Republicans (82%) were consistently critical of Iran (Figure 65). In 2019, almost 57% of partisans on both sides (up from 51% in 2017 (Figure 66)) believed that Iran's nuclear program was a major threat to the U.S. (Figure 67). Although 74% of Democrats supported the return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, or the Iran nuclear agreement) in 2021, only 39% of Republicans (down from 53% in 2018) expressed positive views (Figure 68).

The most critical moment for the U.S.-Iran relations in recent years was the January 2020 assassination of Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian major general. Trump's decision to proceed with the strike without any previous deliberation divided Republicans and Democrats. More specifically, Republicans and Republican-leaning independents were more confident (83%) than Democrats and Democratic leaners (14%) in what the Trump administration said on Iran (Figure 69). Moreover, 80% of Republicans approved the decision to conduct the drone strike that killed the top Iranian general and the way Trump was handling foreign policy, while only 15% and 8% of Democrats answered positively to these two items, respectively (Figure 70). Finally, 63% of Republicans thought that the strike contributed to make the country safer but three-quarters of Democrats said that this decision made the U.S. less safe (Figure 71) and increased the likelihood of a major military conflict between the U.S. and Iran (Figure 72).

#### *Israel and Palestine.*

Israel remains popular in the U.S. but Americans are warming to Palestinians. In particular, 58% of Americans expressed their sympathy with the Israelis in a 2021 Gallup poll, while a quarter of the general public (up from 19% in 2017) was favorable to the Palestinians (Figure 73) and 52% supported the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Figure 74).

However, attitudes toward Israelis and Palestinians depend heavily on partisanship, with Democrats being more supportive of the Palestinian cause and Republicans rooting for Israel (Figure 75). In 2018, the partisan divide in Middle East sympathies was wider than at any point in the last forty years (Figure 76). In 2020, more than 60% of Democrats but only a third of Republicans favored the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (Figure 77). A year later, 53% of Democrats (up from 43% in 2018 and no more than 38% in the decade before that) stated that the U.S. should put more pressure to the Israelis in order to resolve the Mideast conflict. Meanwhile, only 17% of Republicans agreed with the U.S. applying more pressure on the Israelis (Figure 78).

*Afghanistan and Iraq.*

Americans remained divided about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2018, two-thirds of Republicans thought that the U.S. made the right decision in 2001 to use military force in Afghanistan while less than a third of Democrats shared this opinion. This gap was the widest it has been since 2006 (Figure 79). A comparable divide could be observed in 2021, too (Figure 80). Similar disagreement exists about how successful the war in Afghanistan was. Roughly half of Republicans (up from 29% in 2015) evaluated the outcome of the war in a positive manner whereas 28% (down from 42% in 2015) of Democrats thought that the U.S. had mostly succeeded in achieving its goals in Afghanistan (Figure 81). Further, almost 50% of Republicans (vs. 27% of Democrats) agreed that sending troops to Afghanistan was the correct choice and that the war was worth fighting (Figures 82-83). In contrast, about three-quarters of Democrats regretted the invasion in Afghanistan.

The recent military evacuation of Afghanistan brought America's longest war to an end and affected public opinion on the war. In a Pew Research Center survey conducted between August 23 and 29, 2021, Democrats (33%) were less likely than Republicans (61%) to view Taliban control of Afghanistan as a major threat to the security of the United States (Figures 84). In fact, Democrats evaluated domestic terrorism as a more critical threat than international terrorism – an opinion that is in stark contrast with how Republicans perceive the relative risk (Figure 85). Republicans and Democrats also disagreed on whether the U.S. decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan was the right one: almost two-thirds of Republicans disagreed with this initiative while 70% of Democrats favored the end of the war (Figures 86). Further, the Democratic public was split on whether the United States' initial decision to use military force in 2001 was right or wrong whereas 70% of Republicans supported this decision (Figures 86). Nevertheless, most partisans are united in thinking the U.S. mostly failed in achieving its goals in Afghanistan and that the Biden administration did not handle the situation in Afghanistan in a positive way (Figures 86-87).

Public opinion on Iraq exhibited similar dynamics. In 2018, 61% of Republicans (up from 52% in 2014) but only 27% of Democrats reported that the U.S. made the right decision in engaging in invading Iraq (Figure 88). Moreover, 48% of Republicans (up from 38% in 2014) and just 30% of Democrats (down from 36% in 2014) answered that the war in Iraq was mostly successful (Figure 89). Overall, considering the costs and benefits of the Iraq war, 46% of Republicans and almost 80% of Democrats suggested that it had not been worth fighting it (Figure 83). Finally, veterans were more negative than the general public about whether the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were worth fighting. Less than half of Republican veterans thought that the wars were worth it while only 26% and 15% of Democratic veterans agreed that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had been beneficial, respectively (Figure 90).

*North Korea.*

Contrary to previous areas, North Korea remained a relatively uncontroversial foreign policy issue. Indeed, partisans on both sides expressed similar attitudes toward North Korea. A 2018 Gallup poll revealed that almost half of Democrats have perceived North Korea as an enemy since 2006. In contrast, the Trump presidency reshaped how Republican viewed North Korea: 42% perceived North Korea as an enemy in 2018, down from 64% in 2013 (Figure 91). About half of both Republicans and Democrats found North Korea's nuclear program to be a major threat to the well-being of the United States (Figure 92). A similar share of Republicans said that North Korea's leadership was not serious about addressing concerns about its nuclear program, while Democrats were even more skeptical (Figure 93).

Significant partisan differences are found in what kind of pressure the U.S. should apply on North Korea to convince it to stop building its nuclear weapons program (Figure 94). Democrats preferred less violent actions such as imposing tighter economic sanctions and conducting cyberattacks against North Korea's nuclear production facilities, while Republicans favored more drastic measures like conducting airstrikes or sending troops to destroy nuclear production facilities. Nevertheless, 80% of Republicans (vs. 17% of Democrats) declared that the U.S. should simply accept the fact that that North Korea would produce additional nuclear weapons.

*Immigration and Refugees.*

Immigration remains one of the most divisive issues in contemporary American politics. Although the coronavirus outbreak in 2020 reduced public concerns about immigration, the share of Americans who thought that illegal immigration was a very big problem in the country increased from 28% to 48%, which marked a 5-year high. More specifically, 72% of Republicans (up from 43%) and 29% of Democrats (up from 15%) declared illegal immigration to be a very big national problem (Figure 95). A more macroscopic view reveals that polarization on immigration is asymmetric: since 1998 Republicans' opinion on the issue has remained almost unchanged, while Democrats have become less concerned about the large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S. after 2002 and increasingly so after 2010 (Figure 96).

A similar trend concerns the importance of controlling and reducing illegal immigration (Figure 97). Despite the fact that Democrats and Republicans differed in their attitudes toward immigration, there is evidence that common ground existed in certain policy areas. Solid majorities of partisans on both sides favored increasing staffing and resources available to patrol and police the U.S.-Mexico border and to process unaccompanied minors more quickly, reducing the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum, and providing safe and sanitary conditions for asylum seekers once they arrive in the U.S. (Figure 98). In contrast, wide partisan gaps existed about making it easier for asylum seekers to be granted legal status, providing more assistance to countries in places like Central America, where many asylum seekers originate, not allowing people to seek asylum in the U.S. (Figure 94), and building a wall in the U.S.-Mexico border (Figure 99).

*The Future of Liberal Internationalism: the COVID-19 Pandemic, Climate Change, Globalization, and the Rise of Autocratic Regimes*

During the first months of Joe Biden's presidency, public opinion seems to have been more confident about the position of the U.S. in global affairs. A majority of Americans (60%) expressed confidence in Biden's ability to handle international affairs (Figure 100). This majority is not as large as the one that Barack Obama enjoyed at the beginning of his term (74%) but it is significantly larger than that of Donald Trump (46%). Nevertheless, following a trend that dates back at least to the administration of George W. Bush, there are vast partisan differences in public trust in the president to handle foreign policy. Throughout his presidency, Democrats were skeptical of Trump's capacity to do the right thing regarding world affairs while Republicans were clearly more confident. In the beginning of 2021, this dynamic reversed: 88% of Democrats but only 27% of Republicans expressed confidence in Biden's handling of international affairs (Figure 101). Gaps of similar magnitude characterized Democrats' (93%) and Republicans' (41%) views about whether Biden's election victory would improve how other countries perceive the U.S. (Figure 102).

Moreover, there are stark partisan divides over foreign policy priorities and in terms of public confidence in Biden's decision-making and ability to deal effectively in different policy areas (Figure 103-104). Democrats and Republicans disagreed on the issues of improving relationships with U.S. allies, maintaining the U.S. military advantage over all other countries, limiting the power and influence of China, Iran, and Russia, reducing illegal immigration into the U.S., dealing with global climate change, and getting other countries to assume more of the costs of maintaining world order. In contrast, solid majorities favored giving top priority to protecting the jobs of American workers, taking measures to protect the U.S. from terrorist attacks, reducing the spread of infectious diseases, and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Smaller percentages of partisans on both sides gave top priority to reducing the trade deficit with other countries, limiting the power and influence of North Korea, reducing U.S. military commitments overseas, aiding refugees who are fleeing violence around the world, reducing legal immigration into the U.S., promoting democracy in other nations, strengthening the United Nations, and promoting and defending human rights in other countries.

These dynamics of public opinion hint that the perseverance of liberal internationalism is still at stake. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a major challenge to the current world order. Since 2018, an increasing number of Americans from both parties have agreed that reducing the spread of infectious diseases should be given top priority as a long-range foreign policy goal (Figure 105). At the same time, both Democrats and Republicans seem to have become disenchanted with the United Nations.

Perhaps the most polarizing issue relating to the COVID-19 pandemic is the role of China. Republicans thought that the U.S. should limit the power and influence of China at a much higher rate than Democrats (Figure 105). Accordingly, they expressed more negative views about China and its handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, with partisan gaps ranging between 15 and 35 percentage points (Figures 106-107). Although Democrats blamed the U.S. government for the coronavirus situation during the first months of the health crisis, Republicans were more likely to criticize the governments of other countries and the World Health Organization (Figure 108).

In response to the pandemic, 80% of Democrats wanted the U.S. to coordinate and collaborate with other countries to solve global issues while roughly 60% of Republicans preferred the U.S. to be self-sufficient as a nation so that Americans did not need to depend on others (Figure 109). Partisans on both sides overwhelmingly agreed that the U.S. should have a major role in developing the coronavirus vaccine, but only Democrats favored allowing other entities (such as the WHO, the European Union, China) contributing to this effort (Figure 110). Similar disagreement existed on who should be benefited from the vaccines: 70% of Republicans said that the U.S. should keep any vaccines it produces for Americans first, while Democrats were divided over the U.S. making any vaccine it developed immediately available to other countries (Figure 111).

Despite the challenges that the pandemic currently represents for the international community, climate change is the most important threat that humans will have to face in the near future. Since the early 2000s, Republicans have grown more skeptical about climate change. Nowadays, Democrats almost unanimously believe that the world's temperature has probably been increasing over the past 100



years while only half of the Republicans share this belief. However, among those who believe that the global warming exists, solid majorities of Americans from both parties attribute the rise of temperature to human activity (Figure 112).

In 2020, the divide between Democrats and Republicans who thought that global warming would be at least a somewhat serious problem for the U.S. and the world and that the world's temperature would probably go up over the next 100 years hit a 15-year record high of almost 50 points (Figures 113-115). Most worryingly, a similar gap is observed regarding preferences about the actions that the U.S. government and other countries in the world should take to fight climate change: Republicans are consistently reluctant to support a green policy agenda while Democrats are enthusiastic about it (Figures 116-117).

In addition, it is crucial to redress the widening inequalities between the losers and winners of globalization. To deal with this urging issue, Republicans seem to prefer a more protectionist approach whereas Democrats think that problems can be better solved with greater integration at the international level (Figures 118). Perhaps Republicans' skepticism about the forces of globalization better manifests itself in the low ratings they give to international organizations (Figure 119), such as the WHO (38% vs. 88% of Democrats), the United Nations (46% vs. 86% of Democrats), and NATO (55% vs. 85% of Democrats). Finally, two-thirds of Republicans say the U.S. should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on domestic policy issues at the same time that the same share of Democrats wants the U.S. to be active in world affairs (Figure 120).

### *Conclusion*

After the end of World War II, the U.S. largely dominated the Western hemisphere and the world in political, economic, and cultural terms. During the American Century, international liberalism was the predominant foreign policy doctrine that encouraged interventions around the globe in order to pursue liberal objectives, such as the defense of human rights and the establishment of liberal democratic regimes and free market institutions. Nevertheless, systemic deficiencies have caused the unraveling of the current world order, a process that has been further accelerated by global shocks.

Recent developments highlight the importance of shocks in determining the international politics of the United States and bear on the current state of liberal internationalism. One is the COVID-19 pandemic with its domestic and global public health and economic consequences. The other is the defeat of the United States and its allies in Afghanistan. The liberal internationalism that was able to endure the Trump administration and that could rebound through the efforts of the Biden administration has been weakened by these two developments. The COVID-19 crisis was engulfed in the continuing partisan conflict in the United States that Trump inflamed and will endure for as long as Trump remains on the political scene and beyond. The partisan repercussions of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan are readily apparent and have ramifications for the next congressional and presidential elections.

In this international context, new types of authoritarian regimes offer an alternative Hobbesian vision of the world, one that often embraces economic freedom but consistently undermines fundamental political and social rights. The rise of illiberal democracies and autocracies around the globe foreshadows the defining clash of the twenty-first century. The longer-term consequences of these shocks for the American public and liberal internationalism are open questions to be answered by future opinion survey data and other evidence.

**George N. Georgarakis** holds a joint Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University and Sciences Po, Paris. His principal research interests lie in public opinion, the psychology of political behavior, persuasion, framing, emotions, and the design and analysis of randomized experiments.

**Robert Y. Shapiro** is the Wallace S. Sayre Professor of Government and Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, and the President of The Academy of Political Science. His research has focused on the interplay of public opinion, policymaking, political leadership and the mass media in the United States. His most recent book is *Perspectives on Presidential Elections, 1992-2000* (2021).

## APPENDIX

Figure 1. Trump's approval ratings so far are unusually stable – and deeply partisan

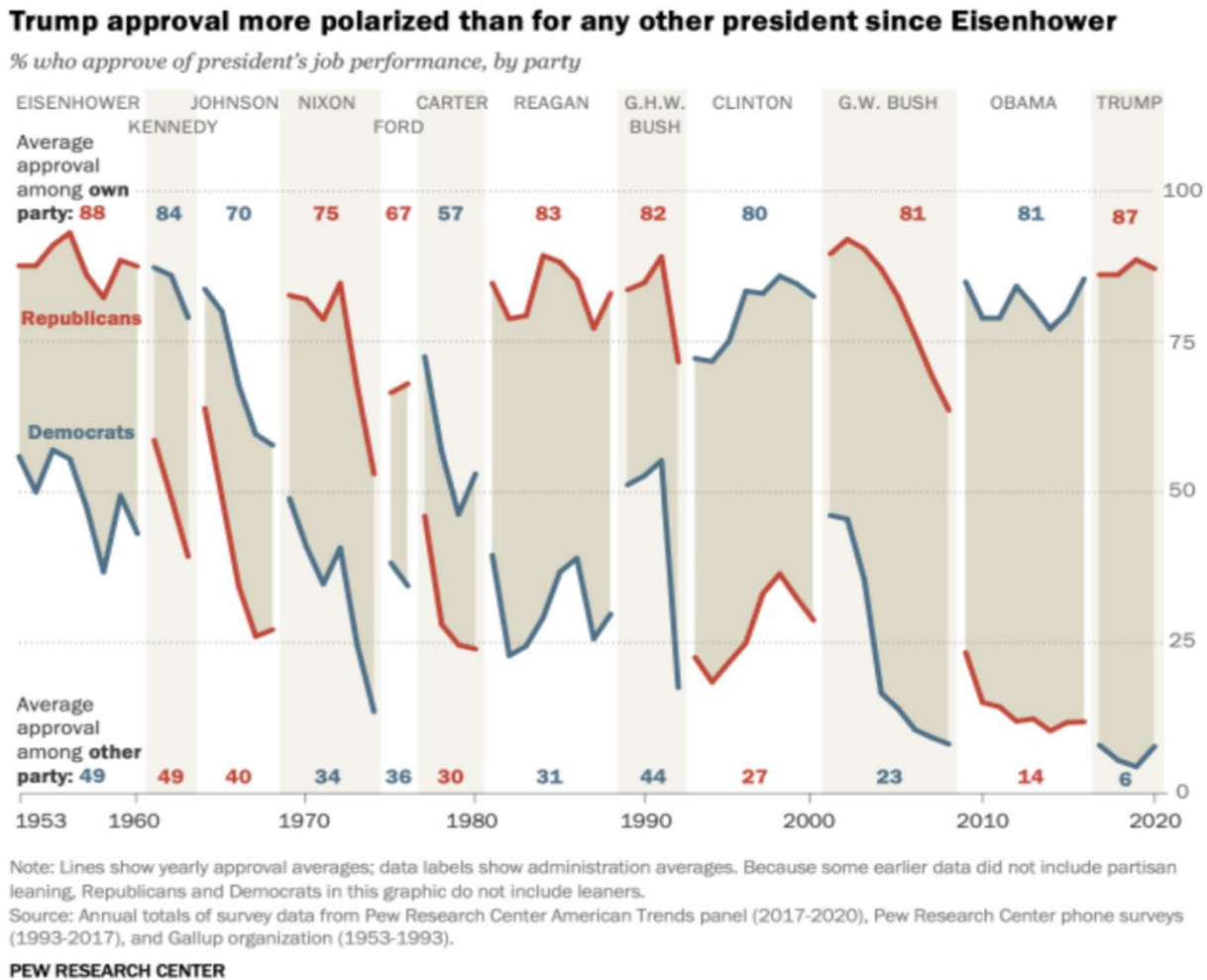


Figure 2. Biden Approval Drops to 50%, Lowest for Him to Date

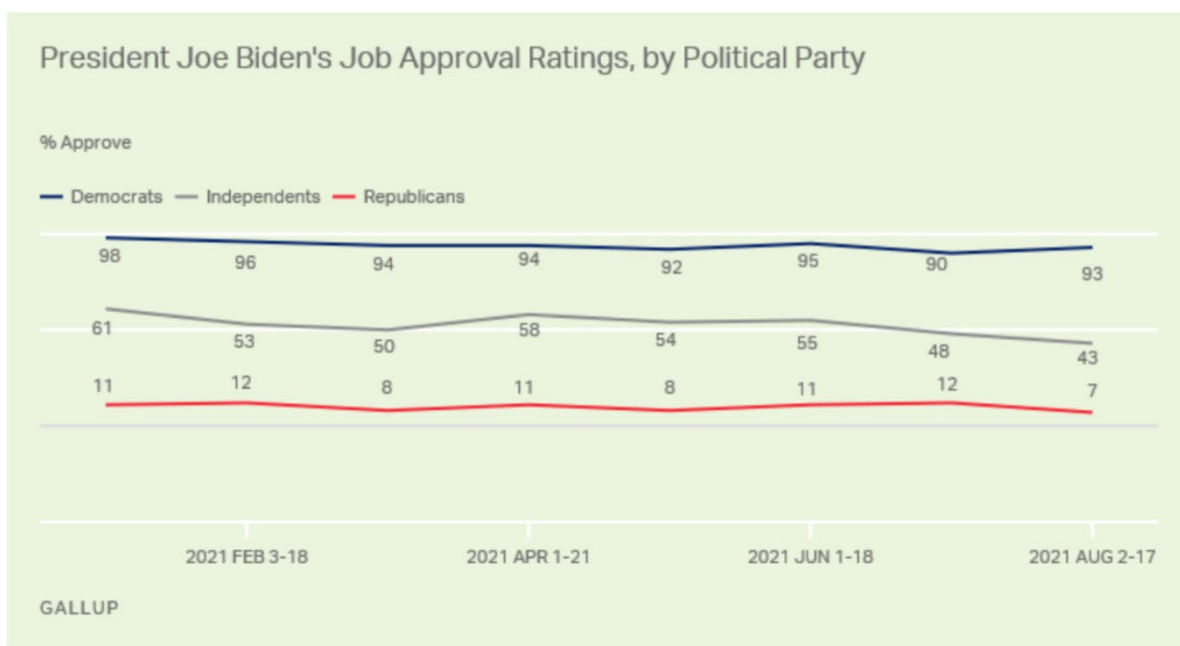


Figure 3. Ideological conflict across partisans.

NORC General Social Surveys 1974-2018, Liberal/Conservative Ideology (Self Reported)

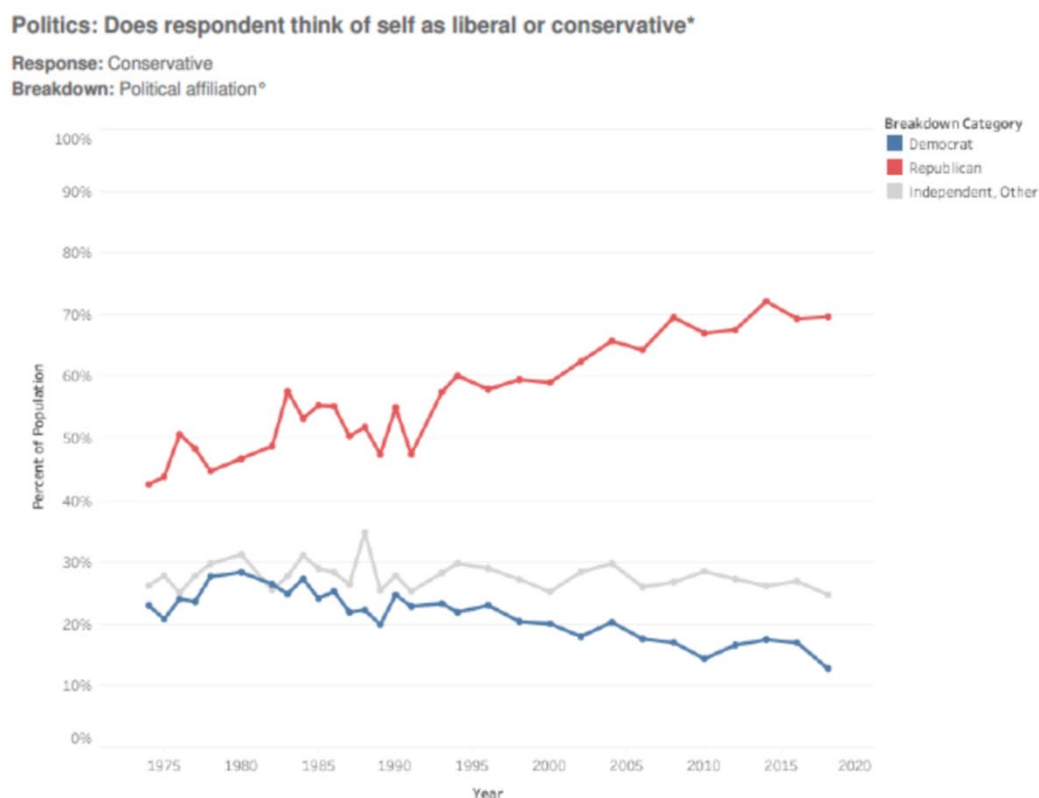


Figure 4. The partisan divide on political values grows even wider

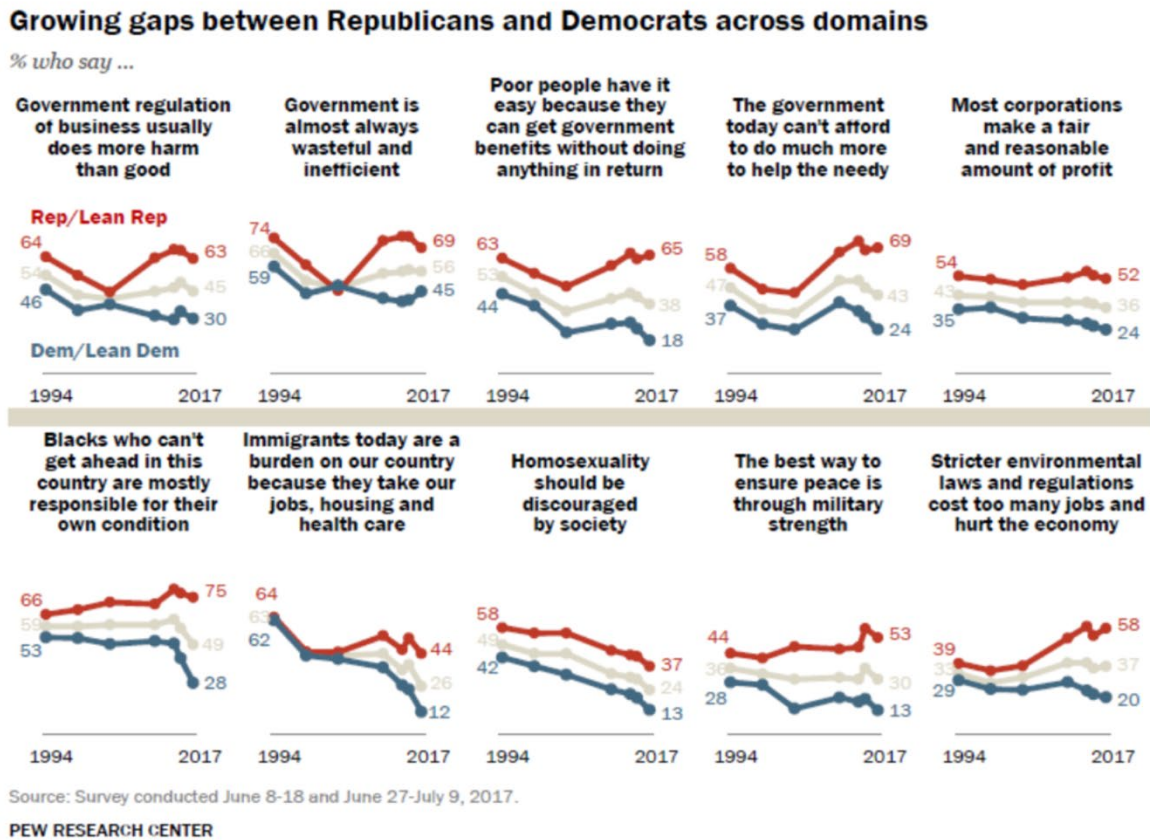
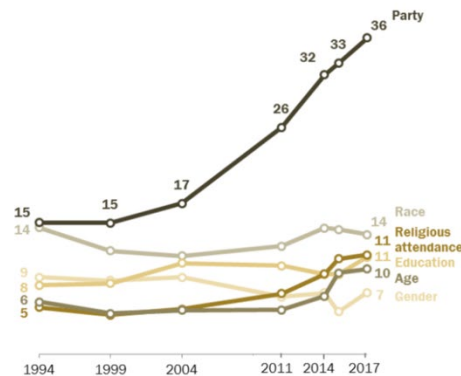


Figure 5. Pew Research Center 2017: The partisan divide on political values grows even wide

### But Partisan Differences Have Increased for Most Major Issues

• Pew Research Center Surveys: Average gap in the share taking a conservative position across 10 political values issues, by key demographics:



• Source: Survey conducted June 8-18 and June 27-July 9, 2017.

Figure 6. D-W Nominate Scores (Rosenthal and Poole): Ideological polarization in US Congress

## Liberal-Conservative Partisan Polarization: House and Senate

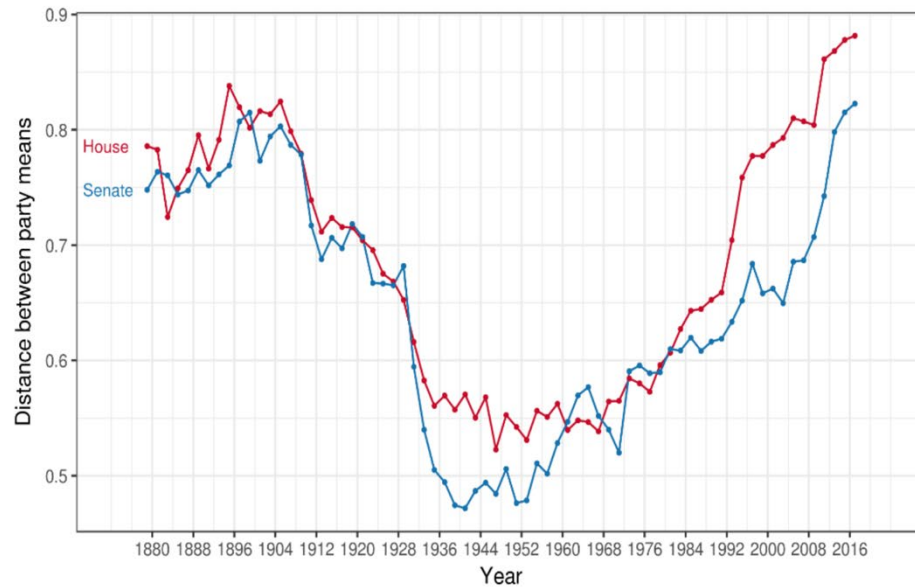


Figure 7. Ideological polarization in US House of Representatives

Party Mean “D-W Nominate Scores” on the Liberal-Conservative Dimension Over Time for the:  
The House of Representatives

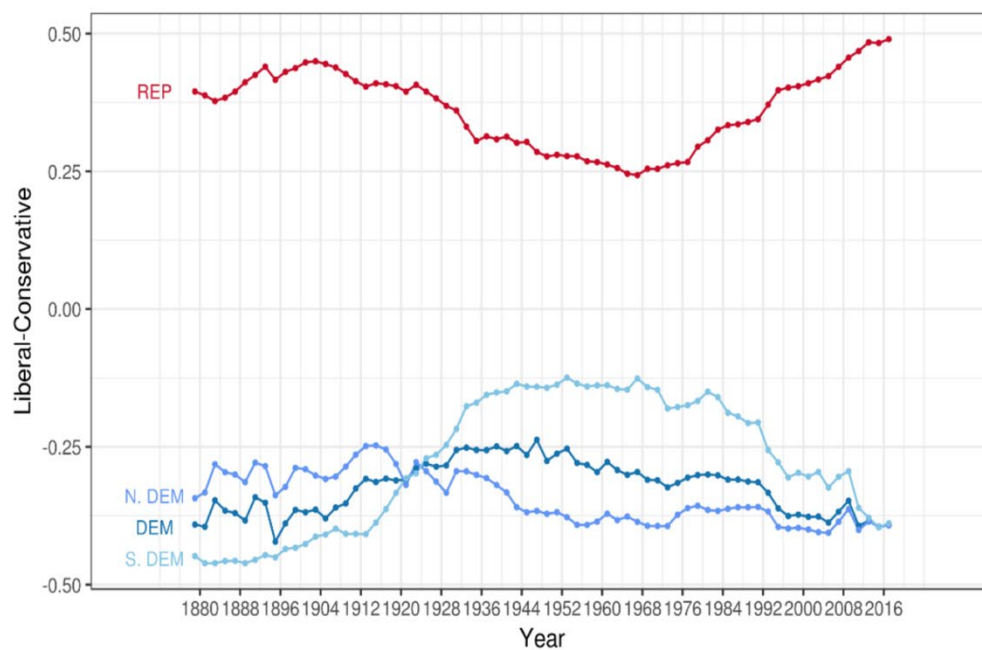




Figure 8. Ideological polarization in US Senate

Party Mean “D-W Nominate Scores” on the Liberal-Conservative Dimension Over Time for the:

## The Senate

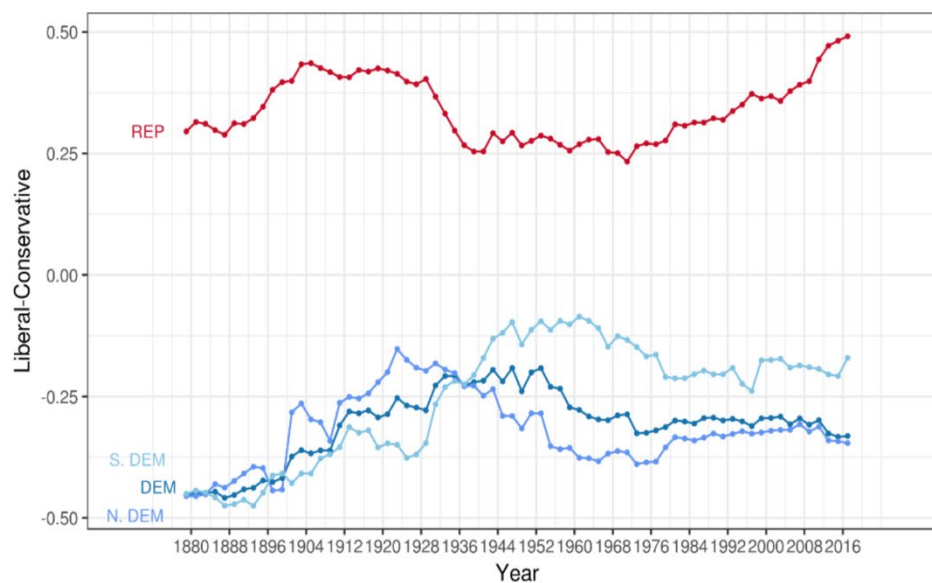


Figure 9. The partisan divide on political values grows even wider

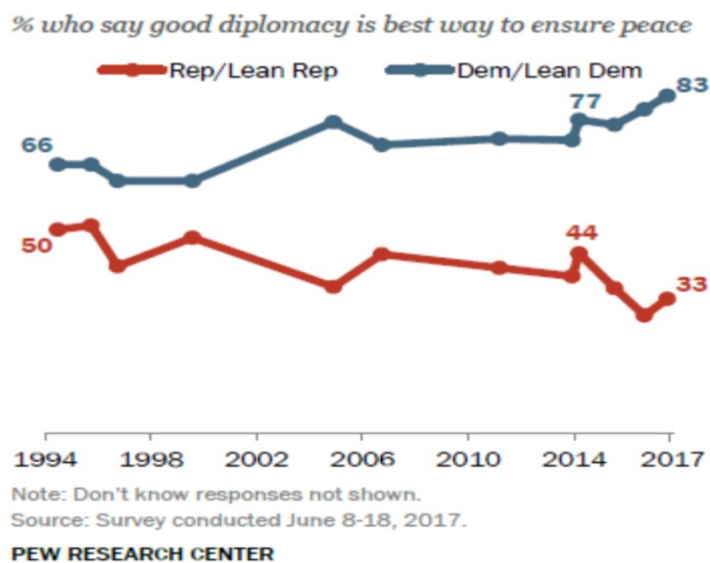


Figure 10. Measuring the Fault Lines in Current U.S. Foreign Policy

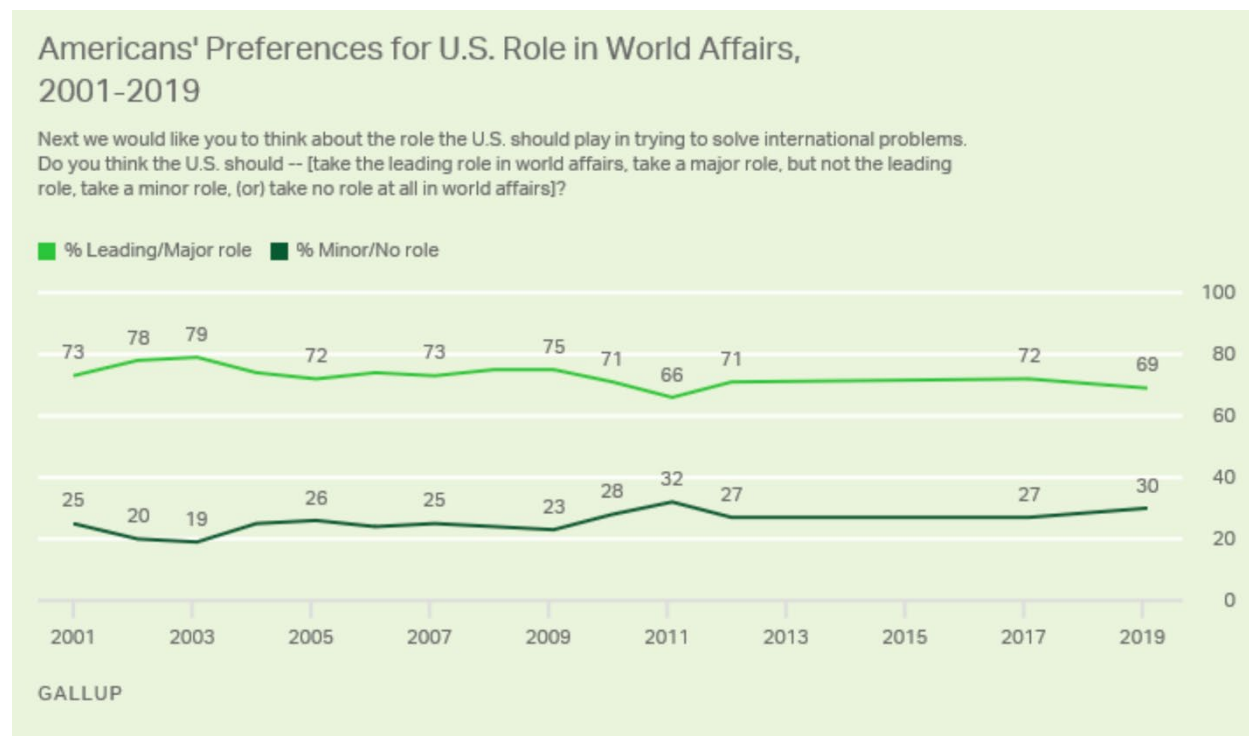
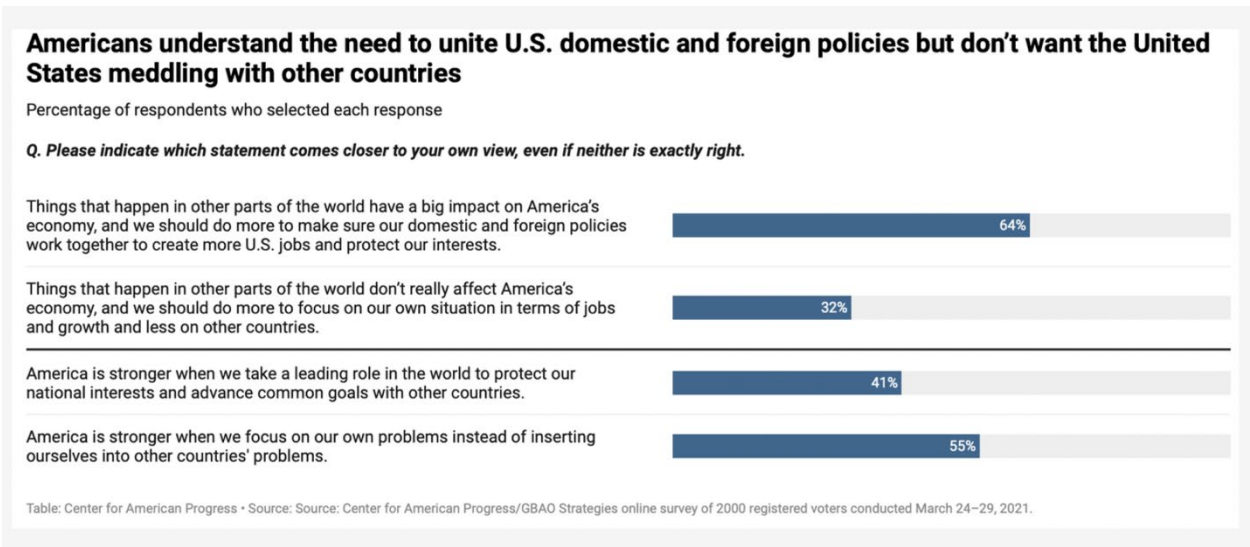


