



KEI: 2022 Report on American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula

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This study on American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula surveyed 1,172 Americans in September of 2022. The survey was commissioned by the Korean Economic Institute of America and conducted by YouGov.

The goal of the report is to explore perceptions of Americans on the relationship with South Korea, the challenges presented by North Korea, and how the US should manage its relationship with the peninsula. This has been explored through direct questions concerning specific trade and military alliances in the region as well as how South and North Korea more generally fit into global international relations.

YouGov surveyed 1,032 respondents who were nationally representative of adults (18+) in the US. YouGov collected an additional oversample of 140 Americans who specifically follow international news, to ensure a sample size of over 500 such respondents across the main and oversample. 336 respondents also indicate specifically following Asia-Pacific (APAC) news.

Results in this report are nationally representative unless otherwise noted on the slide. For any questions presented in this report measuring multiple countries or regions, respondents were given a predetermined list of country/regions to react to.



Survey conducted from September 1st to September 12th, 2022



Average Survey Length: 15 minutes

	Margin of Error
US Adults	+/- 3.5%
Int'l News Followers	+/- 4.72%

Demographics: By Sample Type

Education

	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
High school or less	38%	25%
Some college, 2 year	34%	40%
4-year	18%	22%
Post-grad	10%	14%

Income



	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
Less Than \$29,999	27%	21%
\$30,000 - \$49,999	16%	16%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	29%	35%
\$100,000 or More	18%	22%
Prefer not to say	10%	7%



Region

	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
Northeast	17%	18%
Midwest	21%	21%
South	40%	36%
West	22%	25%

Age

	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
18-29	22%	18%
30-44	25%	19%
45-64	32%	32%
65 or older	22%	31%



Ethnicity

	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
White	65%	70%
Black	13%	9%
Hispanic	14%	11%
Other	8%	9%

Political Party:



	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
Democrat	37%	39%
Republican	22%	21%
Independent	28%	29%
Other/Not Sure	13%	11%

Gender



	Nat. Rep	Int'l News Followers
Male	51%	66%
Female	49%	34%



Table of Contents

Key Insights

Americans' General Views on South and North Korea

Americans' Views on Trade with South Korea

Americans' Views on Military Alliance with South Korea

Americans' Views on the North Korea Challenge



KEY INSIGHTS: Americans' General Views on South and North Korea

- Like last year, this year, the UK, Canada, and the EU were most likely to be called "critical partners" of the US. Somewhat more called South Korea a critical partner this year (41% in 2021 vs. 45% in 2022), but this increase was not significant.
- Over half of Americans would like to see the US and South Korea cooperate on supply chain issues and North Korea. However, Global health showed a significant decline this year.
 - The disapproval rate of the current US administration's handling of relations with South Korea had a statistically significant increase from 12% in 2021 to 15% in 2022, with less Americans shifting to "not sure" (48% in 2021 to 42% in 2022). Following the aftermath of the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, there has been a statistically significant decrease in the number of Americans rating Afghanistan as the most critical foreign policy challenge to the US in 2021 (36% in 2021 vs. 14% in 2022).
- Americans have an unfavorable view of North Korea (70%). This rate is higher among international news followers (84%) and APAC news followers (82%). This is a significant decrease from last year.
- The proportion of Americans who approve of the current US administration's handling of North Korea increased significantly from 18% in 2021 to 24% in 2022, while uncertainty also fell (49% "not sure" in 2021 vs. 42% in 2022).



KEY INSIGHTS: Americans' Views on Trade & Military Alliance with South Korea

- Most Americans are aware of US free trade agreements with Mexico and Canada, while only 29% are aware of the free trade agreement with South Korea.
 - 66% Americans see trade with South Korea as beneficial to the US. This rate is even higher among those who follow international and APAC news (83% and 85%).
- Nearly two thirds of Americans see the military alliance with South Korea as beneficial to the US.
 - The number of Americans who want to maintain all US alliances increased significantly from 18% in 2021 to 23% in 2022, while the number of those who did not know enough to answer declined significantly (from 25% in 2021 to 21% in 2022).
 - For a plurality of Americans (34%), the withdrawal from Afghanistan had no impact on their views about maintaining other US security commitments abroad. 2 in 10 said it made them more likely to support such commitments.
 - 48% of Americans would like to see the US maintain the current troop presence in South Korea. This rate is especially high among those who follow international (58%) and APAC news (54%).
- Among Americans who believe that East Asia is a vital region for the US, 40% believe that the most important interest for the US there is countering the rise of China.
 - 61% of Americans believe the US should assist South Korea in the aftermath of a cyber-attack and over a third think the US should coordinate with South Korea on cyber issues.



KEY INSIGHTS: Americans' Views on the North Korea Challenge

- 84% Americans believe it is very important/important for North Korea to give up its military nuclear capabilities.
 - While nearly half of Americans think their own country should maintain its nuclear capabilities, only 10% think that North Korea should maintain its military nuclear capabilities. 42% think no countries should have military nuclear capabilities.
 - 42% of Americans would like the US to maintain its troop presence in South Korea, if the United States were to reach an agreement with North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.
 - This year, as last, about half of Americans approve of the US sending humanitarian assistance to North Korea.
 - The proportion of Americans who approve of the US sending humanitarian assistance to North Korean citizens declined from 48% last year to 46% this year. More Democrats approve of sending humanitarian assistance to North Korea compared to Republicans (64% vs. 33%).
 - In 2022, fewer Americans who follow international news approve of the US sending Covid-19 assistance to North Korean citizens than they did in 2021 (59% in 2022 vs. 63% in 2021).