Figure 11. 3 Things Americans Think about U.S. Foreign Policy

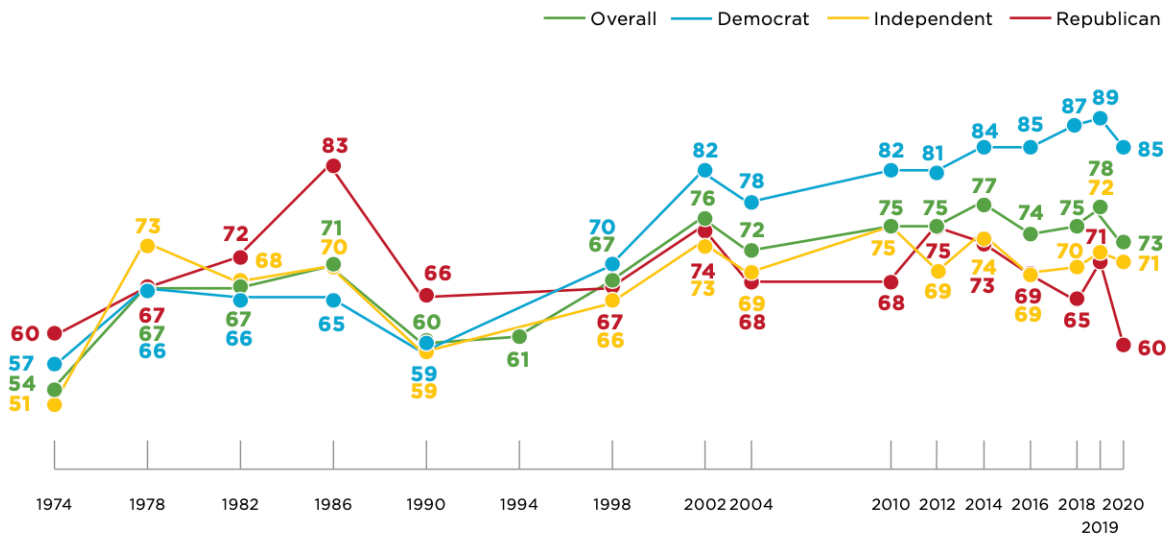


Foreign policy and international organizations

Figure 12. Divided we stand

Appendix Figure 4: **Commitment to NATO**

Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment to NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely? (% increase + keep same)  
n = 2,111



2020 Chicago Council Survey

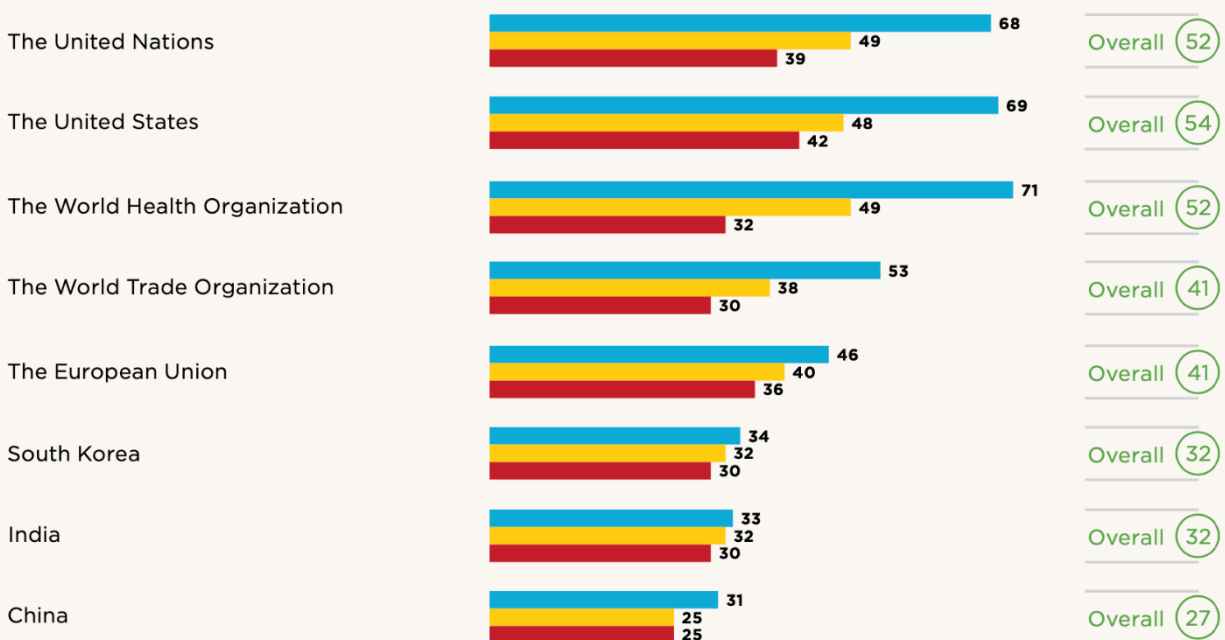
Figure 13. Divided we stand

Figure 11: **Involvement in Addressing World Problems**

Should the following countries and international organizations be more involved, less involved, or as involved as they are now in addressing the world's problems? (% more involved)

n = 2,111

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican



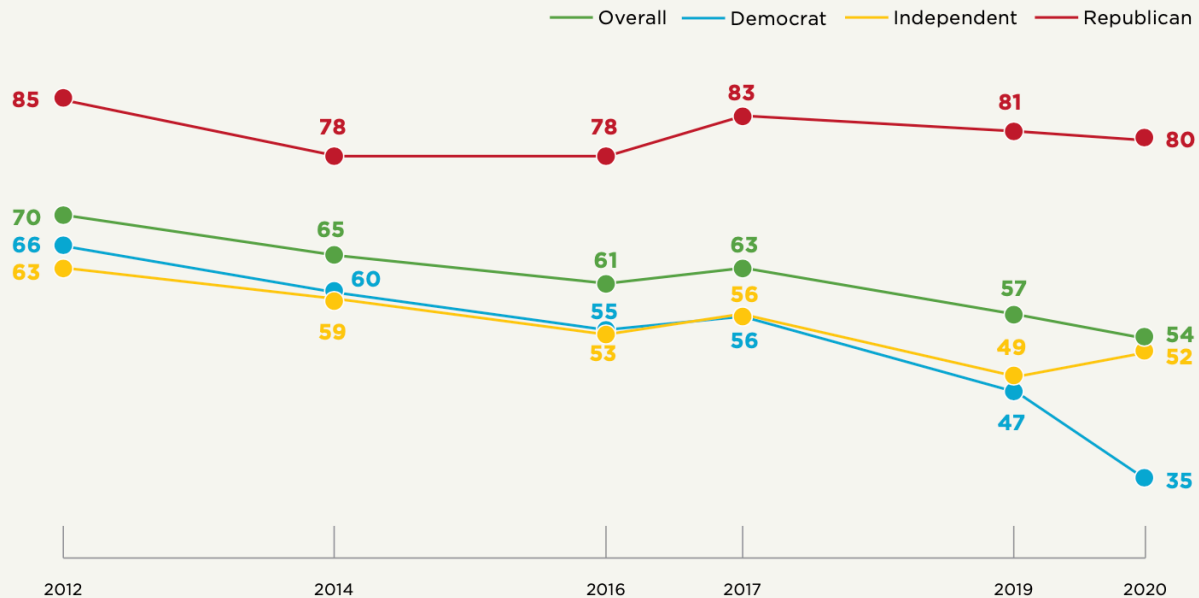
2020 Chicago Council Survey

Figure 14. Divided we stand

Figure E: **American Exceptionalism**

Some people say the United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world. Others say that every country is unique, and the United States is no greater than other nations. Which view is closer to your own? (% greatest country in the world)

n = 2,111



2020 Chicago Council Survey

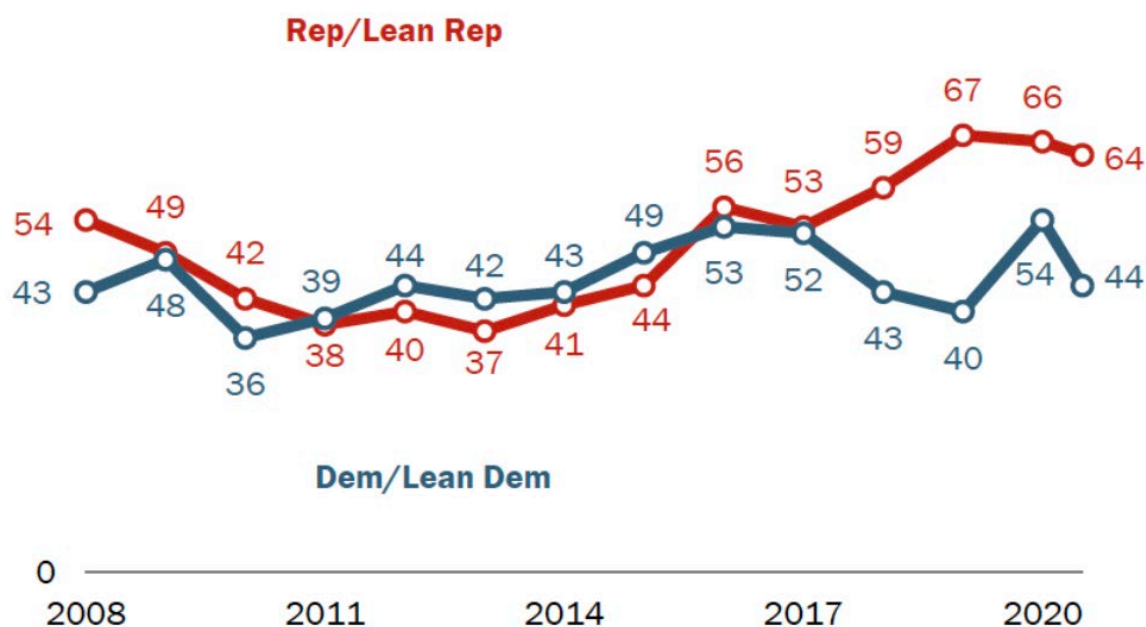


Figure 15. Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19

## Since March, decline in share of Democrats who see the U.S. as the world's top economy

% of \_\_\_ who say the U.S. is the world's leading economic power

100%



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020. Q14.

"Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19"

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Figure 16. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public’s Views of Global Threats

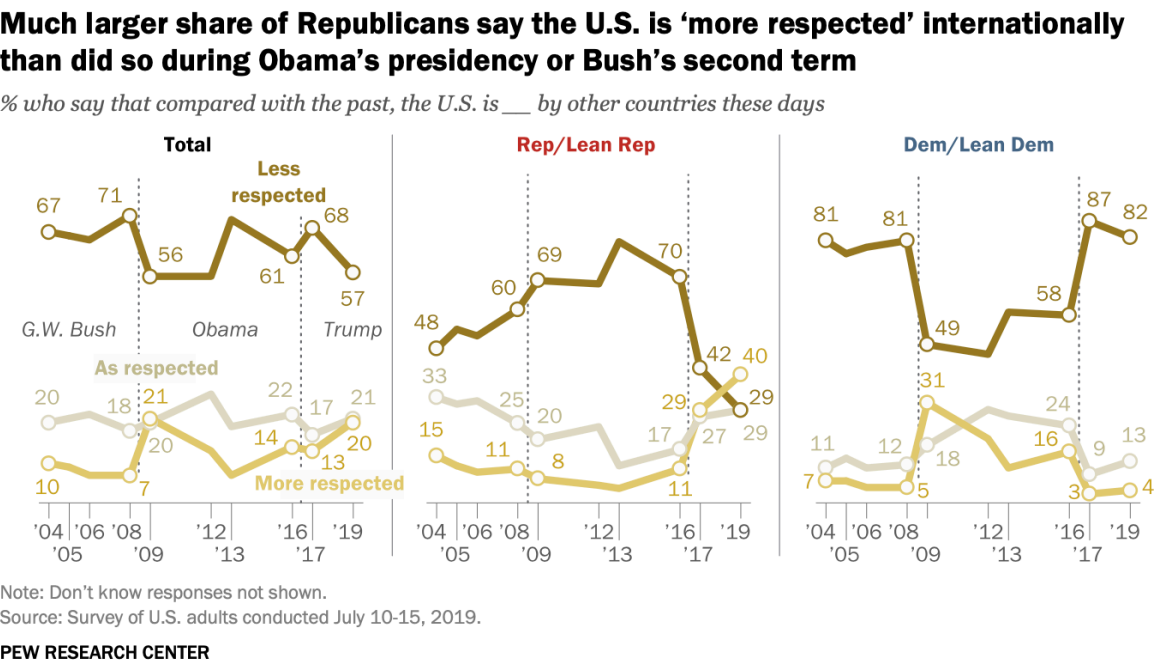


Figure 17. America Adrift

TABLE 1

**Democrats and younger voters prioritize improving international alliances and combating climate change**

Share of respondents who listed each foreign policy issue as a top priority, by political affiliation and generational group

Q. "Which three of the following issues should be the top priorities for U.S. foreign policy in the next five years?"

	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Generation Z/ Millennial	Generation X	Baby Boomer/ Silent Generation
Protecting against terrorist threats from groups such as ISIS or al-Qaeda	29	40	53	30	42	47
Protecting jobs for American workers	30	44	40	37	41	32
Reducing illegal immigration	10	34	64	25	34	44
Improving relationships with allies	40	27	22	33	30	30
Combating global climate change	48	28	9	38	26	24
Dealing with nuclear threats in Iran and North Korea	23	21	38	22	32	32
Stopping Russian interference in U.S. government and politics	41	26	11	27	24	29
Ending U.S. involvement in wars in the Middle East	20	28	18	23	22	17
Fighting global poverty and promoting human rights	27	16	9	31	16	11
Promoting international trade	13	13	14	13	15	13
Taking on China's economic and military aggression	6	12	17	9	10	14
Promoting democratic rights and freedoms abroad	12	8	5	11	9	7

Source: Center for American Progress and GBAO national online survey of 2,000 registered voters, conducted from February 23, 2019, through March 5, 2019. Poll results and data are on file with the authors.



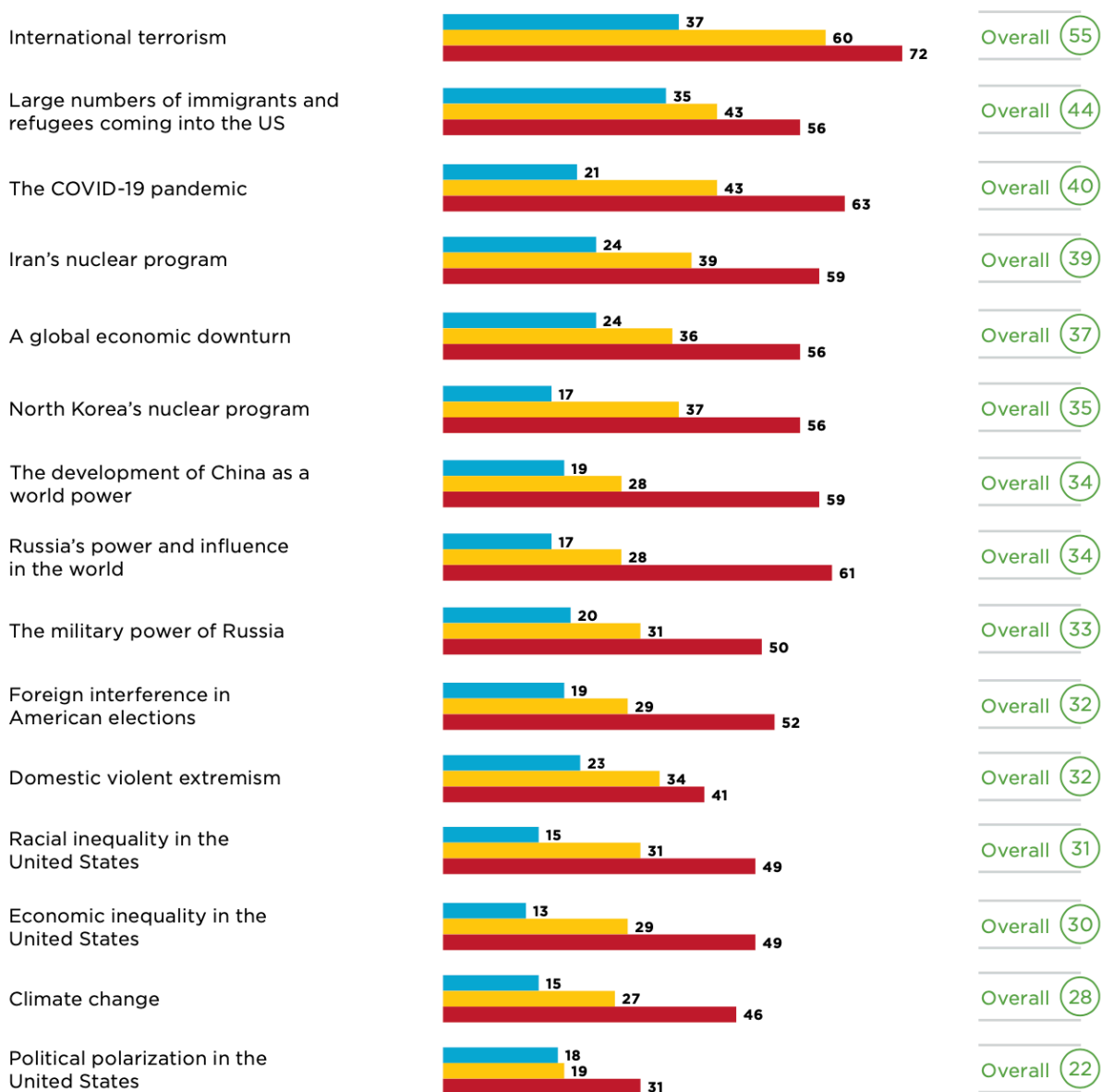
Figure 18. Divided we stand

## Appendix Figure 1: US Effectiveness in Dealing with Threats

How effective do you think the US government is in dealing with the following threats? (% very + somewhat effective)

n varies

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican



2020 Chicago Council Survey

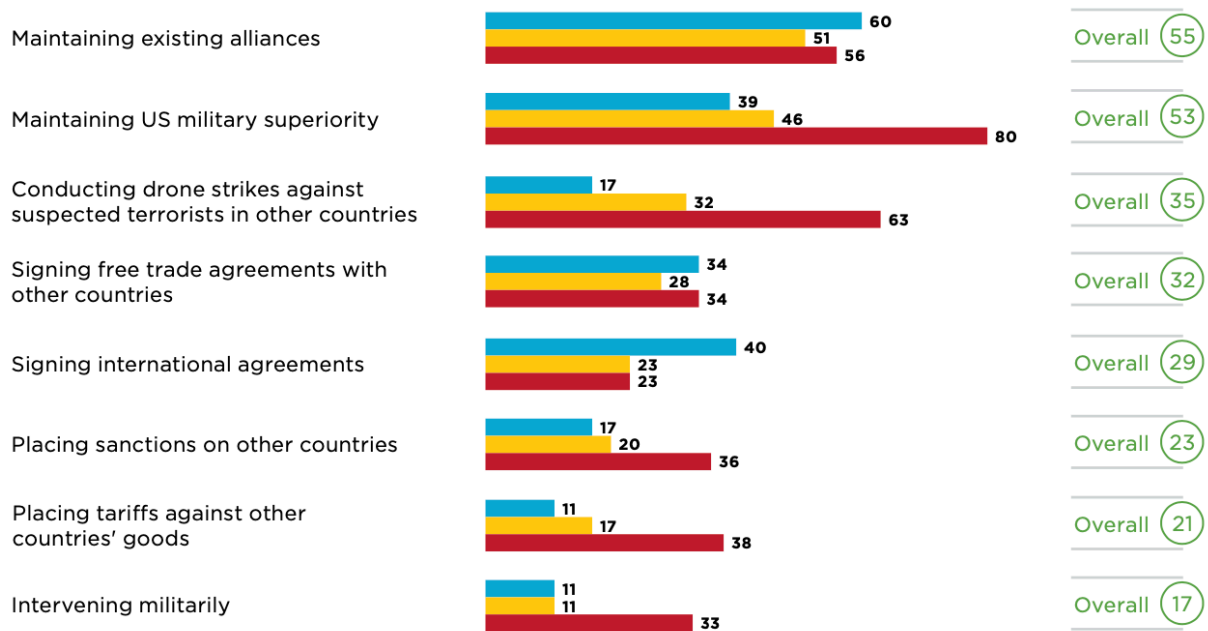
Figure 19. Divided we stand

Appendix Figure 2: **Efficacy of US Foreign Policy Tools**

And how effective do you think each of the following approaches is to achieving the foreign policy goals of the United States—very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not effective at all? (% very effective)

n = 1,019

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican



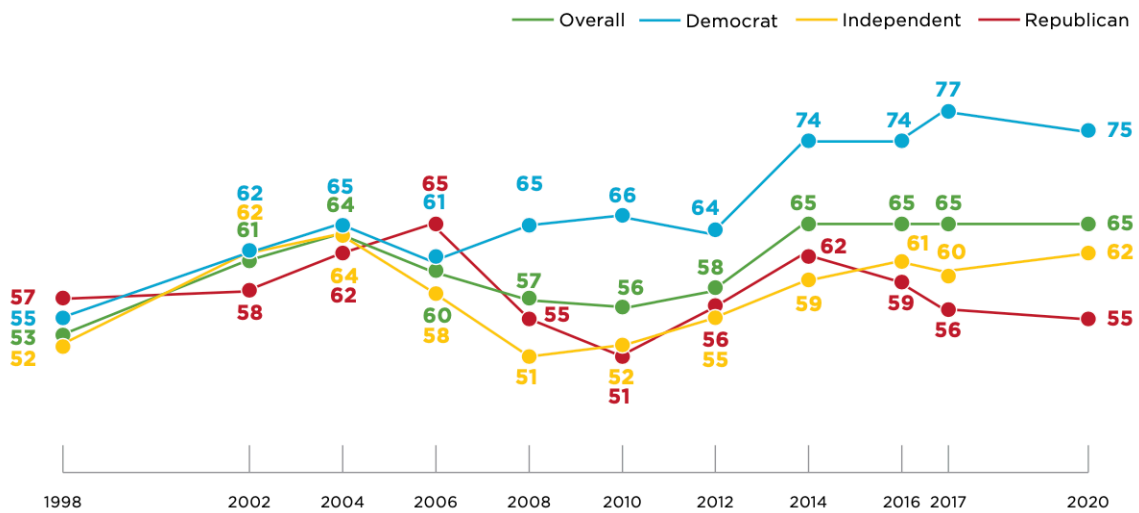
January 2020 Chicago Council Survey

Globalization and free trade

Figure 20. Divided we stand

Appendix Figure 3: **Effects of Globalization**

Turning to something else, do you believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for the United States? (% mostly good)  
n = 2,111



2020 Chicago Council Survey



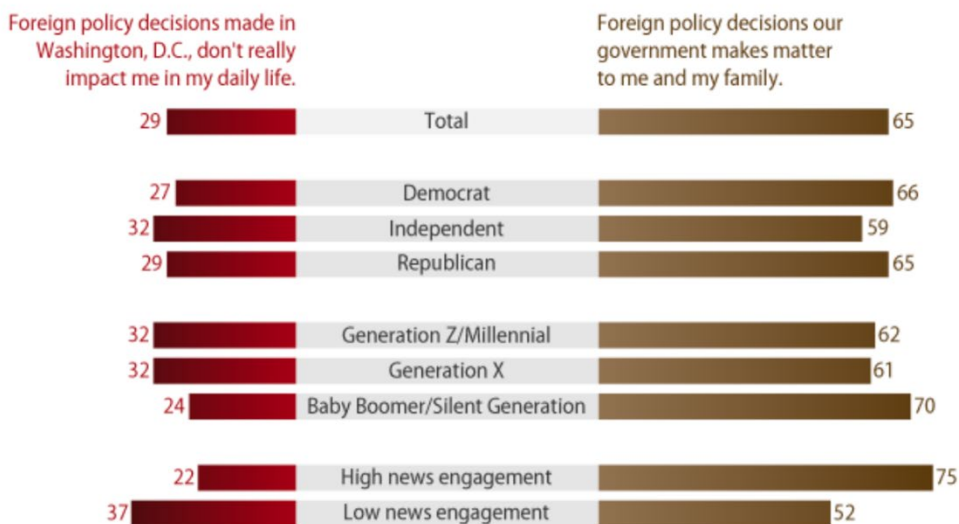
Figure 21. America Adrift

FIGURE 5

### Overall, the effects of foreign policy decisions are felt by U.S. voters across political parties and generations

Share of respondents, by category

Q. "Please indicate which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right."



Source: Center for American Progress and GBAO national online survey of 2,000 registered voters, conducted from February 23, 2019, through March 5, 2019. Poll results and data are on file with the authors.



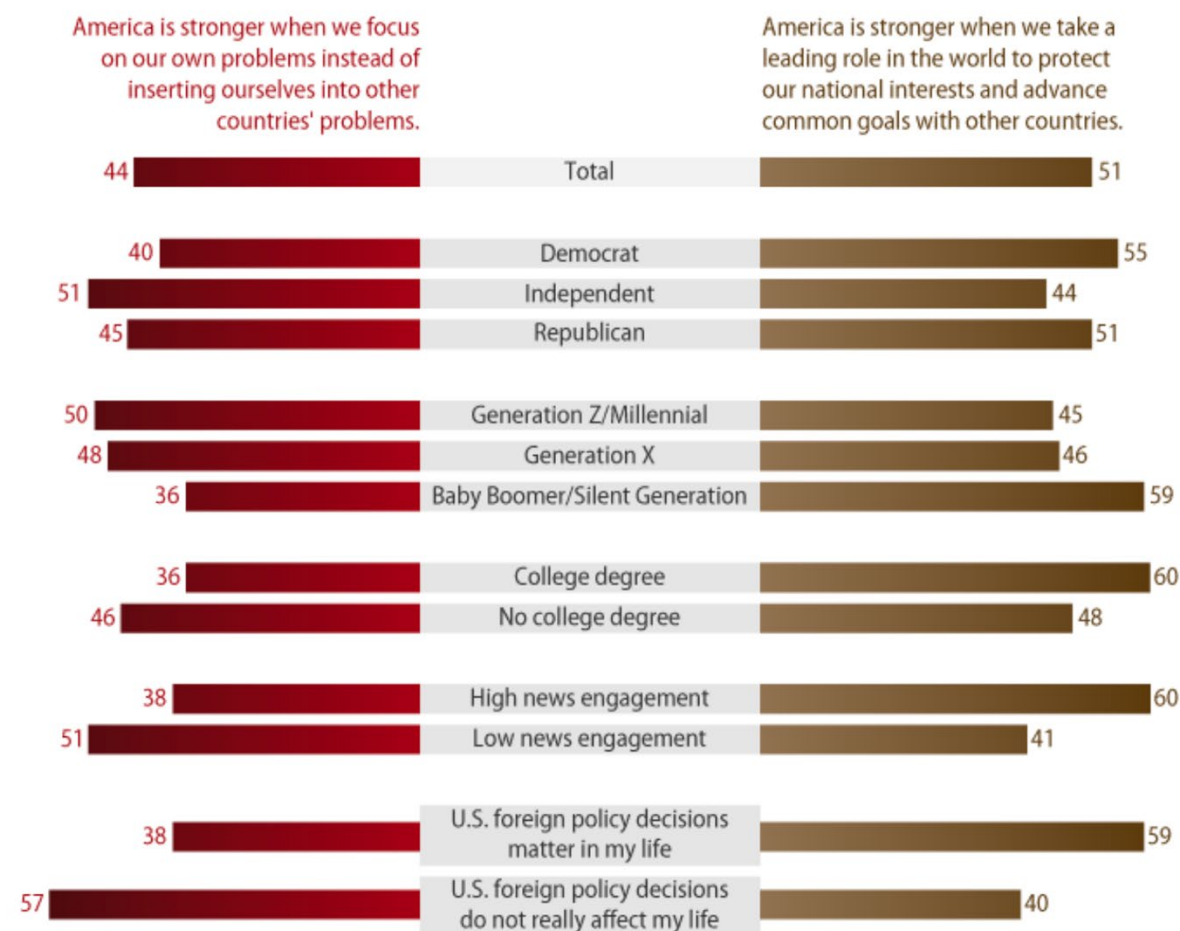
Figure 22. America Adrift

FIGURE 11

## On voters' views of the United States' global leadership role, the generational gap is greater than the partisan gap

Share of respondents, by category

Q. "Please indicate which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither statement is exactly right."



Source: Center for American Progress and GBAO national online survey of 2,000 registered voters, conducted from February 23, 2019, through March 5, 2019. Poll results and data are on file with the authors.



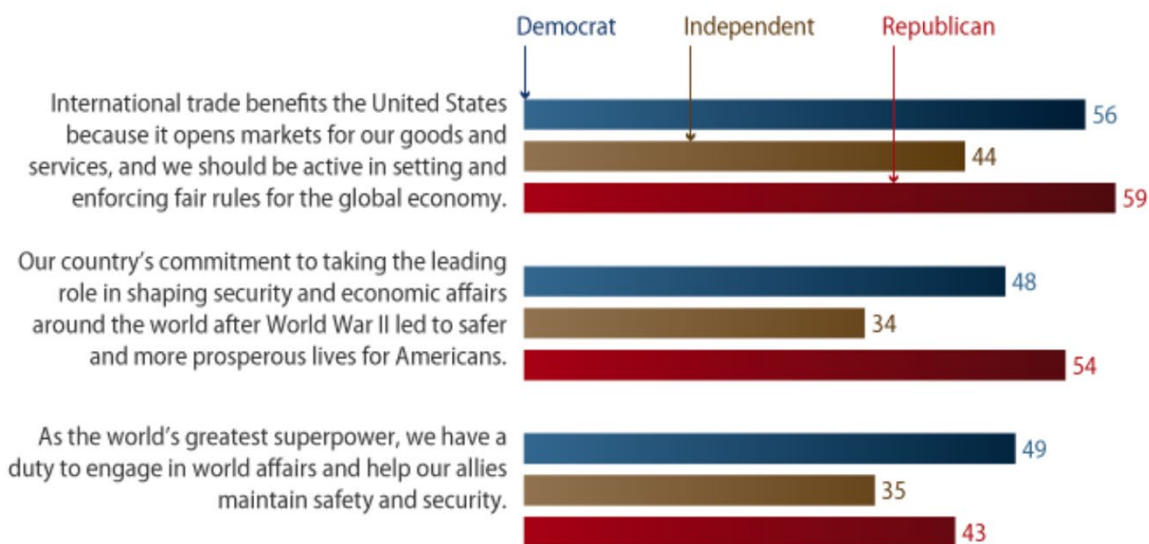
Figure 23. America Adrift

FIGURE 14

## There is overall bipartisan consensus on questions of U.S. global leadership, with lower levels of support from independents

Share of respondents who strongly agree\* with each statement, by political affiliation

Q. "On a scale from 0 to 10, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement, where 0 means 'strongly disagree' and 10 means 'strongly agree'."



\*Note: Responses of 8–10 indicate strong agreement.

Source: Center for American Progress and GBAO national online survey of 2,000 registered voters, conducted from February 23, 2019, through March 5, 2019. Poll results and data are on file with the authors.



Figure 24. Sharply Fewer in U.S. View Foreign Trade as Opportunity

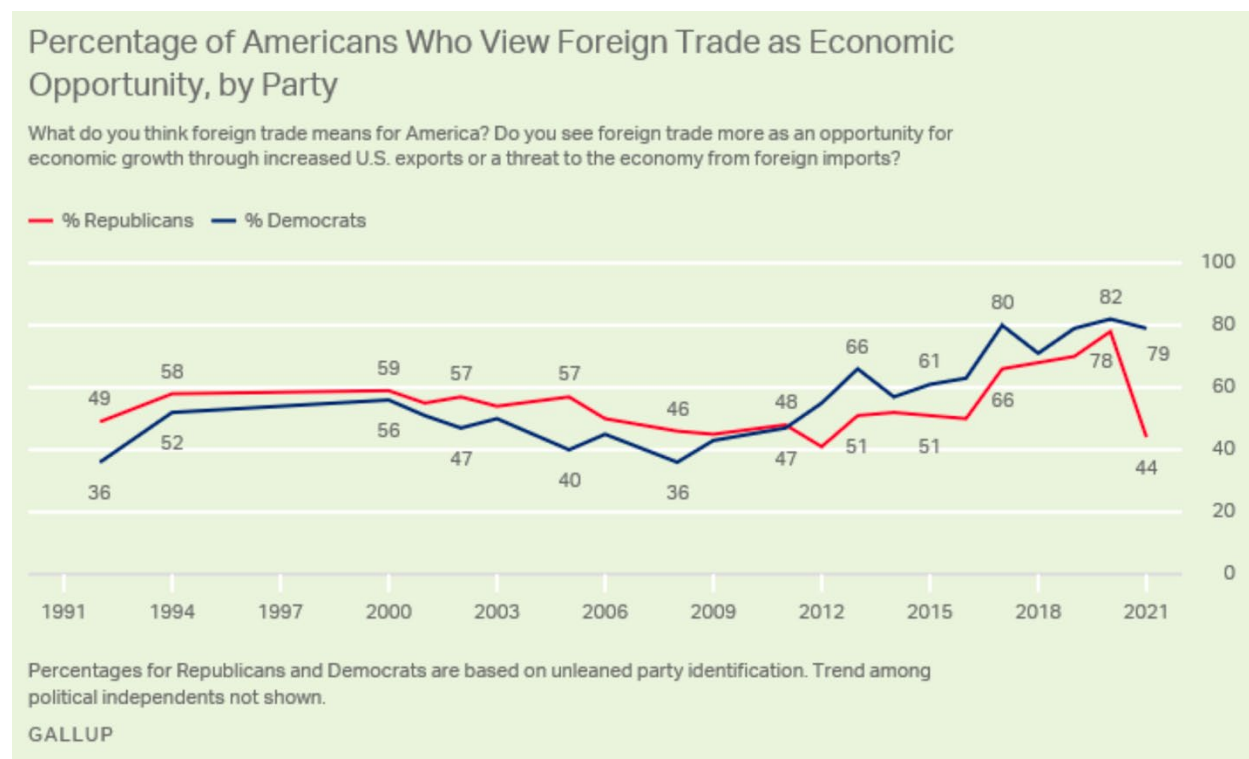
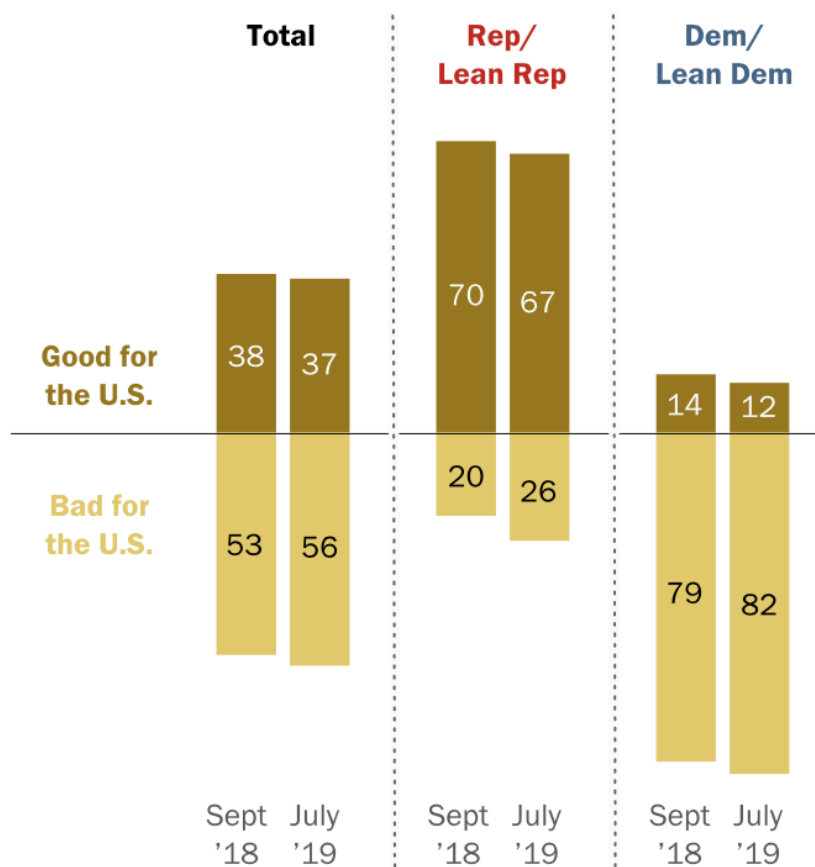


Figure 25. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public's Views of Global Threats

## Partisans remain split over the impact of increased tariffs

*% who say increased tariffs between the U.S. and its trading partners have been ...*



Note: September 2018 survey mentioned specific countries as examples in the question.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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Figure 26. Divided we stand

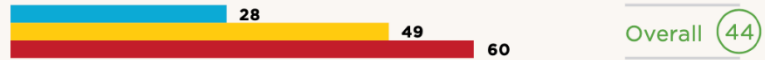
**Figure 8: Production of Goods**

Right now different countries produce different goods, resulting in lower costs for consumers. Which one of the following two approaches would be better for the United States? (%)

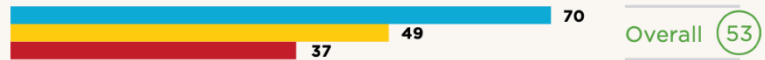
n = 1,049

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican

The United States produces critical goods here and does not buy or sell critical goods overseas, ensuring our own supply of goods, even if this means higher prices



Countries agree to coordinate the production of critical goods globally, keeping prices low, even if this means relying on other countries' production if shortages arise



2020 Chicago Council Survey

Figure 27. Divided we stand

### Figure 9: **Supply Chains during Crisis**

To ensure that a crisis or disaster in one place does not hurt the supply of goods around the world, which situation is better? (%)

n = 1,062

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican

Many different countries around the world produce various goods



Overall (64)

Individual countries make all the goods they need themselves



Overall (34)

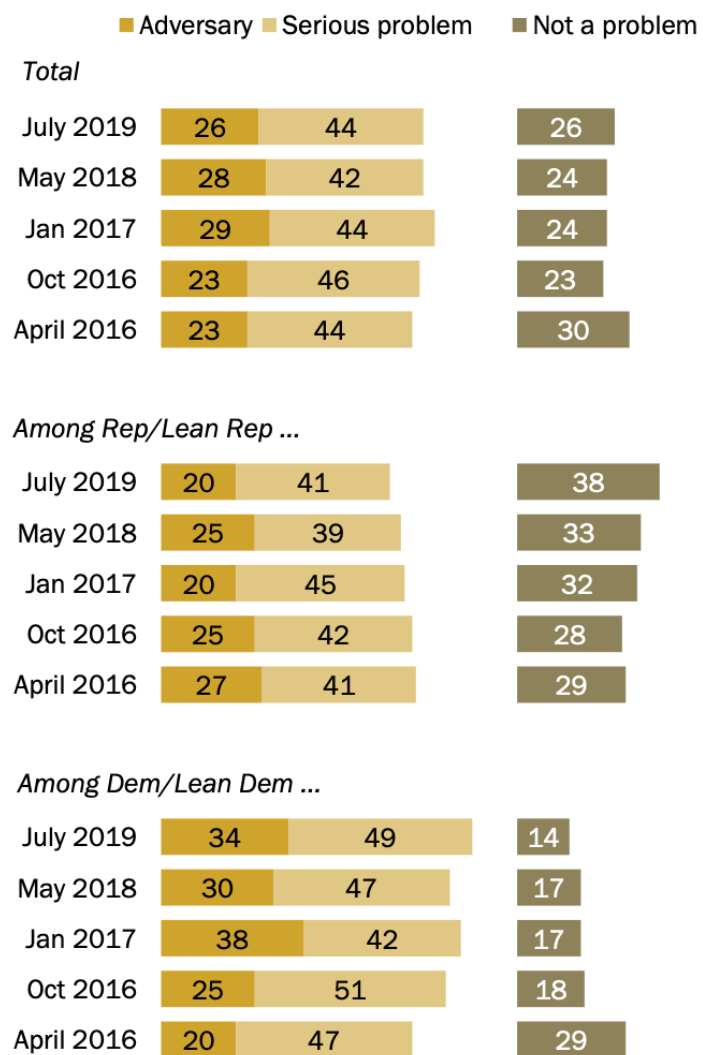
2020 Chicago Council Survey

Russia

Figure 28. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public's Views of Global Threats

## Far more Republicans than Democrats say Russia is 'not much of a problem'

% who think of Russia as ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

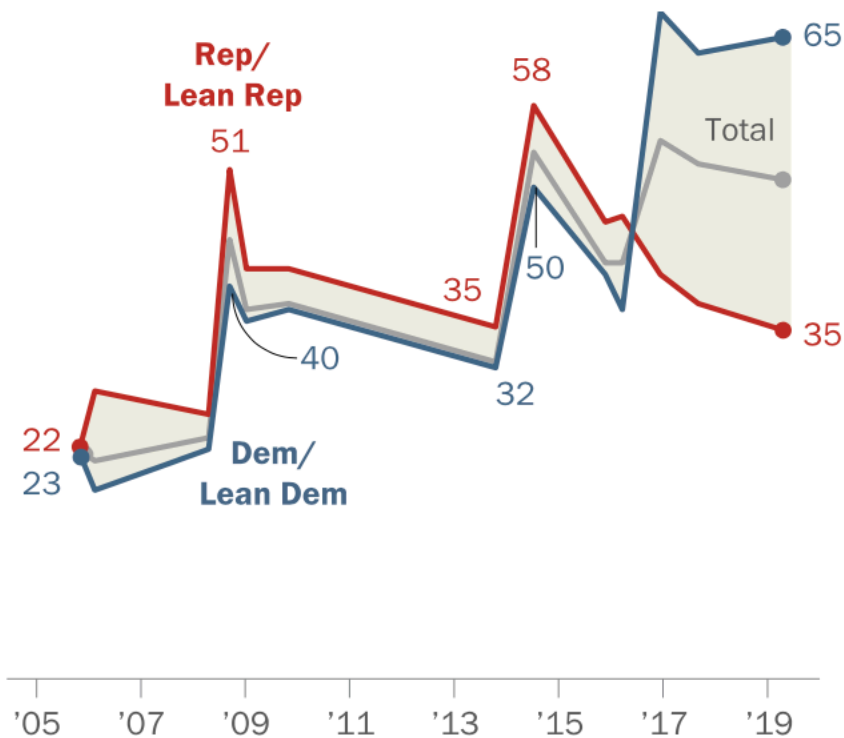
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Figure 29. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public's Views of Global Threats

## Republicans and Democrats had similar views of Russia – until Trump's election

*% who say they view Russia's power and influence as a major threat to the well-being of the U.S.*



Notes: Surveys conducted in 2017 through 2019 asked about "Russia's power and influence." In April 2016, question was worded "tensions with Russia." In 2015, 2013, May 2008, 2006 and 2005, question was worded "Growing authoritarianism in Russia." In 2014, 2009, and September 2008, question was worded "growing tension between Russia and its neighbors."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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Figure 30. Majority of Americans Now Consider Russia a Critical Threat

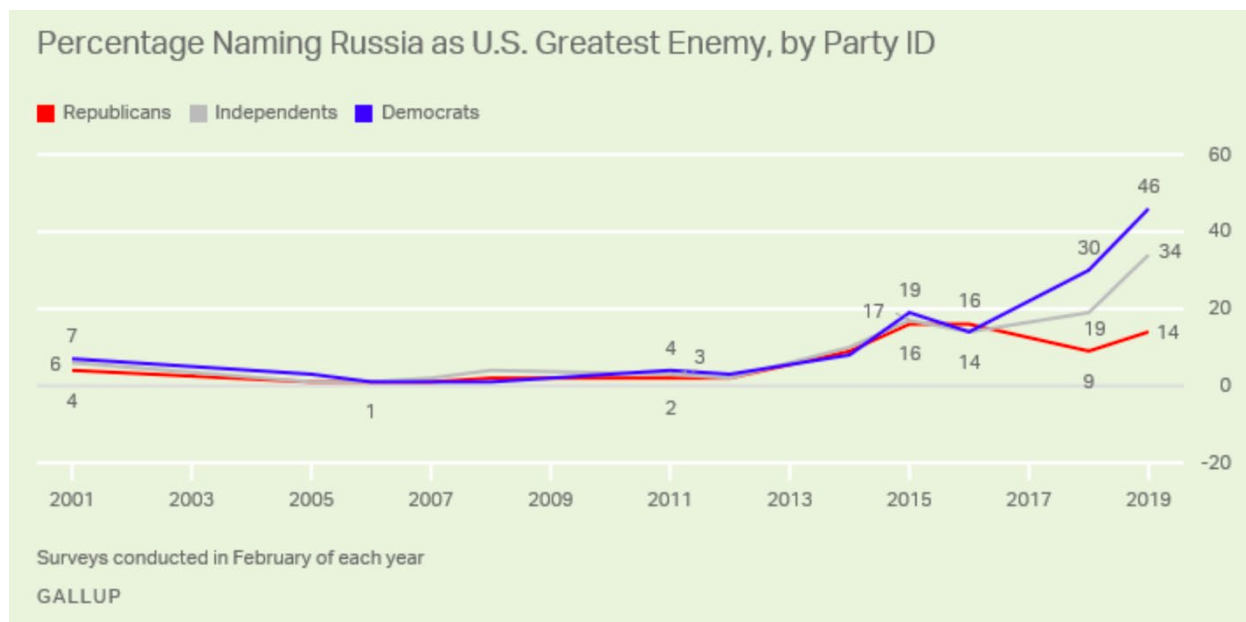
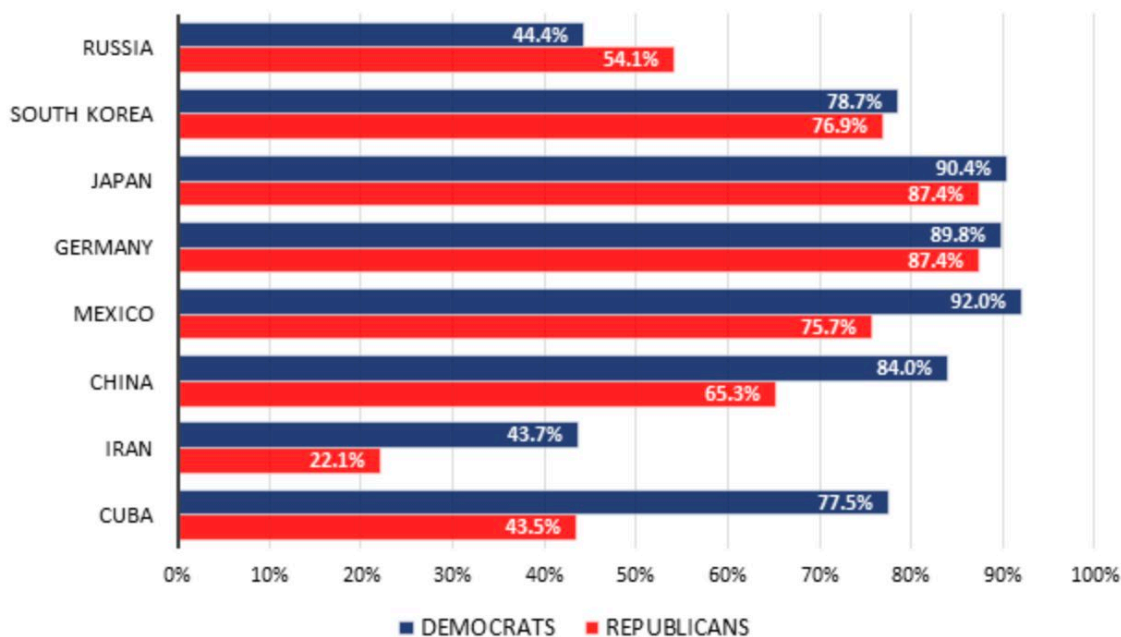


Figure 31. Americans' support for trade and intervention abroad depends on which country is involved

Figure 1 – Percent of Americans favoring trade with the following countries



Source: 2019 Chicago Council on Global Affairs Public Opinion Survey, 6/7-6/20/2019; probability-based nationally representative sample (n=2,059, margin of error =  $\pm 2.37$  but larger for partisan subgroups)

Figure 32. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia

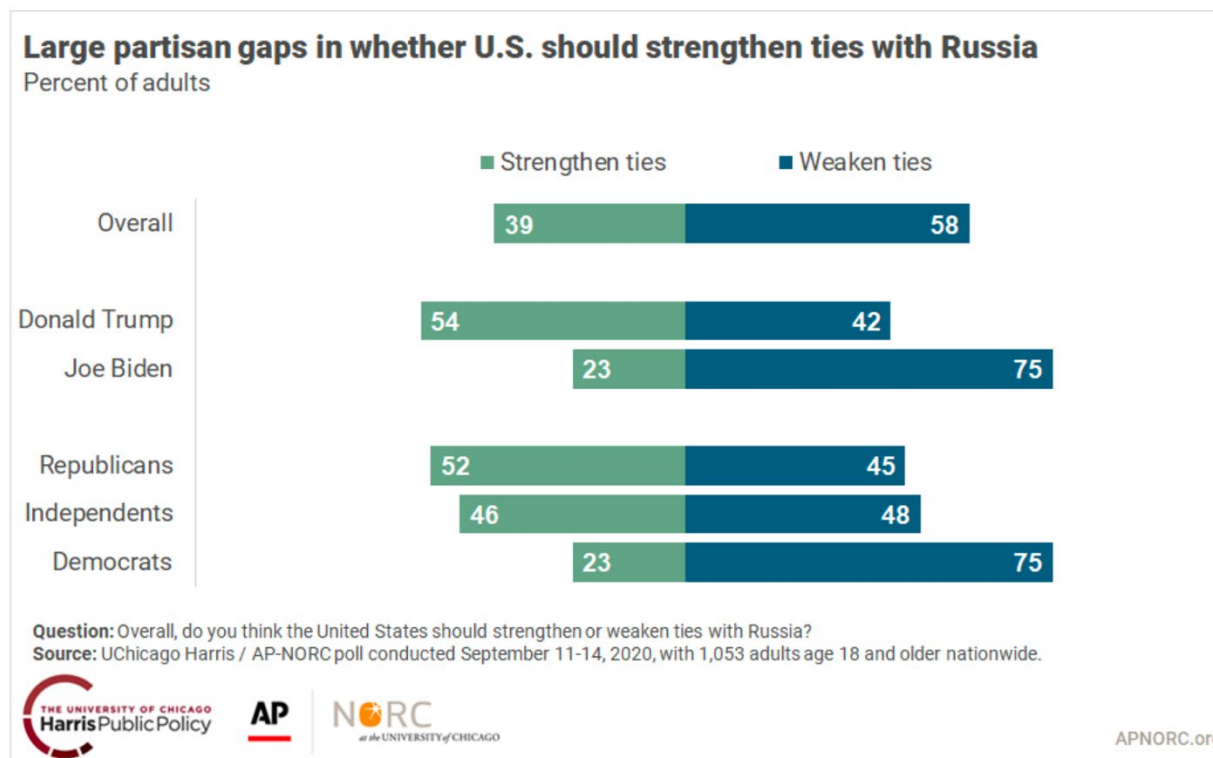
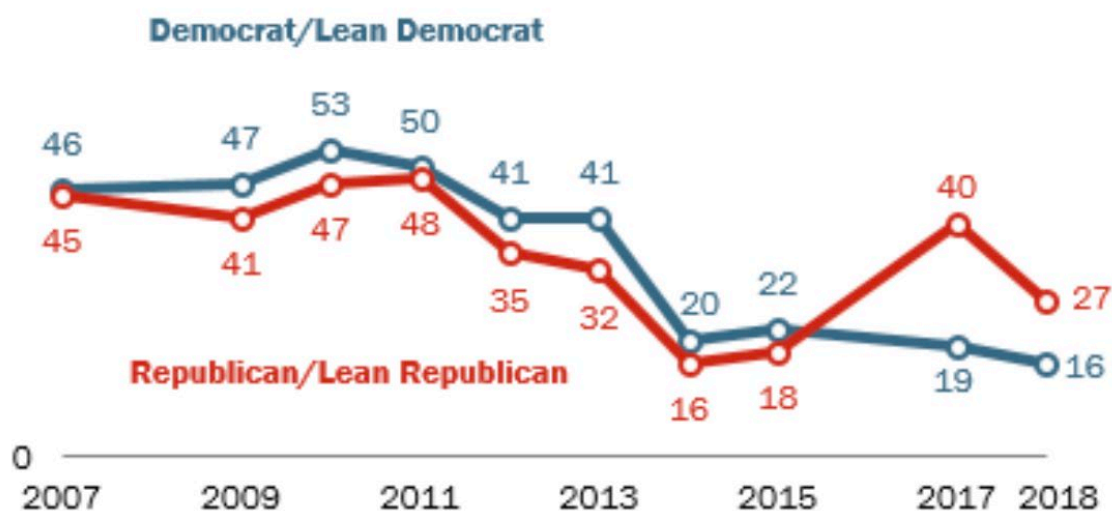


Figure 33. 6 charts on how Russians, Americans see each other

## In the U.S., the partisan gap in views toward Russia has narrowed since 2017

*Favorable view of Russia*

100 %



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q17c.

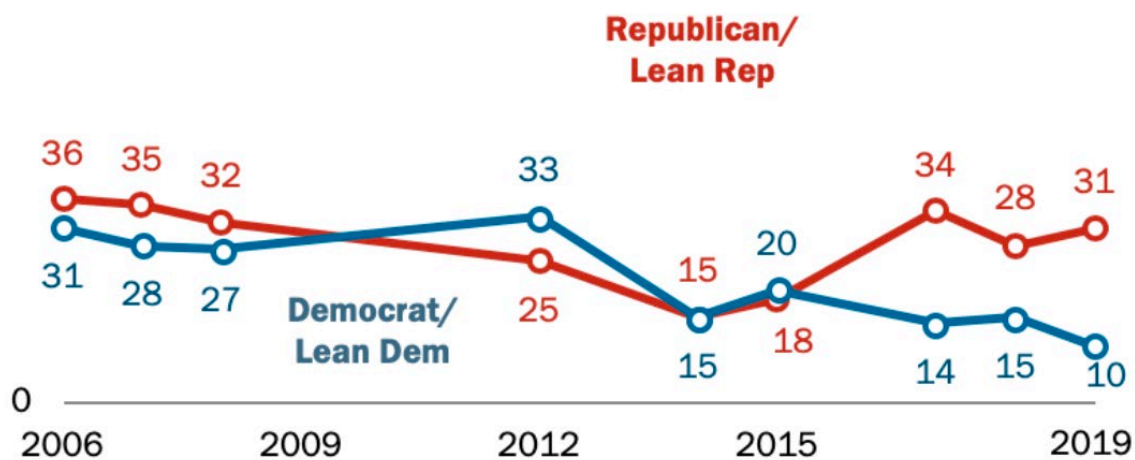
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Figure 34. Russia and Putin receive low ratings globally

## About a third of U.S. Republicans have confidence in Putin, up significantly since 2015

*% who say they have confidence in Russian President Vladimir Putin to do the right thing concerning world affairs*

100 %



Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q38c.

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Figure 35. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia

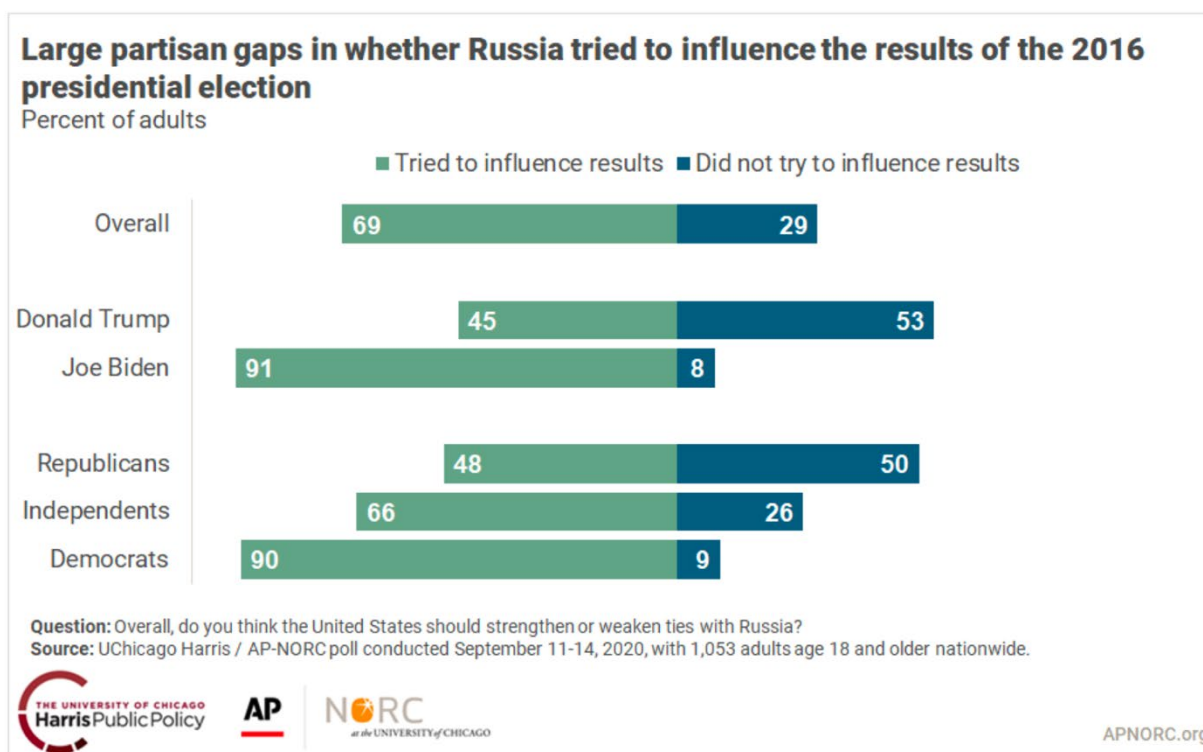
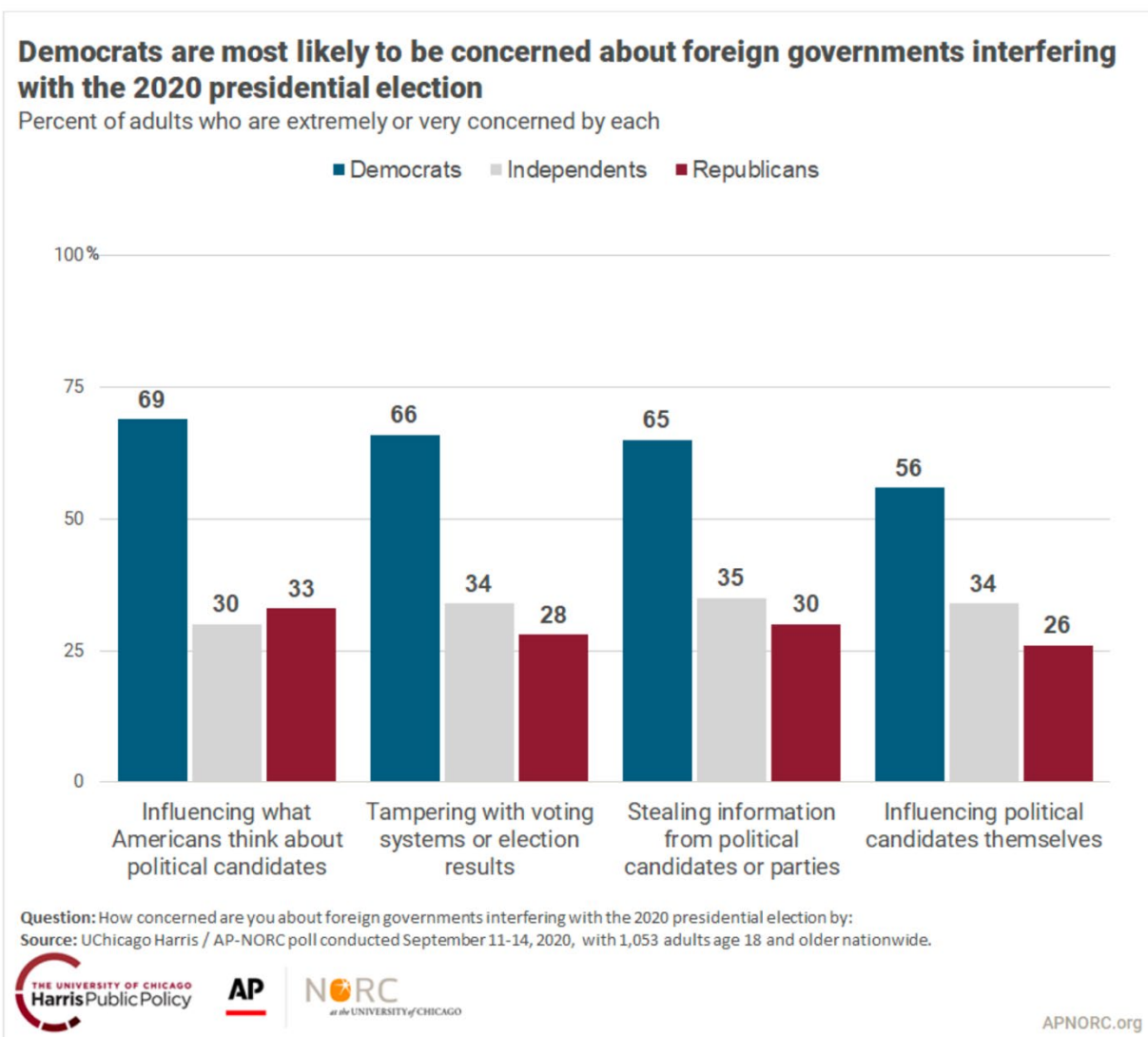


Figure 36. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia





China

Figure 37. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China

**Threat of China**

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all: The development of China as a world power (% critical threat)

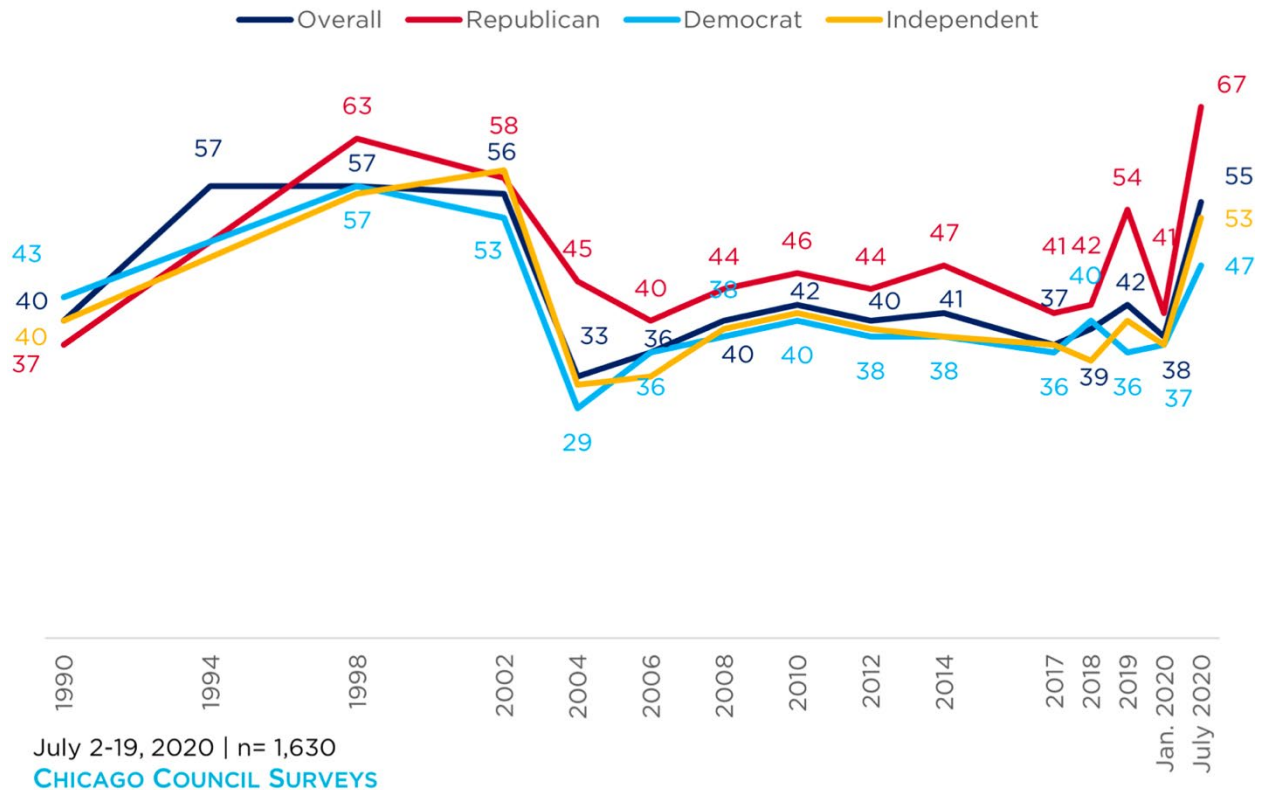
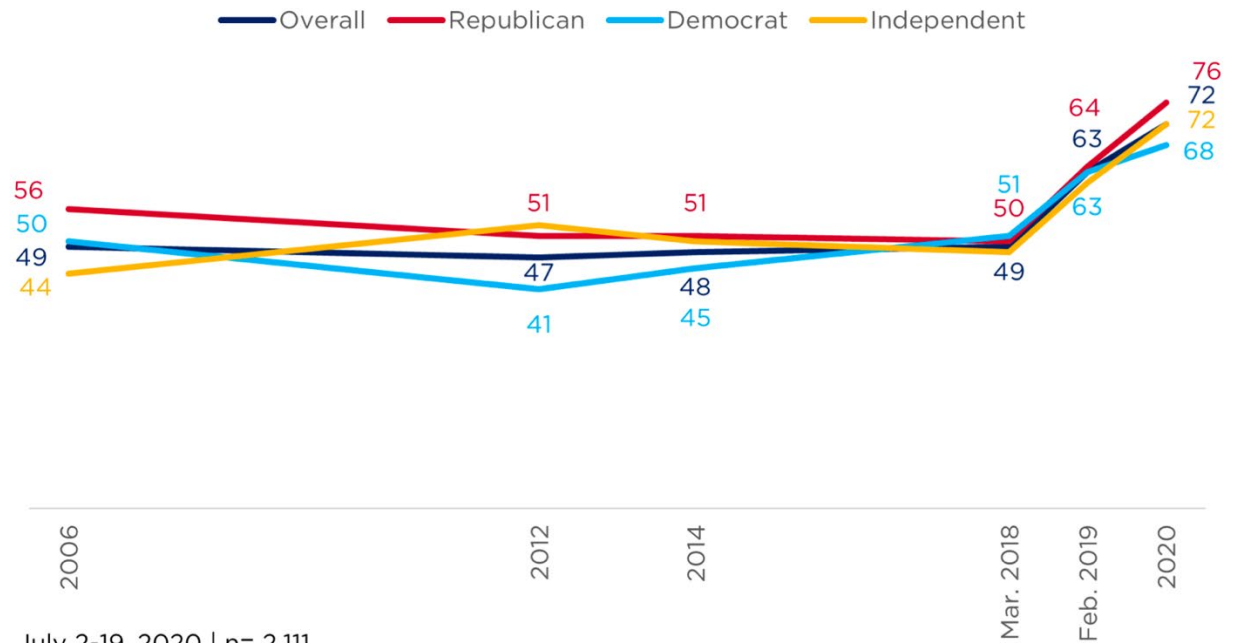


Figure 38. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China

## US and China: Mostly Rivals

*At present, are the following countries mostly rivals or mostly partners? US and China*  
(% mostly rivals)



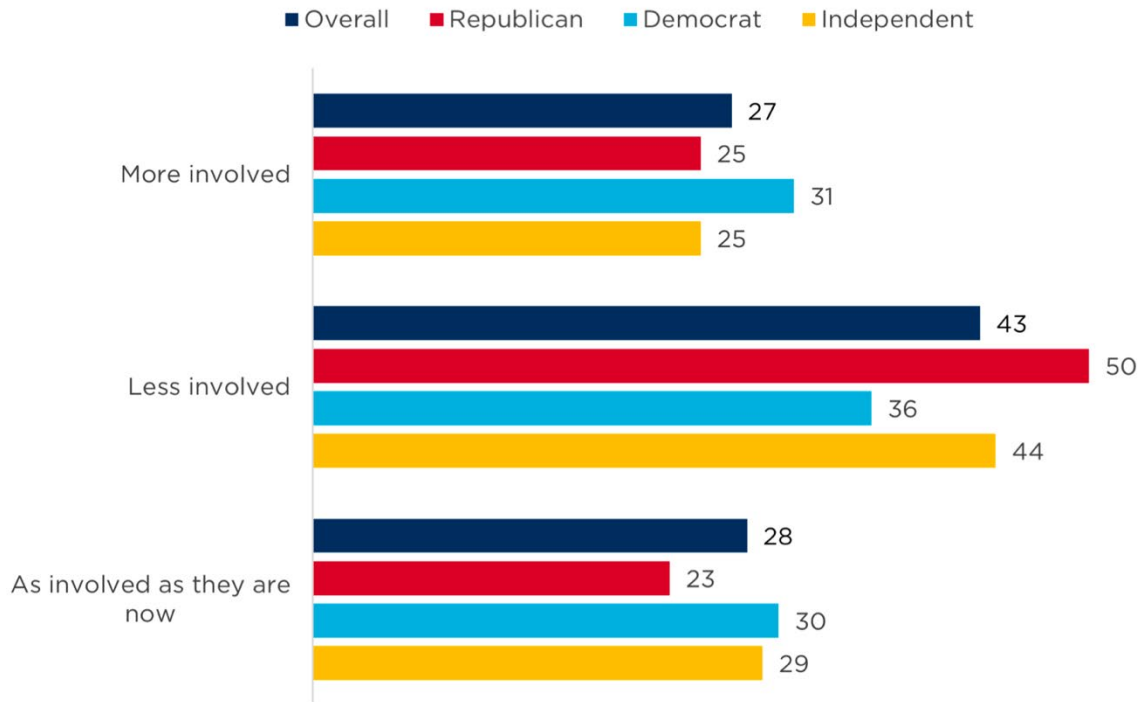
July 2-19, 2020 | n= 2,111

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 39. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China

## China's Involvement in Addressing World Problems

*Should the following countries and international organizations be more involved, less involved, or as involved as they are now in addressing the world's problems? China (%)*

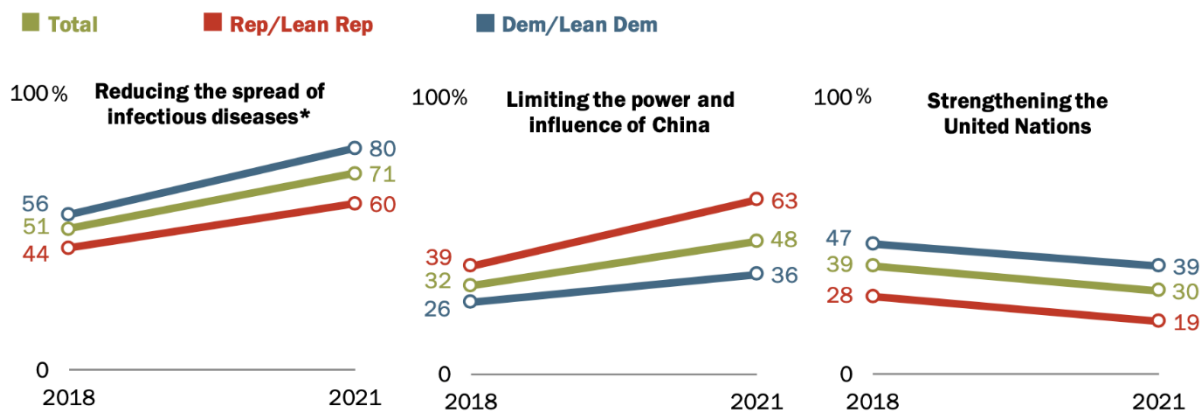


July 2-19, 2020 | n=2,111  
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 40. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Amid coronavirus pandemic, more Americans from both parties see curbing infectious disease as a top priority since 2018

% who say \_\_\_ should be given **top priority** as a long-range foreign policy goal



\*In 2018, question asked: "Reducing the spread of infectious diseases, such as AIDS and Ebola."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

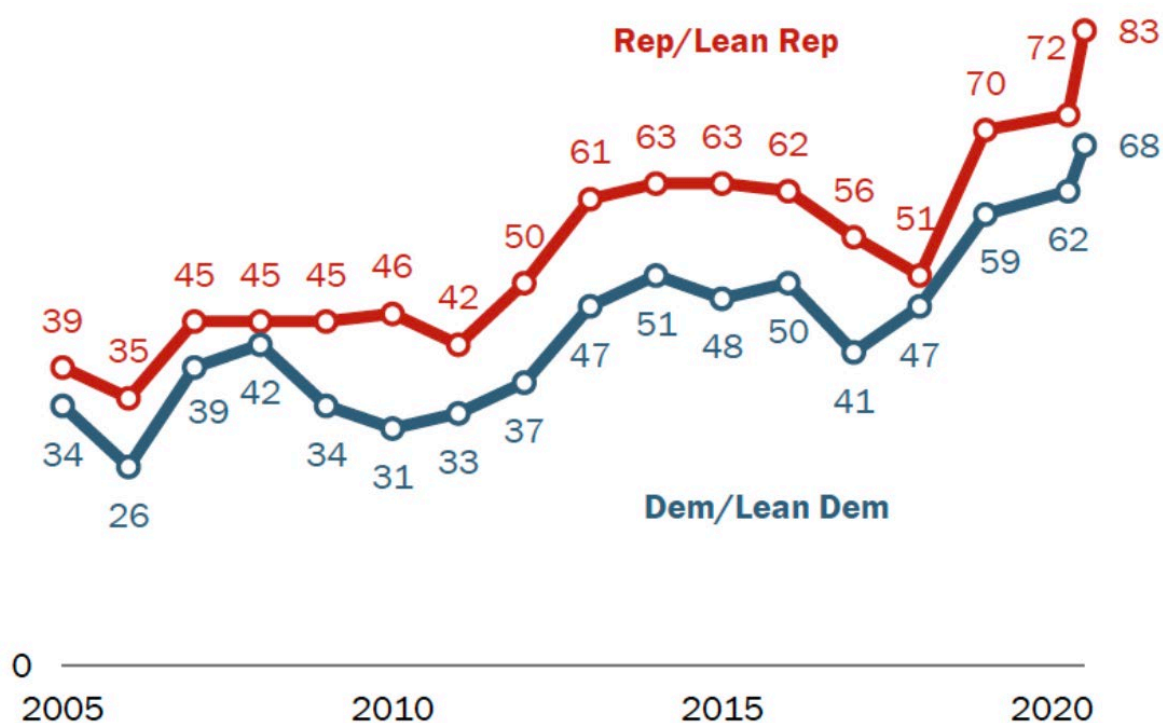
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Figure 41. Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19

## Republicans remain more unfavorable toward China, but all partisans are increasingly negative

% who say they have an unfavorable opinion of China

100 %



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020. Q8b.