AMERICANS' GENERAL VIEWS ON SOUTH & NORTH KOREA

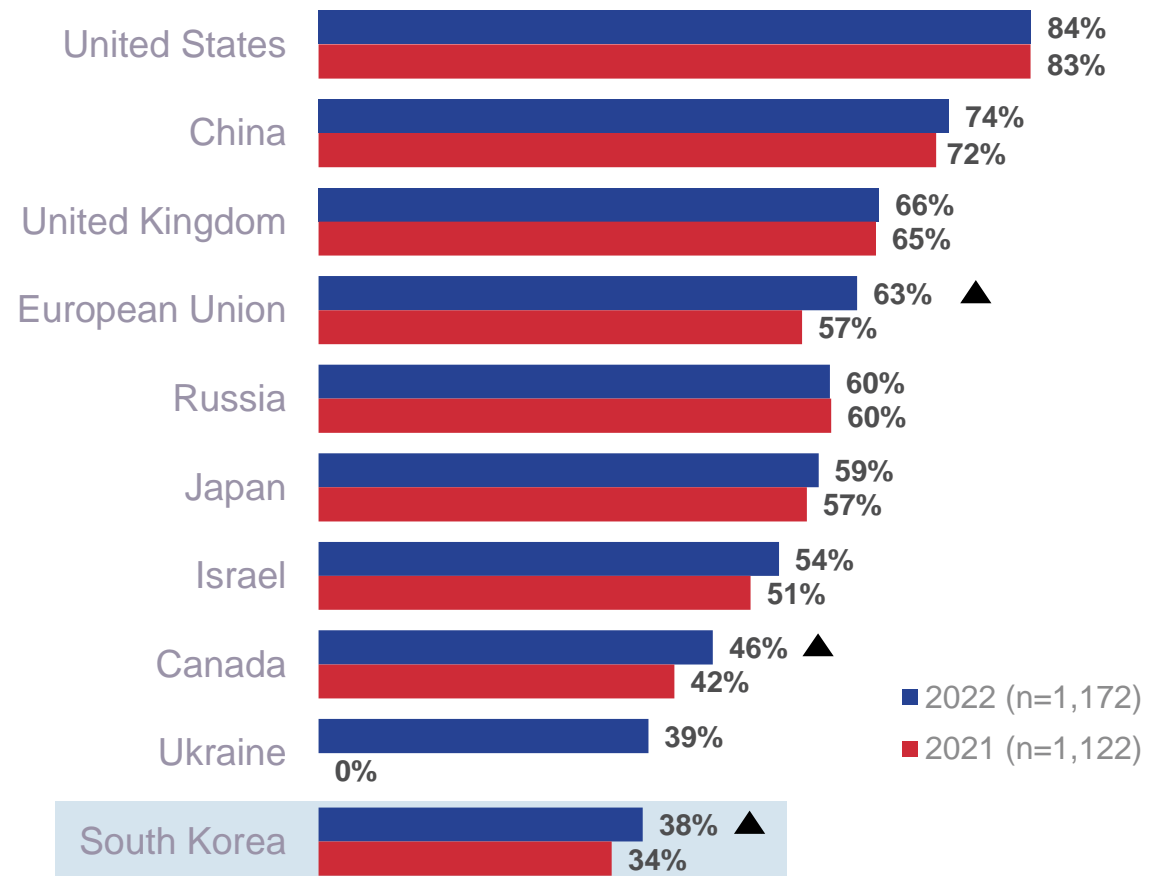
Over four in ten of all Americans view South Korea as a “partner” of the US and would like to see the two countries coordinate more on issues such supply chains, North Korea, and security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Russia replaced North Korea as the top adversary to the US and is considered the second most critical foreign policy challenge to the US.

Almost 40% of respondents see South Korea as a very/fairly influential nation in the world. This rate inclined significantly since 2021. The US is viewed as the most influential nation in the world.



International News Followers are more likely to see South Korea as very/fairly influential (49%, vs. 31% among those who do not follow international news).

National/Regional Influence in the World (Top 10)* (very/fairly influential)



Q1: How influential do you think the following country or region is in the world?

*Respondents were provided a predetermined list of countries and regions to choose from for this question

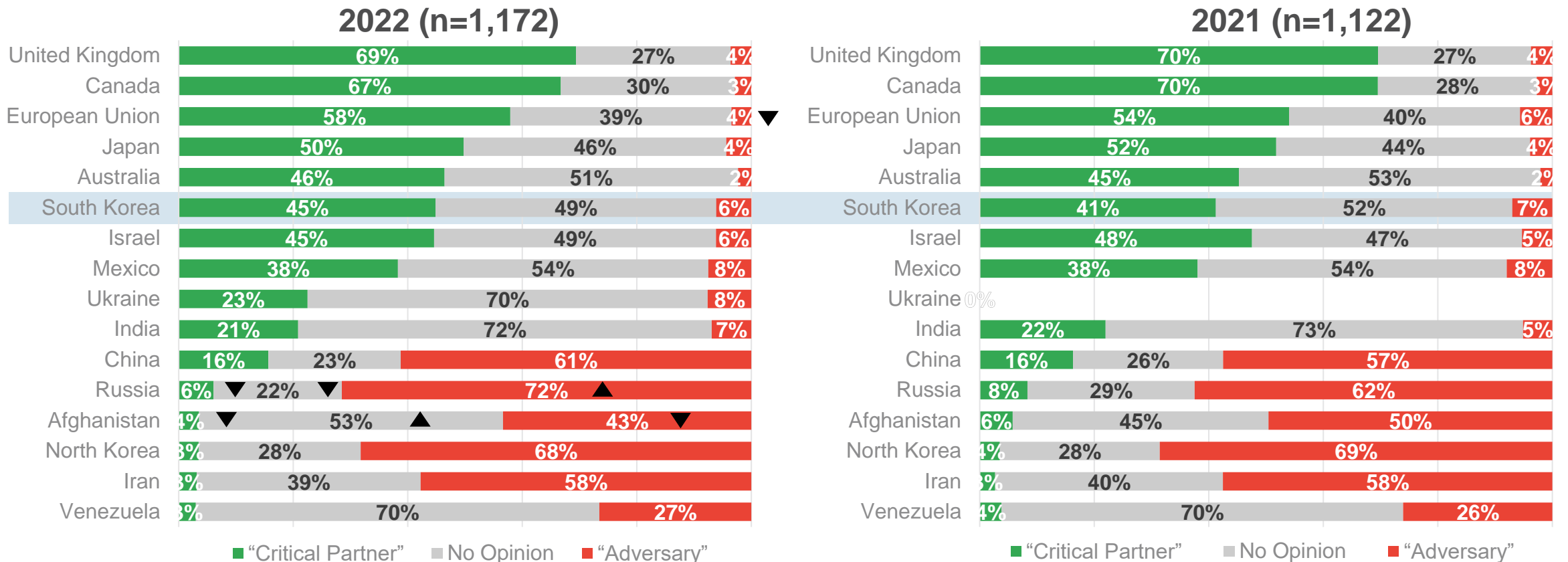
Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Note 2: *Only top ten out of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.