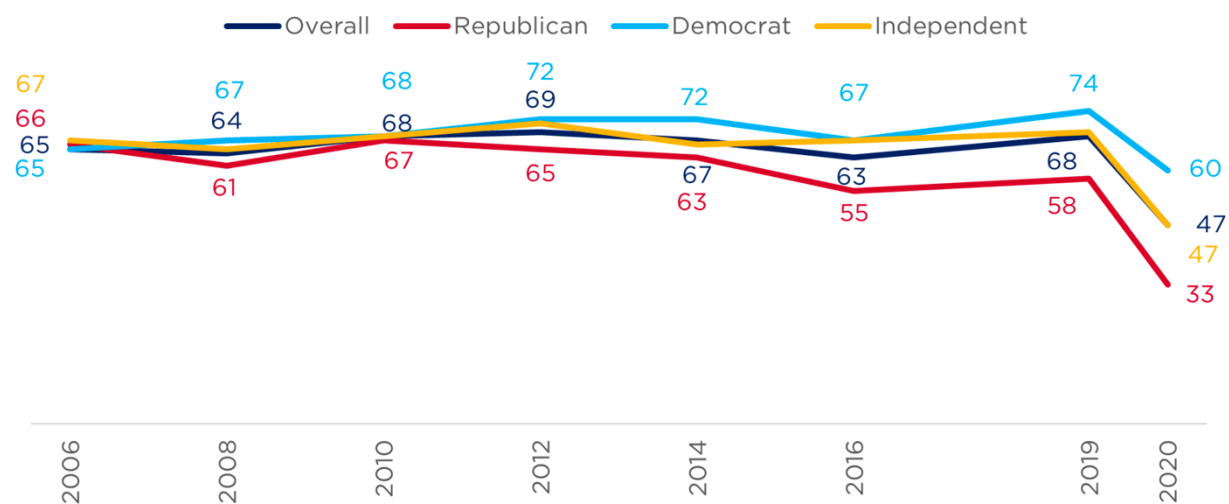
"Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19"

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Figure 42. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China

## Cooperation with China

*In dealing with the rise of China's power, do you think the US should: (% undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China)*



July 2-19, 2020 | n= 2,111

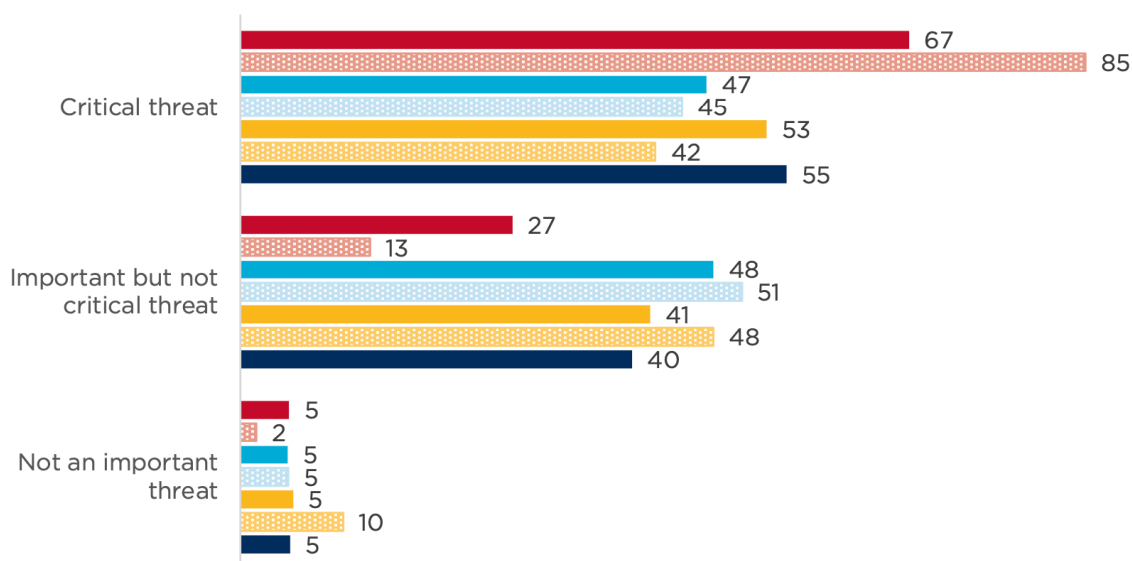
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 43. Divisions on US-China Policy- Opinion Leaders and the Public

## Leaders and the Public on: China as a Threat

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all: **The development of China as a world power (%)**

■ Republican Public   ■ Republican Leaders   ■ Democratic Public   ■ Democratic Leaders  
 ■ Independent Public   ■ Independent Leaders   ■ Overall Public



Leaders: August 3 - September 7, 2020 | n = 781

Public: July 2-19, 2020 | n = 1,634

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 44. Divisions on US-China Policy- Opinion Leaders and the Public

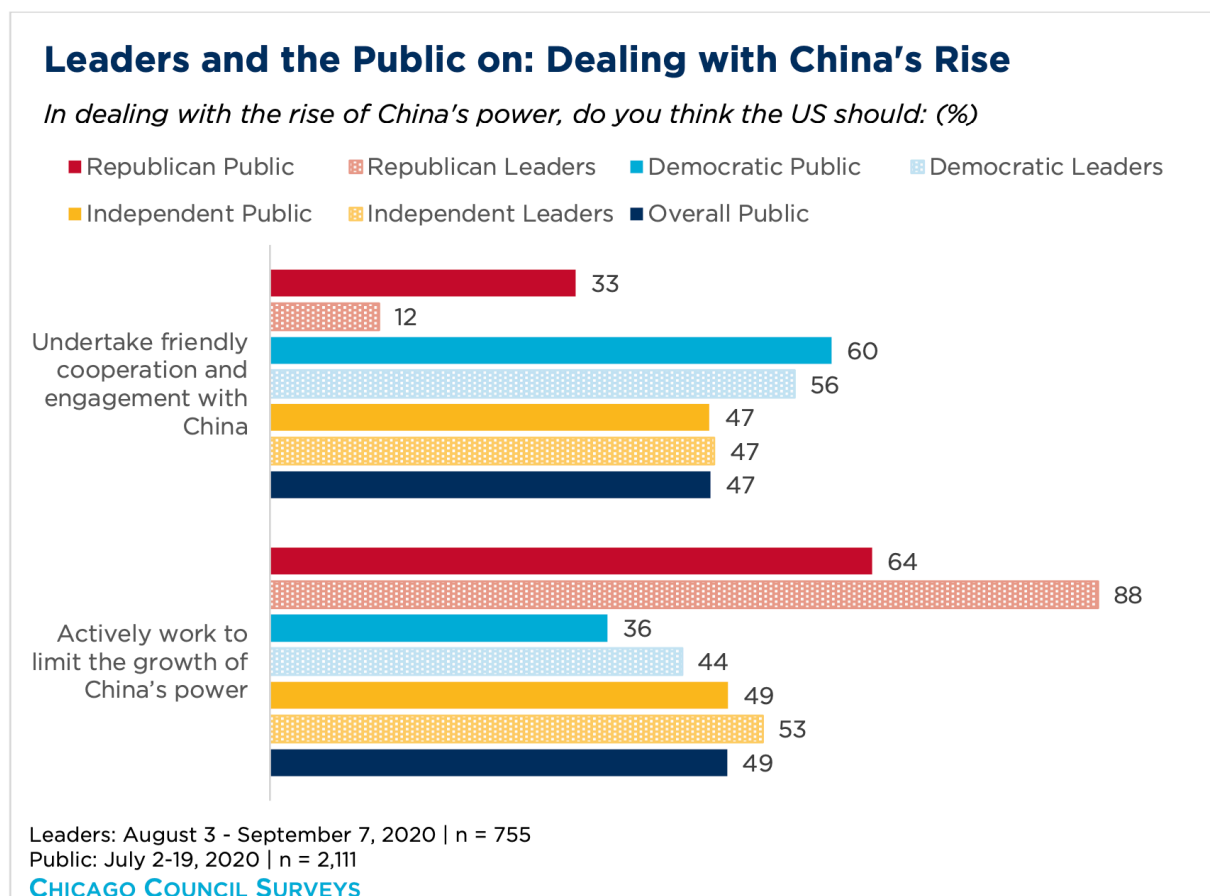
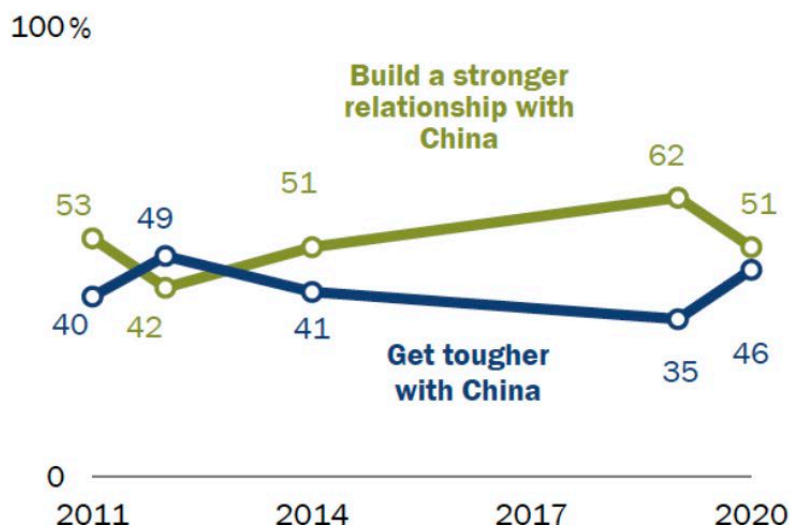




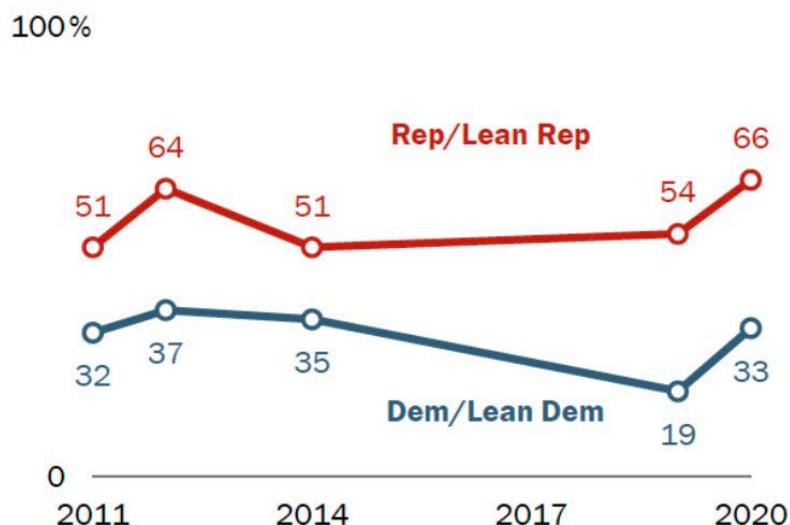
Figure 45. Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19

## U.S. public increasingly seeking tougher stance toward China on trade

*% who say that when it comes to our economic and trade policy toward China, it is more important to ...*



*% who say it is more important to get tougher with China on economic issues*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020.

Q17.

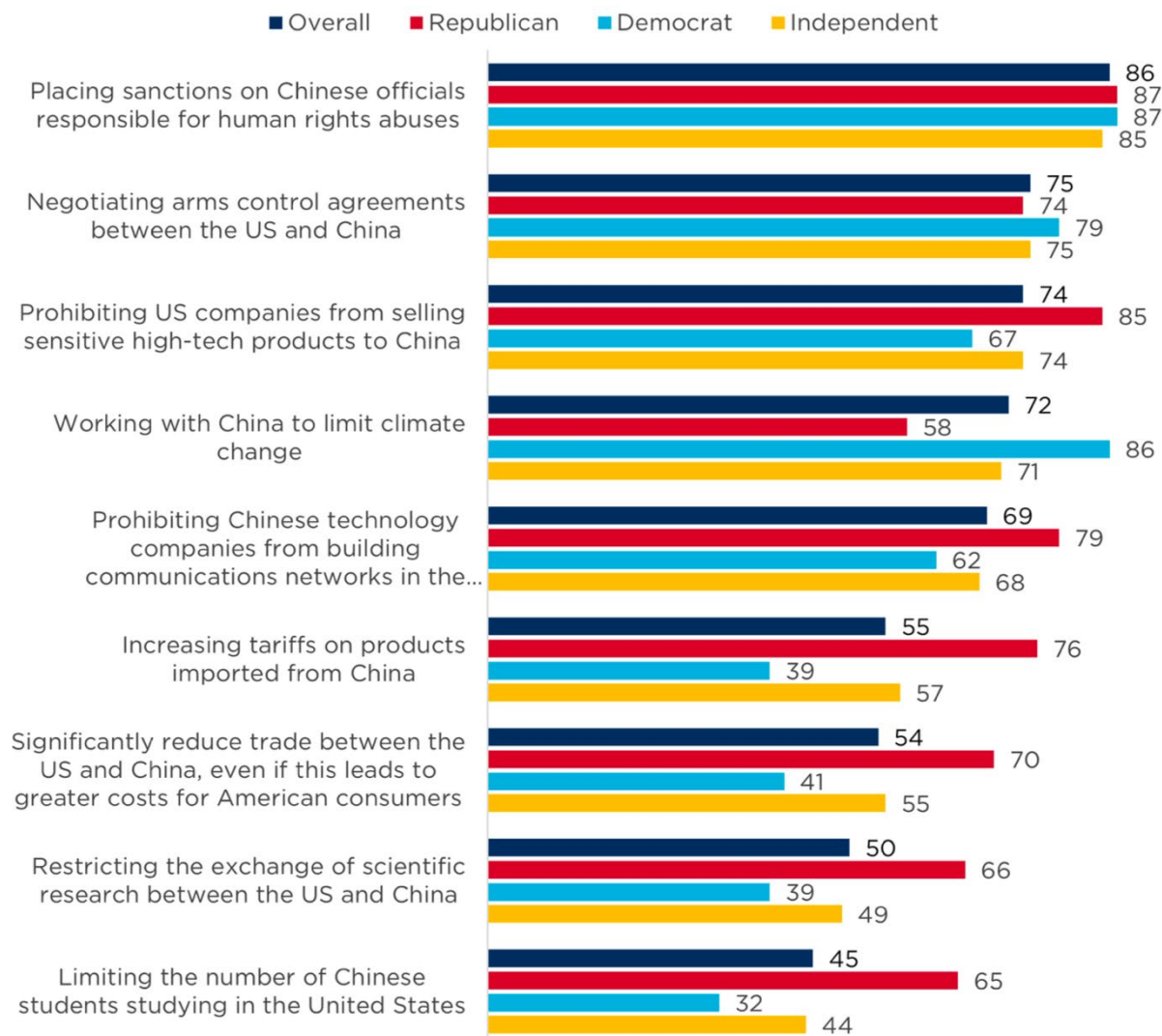
"Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19"

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Figure 46. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China.

## US Policies Towards China

Would you support or oppose the following US policies towards China? (% support)



July 2-19, 2020 | n= variable (1390 to 1435)

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

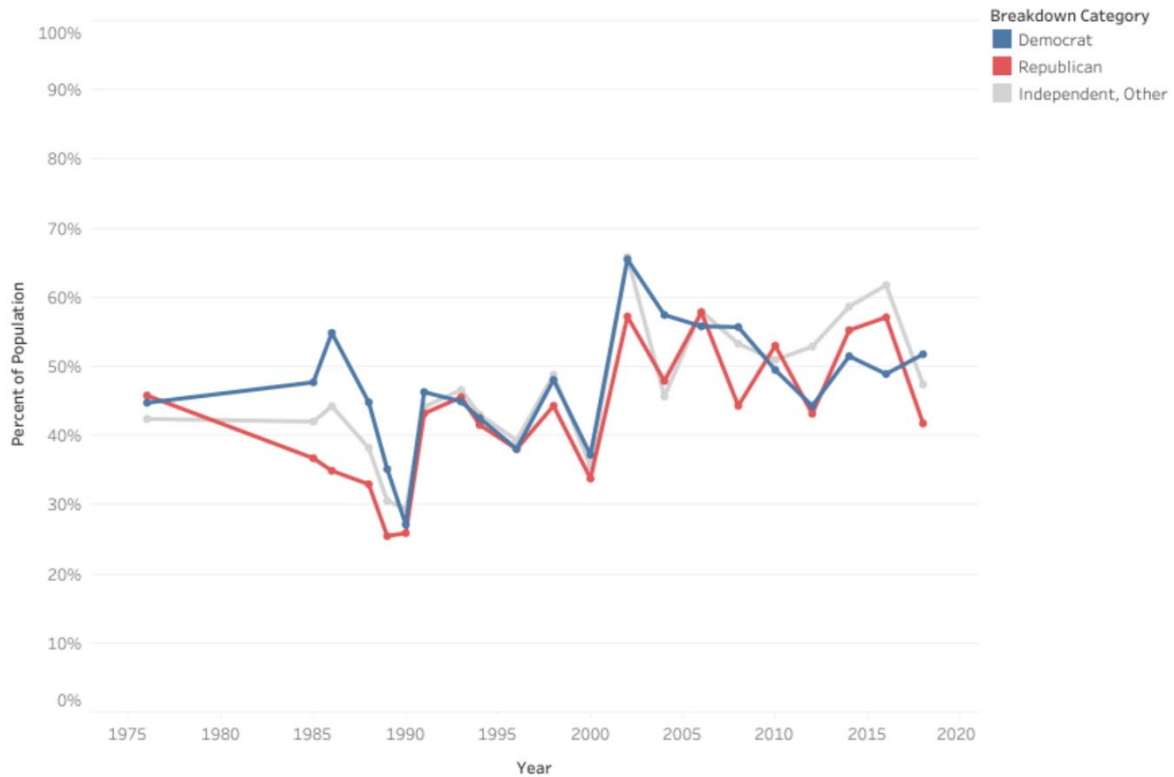
Use of military force and U.S. bases abroad

Figure 47. Expect U.S. in world war in 10 years

Current Affairs: Expect U.S. in world war in 10 years

Response: Yes

Breakdown: Political affiliation<sup>a</sup>



Citation

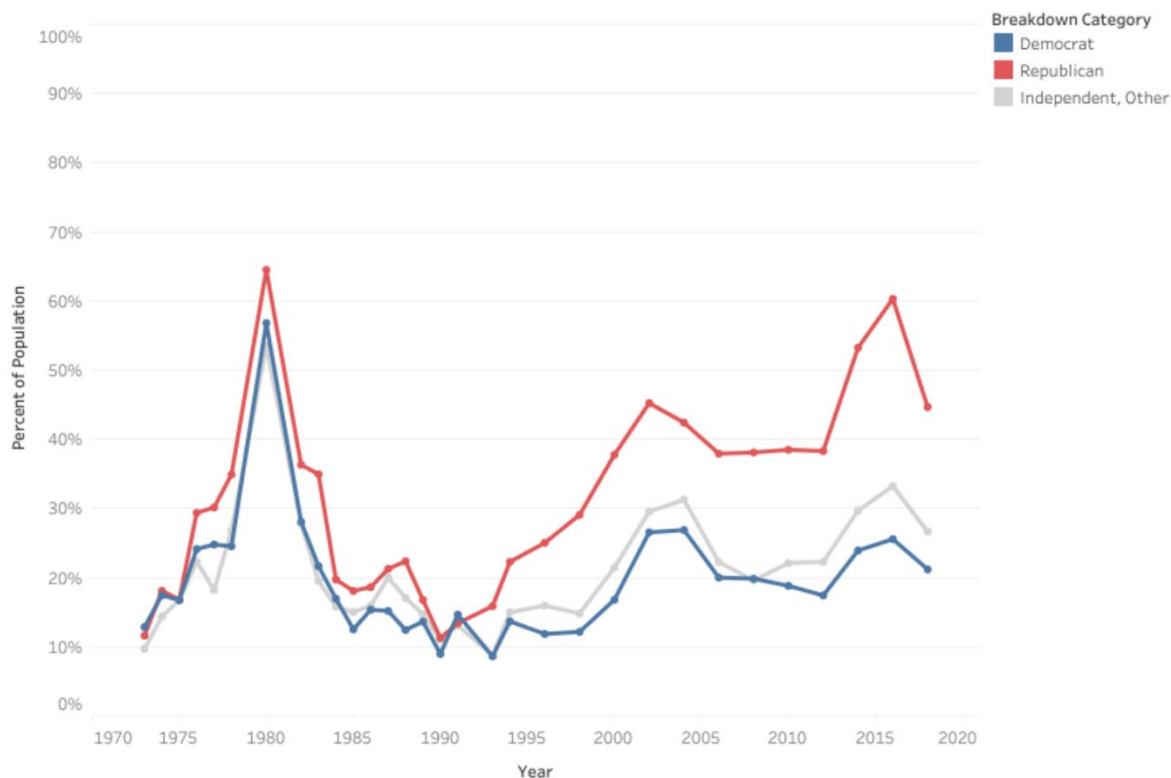
Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Morgan, Stephen, General Social Surveys, 1972-2018 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Michael Davern, Jeremy Freese, and Stephen Morgan; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](https://gssdataexplorer.norc.uchicago.edu/).

Figure 48. National spending on military-armaments-defense/national defense

## Current Affairs: National spending on military-armaments-defense/national defense\*

Response: Too little

Breakdown: Political affiliation°



## Citation

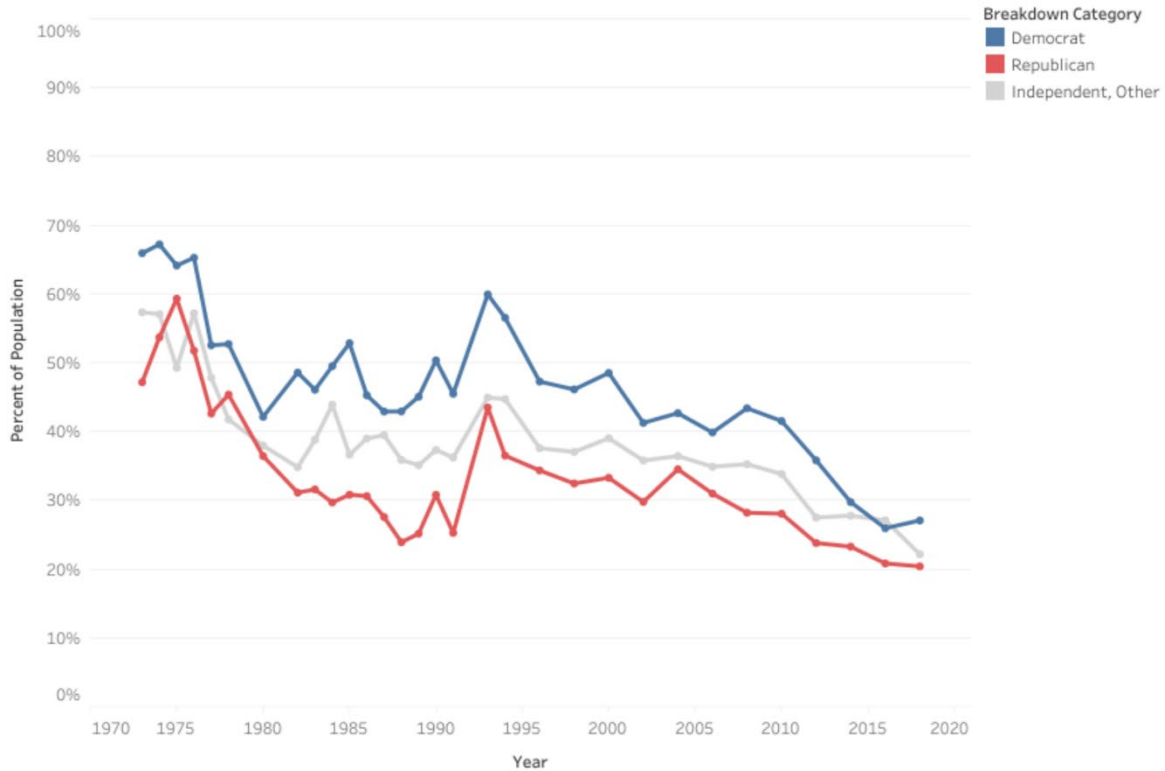
Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Morgan, Stephen, General Social Surveys, 1972-2018 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Michael Davern, Jeremy Freese, and Stephen Morgan; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](https://gssdataexplorer.norc.uchicago.edu/).

Figure 49. National spending on space exploration program/space exploration

**Current Affairs: National spending on space exploration program/space exploration\***

**Response:** Too much

**Breakdown:** Political affiliation°

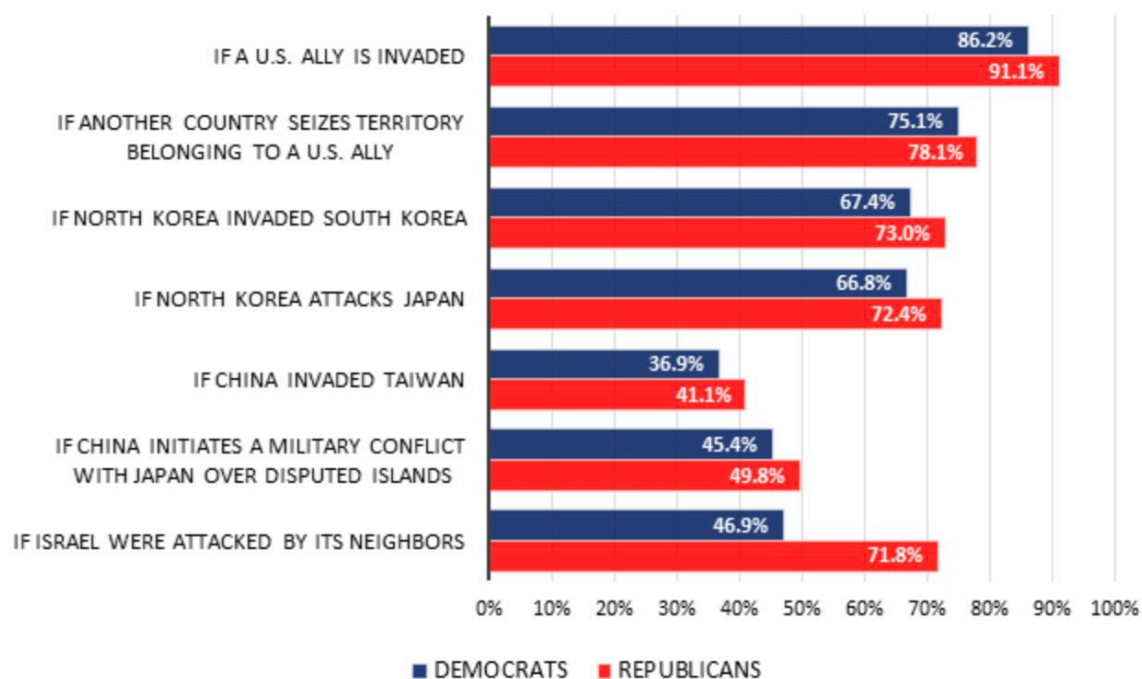


**Citation**

Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Morgan, Stephen, General Social Surveys, 1972-2018 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Michael Davern, Jeremy Freese, and Stephen Morgan; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](https://gssdataexplorer.norc.uchicago.edu/).

Figure 50. Americans' support for trade and intervention abroad depends on which country is involved

Figure 2 – Percent of Americans supporting the use of US troops...

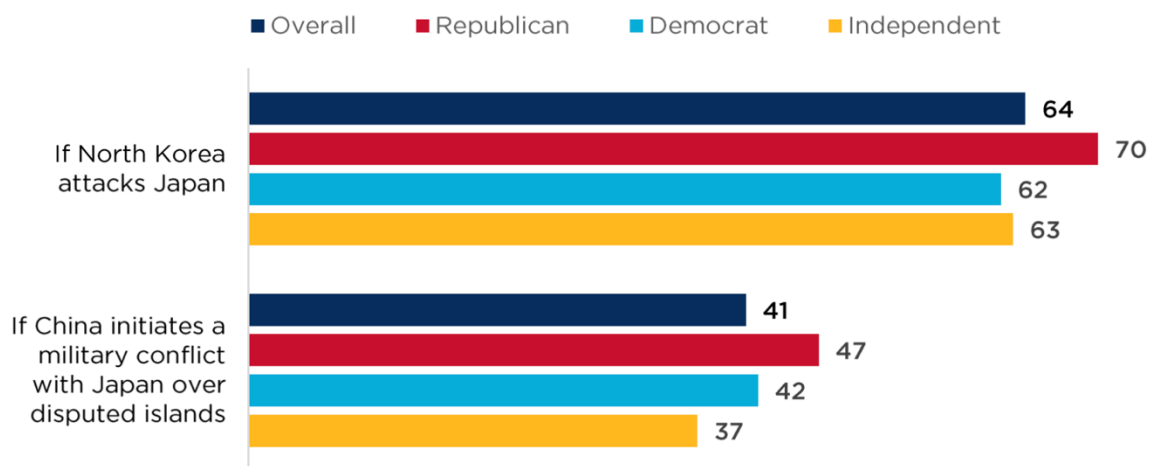


Source: 2019 Chicago Council on Global Affairs Public Opinion Survey, 7/12-7/31/2018; probability-based nationally representative sample (n=2,046, margin of error =  $\pm 2.3$ , but larger for partisan subgroups)

Figure 51. As China rises, Americans seek closer ties with Japan

## Using US Troops to Defend Japan

*There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops: (%)*



July 12-31, 2018 | n=1051

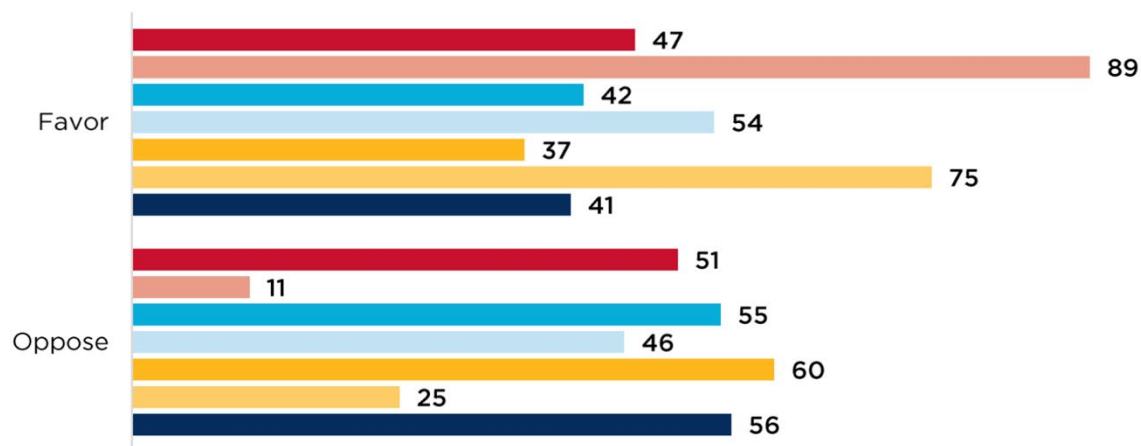
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 52. As China rises, Americans seek closer ties with Japan

## US Involvement in China-Japan Conflict

*There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops: If China initiates a military conflict with Japan over disputed islands (%)*

■ Republican public   ■ Republican leaders   ■ Democrat public   ■ Democrat leaders  
■ Independent public   ■ Independent leaders   ■ Overall public



Leaders: Aug. 2 - Oct. 16, 2018 | n=588

Public: July 12-31, 2018 | n=1051

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

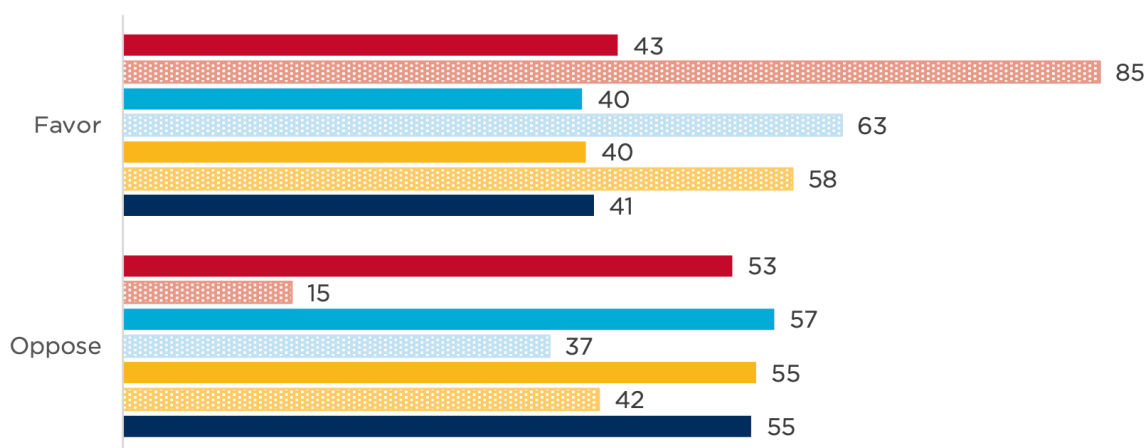


Figure 53. Divisions on US-China Policy- Opinion Leaders and the Public

## Leaders and the Public on: Defending Taiwan

*There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops: If China invaded Taiwan (% favor)*

■ Republican Public   ■ Republican Leaders   ■ Democratic Public   ■ Democratic Leaders  
 ■ Independent Public   ■ Independent Leaders   ■ Overall Public



Leaders: August 3 - September 7, 2020 | n = 774

Public: July 2-19, 2020 | n = 2,111

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 54. American Public Support for US Troops in Middle East Has Grown

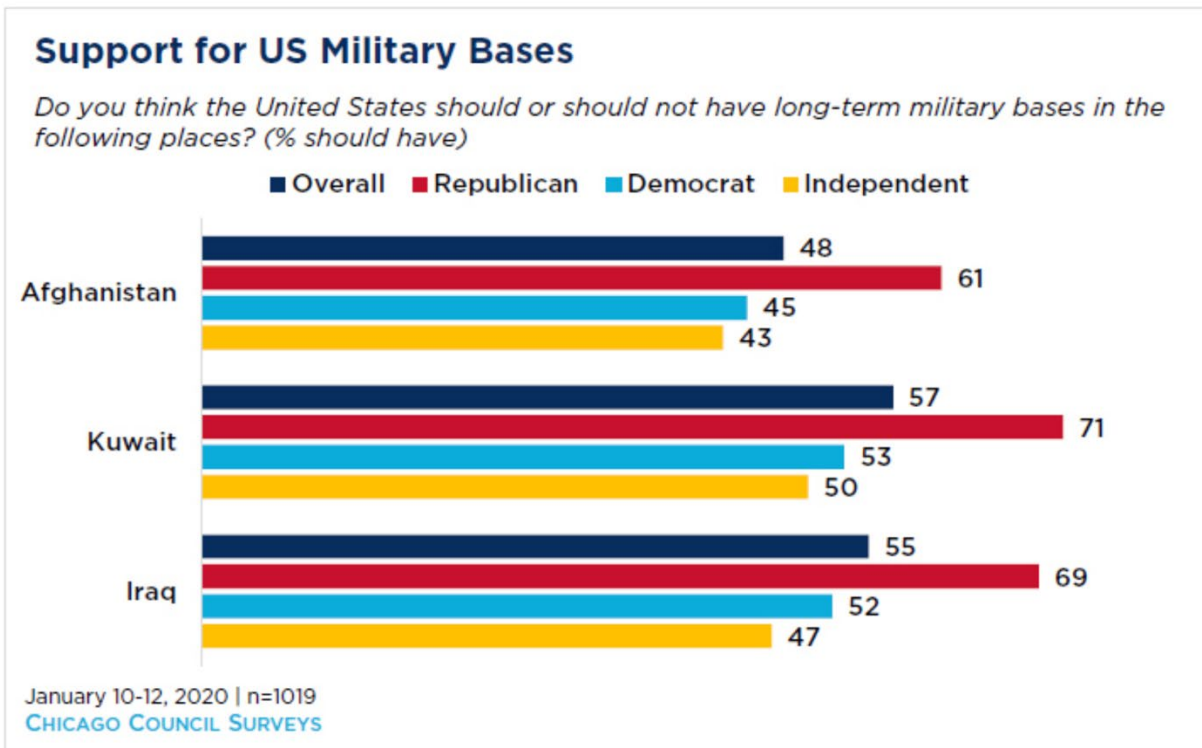
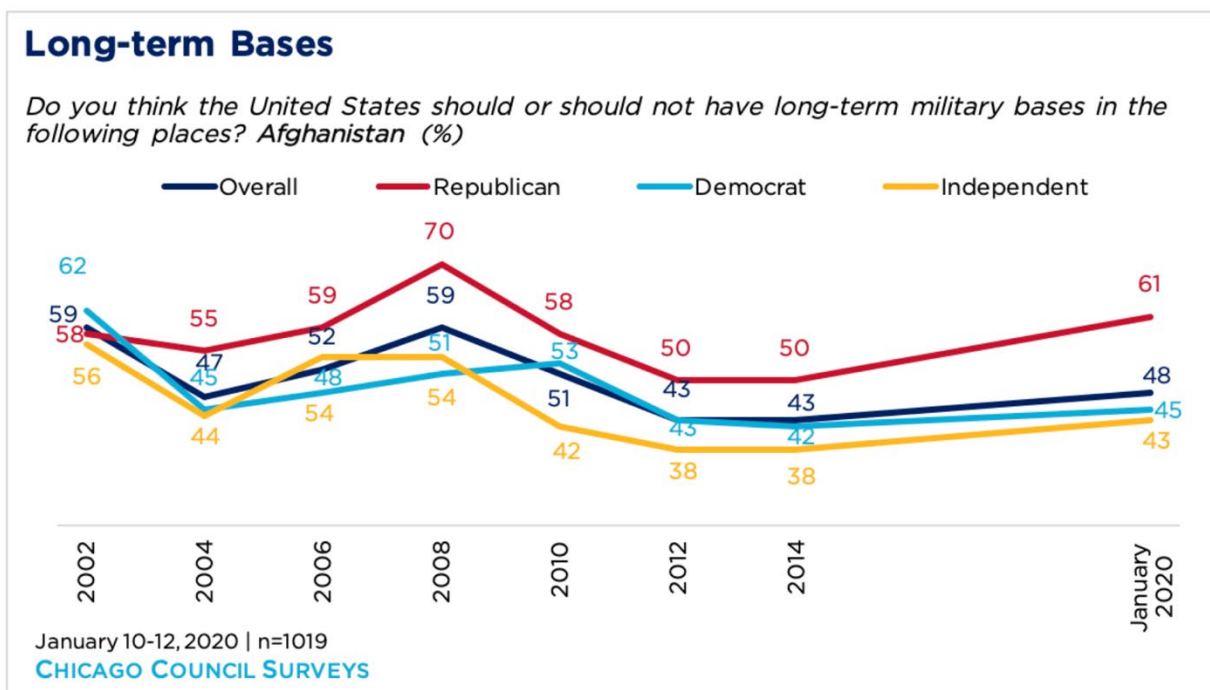


Figure 55. Despite Unfavorable Views of the War in Afghanistan, Americans Split on Complete Withdrawal



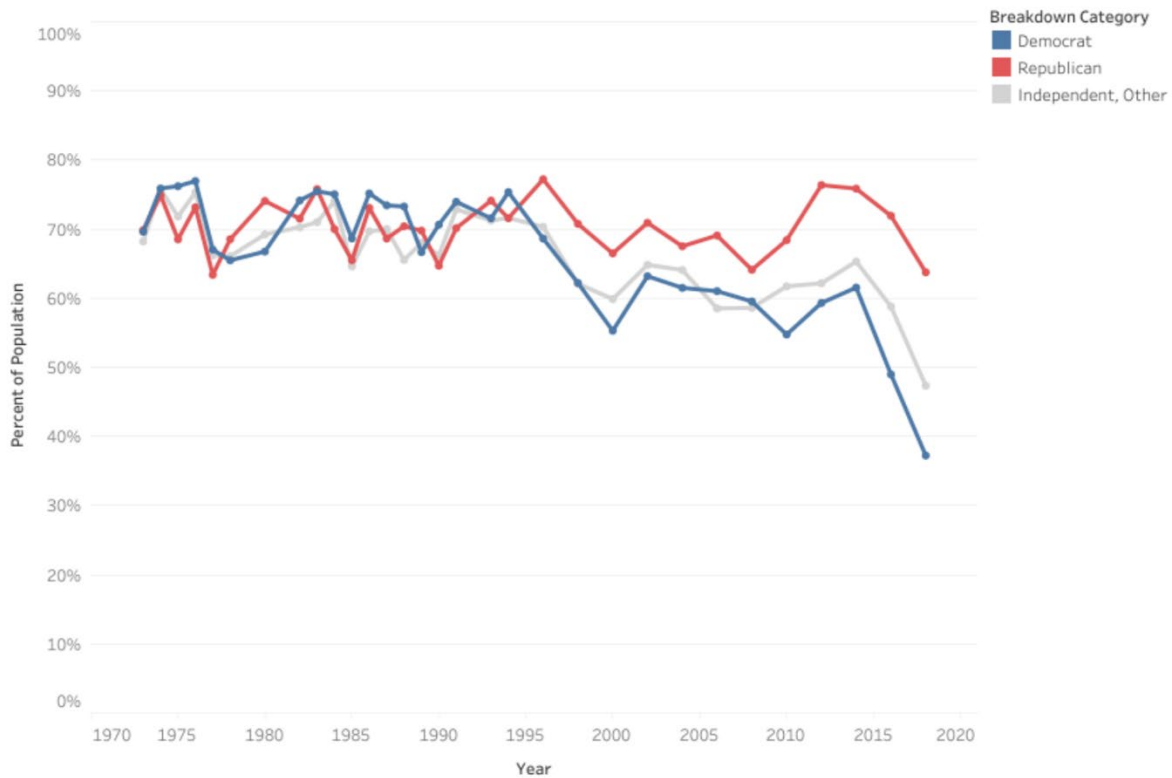
Support for allies

Figure 56. National spending on foreign aid/assistance to other countries

**Current Affairs: National spending on foreign aid/assistance to other countries\***

**Response:** Too much

**Breakdown:** Political affiliation°



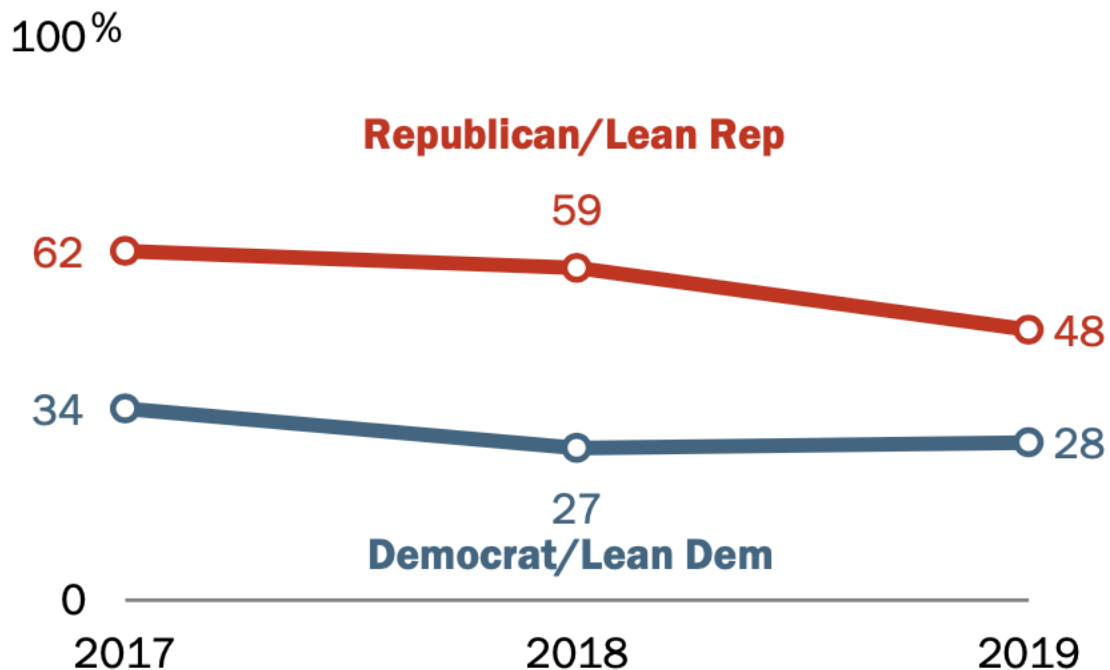
Citation

Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Morgan, Stephen, General Social Surveys, 1972-2018 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Michael Davern, Jeremy Freese, and Stephen Morgan; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](https://gssdataexplorer.norc.umd.edu/).