More than 4 in 10 Americans have a favorable view South Korea.

In 2022, the UK, Canada, and the EU were most likely to be called "critical partners" of the US. 45% of respondents called South Korea a "critical partner" to the US, compared to 41% in 2021, however this increase was not significant.

Perceived Relationship to the US



Over half of Americans would like to see the US and South Korea cooperate on supply chain issues and North Korea. Global health showed a significant decline this year.

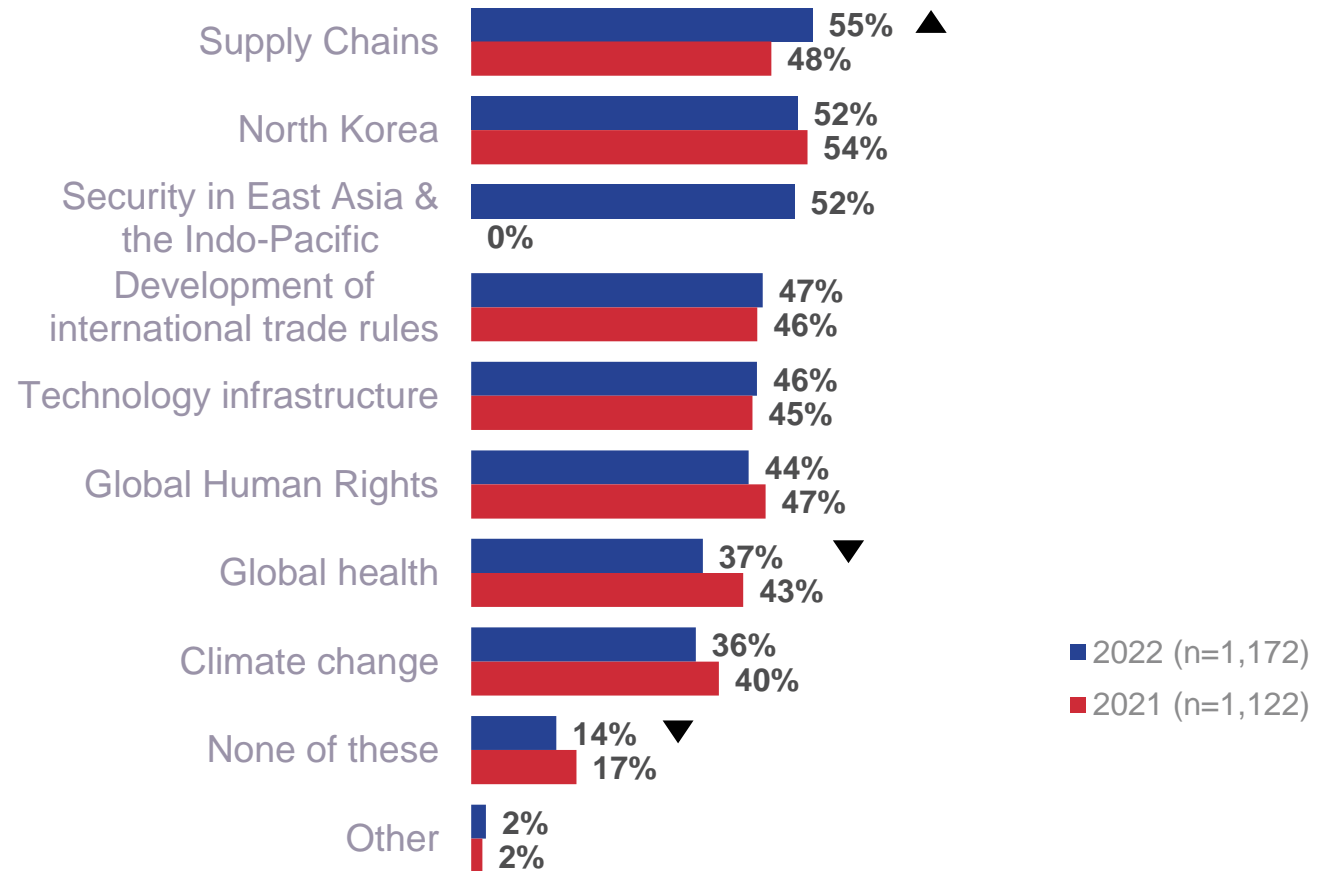


Compared to Republicans, Democrats are significantly more likely to want to see cooperation on:



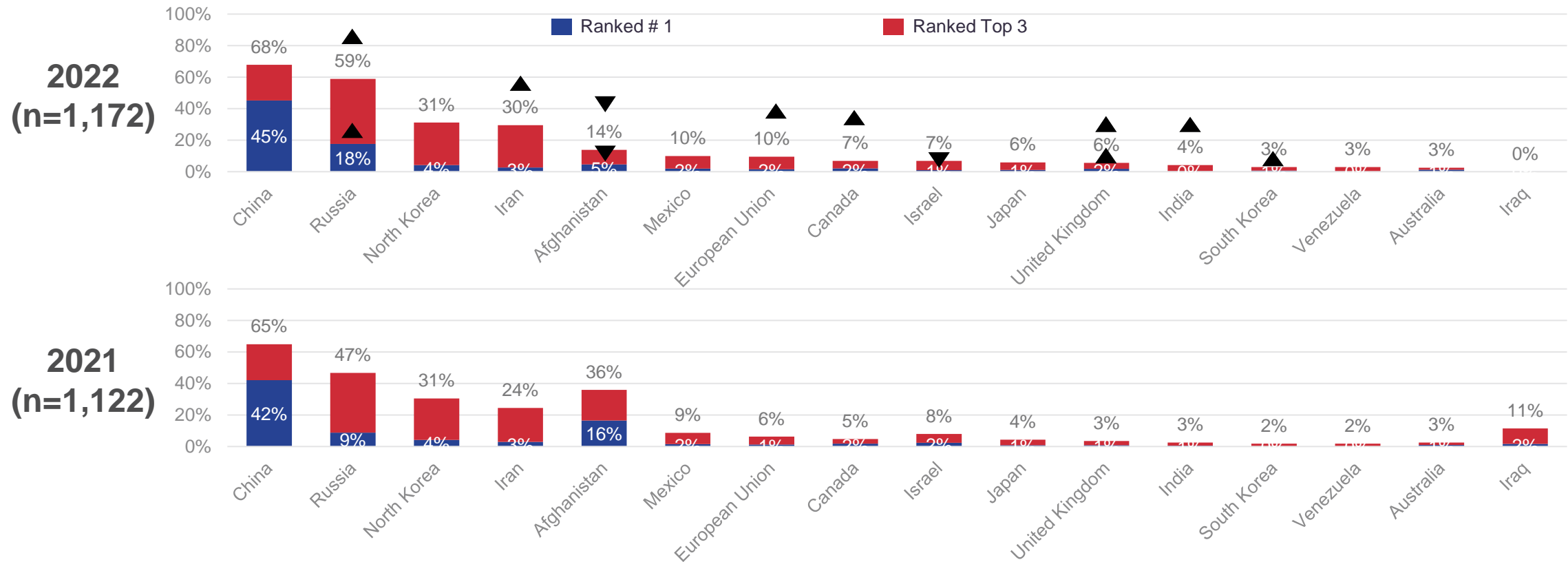
- Global health (50% vs. 20%).
- Climate change (57% vs 13%).
- Technology infrastructure (51% vs. 43%).
- Global Human Rights (57% vs 29%).

Issues that the US and South Korea Should Cooperate On





North Korea was ranked as the third most critical foreign policy challenge to the US, following only China and Russia. Compared to last year, those rates grew significantly for Russia and Iran and declined for Afghanistan.

Countries/Regions Representing the Most Critical Foreign Policy Challenges to the US*

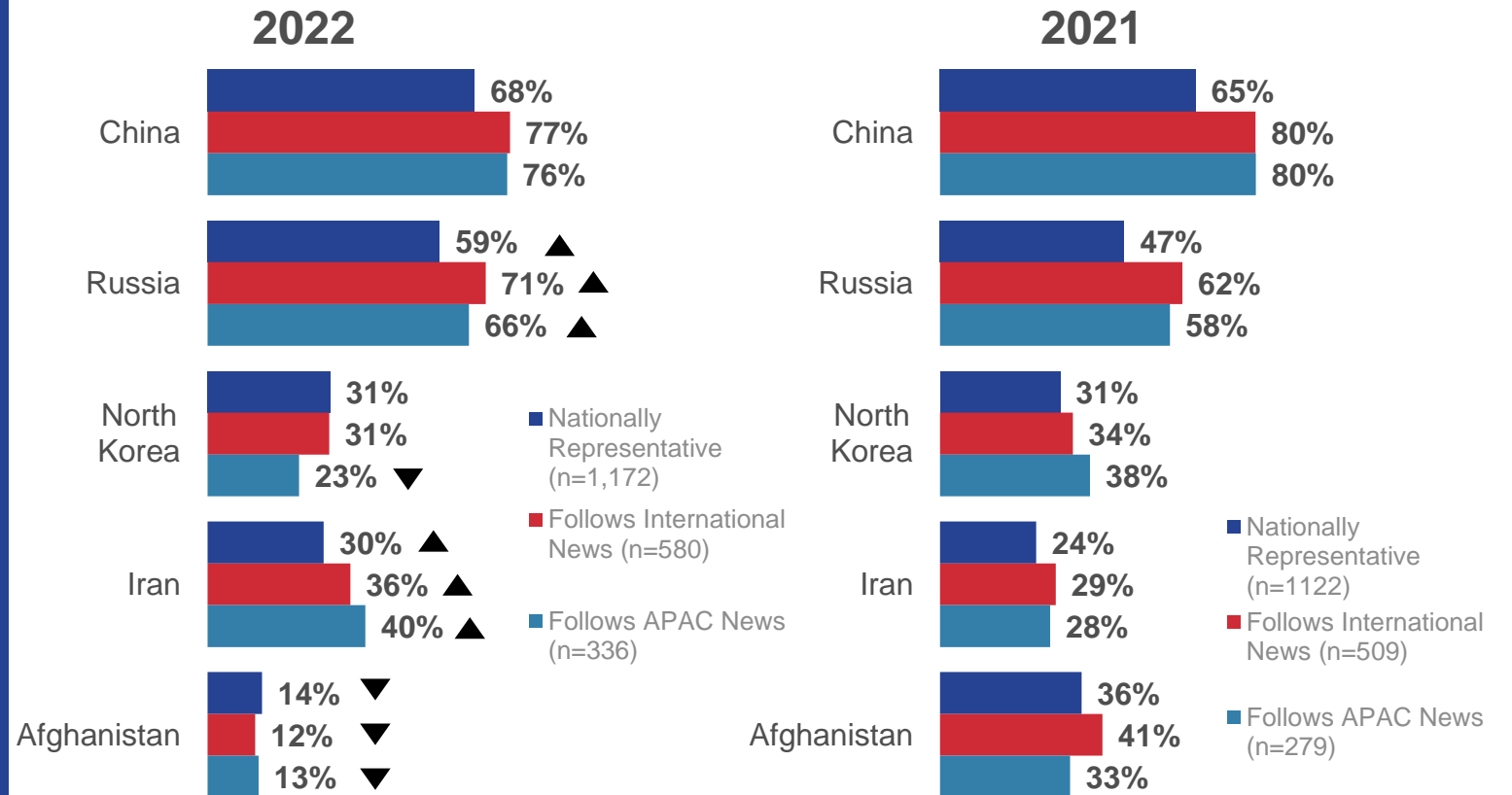


Americans in general see a greater challenge from Russia and Iran this year and, among those who follow Asia-Pacific news, a significantly smaller challenge from North Korea than in 2021.

 Around a third of Democrats and Republicans in America see North Korea as a greater challenge (32%).

 Republicans are more likely to view China as a greater challenge than Democrats (75% vs. 62%).