Figure 57. Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World

## Republican support for increased defense spending from Europe has waned since 2017

*% of \_\_\_ who say American allies in Europe should increase their spending on national defense*



Source: Pew Research Center survey conducted in the U.S. Sept. 17-22, 2019. Q3.

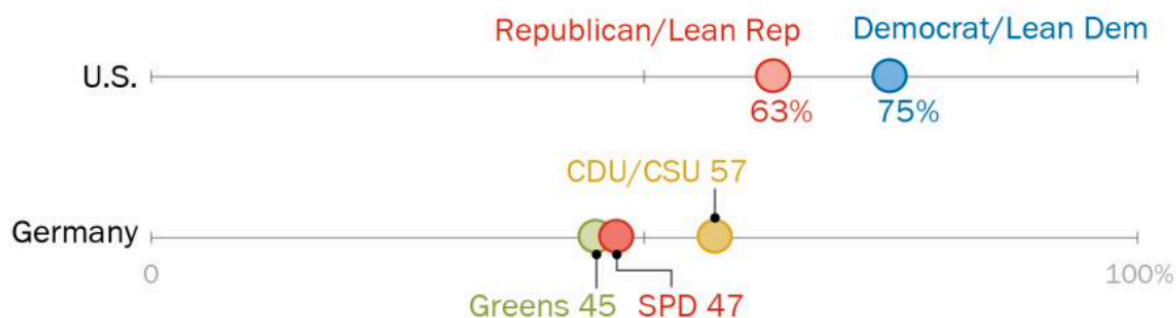
"Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World"

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Figure 58. Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World

## Supporters of different parties take alternate stances on U.S.-German cooperation

% among \_\_\_ who say their country should cooperate more with the U.S./Germany



Note: German voting behavior based on 2017 Bundestag elections.

Source: Pew Research Center survey conducted in the U.S. Sept. 17-22, 2019. Q2e.

German results from Körber-Stiftung survey conducted Sept. 9-28, 2019.

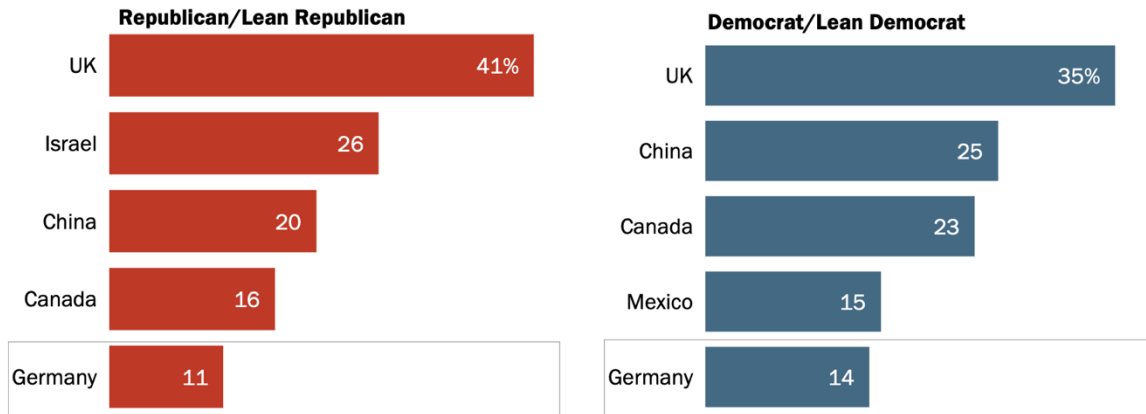
"Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World"

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Figure 59. Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World

### Democrats and Republicans are about as likely to name Germany as a top foreign policy partner, but Republicans are keener on Israel

% who say \_\_\_ is the most/second-most important partner for American foreign policy



Source: Pew Research Center survey conducted in the U.S. Sept. 17-22, 2019. Q1a-b.  
 "Americans and Germans Differ in Their Views of Each Other and the World"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

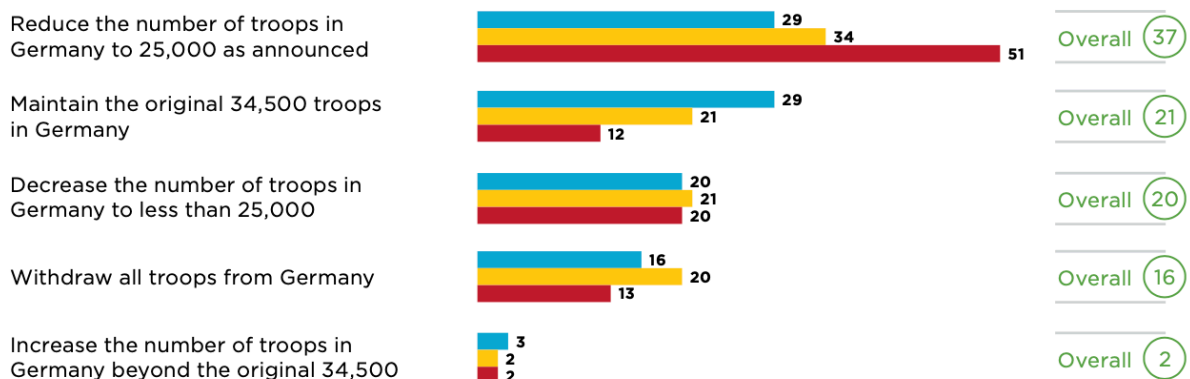
Figure 60. Divided we stand

### Appendix Figure 5: US Troop Levels in Germany

The United States recently announced it would reduce the US military presence in Germany from 34,500 to 25,000 US troops. In your view, the United States should: (%)

n = 2,111

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican

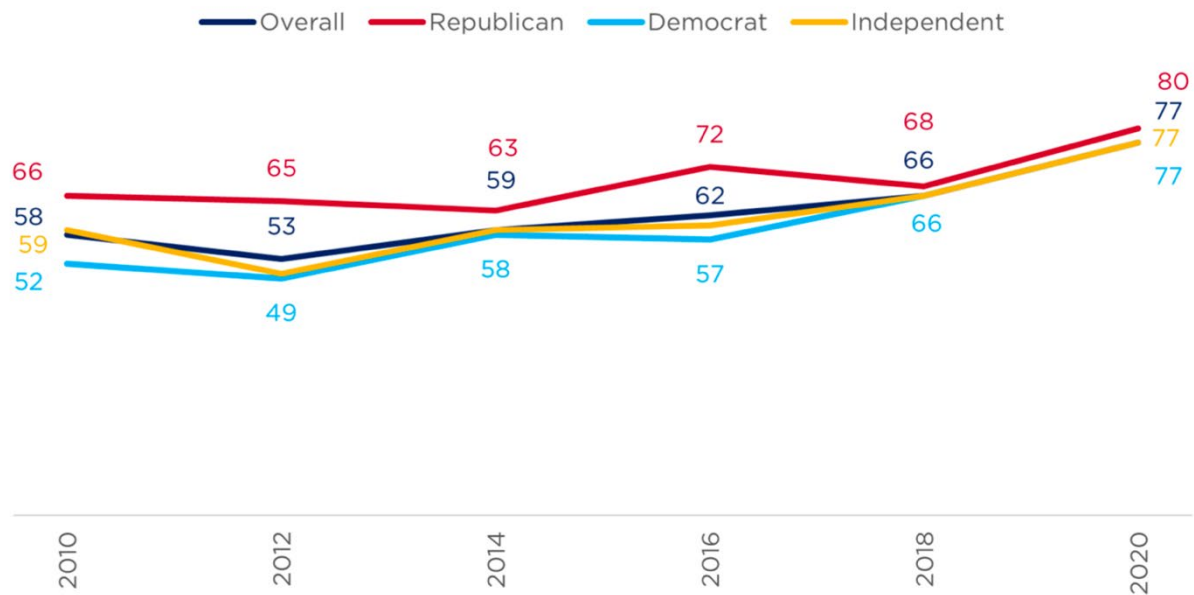


2020 Chicago Council Survey

Figure 61. Do Republicans and Democrats Want a Cold War with China

## US Foreign Policy in Asia

*Now thinking about US foreign policy in Asia, do you think the US should put a higher priority on: (% building up our strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan, even if this might diminish our relations with China )*



July 2-19, 2020 | n= 2,111

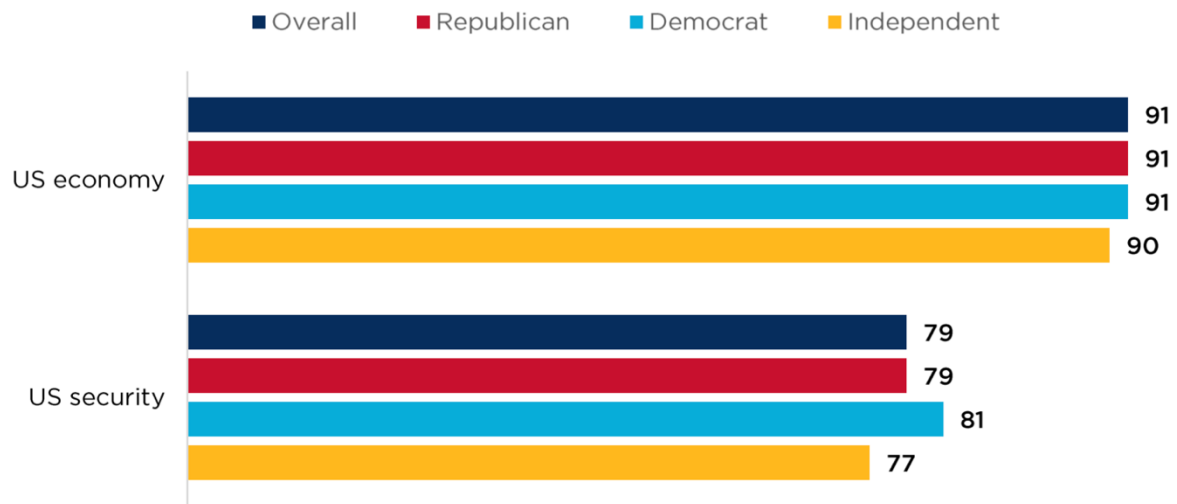
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS



Figure 62. As China rises, Americans seek closer ties with Japan

## Importance of US-Japan Relationship

*How important are relations with the countries listed below [to US security / for the US economy]? Japan (% very + somewhat important)*



July 12-31, 2018 | n=2046

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

**Figure 63. On Eve of Summit, Americans Still View Japan Positively**

## Japan Broadly Popular Among Most Key U.S. Subgroups

Next, I'd like your overall opinion of some foreign countries. What is your overall opinion of Japan? Is it very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

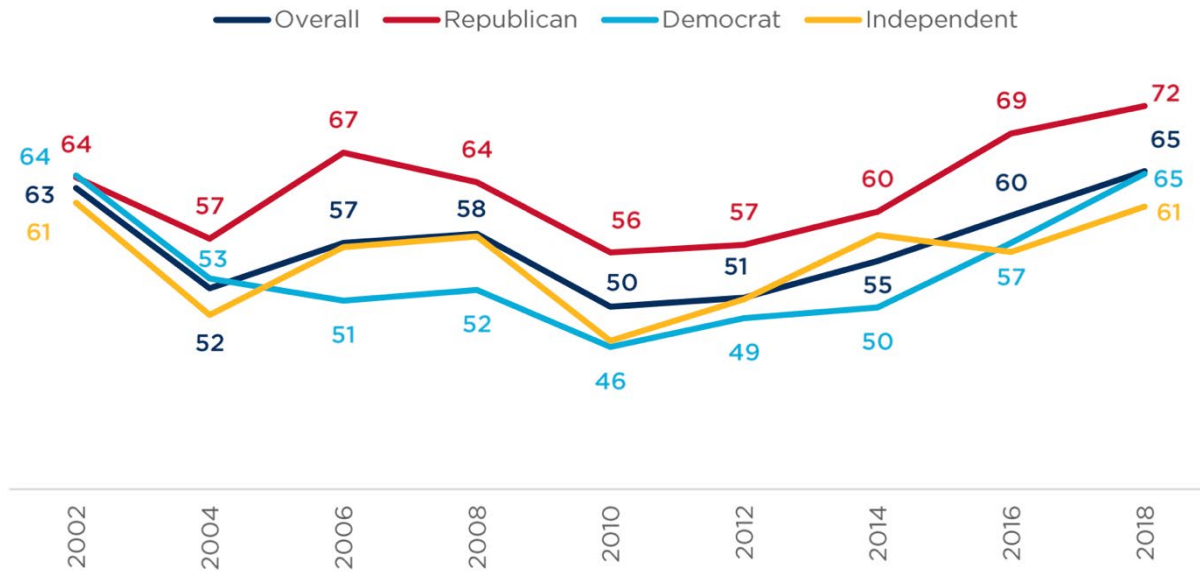
	Very/Mostly favorable	Very/Mostly unfavorable
	%	%
Americans overall	84	17
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	86	13
Female	80	20
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White Americans	85	15
Non-White Americans	79	21
<b>Age</b>		
18-34	86	14
35-54	81	20
55+	84	16
<b>Education</b>		
College grad	92	8
Some college	87	12
HS grad or less	72	28
<b>Political affiliation</b>		
Republican	80	20
Independent	86	14
Democrat	84	16

GALLUP, FEB. 3-18, 2021

Figure 64. As China rises, Americans seek closer ties with Japan

## US Bases in Japan

Do you think the United States should or should not have long-term military bases in the following places? **Japan** (% should have)



July 12-31, 2018 | n=2046

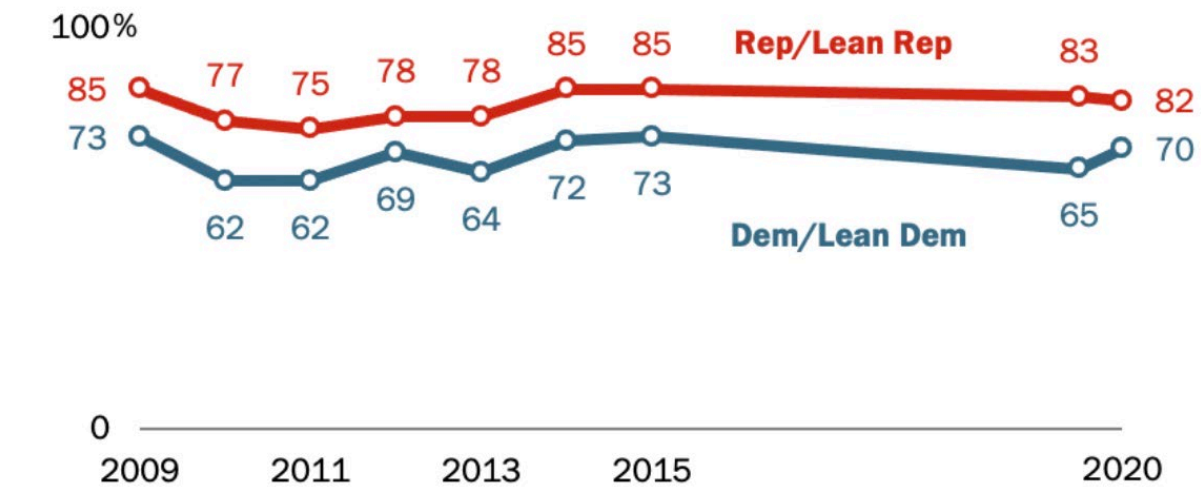
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Iran

Figure 65. Iran widely criticized in 14 advanced economies

## Republicans and Democrats consistent in criticism of Iran

% who say they have an unfavorable view of Iran



Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q8f.

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Figure 66. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public's Views of Global Threats

## Fewer Americans view North Korea's nuclear program, ISIS as 'major threats' than did so two years ago

% who say \_\_\_ is a major threat to the well-being of the United States

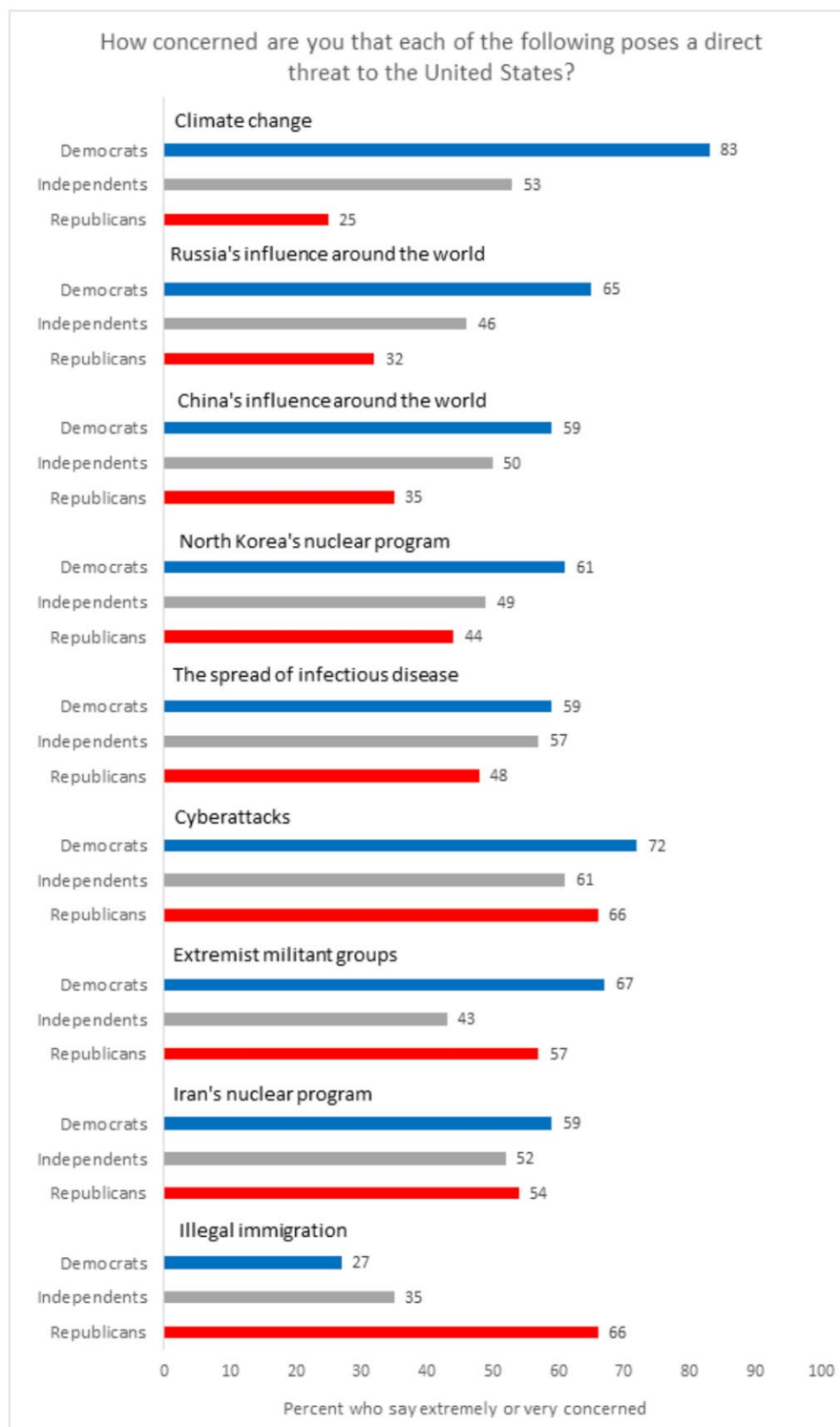


Note: Significant changes noted in **bold**.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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Figure 67. Foreign Policy Attitudes Following the Conflict with Iran



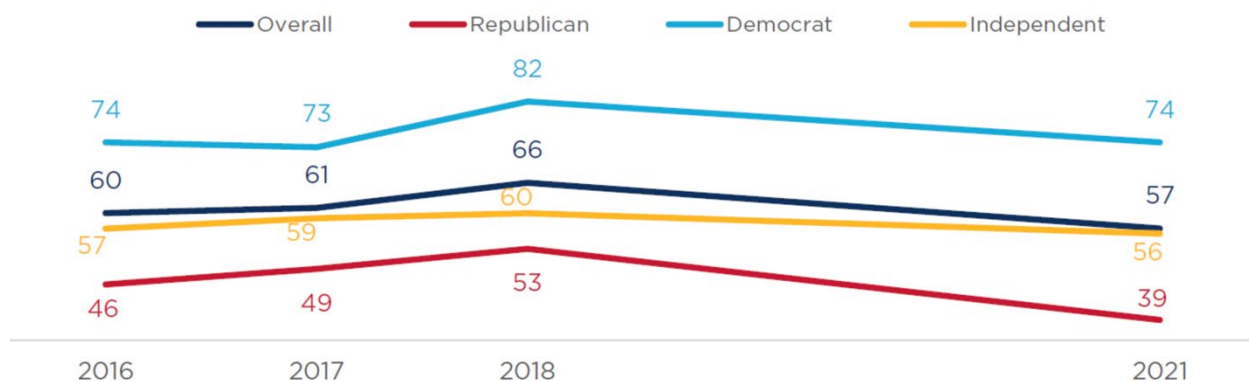
Question: How personally concerned are you that each of the following poses a direct threat to the United States?

Source: AP-NORC poll conducted January 16-21, 2020 with 1,353 adults.

Figure 68. Iranians and Americans Support A Mutual Return to JCPOA

### Democrats and Republicans Diverge on Iran Agreement

Based on what you know, do you think the United States should or should not participate in the following international agreements? (% participate) **The agreement that lifts some international economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for strict limits on its nuclear weapons**



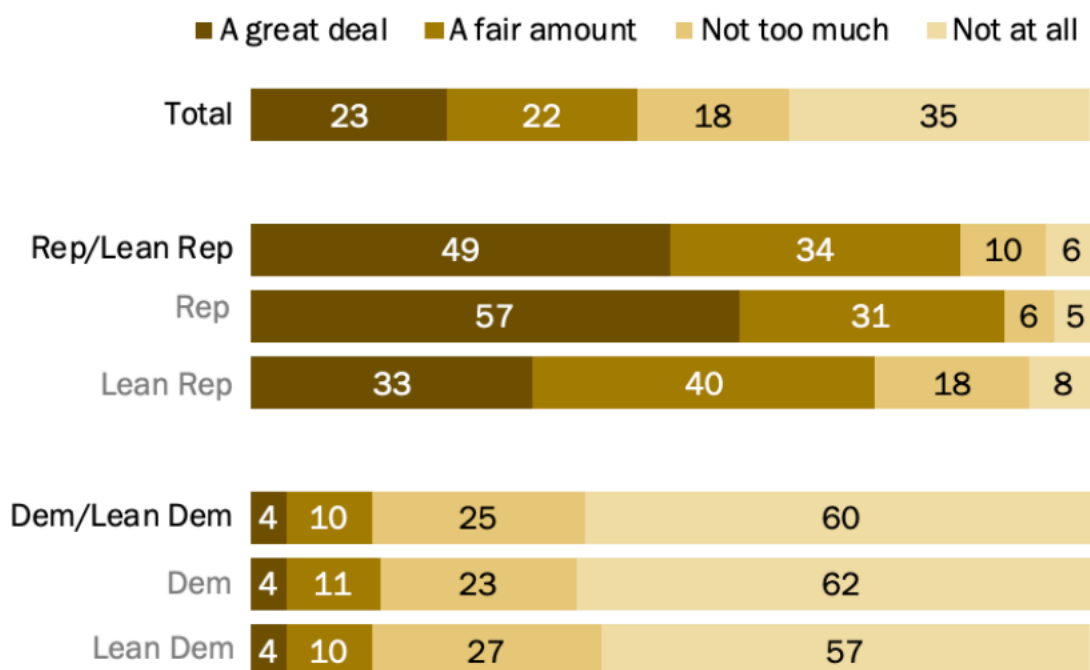
January 29-February 1, 2020 | n = 1,021

CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Figure 69. Majority of U.S. Public Says Trump's Approach on Iran Has Raised Chances of a Major Conflict

## Just a third of Republican-leaning independents have a great deal of trust in what administration says on Iran

*% who say they trust what the Trump administration says about the situation with Iran ...*



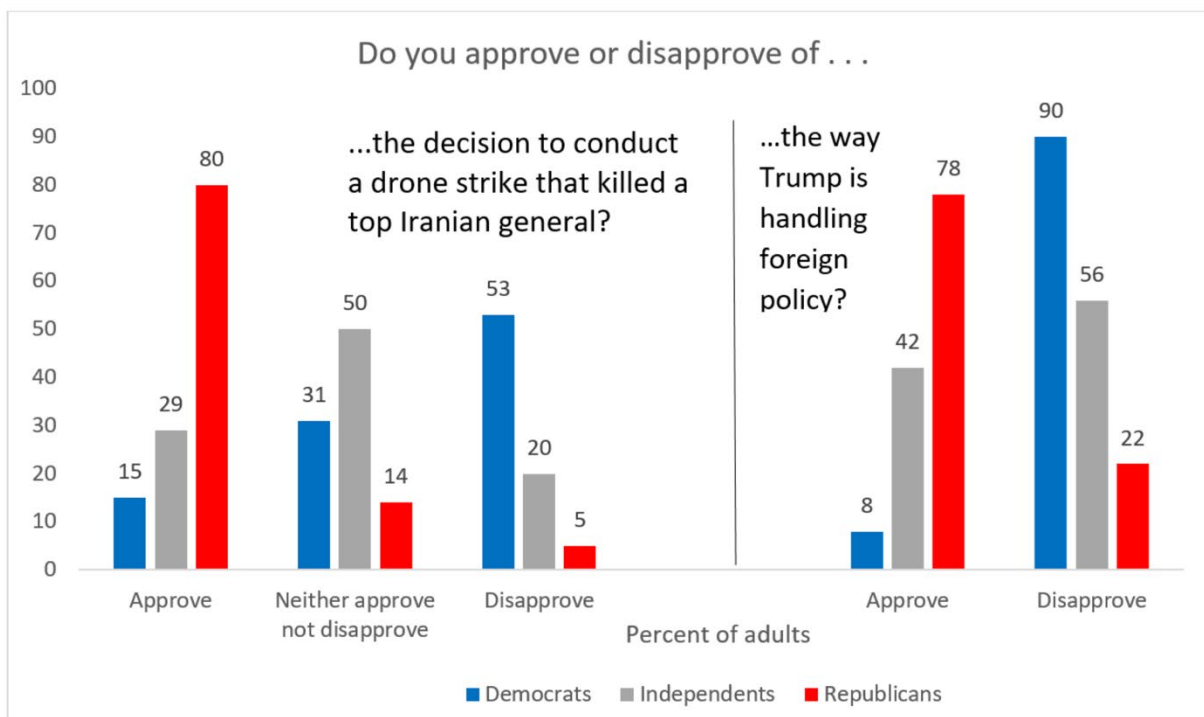
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-13, 2020.

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Figure 70. Foreign Policy Attitudes Following the Conflict with Iran



Questions: Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the United States' decision to conduct a drone strike that killed a top general in Iran? / Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling foreign policy?

Source: AP-NORC poll conducted January 16-21, 2020 with 1,353 adults nationwide.

Figure 71. Wrap-Up of Global Public Opinion on Issues that Defined 2020

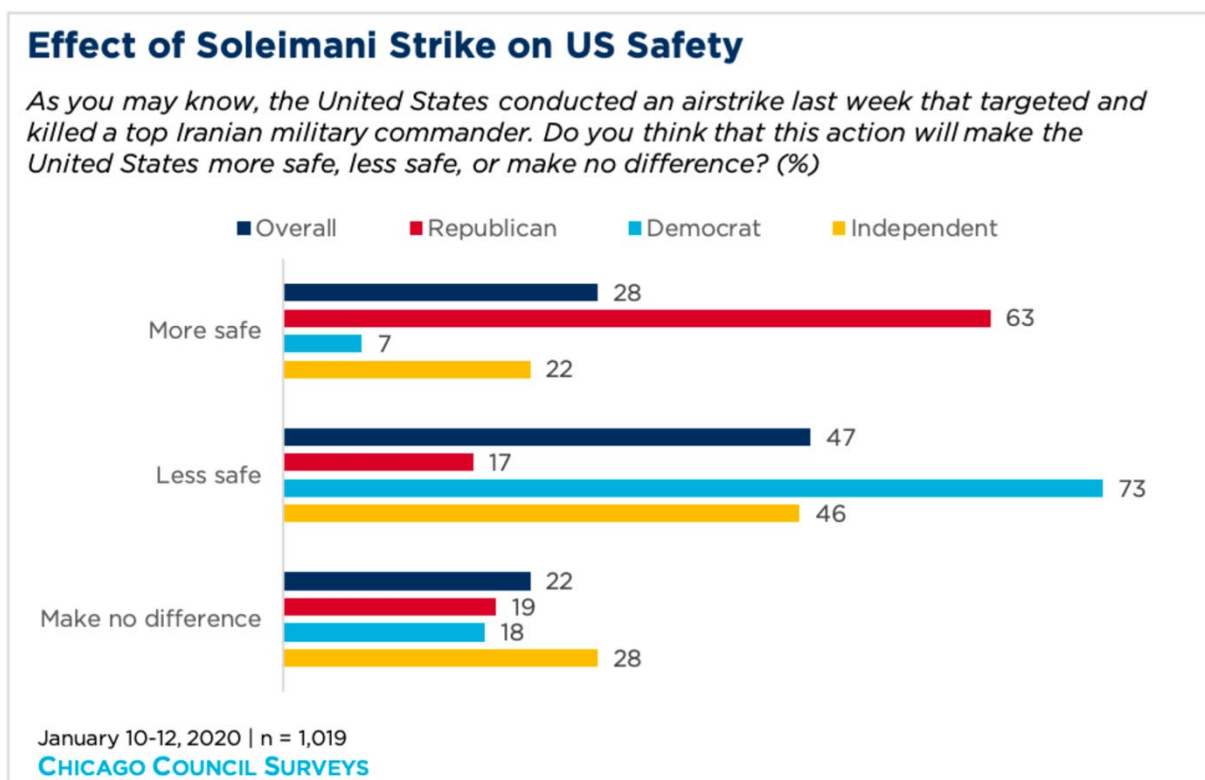
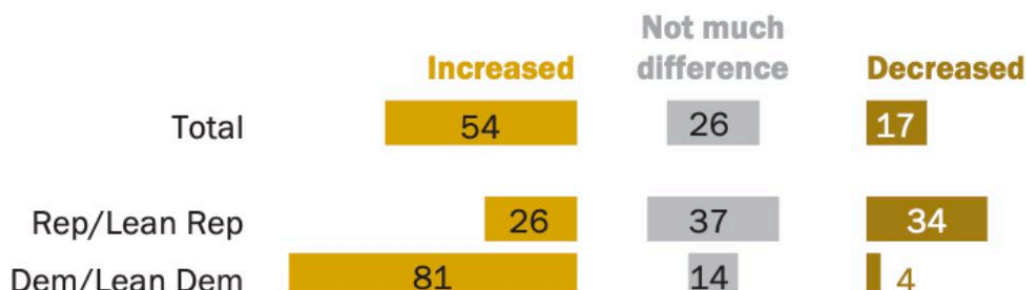


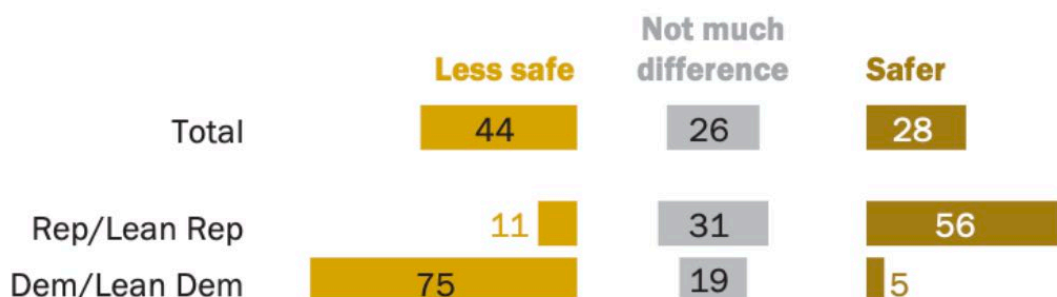
Figure 72. Majority of U.S. Public Says Trump's Approach on Iran Has Raised Chances of a Major Conflict

## Majority of Americans say Trump's approach on Iran has increased likelihood of a 'major military conflict'

*% who say the Trump administration's approach toward Iran has \_\_\_ the likelihood of a major military conflict between the U.S. and Iran*



*% who say the Trump administration's approach toward Iran has made the U.S. ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-13, 2020.

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Israel

Figure 73. Americans Still Favor Israel While Warming to Palestinians

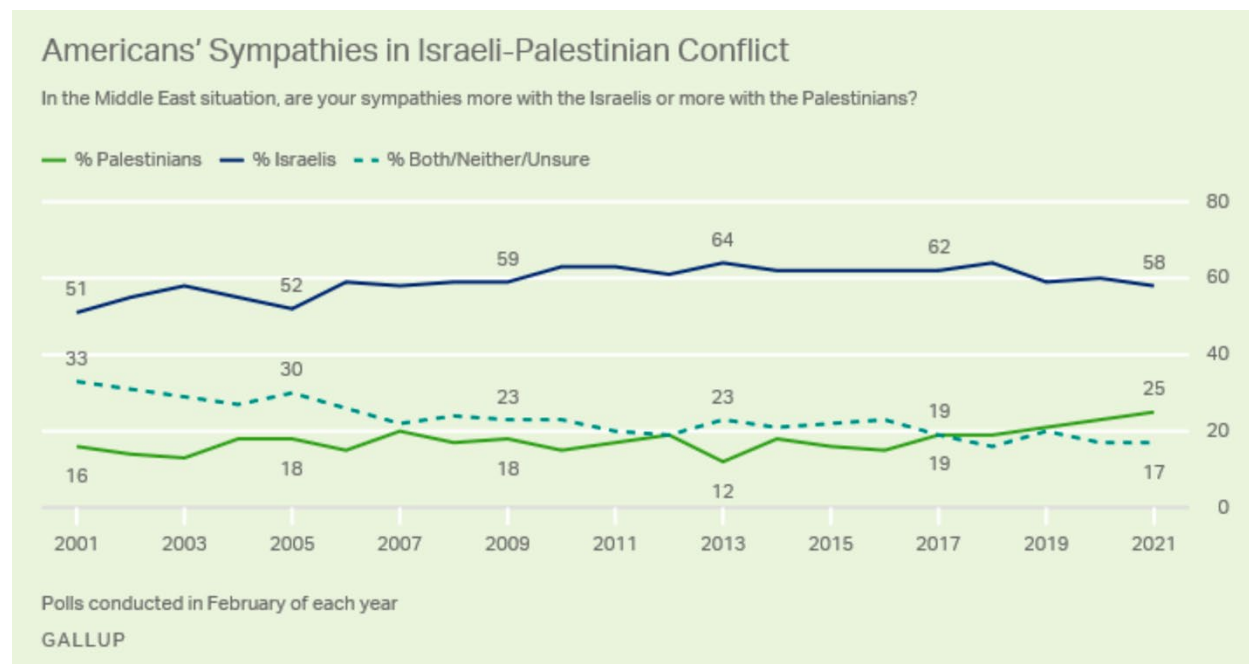
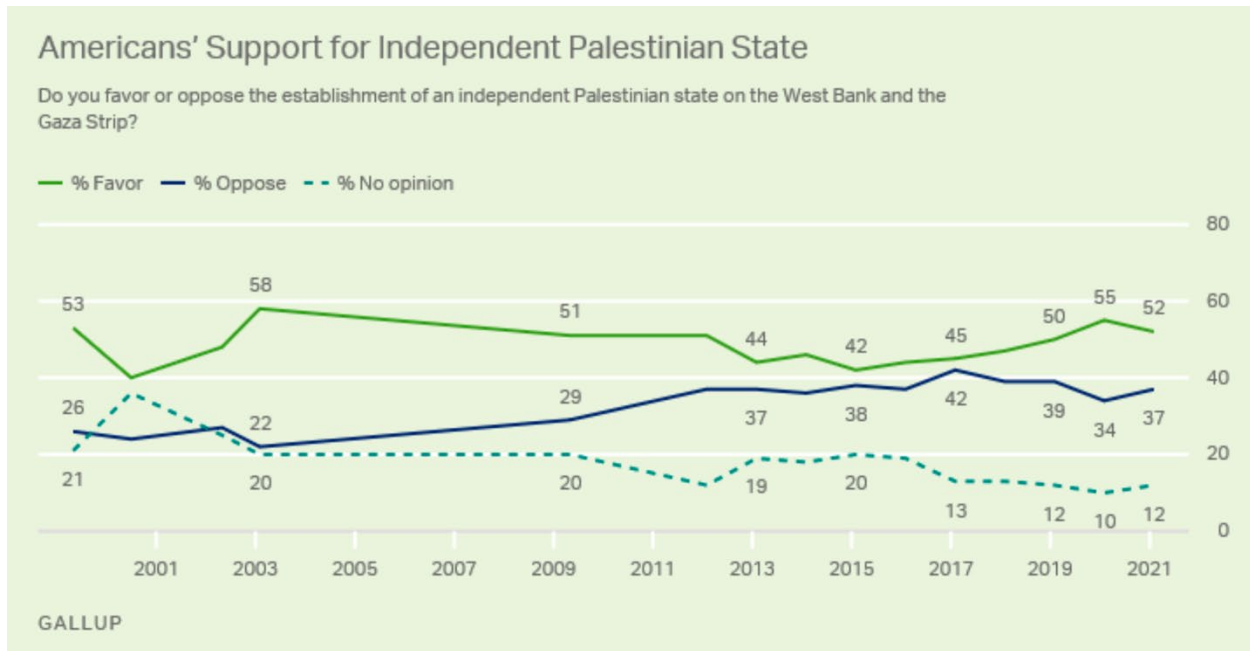


Figure 74. Americans Still Favor Israel While Warming to Palestinians



**Figure 75. Americans Still Favor Israel While Warming to Palestinians**

2021 Views on Israel and the Palestinians, by Party ID

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
	%	%	%
<b>Favorable ratings</b>			
Israel	85	77	64
Palestinian Authority	19	30	38
<b>Mideast sympathies</b>			
More with the Israelis	80	55	43
More with the Palestinians	10	25	38
Both/Neither (vol.)	10	20	19
<b>U.S. pressure</b>			
More on Palestinians	65	44	29
More on Israelis	17	31	53
<b>Palestinian statehood</b>			
Favor	38	49	67
Oppose	50	40	22

(vol.) = volunteered response

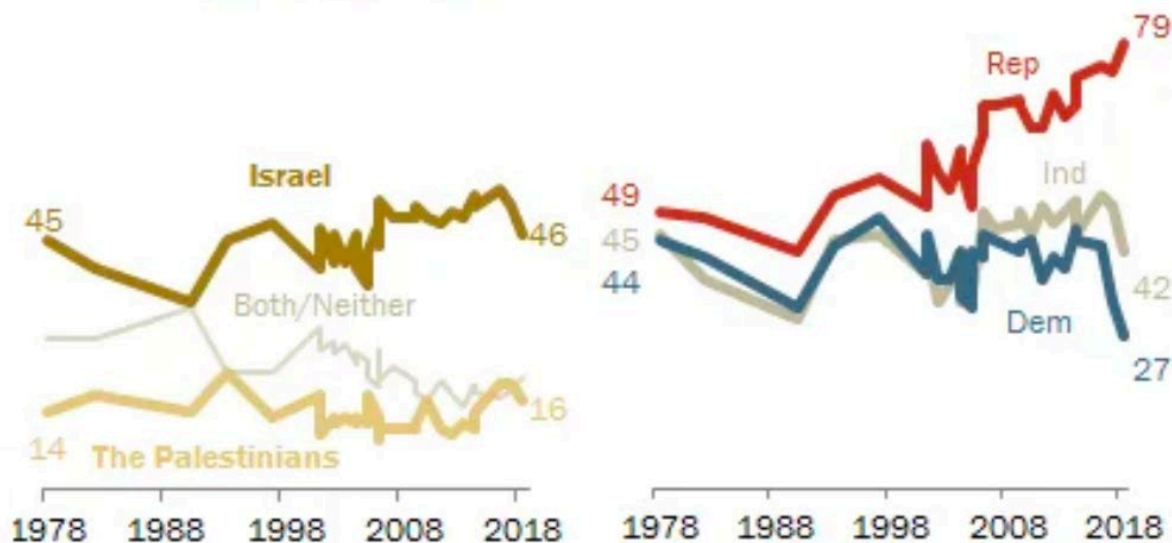
GALLUP, FEB. 3-18, 2021

Figure 76. Trump has changed how Americans think about politics

## Partisan divide in Middle East sympathies now wider than at any point in the past four decades

*In the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, who do you sympathize with more? (%)*

*Sympathize with Israel, by party (%)*



Notes: 1978-1990 data from the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.  
Both/Neither responses are volunteered. Don't know responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 10-15, 2018.

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Figure 77. Half of American Public Favors Independent Palestinian State

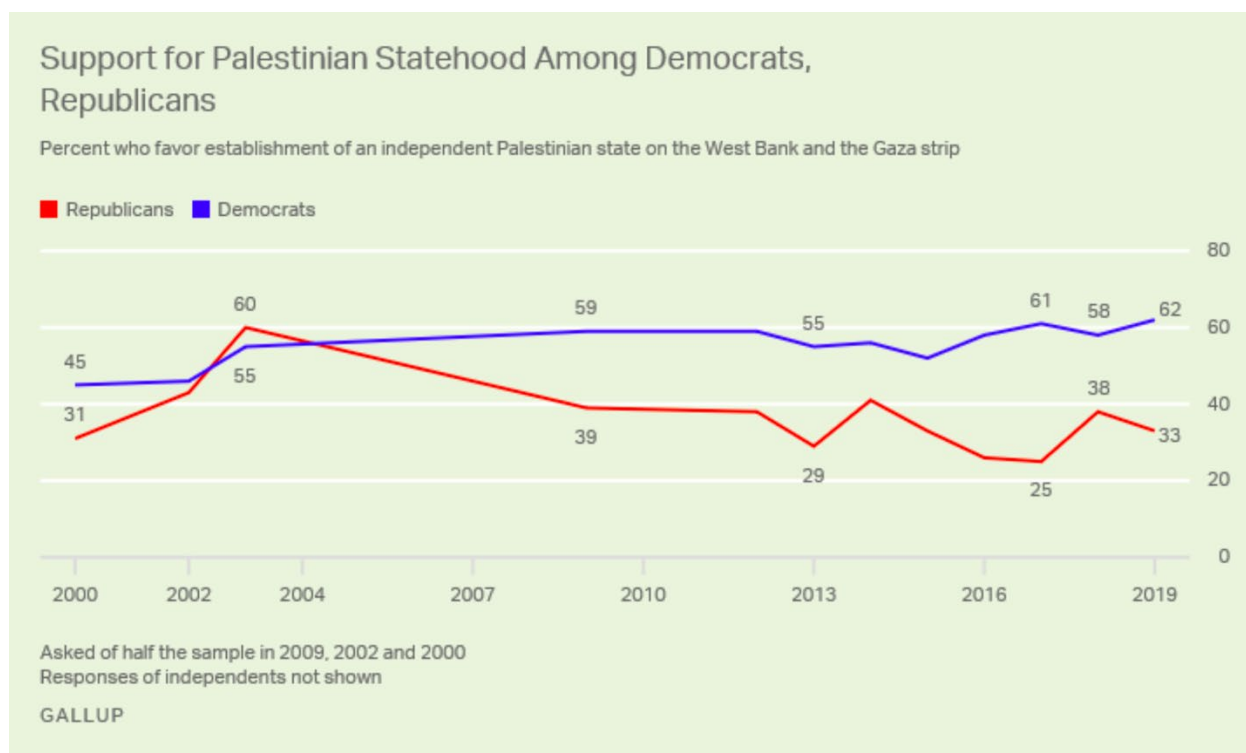
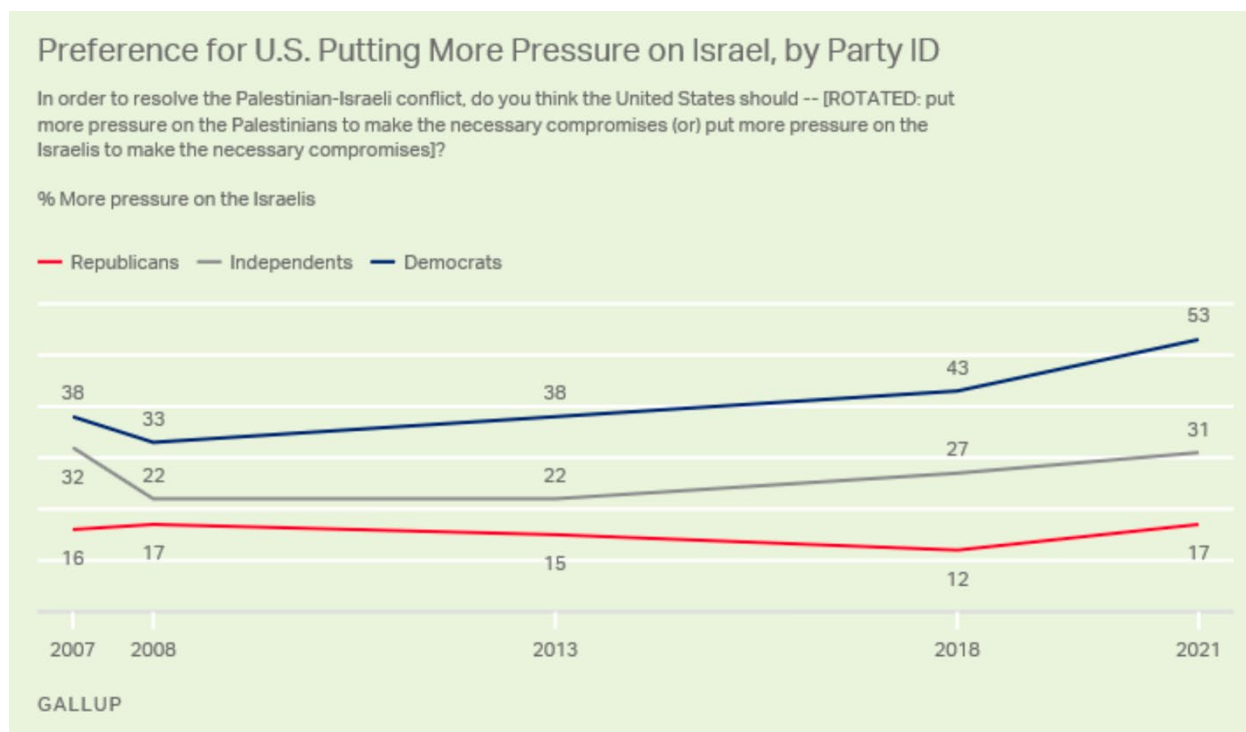


Figure 78. Americans Still Favor Israel While Warming to Palestinians



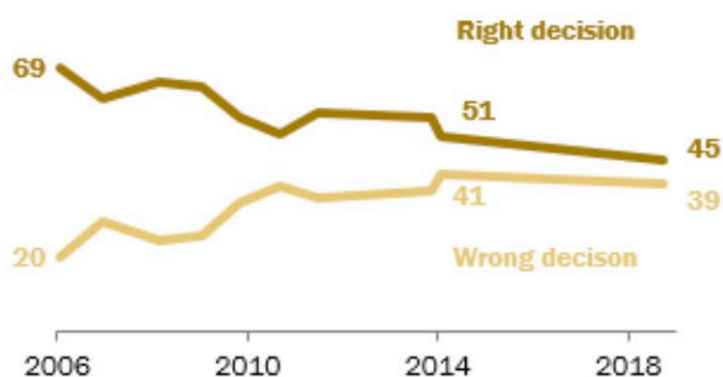


Afghanistan and Iraq

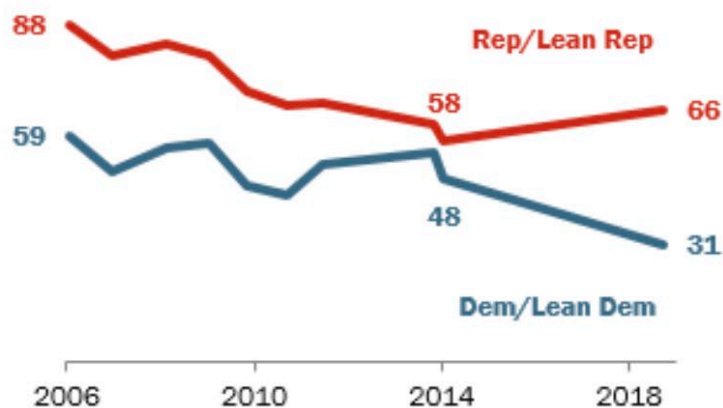
Figure 79. After 17 years of war in Afghanistan, more say U.S. has failed than succeeded in achieving its goals

### Share endorsing the initial U.S. decision to use force has declined in past decade

*% who say U.S. made the \_\_\_\_ in 2001 to use military force in Afghanistan*



*% who say the U.S. made the **right decision** in 2001 to use military force in Afghanistan*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 18-24, 2018.

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Figure 80. U.S. Views Mixed on War in Afghanistan

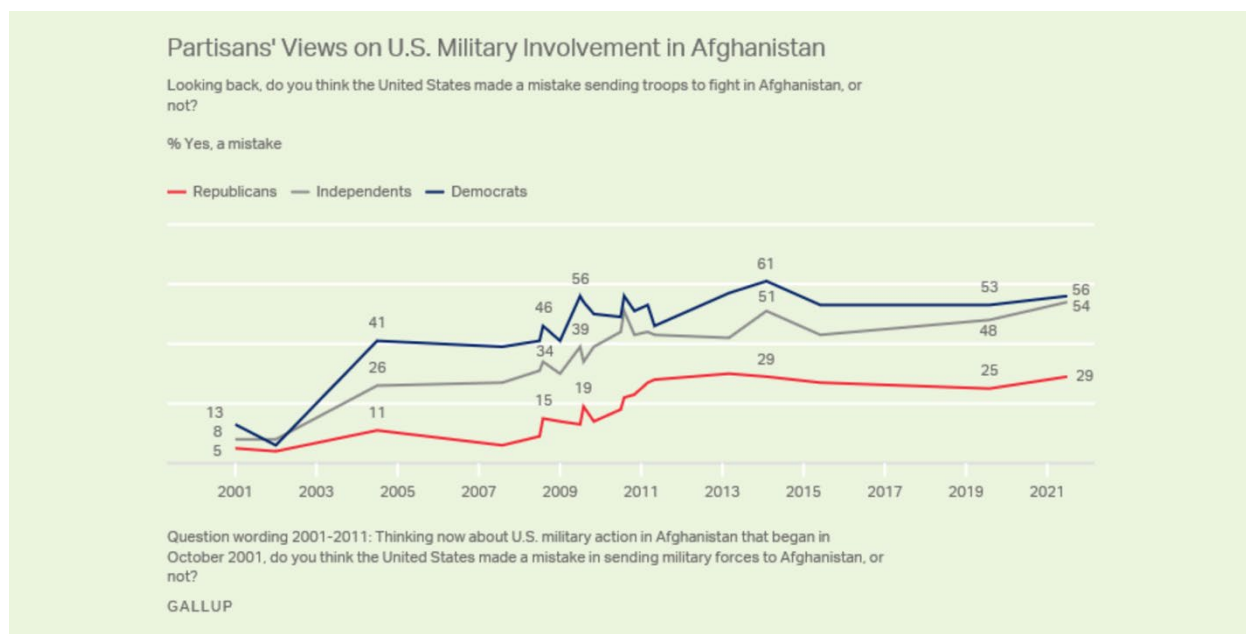
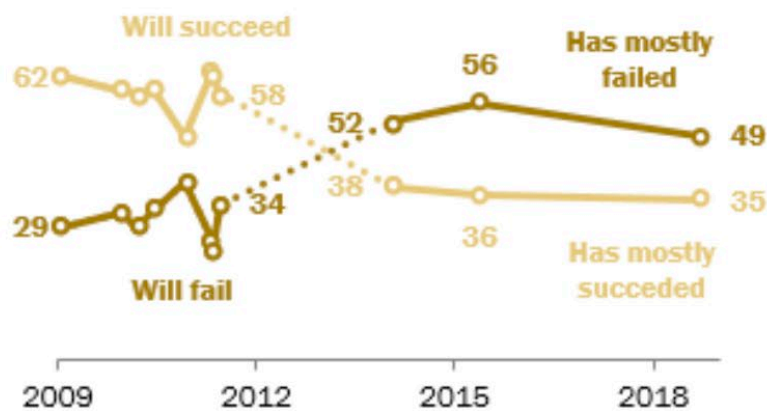


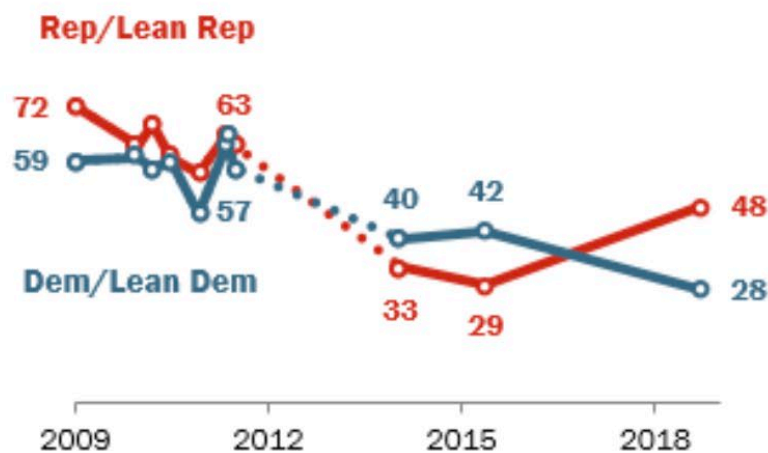
Figure 81. After 17 years of war in Afghanistan, more say U.S. has failed than succeeded in achieving its goals

## About half of the public says the U.S. has ‘mostly failed’ in Afghanistan

% who say that the U.S. \_\_\_\_ in achieving its goals in Afghanistan



% who say that the U.S. has mostly *succeeded* in achieving its goals in Afghanistan



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 18-24, 2018.

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Figure 82. Despite Unfavorable Views of the War in Afghanistan, Americans Split on Complete Withdrawal

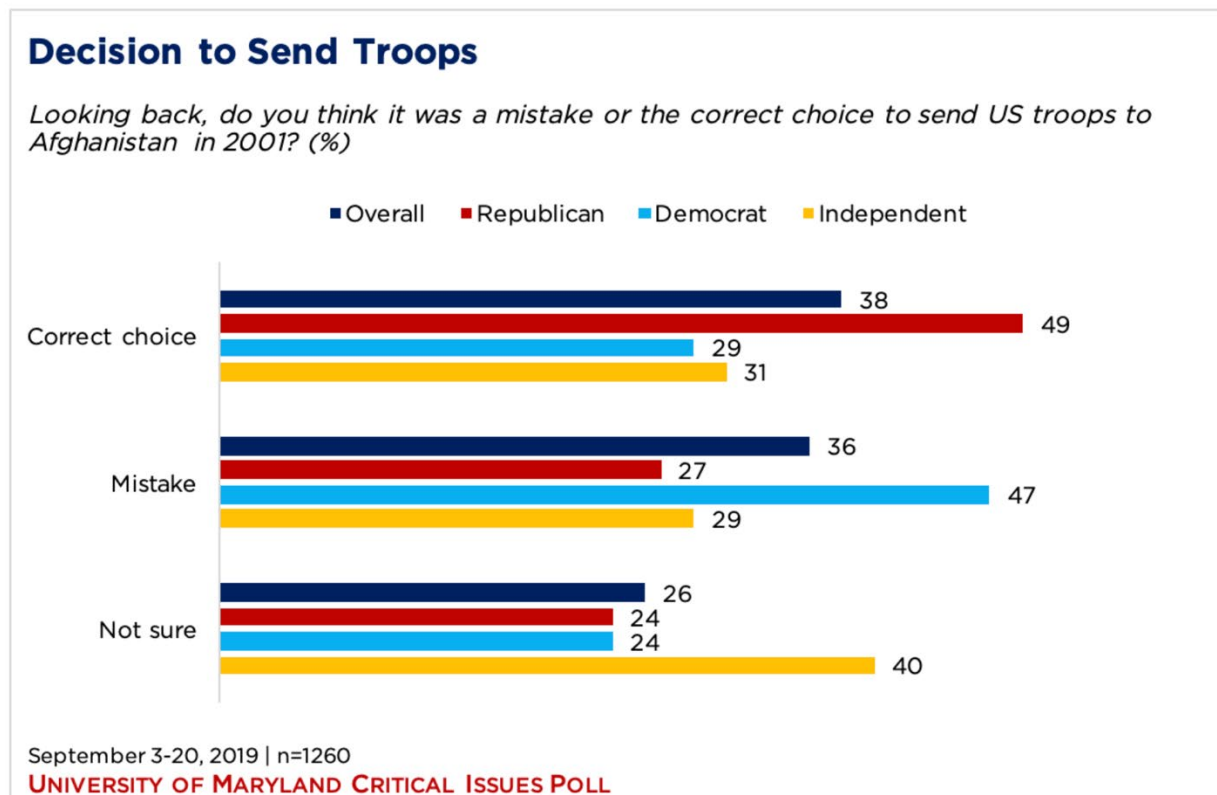


Figure 83. American Public Support for US Troops in Middle East Has Grown

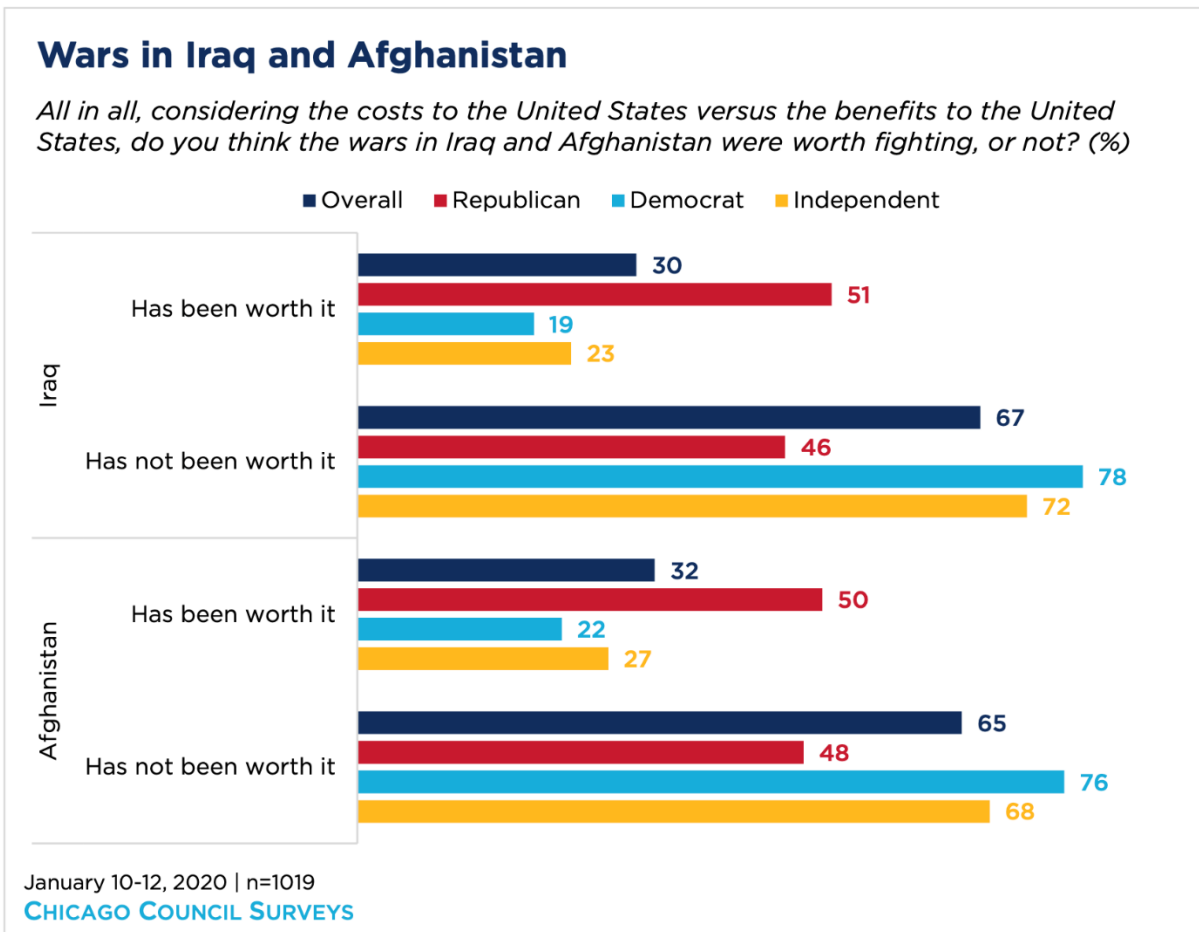
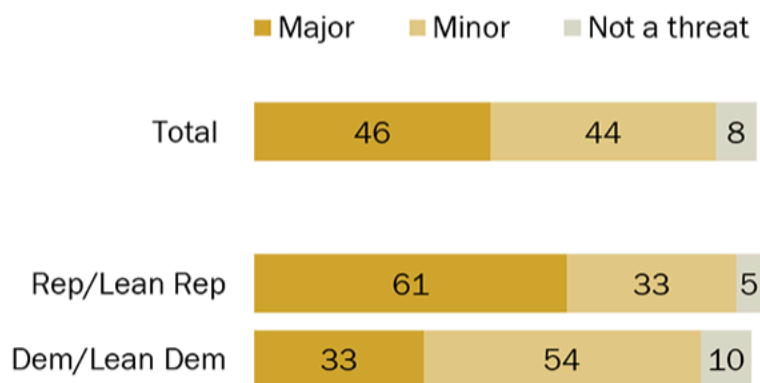


Figure 84. Majority of U.S. public favors Afghanistan troop withdrawal; Biden criticized for his handling of situation

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## Democrats less likely than Republicans to view Taliban control of Afghanistan as major security threat to U.S.

*% who say Taliban control of Afghanistan is a \_\_\_ threat to the security of the United States*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 23-29, 2021.

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Figure 85. Afghanistan, September 2, 2021

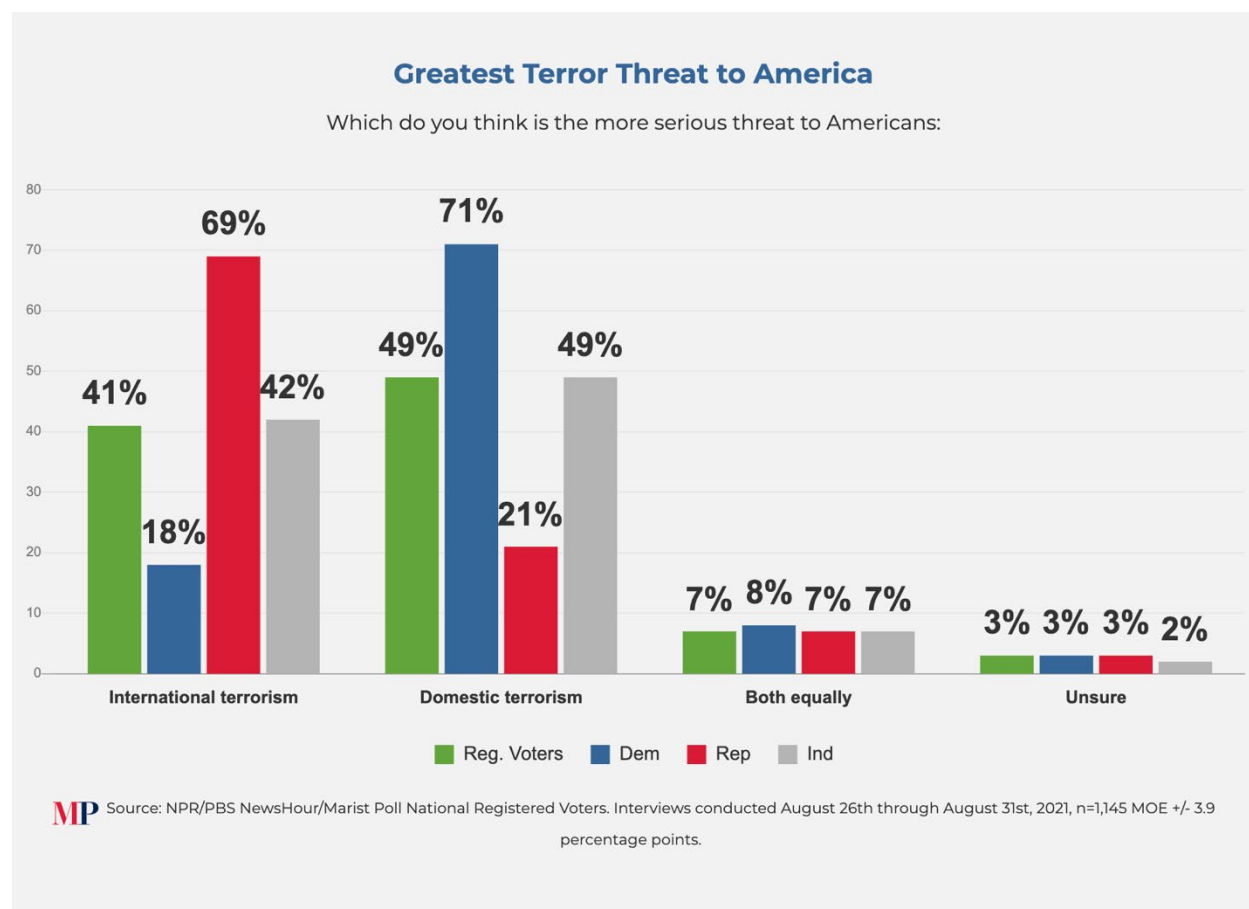
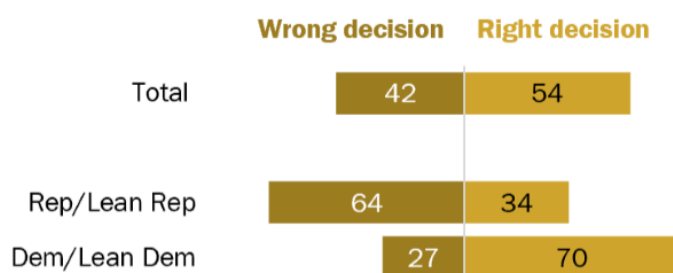


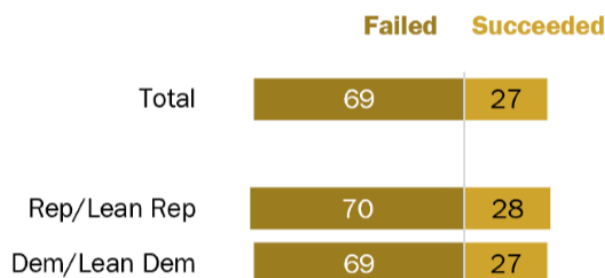
Figure 86. Majority of U.S. public favors Afghanistan troop withdrawal; Biden criticized for his handling of situation

## Republicans oppose U.S. troop pullout; both parties say U.S. failed to meet goals in Afghanistan

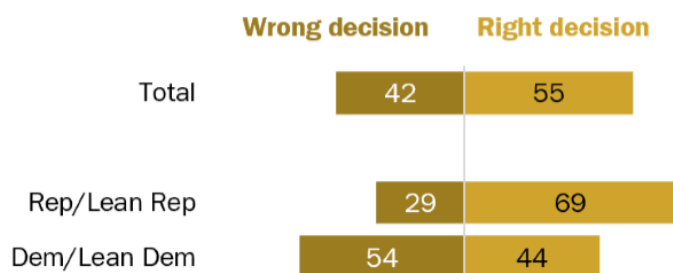
*% who say the U.S. decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan was the ...*



*% who say the U.S. mostly \_\_\_ in achieving its goals in Afghanistan*



*% who say the United States' **initial decision** to use military force in Afghanistan in 2001 was the ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 23-29, 2021.

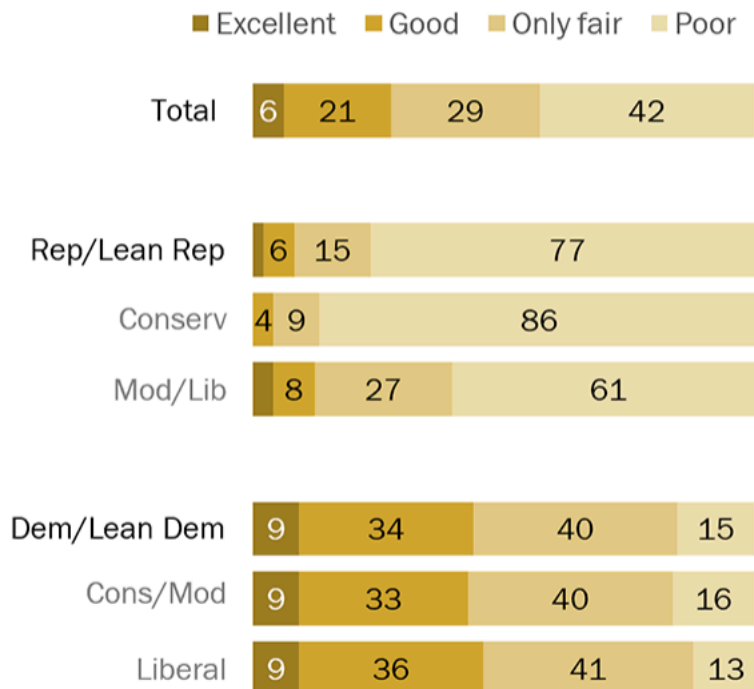
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Figure 87. Majority of U.S. public favors Afghanistan troop withdrawal; Biden criticized for his handling of situation

## Fewer than half of Democrats express positive views of Biden on Afghanistan

*% who rate the job the Biden administration has done handling the situation in Afghanistan as ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

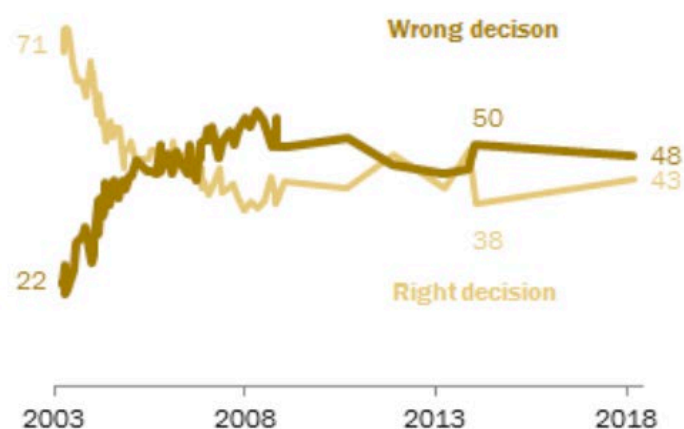
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 23-29, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

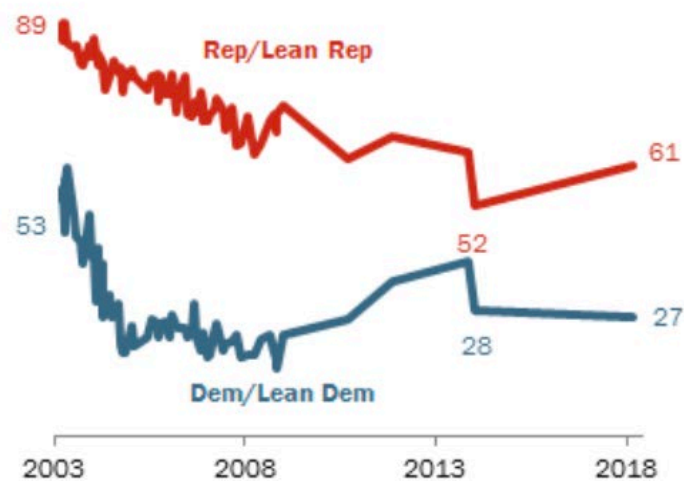
Figure 88. The Iraq War continues to divide the U.S. public, 15 years after it began

## Views of U.S. military force in Iraq: 2003-2018

% who say the U.S. made the \_\_\_\_ in using military force in Iraq



% who say the U.S. made the right decision in using military force in Iraq



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

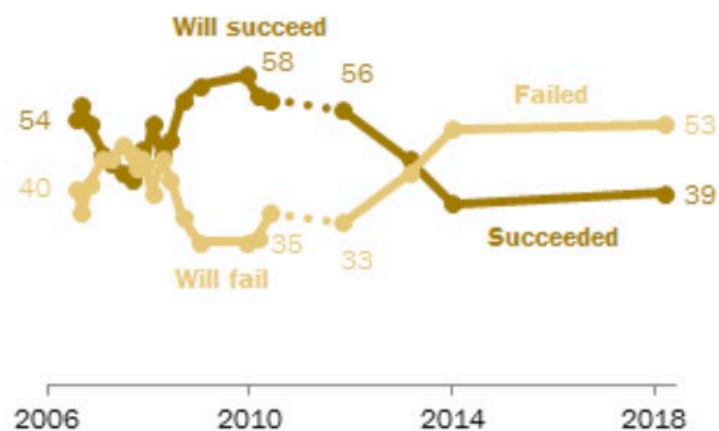
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Mar. 7-14, 2018.

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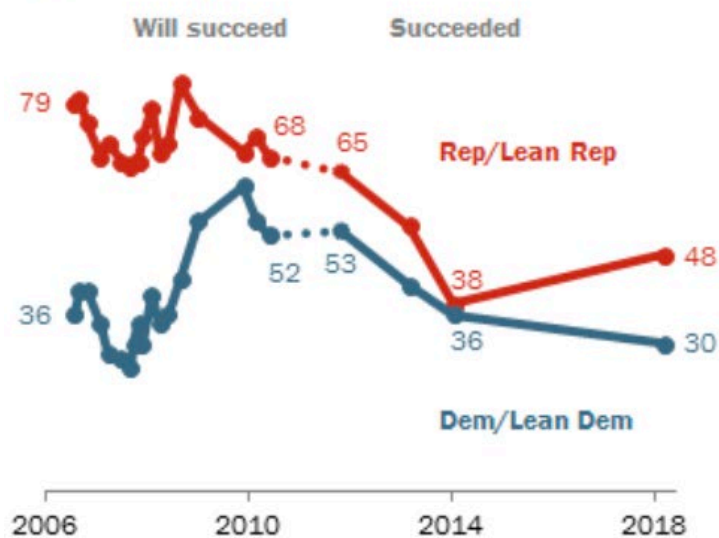
Figure 89. The Iraq War continues to divide the U.S. public, 15 years after it began

## Half of Americans say the U.S. 'mostly failed' to achieve goals in Iraq

*% who say that the U.S. \_\_\_\_ in achieving its goals in Iraq*



*% who say that the U.S. mostly succeeded in achieving its goals in Iraq*



Notes: Question asked in the future tense from 2006-2010, and in the past tense from 2011-2018. See topline for full question wording and trend.

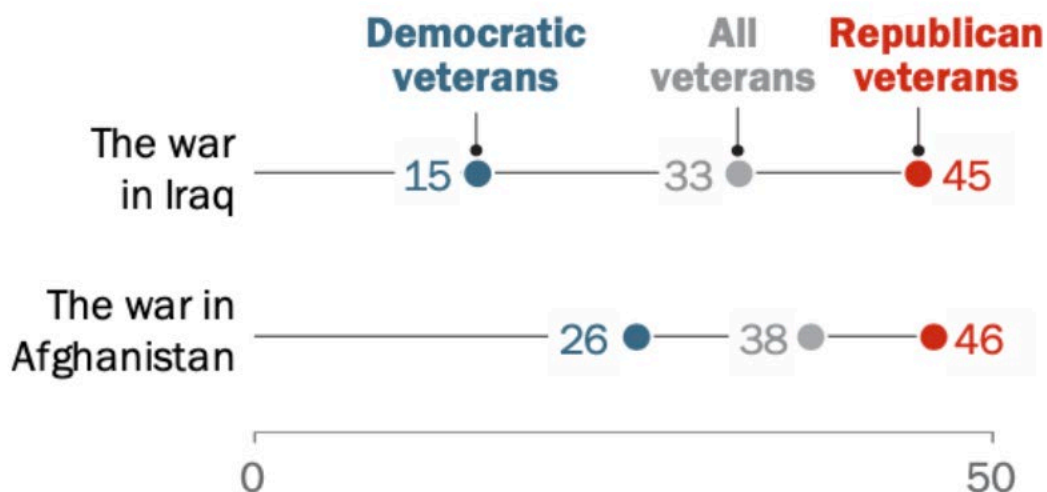
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Mar. 7-14, 2018.

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Figure 90. Majorities of U.S. veterans, public say the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not worth fighting

## Among veterans, partisan divide in views of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan

*% of each group who say, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, \_\_\_\_ was worth fighting*



Note: “Democratic veterans” and “Republican veterans” include those who lean toward the Democratic or Republican Party.