Countries/Regions Representing the Most Critical Foreign Policy Challenges to the US* (ranked in the top 3)

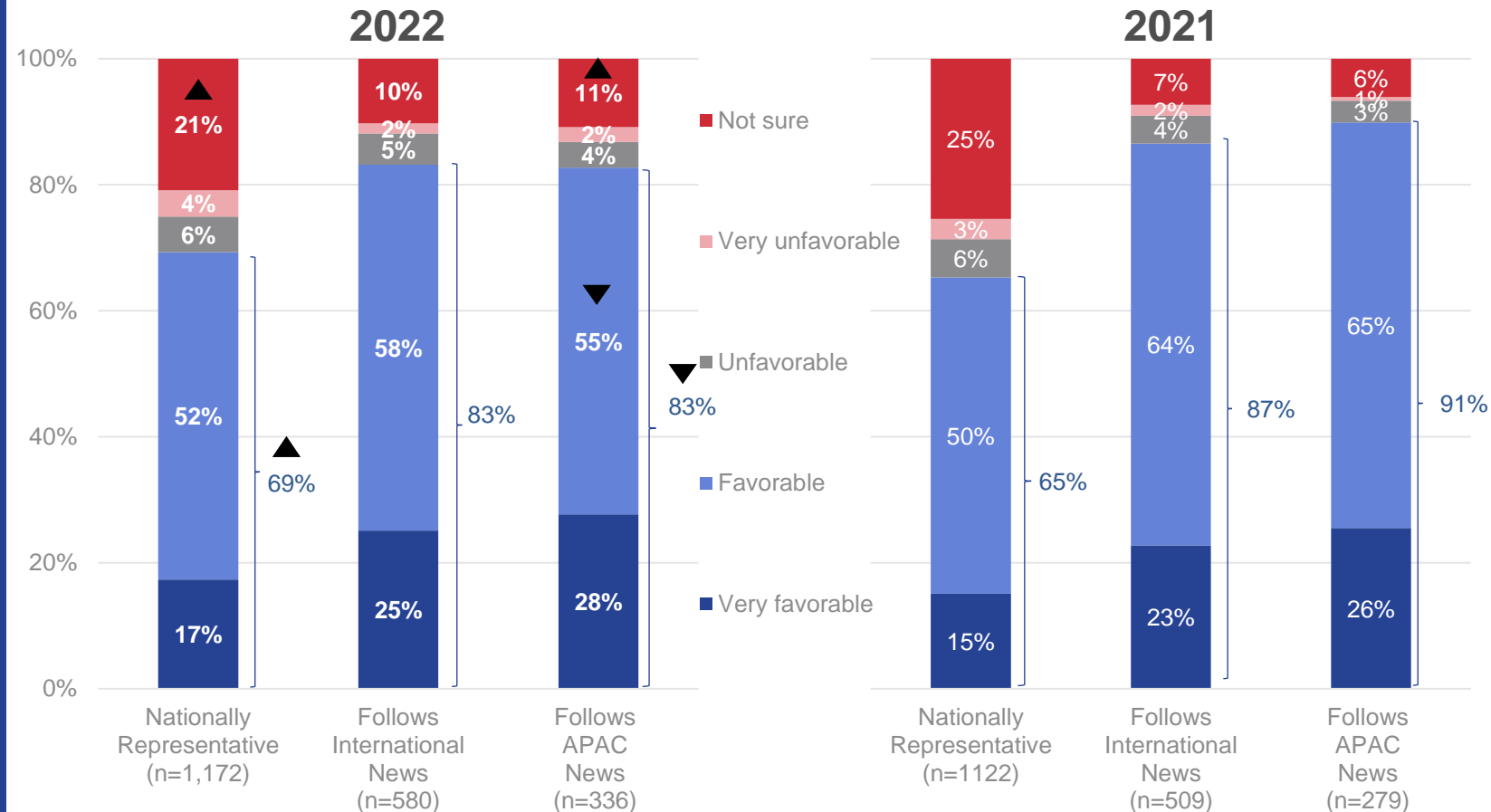


Nationally, compared to 2021, there was a significant increase in Americans who have a favorable or very favorable opinion of South Korea.



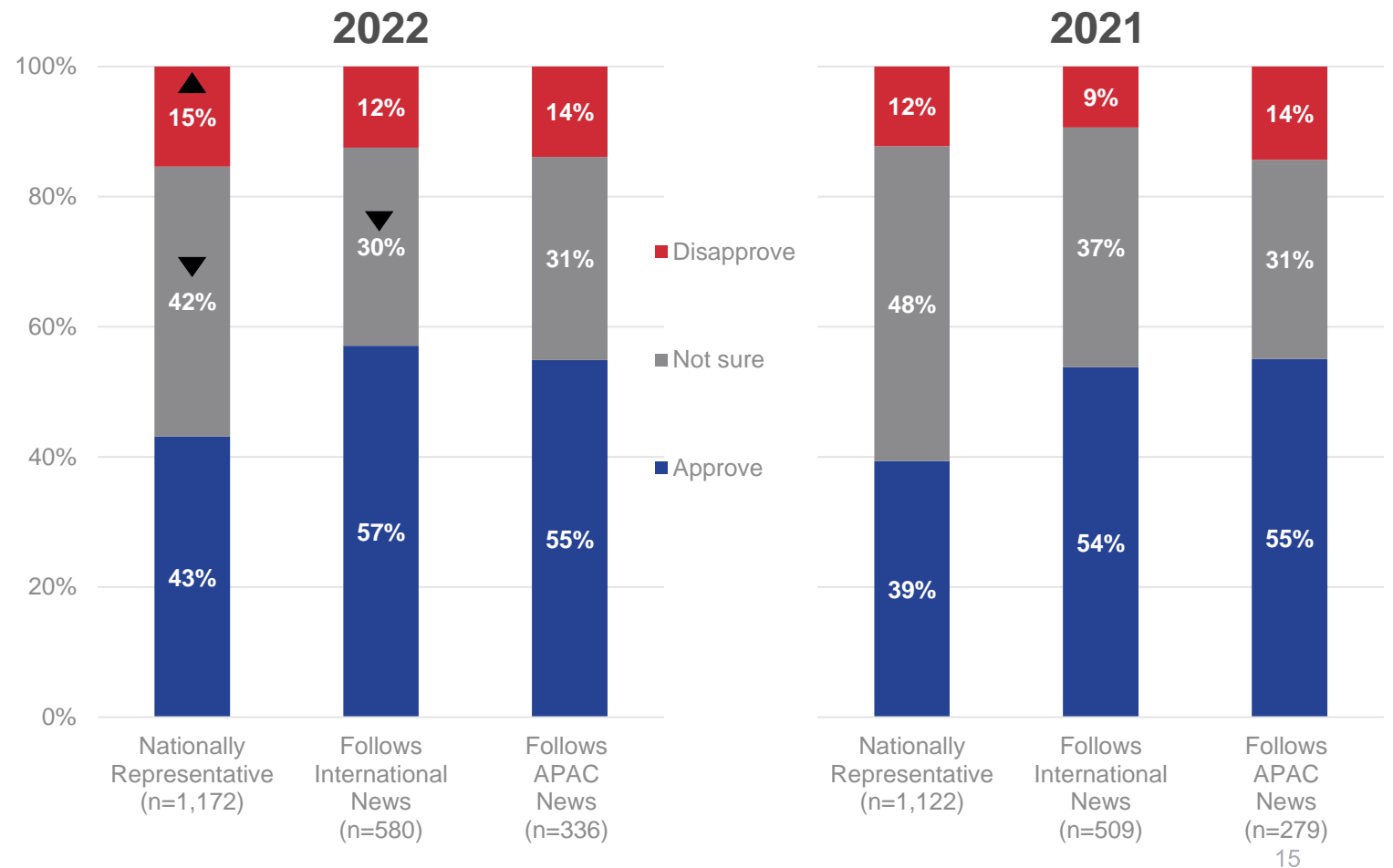
Among those APAC news followers, there was a significant drop in those who have a favorable or very favorable opinion of South Korea.