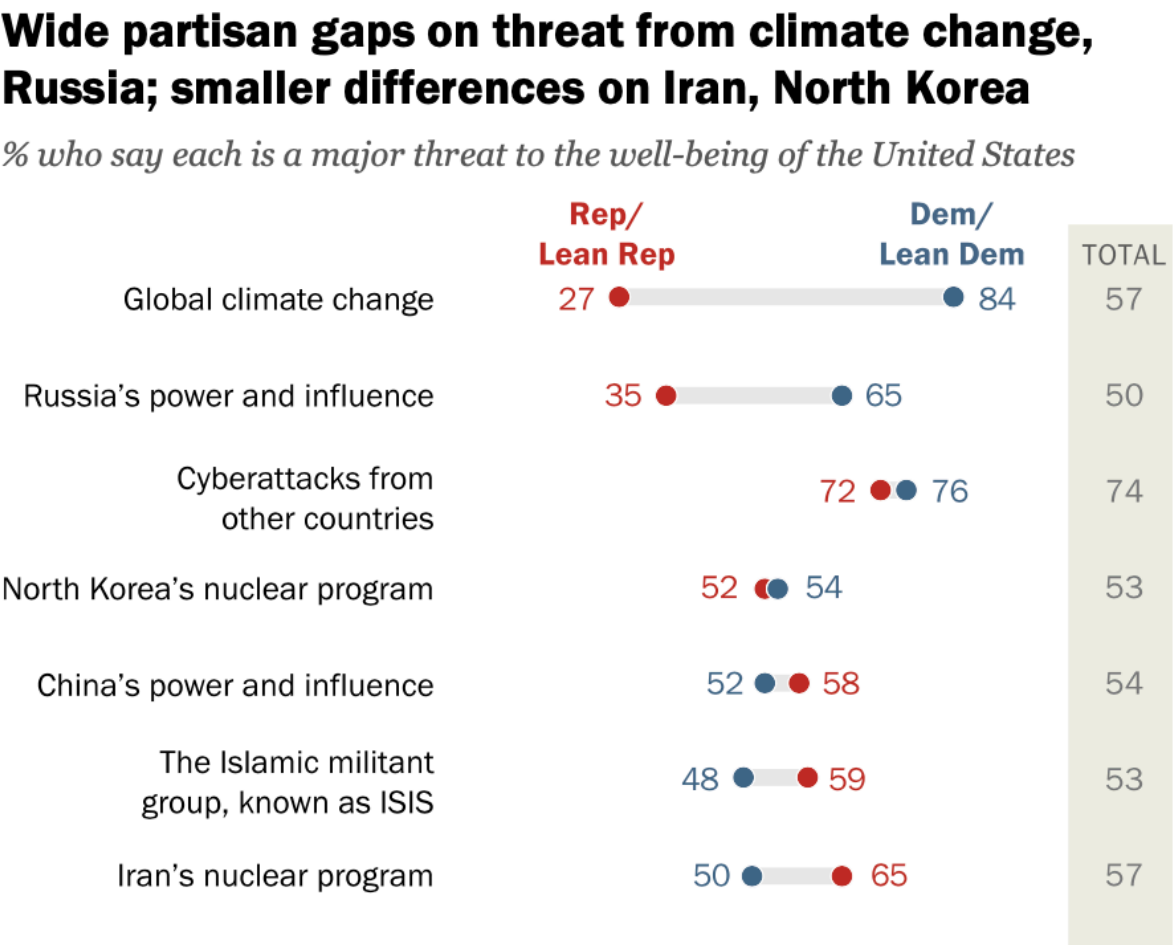
Source: Survey of U.S. veterans conducted May 14-June 2, 2019.

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North Korea**Figure 91. Americans' Opinions of U.S.-North Korea Relations Less Negative**

Americans' Views of North Korea, by Political Party					
	2000	2003	2006	2013	2018
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Republicans</b>					
Ally/Friendly	24	9	9	8	20
Unfriendly	37	36	31	24	34
Enemy	32	50	51	64	42
<b>Independents</b>					
Ally/Friendly	32	11	14	11	16
Unfriendly	36	42	34	25	32
Enemy	23	44	46	59	45
<b>Democrats</b>					
Ally/Friendly	38	14	14	10	15
Unfriendly	33	41	36	31	32
Enemy	17	41	47	54	52
Note: 2003 data based on average of three polls					
GALLUP					

Figure 92. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public’s Views of Global Threats



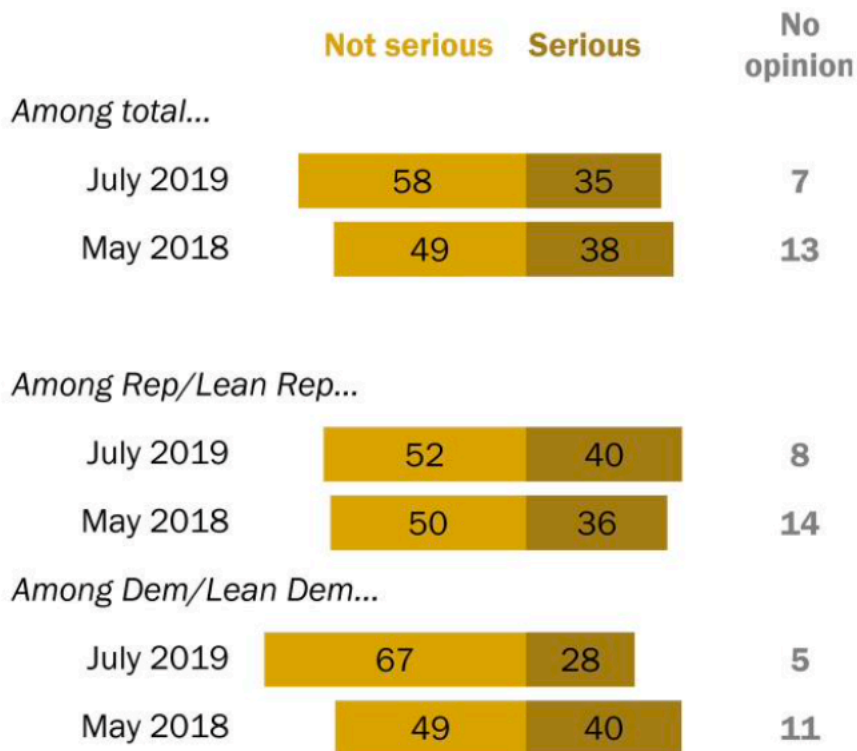
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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Figure 93. Climate Change and Russia Are Partisan Flashpoints in Public's Views of Global Threats

## More Democrats say N. Korea is 'not serious' in addressing nuclear concerns

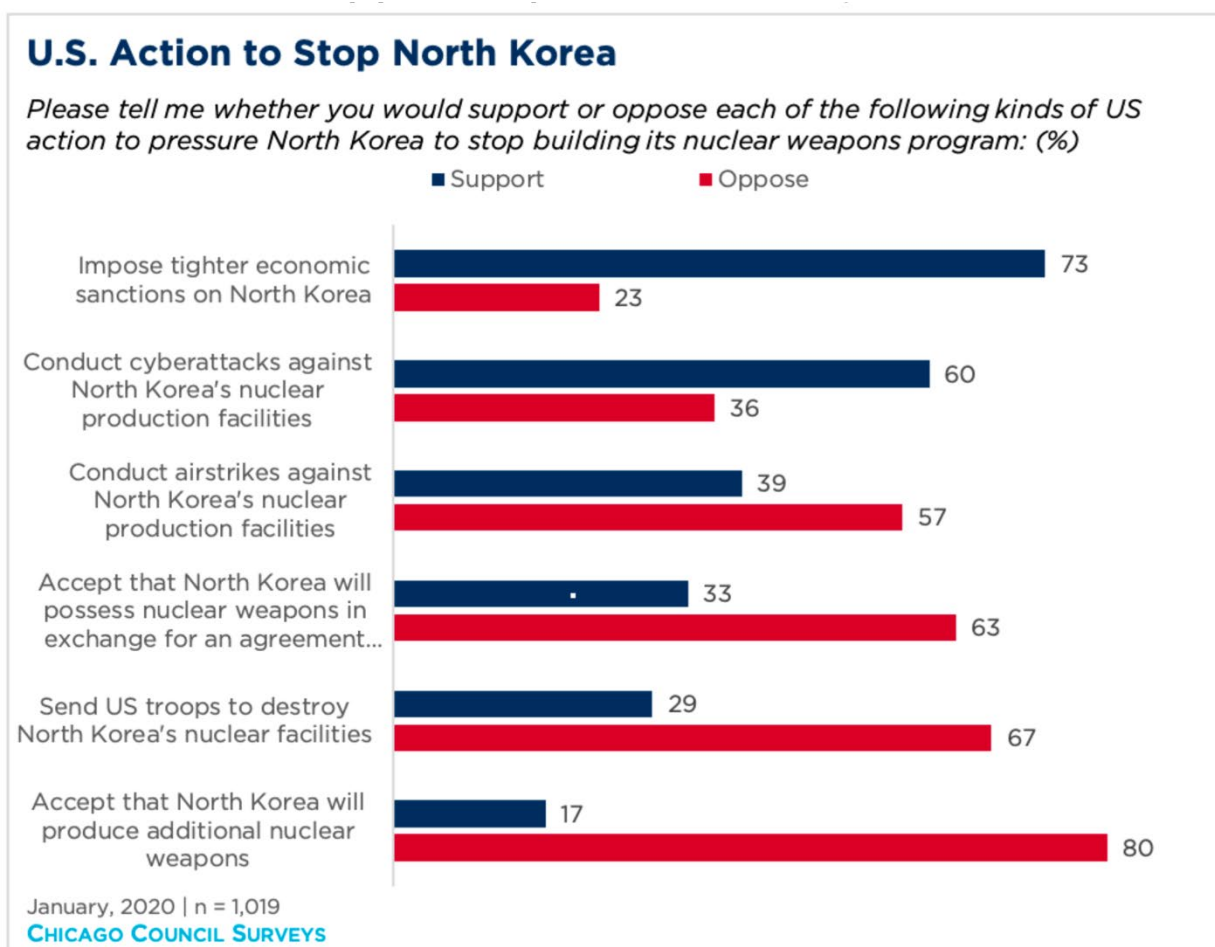
*% who say North Korea's leadership is \_\_\_\_\_ about addressing concerns about their nuclear program*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 10-15, 2019.

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Figure 94. Wrap-Up of Global Public Opinion on Issues that Defined 2020





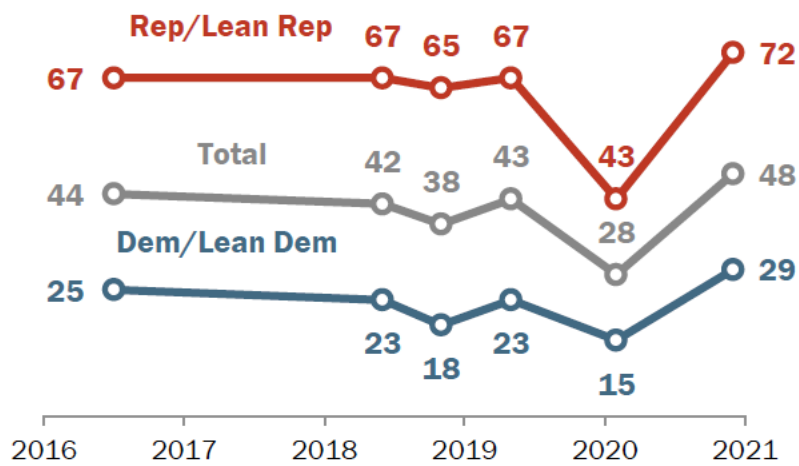
Immigration and Refugees

Figure 95. Most Americans Are Critical of Government's Handling of Situation at U.S.-Mexico Border

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## Share saying illegal immigration is very big problem has increased since 2020

*% who say illegal immigration is a **very big problem** in the country today*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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Figure 96. Majority of Americans Oppose Expanding US-Mexico Border Wall

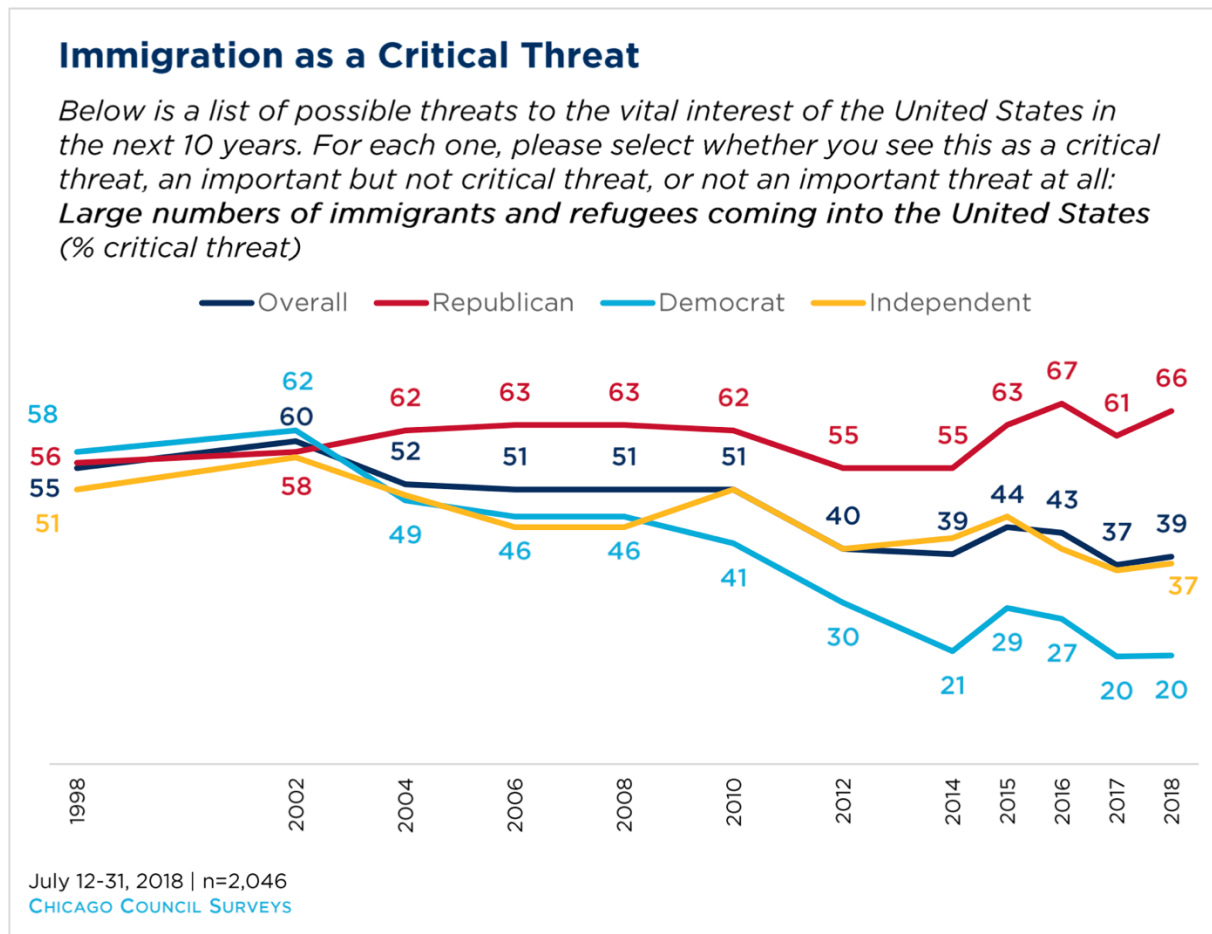


Figure 97. Majority of Americans Oppose Expanding US-Mexico Border Wall

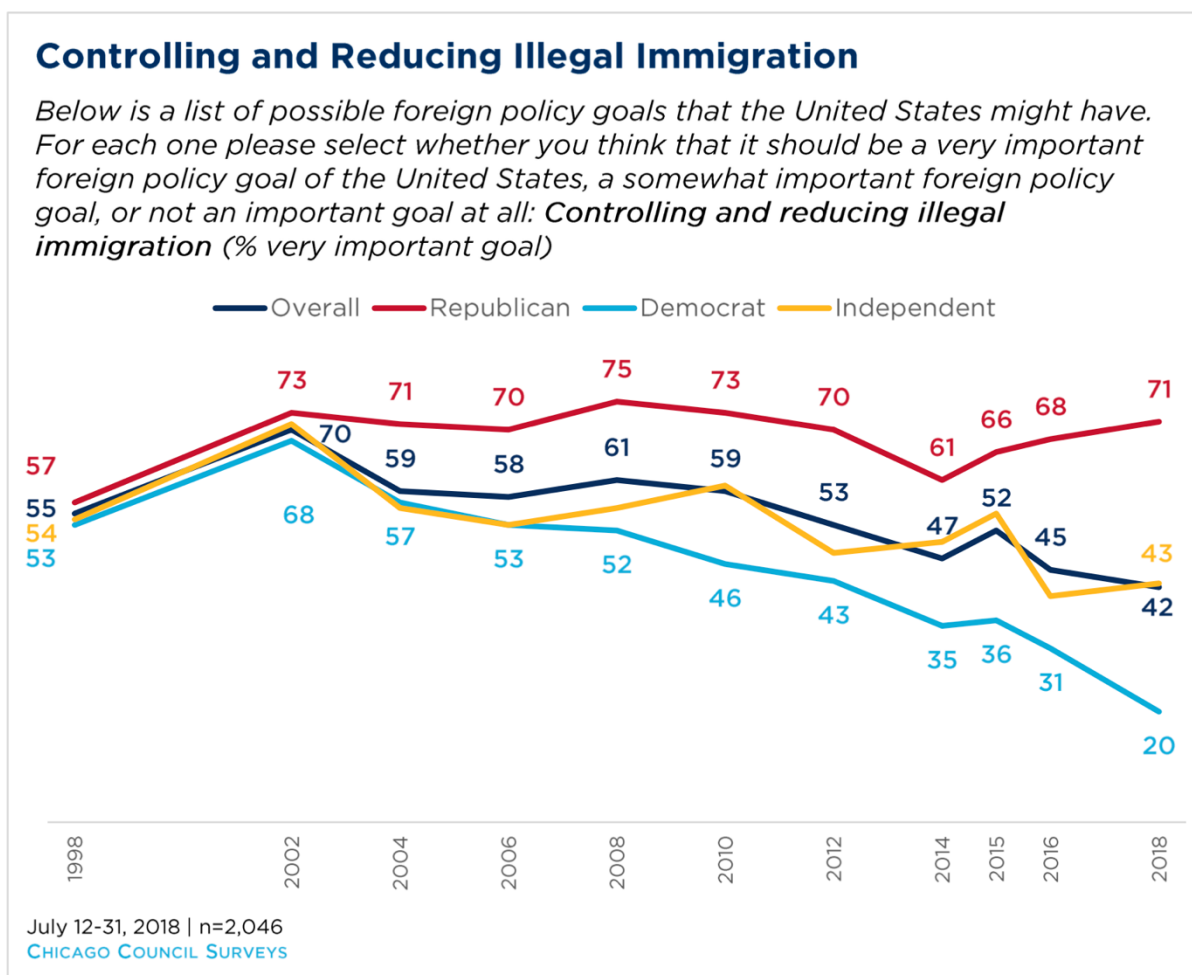
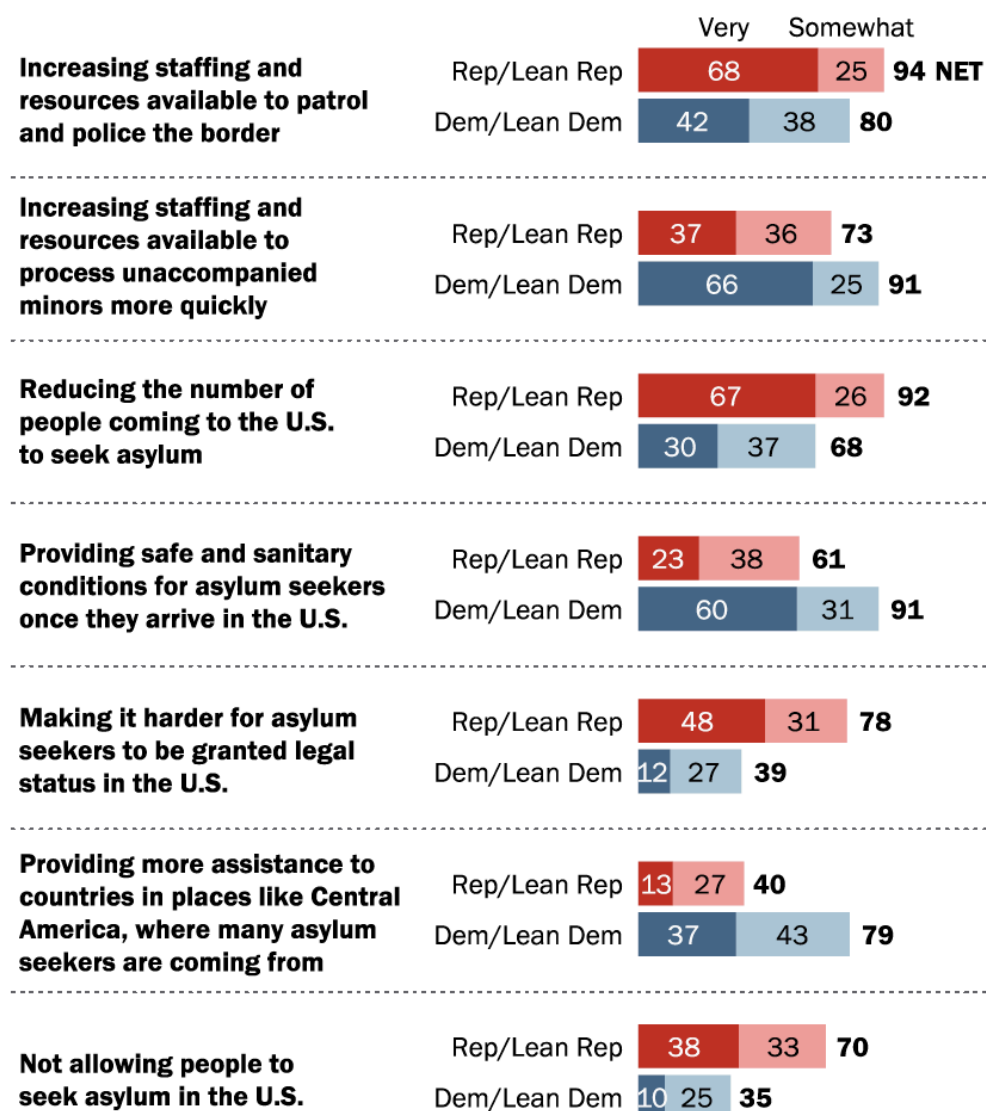


Figure 98. Most Americans Are Critical of Government's Handling of Situation at U.S.-Mexico Border

## Increasing resources at U.S.-Mexico border – both for patrolling and for processing unaccompanied minors more quickly – supported by majorities in both parties

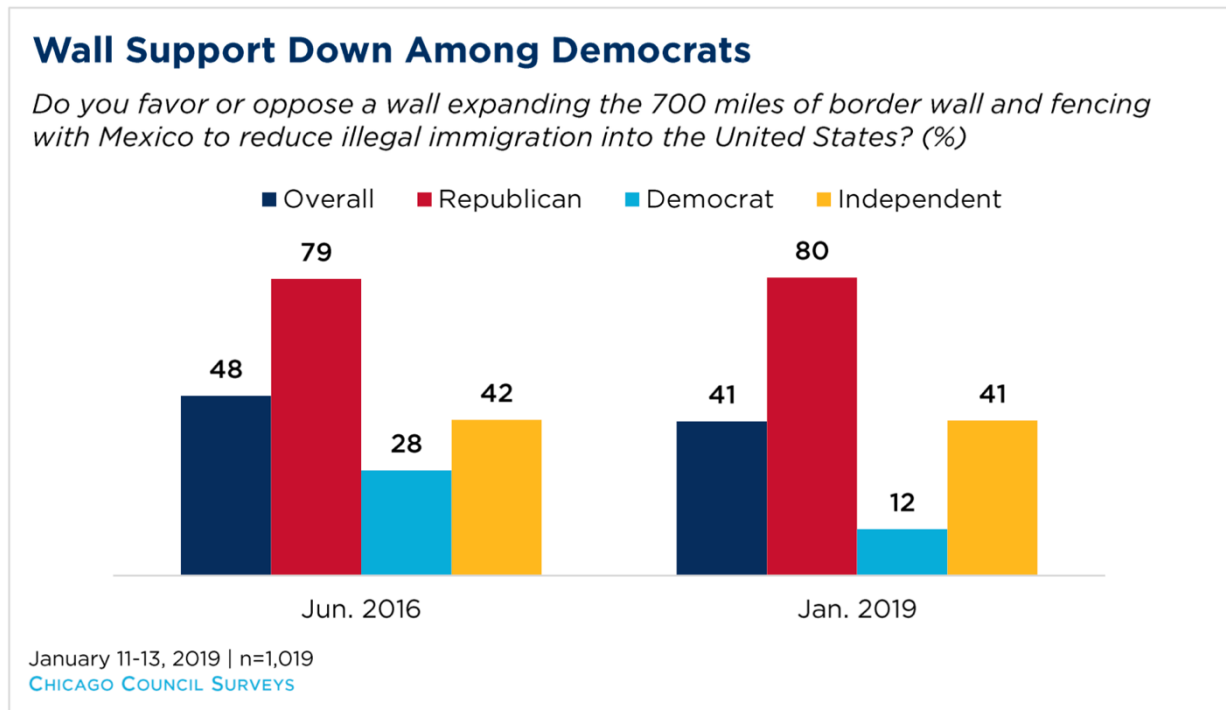
% who say, thinking about the situation at the U.S. border with Mexico, each of the following are \_\_\_\_ important for the U.S.



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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Figure 99. Majority of Americans Oppose Expanding US-Mexico Border Wall

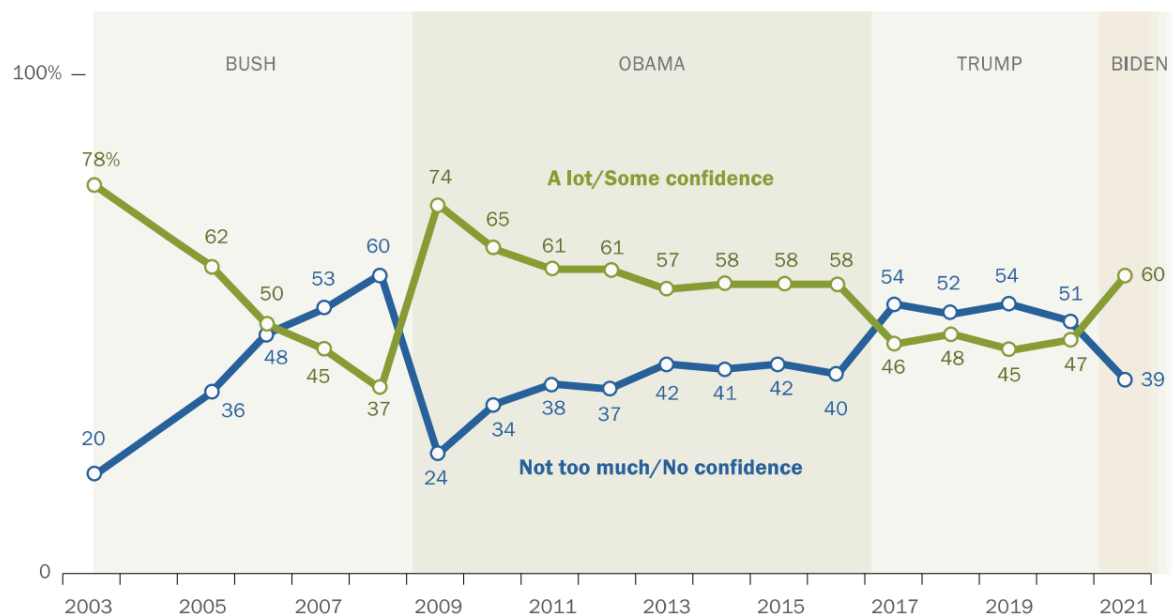


Public confidence in President Biden

Figure 100. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begin

### At start of his presidency, Biden draws more public confidence than Trump in 2017 – but less than Obama in 2009 – for his handling of world affairs

% who have \_\_\_ in the U.S. president to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Note: No answer responses not shown. 2020 and 2021 data from Pew Research Center's online American Trends Panel, prior data from telephone surveys.

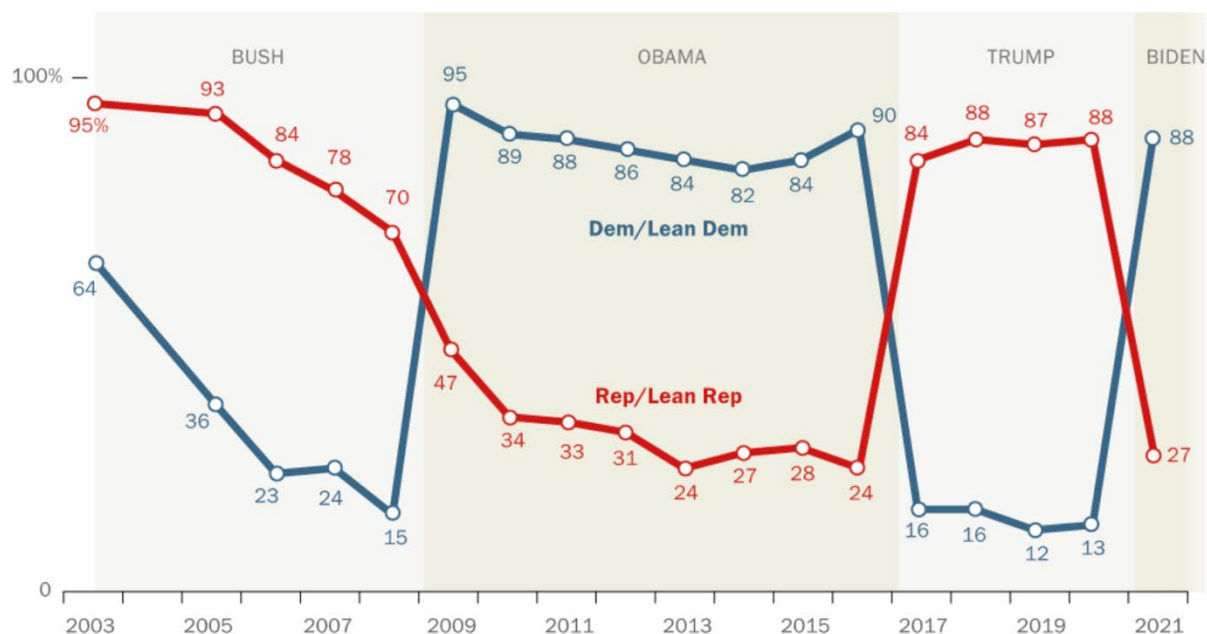
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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Figure 101. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

### Wide partisan divides in confidence in Biden and his recent predecessors on handling world affairs

% who say they have a lot/some confidence in the president to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Note: No answer responses not shown. 2020 and 2021 data from Pew Research Center's online American Trends Panel, prior data from telephone surveys.

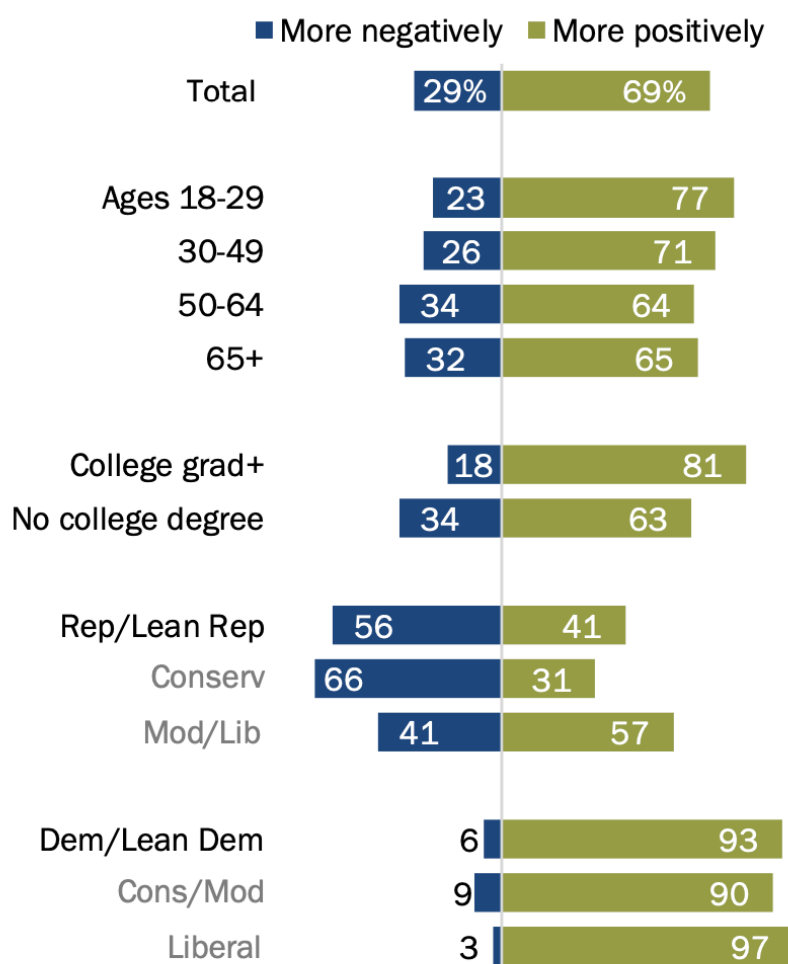
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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Figure 102. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Sizable majority of Americans say Biden presidency will lead to more positive views of U.S. globally

*% who say, now that Joe Biden is president, other countries will view the U.S. ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

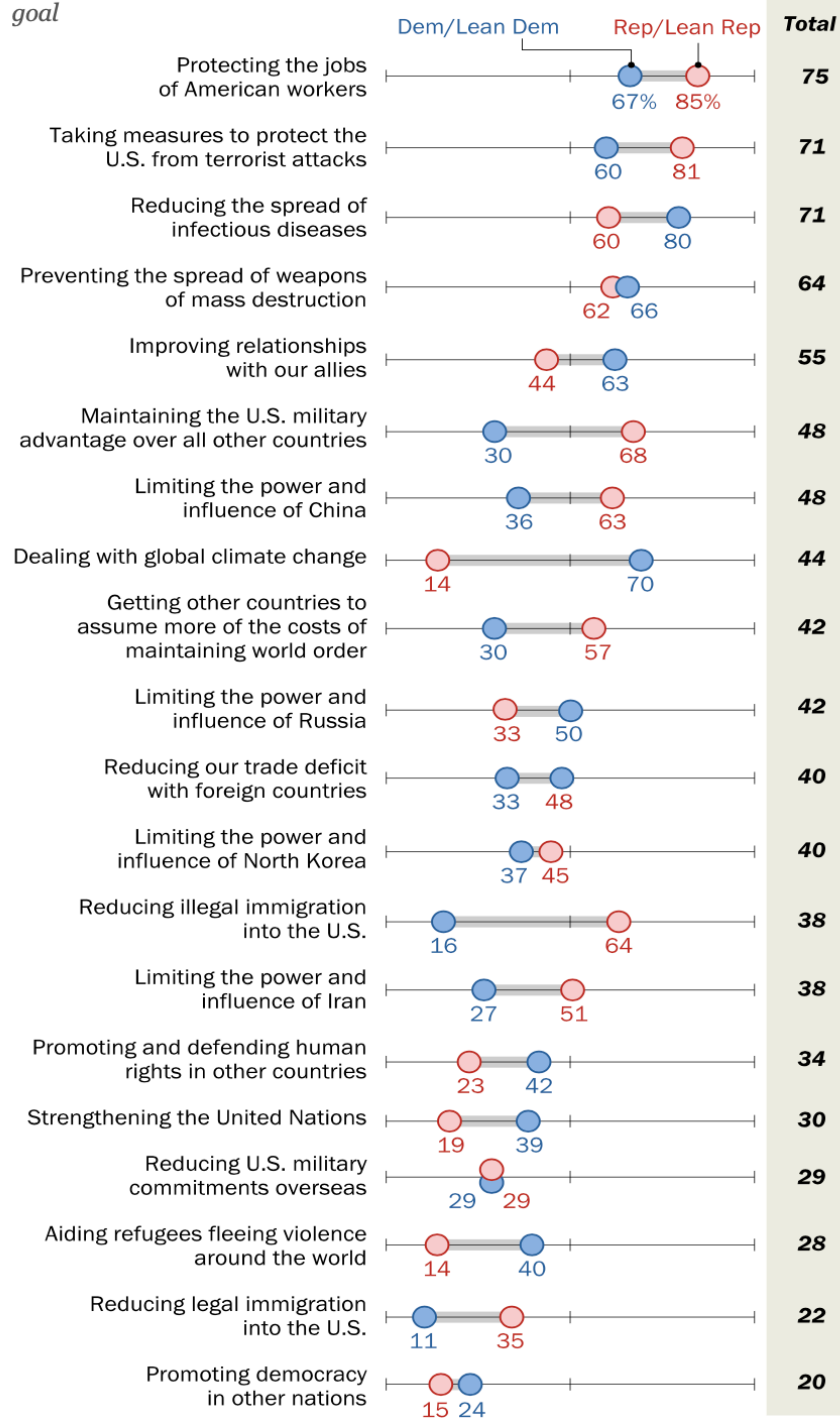
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Figure 103. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

### Sharp partisan divides in foreign policy priorities

% who say \_\_\_ should be given **top priority** as a long-range foreign policy goal



Note: See topline questionnaire for full question wording.

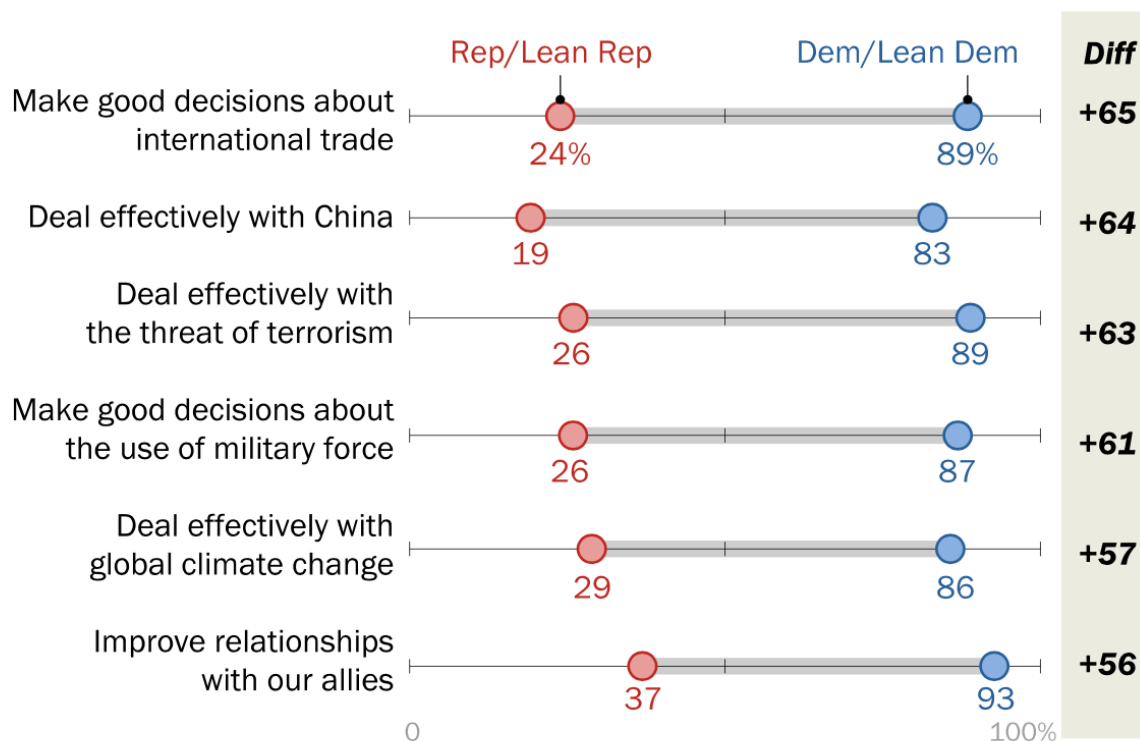
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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Figure 104. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Biden draws more confidence on improving relations with allies than on other foreign policy issues

% who are **very/somewhat** confident that Joe Biden can do each of the following



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

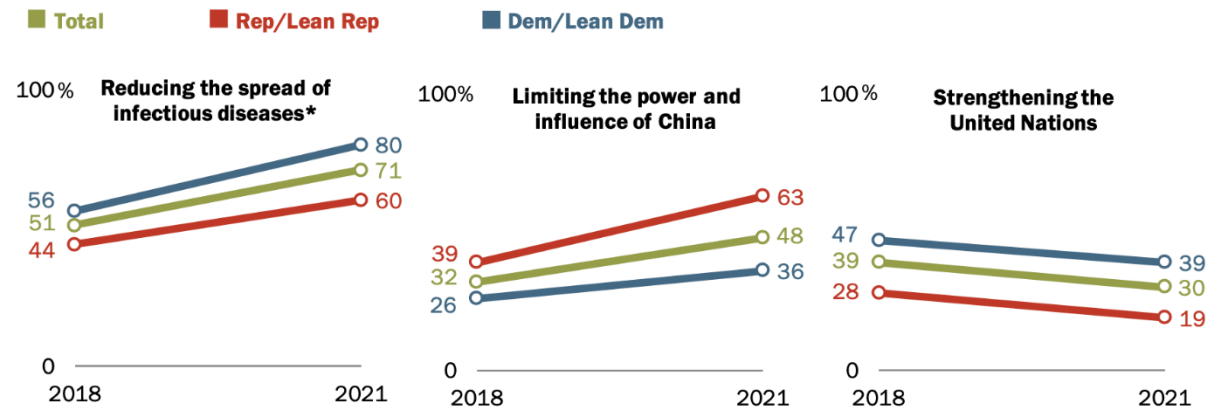
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COVID-19 pandemic

Figure 105. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Amid coronavirus pandemic, more Americans from both parties see curbing infectious disease as a top priority since 2018

% who say \_\_\_ should be given **top priority** as a long-range foreign policy goal



\*In 2018, question asked: "Reducing the spread of infectious diseases, such as AIDS and Ebola."

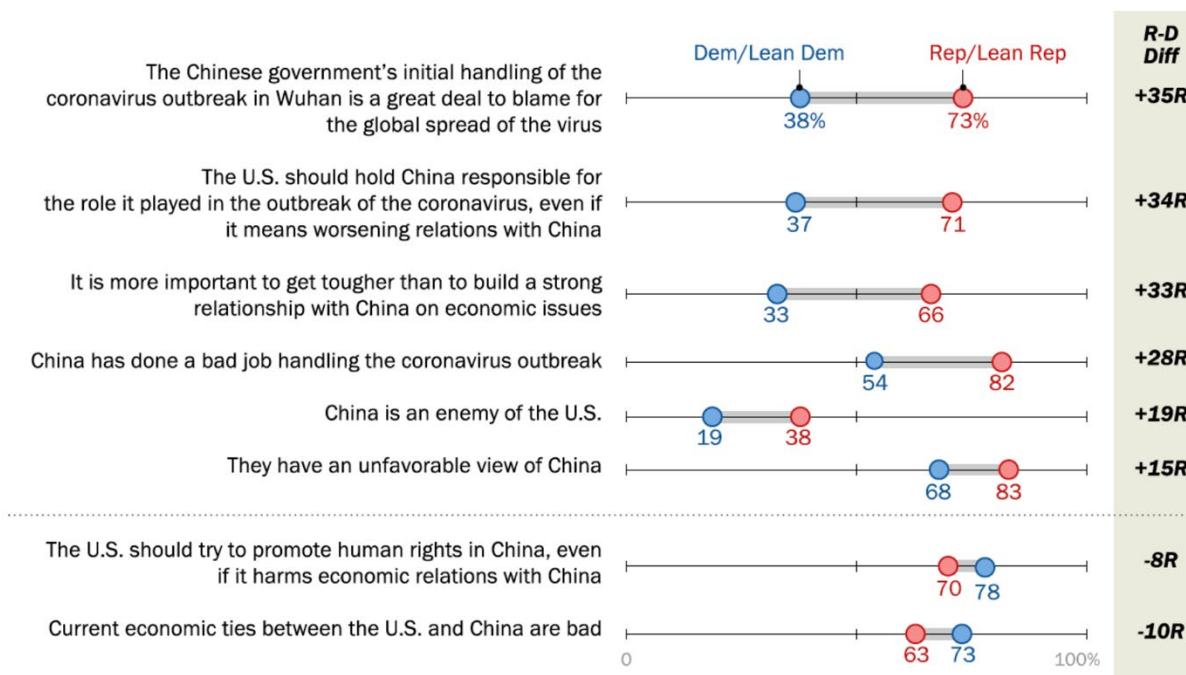
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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Figure 106. Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19

## Republicans are much more critical of China's handling of COVID-19 and have more negative views of the country

% who say ...



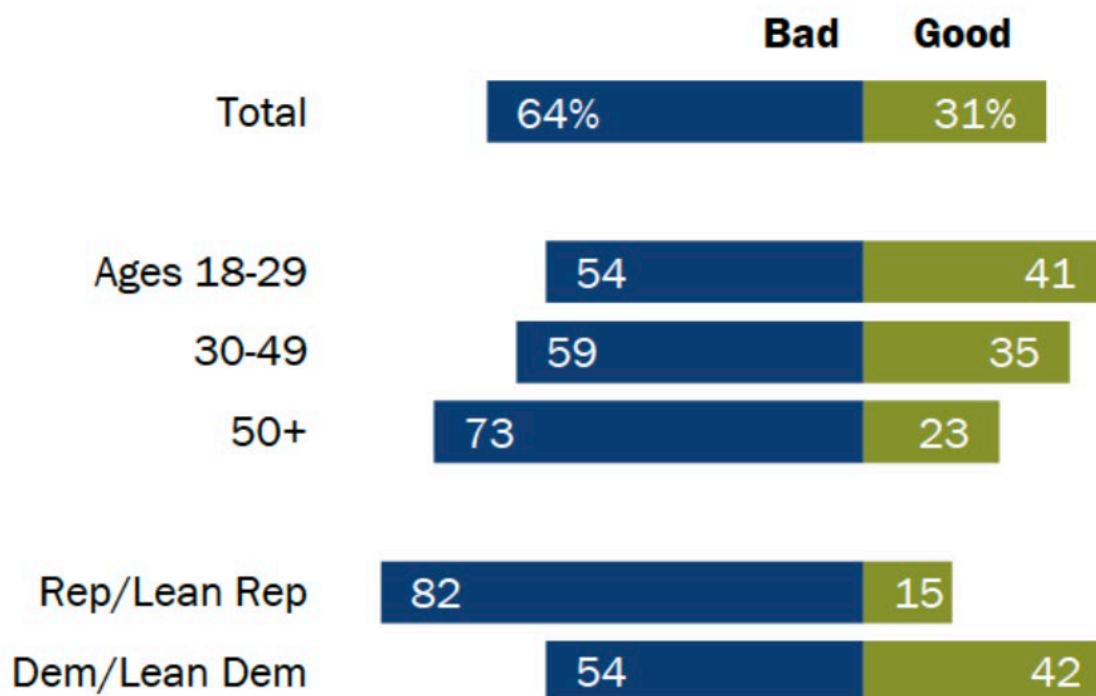
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020. Q8b, Q10b, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20 & Q20a.  
 "Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19"

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Figure 107. Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19

## Republicans, older Americans more critical of China's response to COVID-19

*% who say China has done a \_\_\_ job dealing with the coronavirus outbreak*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020.  
Q10b.

"Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19"

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Figure 108. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia

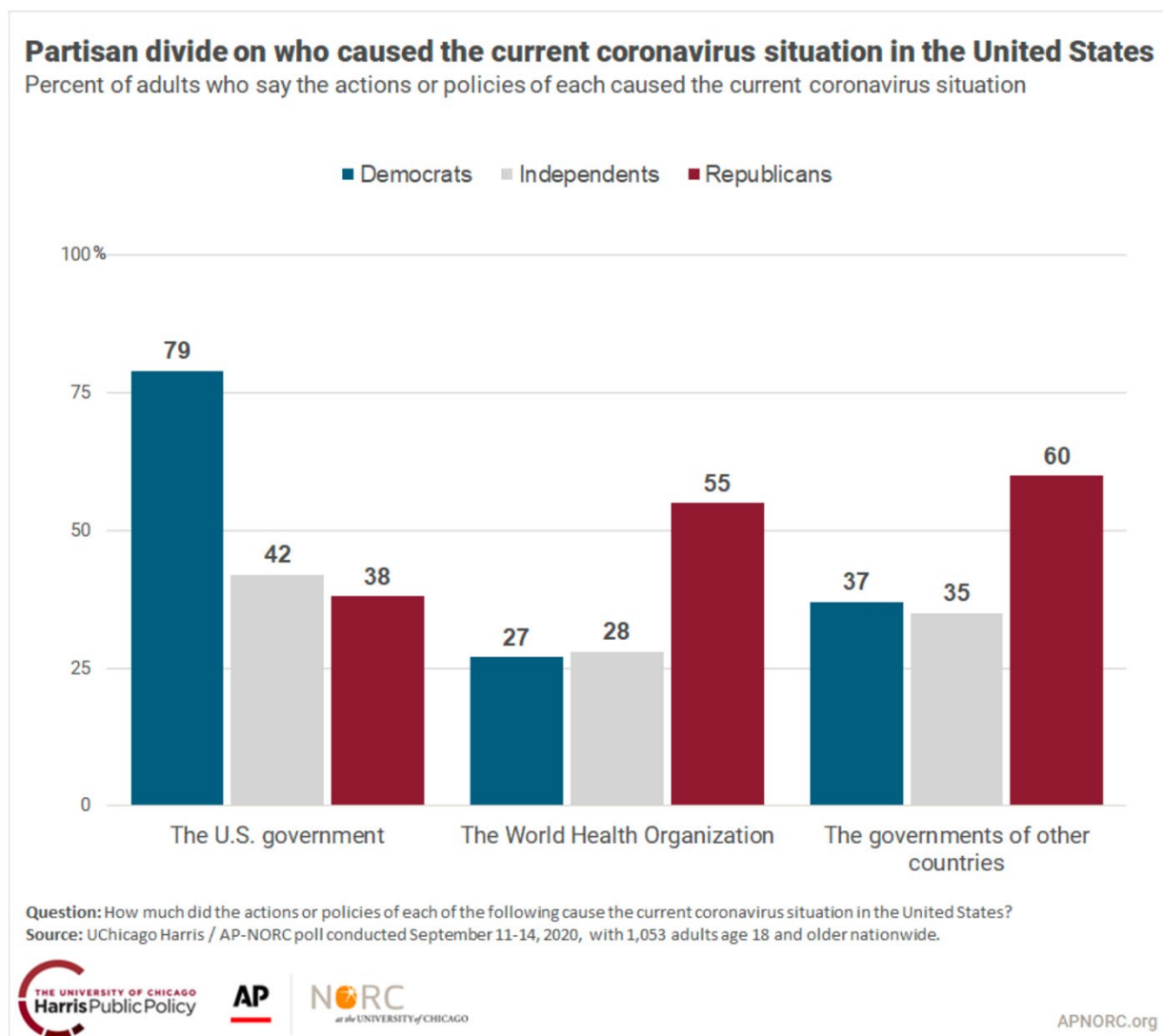


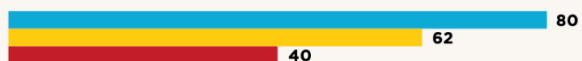
Figure 109. Divided we stand

### Figure A: Lessons from the Coronavirus Pandemic

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? The coronavirus outbreak has made it clear that it is more important for the United States to: (%)  
n = 2,111

■ Democrat ■ Independent ■ Republican

Coordinate and collaborate with other countries to solve global issues



Overall 62

Be self-sufficient as a nation so we don't need to depend on others



Overall 36

2020 Chicago Council Survey

Figure 110. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia

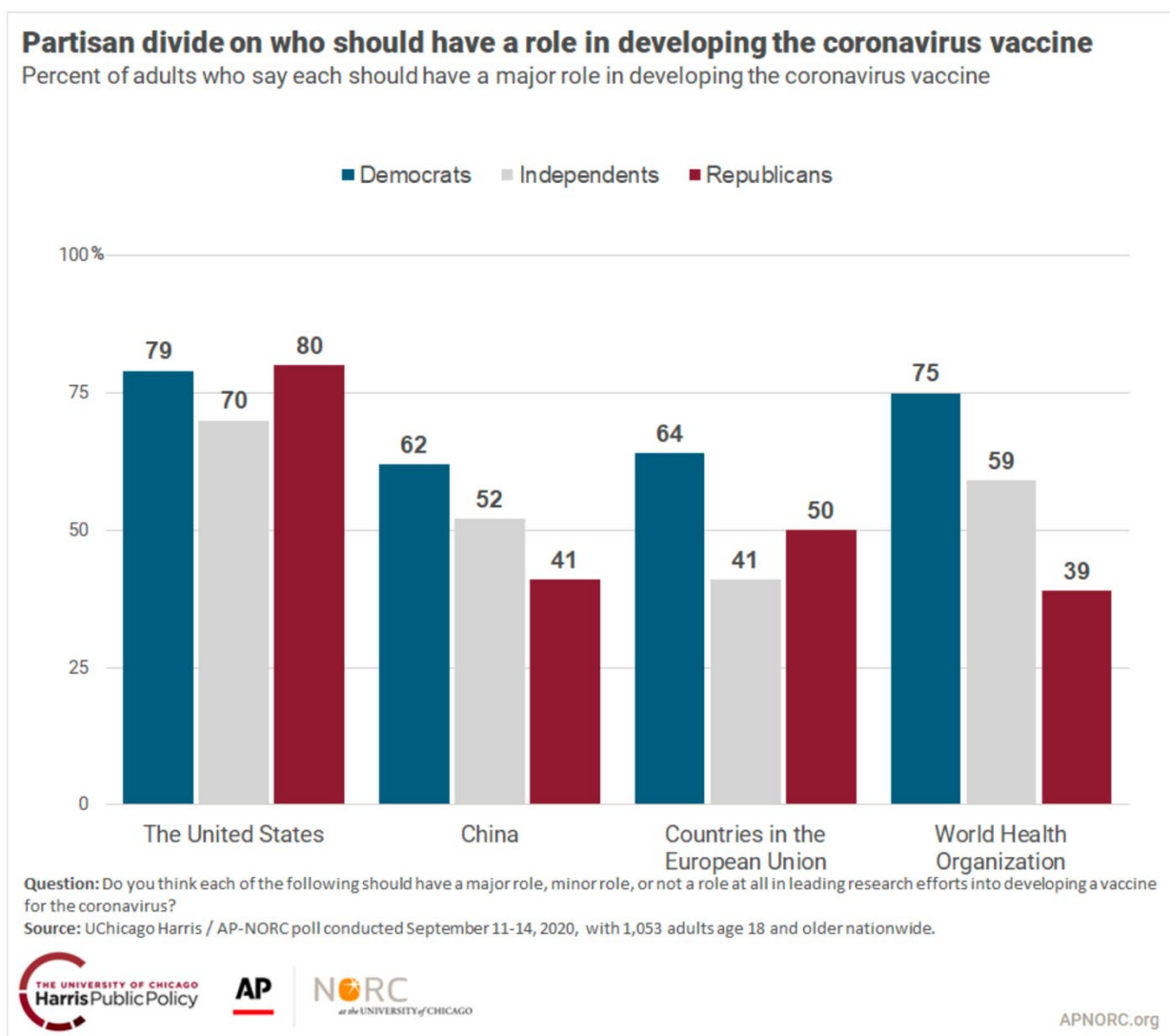
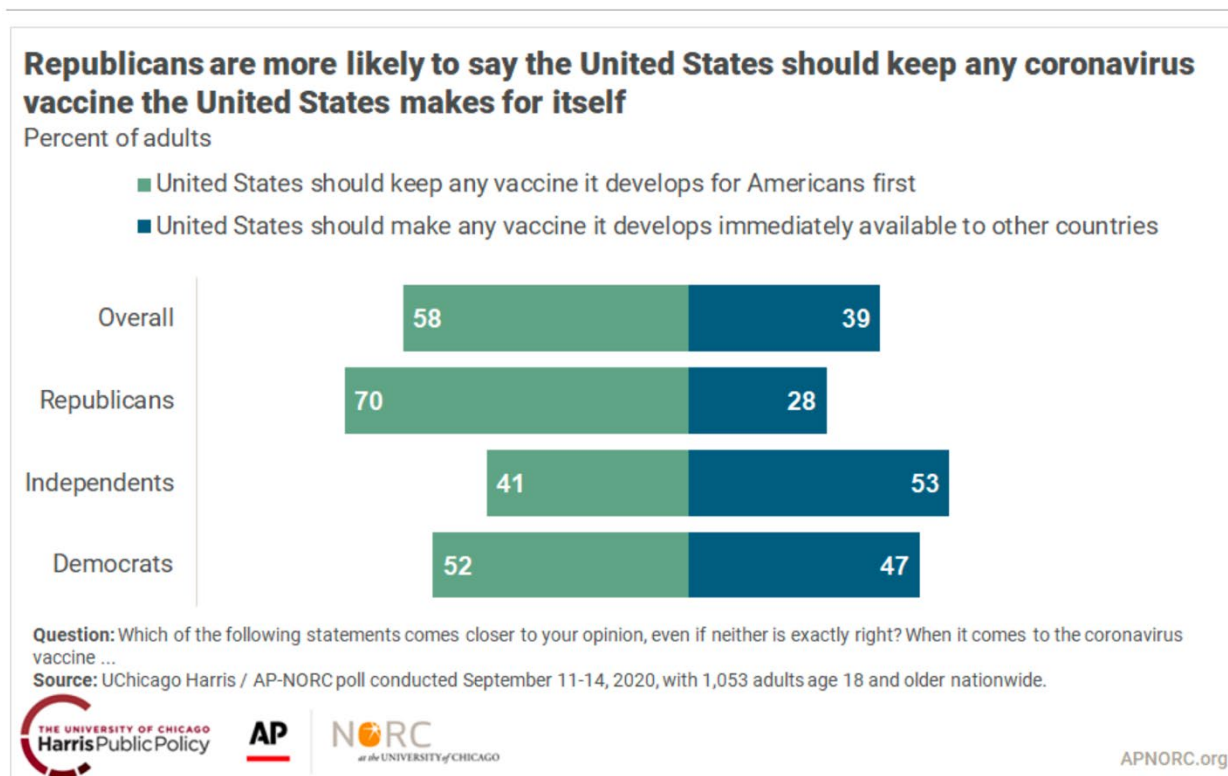




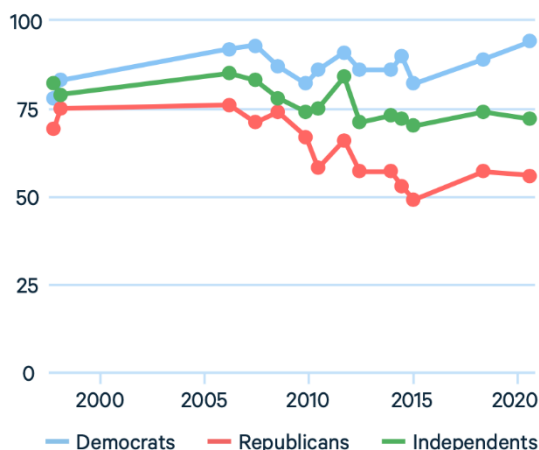
Figure 111. Americans Split on U.S. Role in Combatting Coronavirus and Relationship with Russia



Climate change

Figure 112. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 18. Proportion of each group who believed the world's temperature has probably been increasing over the past 100 years**



**Figure 19. Proportion of each group who believed the increase in the world's temperature over the past 100 years was caused mostly or partly by humans**

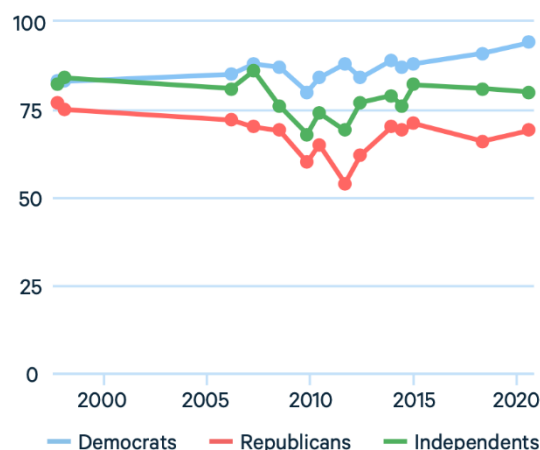


Figure 113. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 22. Proportion of each group who thought global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the United States**

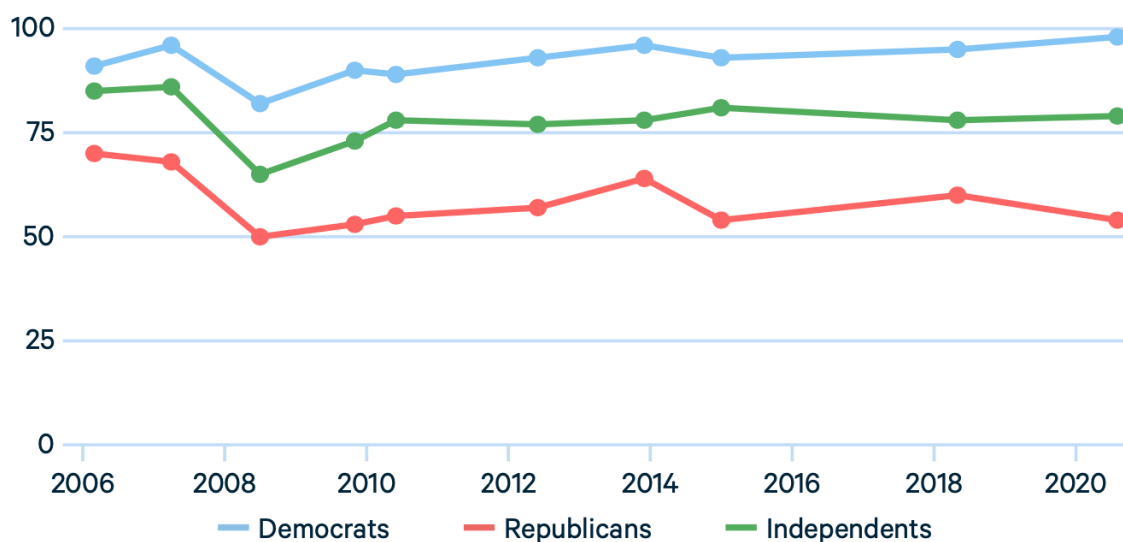


Figure 114. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 23. Proportion of each group who thought global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the world**

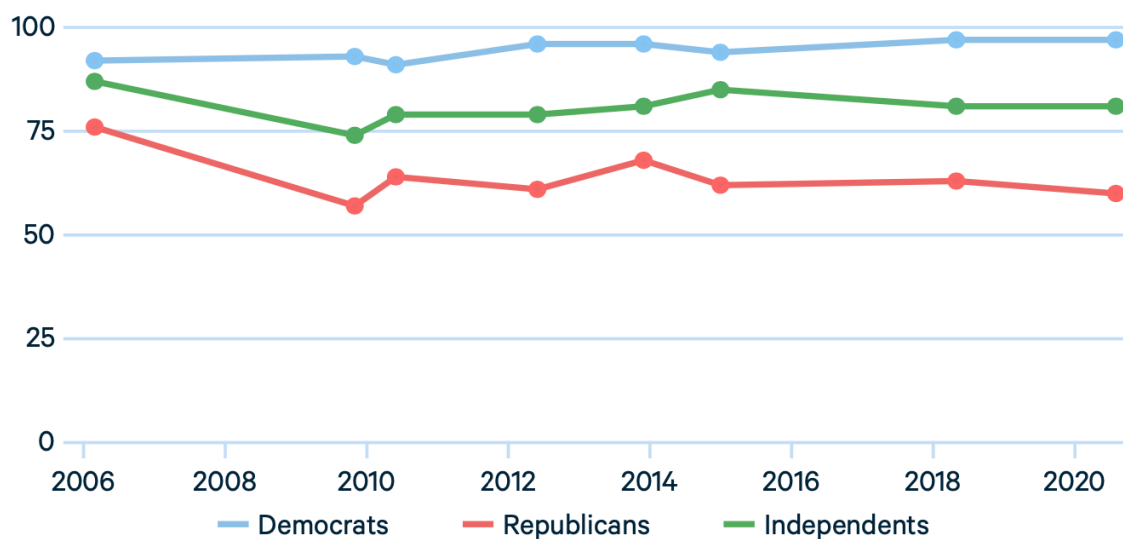


Figure 115. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 20. Proportion of each group who believed the world's temperature will probably go up over the next 100 years**

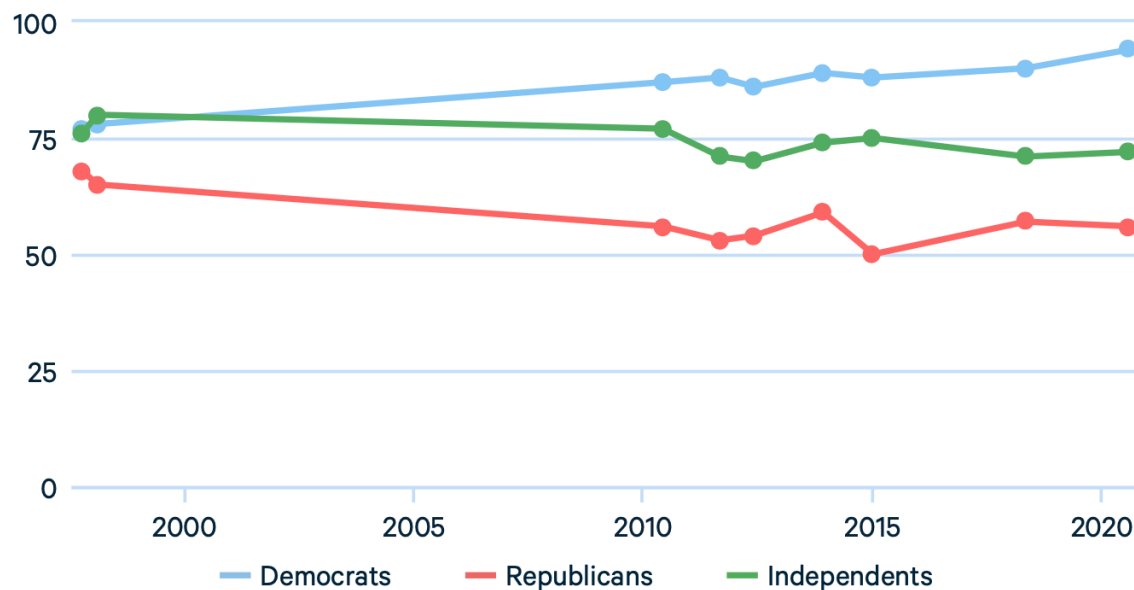


Figure 116. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 24. Proportion of each group who thought the US government should do more about global warming**

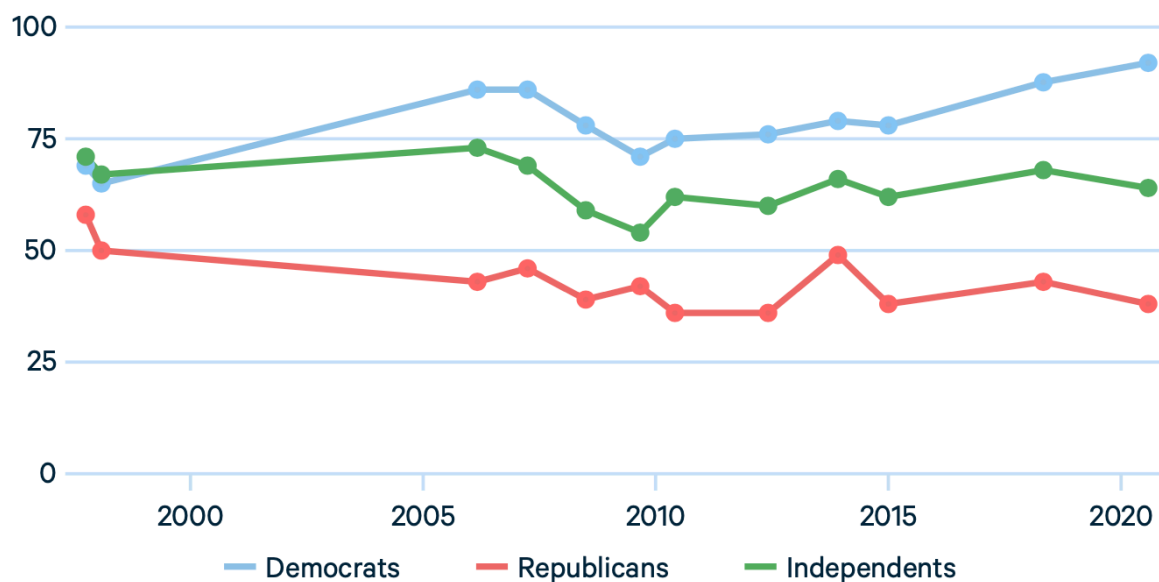
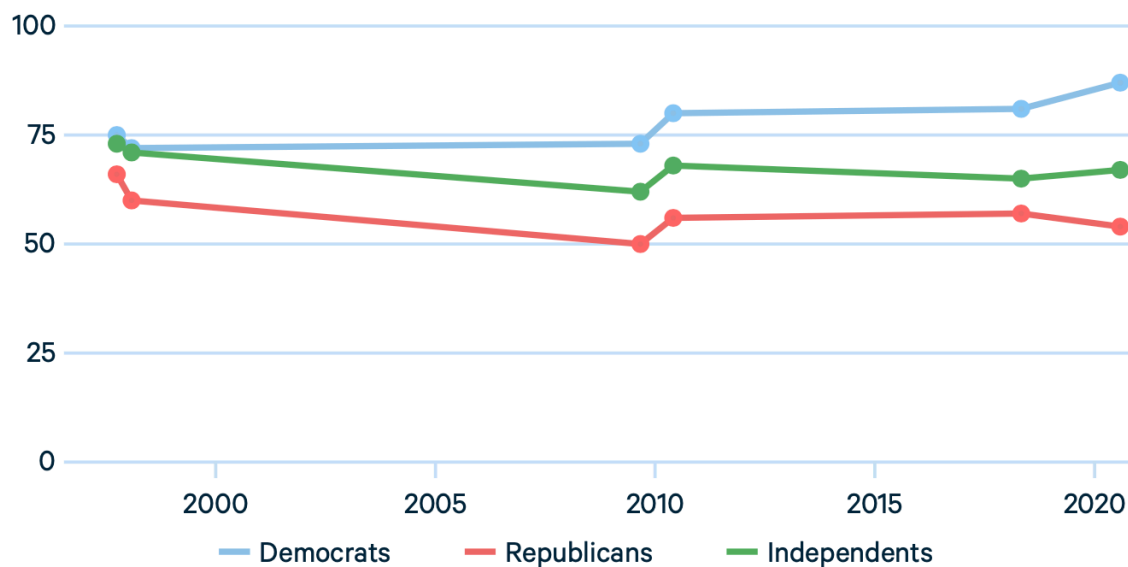


Figure 117. Bo MacInnis and Jon A. Krosnick. 2020. *Climate Insights: Partisan Divide*. Stanford University, Resources for the Future, and ReconMR.

**Figure 25. Proportion of each group who thought that governments in other countries should do more about global warming**

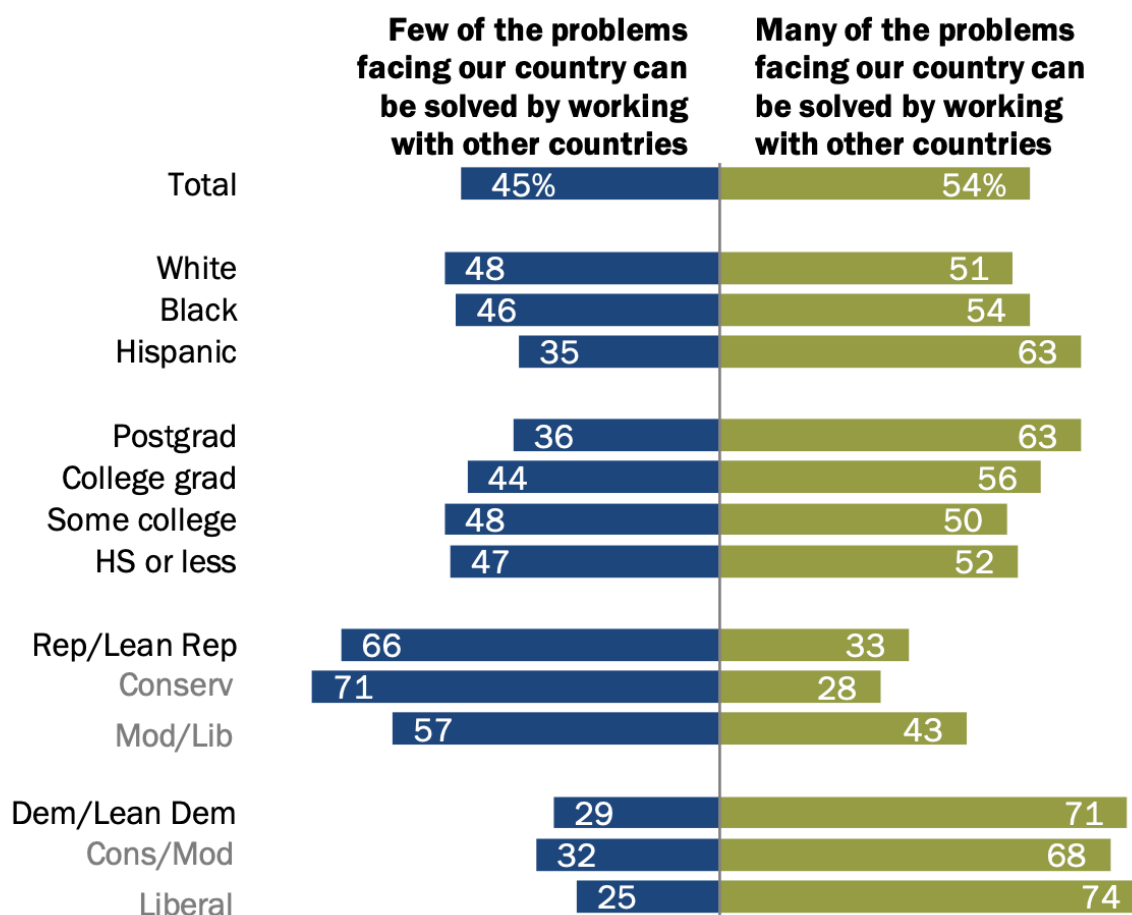


Protectionism

Figures 118. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Democrats far more likely than Republicans to see benefits from working with other countries

*% who say ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

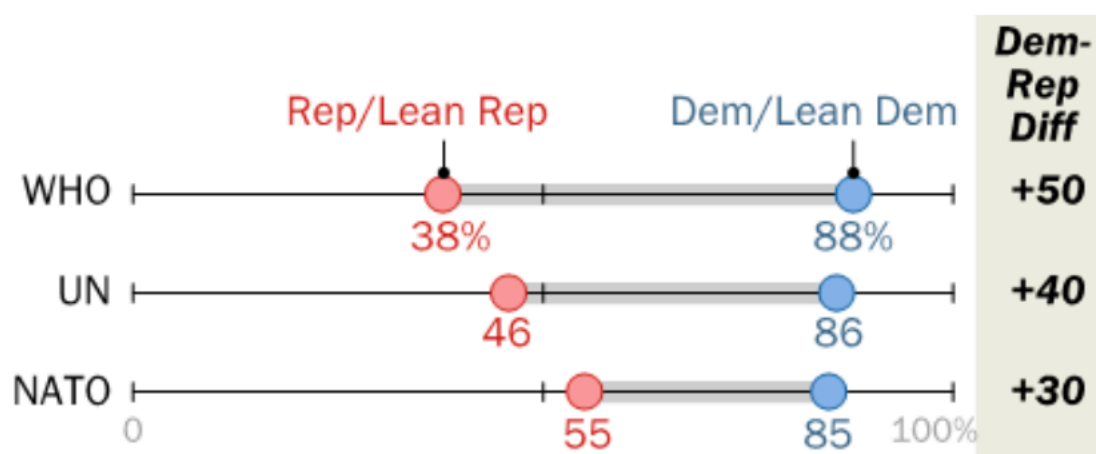
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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Figures 119. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Wide partisan gap on views of U.S. membership in international organizations

% who say the U.S. benefits a great deal/a fair amount from being a member of ...



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

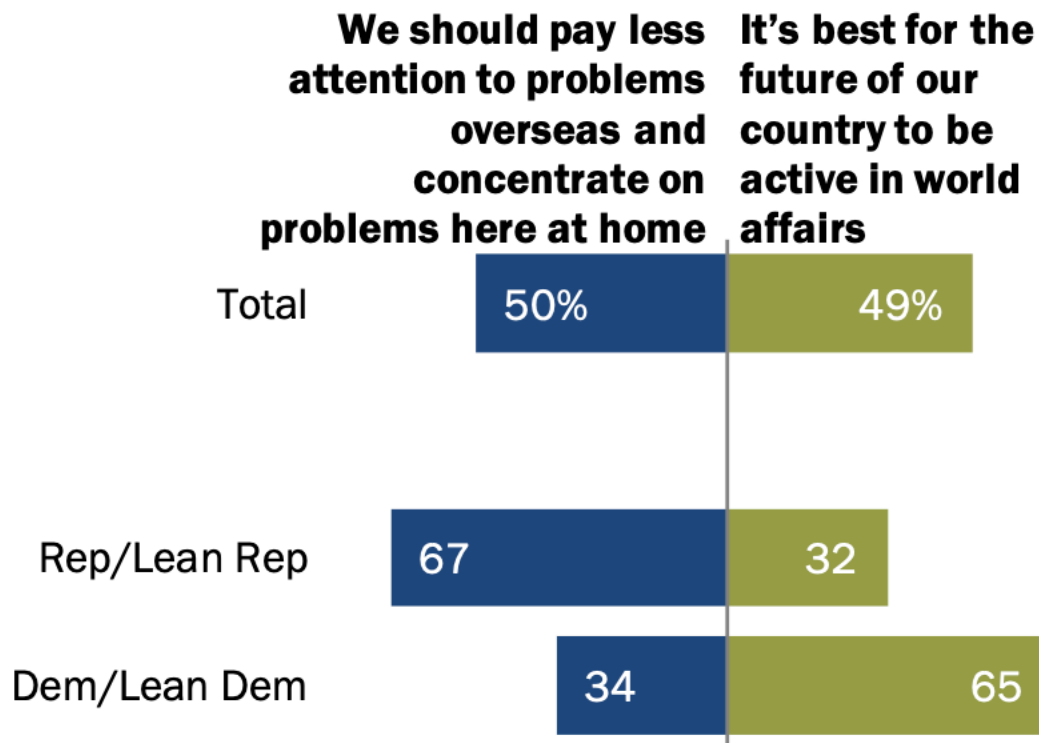
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Figures 120. Majority of Americans Confident in Biden's Handling of Foreign Policy as Term Begins

## Republicans and Democrats split on U.S. role in world affairs

*% who say ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021.

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