Overall Opinion of South Korea



43% of Americans approve of the US administration's handling of relations with South Korea, with more shifting to "disapprove" in 2022.

Approval of the Current US Administration's Handling of Relations with South Korea



Over half of those who follow APAC news approve of the administration's handling of South Korea.

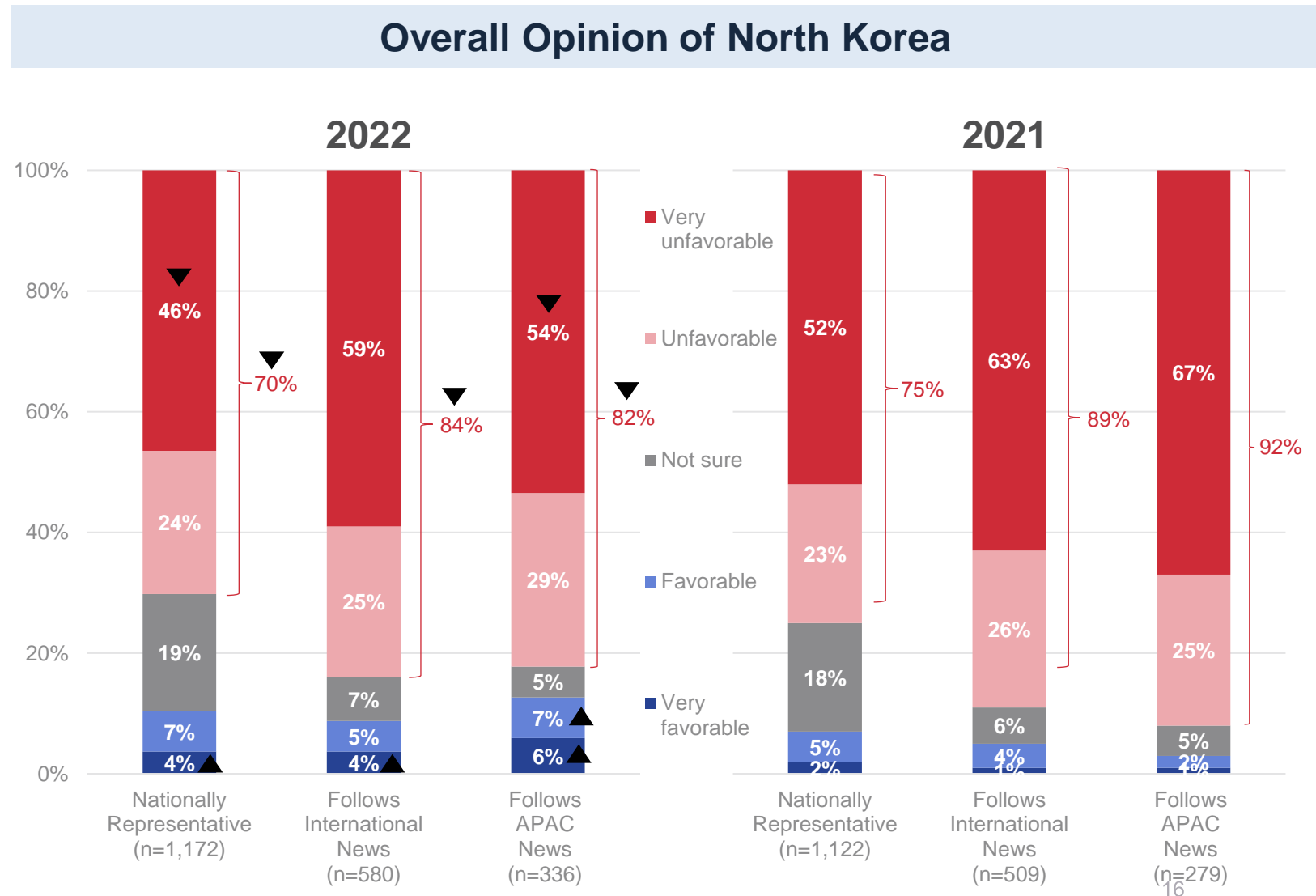


Democrats are significantly more likely to approve of the administration's handling of South Korea compared to Republicans (61% vs. 32%).

70% of Americans have an unfavorable view of North Korea. This rate showed a statistically significant drop in 2022 compared to 2021.



In 2022, fewer Americans have an unfavorable view of North Korea than in 2021.



Q20. Now thinking about North Korea, overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of North Korea?
 Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

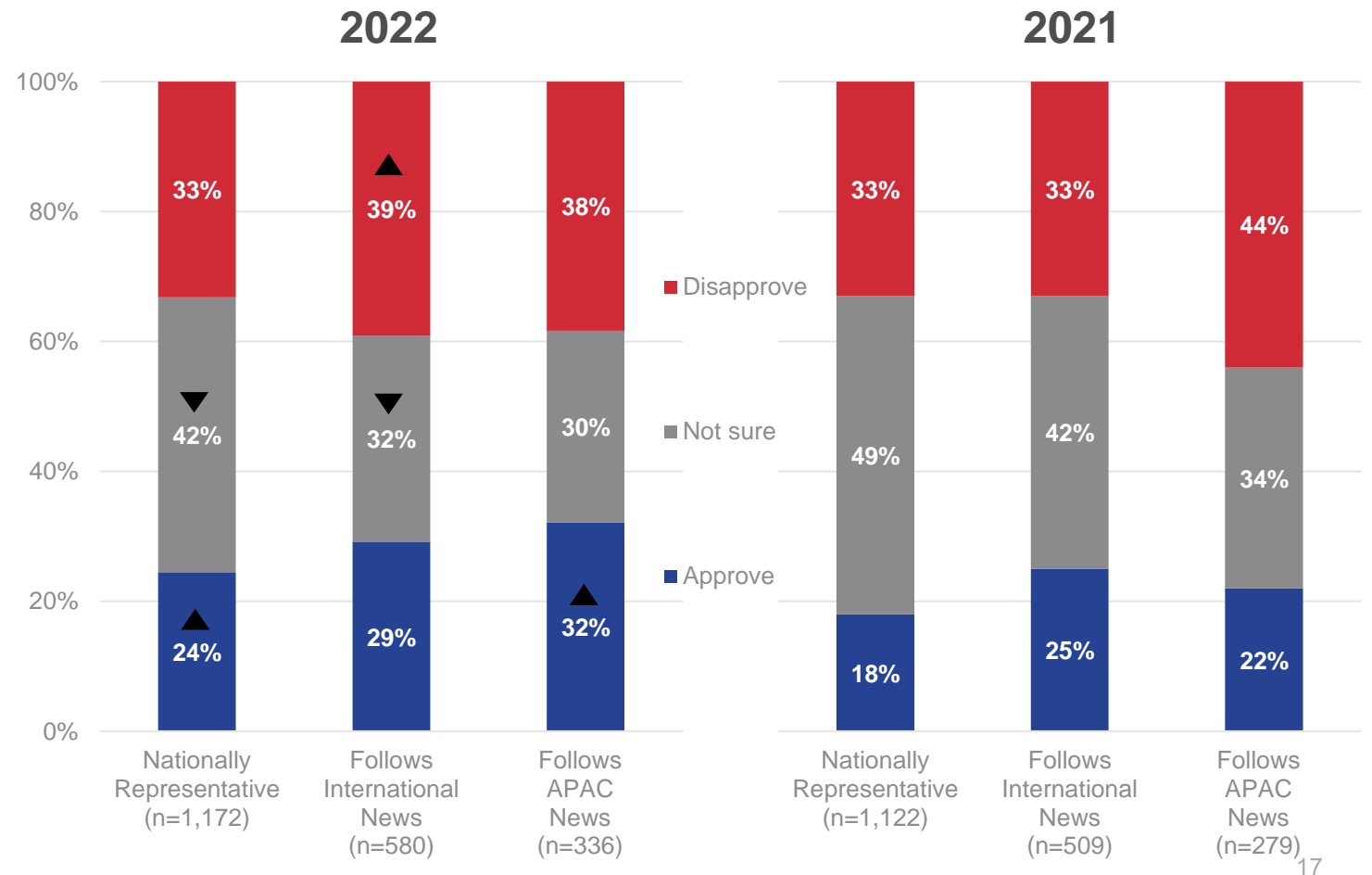
The percent of Americans who approve of the current US administration's handling of North Korea increase significantly in 2022 due to a significant drop in the number of those who are "Not sure".



46% of Democrats approve of the current administration's handling of relations with North Korea. This rate is significantly higher than that of Republicans, 7%.



Approval of the Current US Administration's Handling of Relations with North Korea



Q21. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the current US administration is doing handling relations with North Korea?
 Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON TRADE WITH SOUTH KOREA

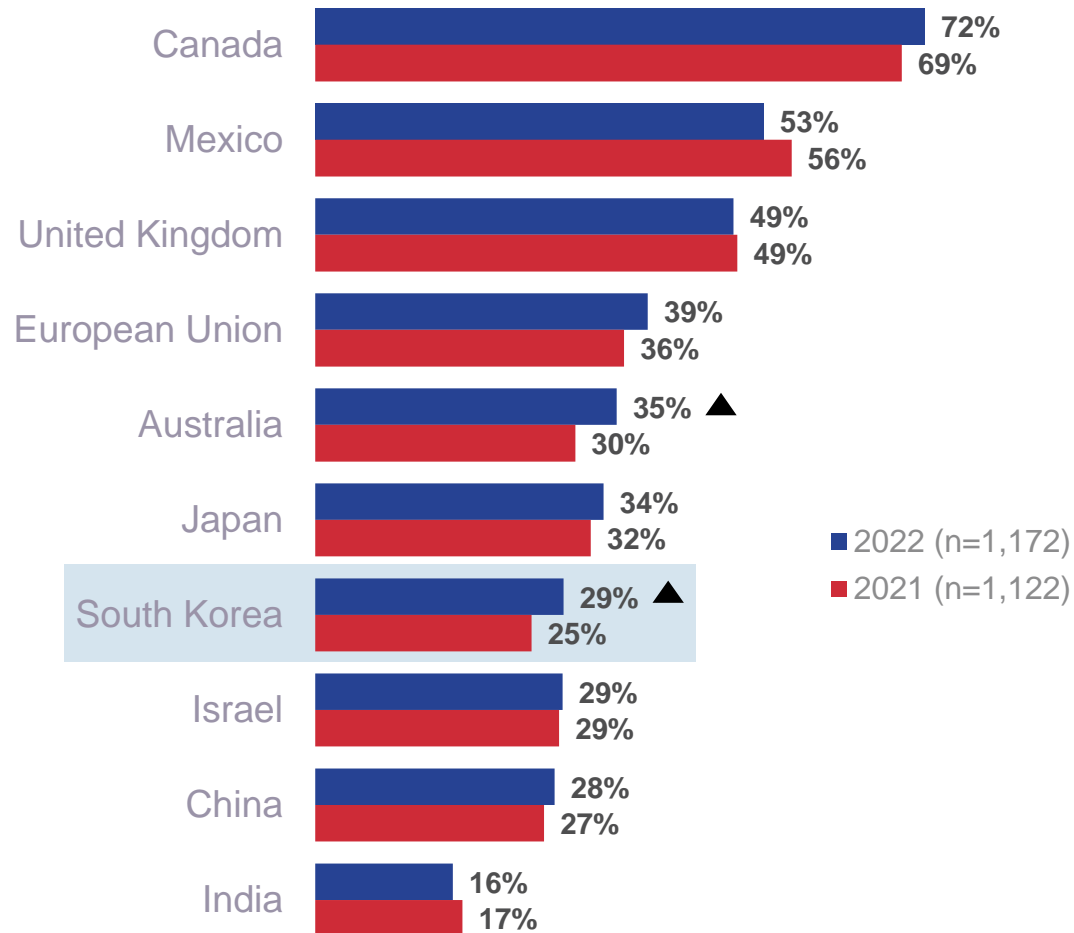
Almost 30% of Americans are aware of the free trade agreement between South Korea and the US. Nearly two-thirds of Americans see trade with South Korea as beneficial to the US.

Almost 30% of Americans are aware of the free trade agreement with South Korea, a significant increase from 2021.



Most Americans are aware of US free trade agreements with fellow North American neighbors – Mexico and Canada.

Awareness of Countries That Have a Free Trade Agreement With the US (Top 10)*



Q2. To the best of your knowledge, with which of the following countries/regions do you believe the US has a standing free trade agreement?

*Respondents were provided a predetermined list of countries and regions to choose from for this question

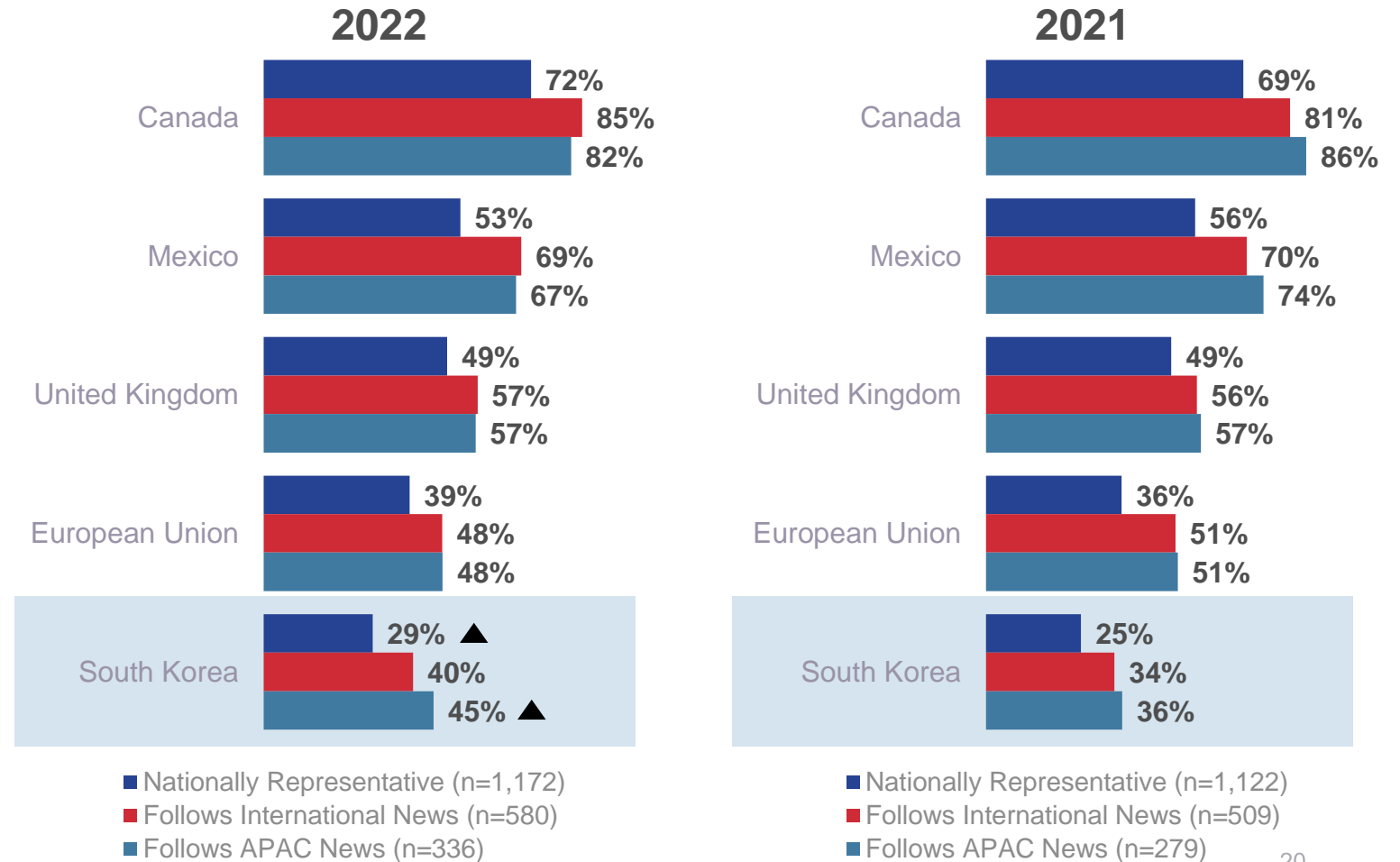
Note: Only top ten out of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.

More Americans are aware of the US & South Korea free trade agreement. This increase was significant among the general public and APAC news followers.



This trend was stable year over year among the other top countries.

Awareness of Countries That Have a Free Trade Agreement With the US*

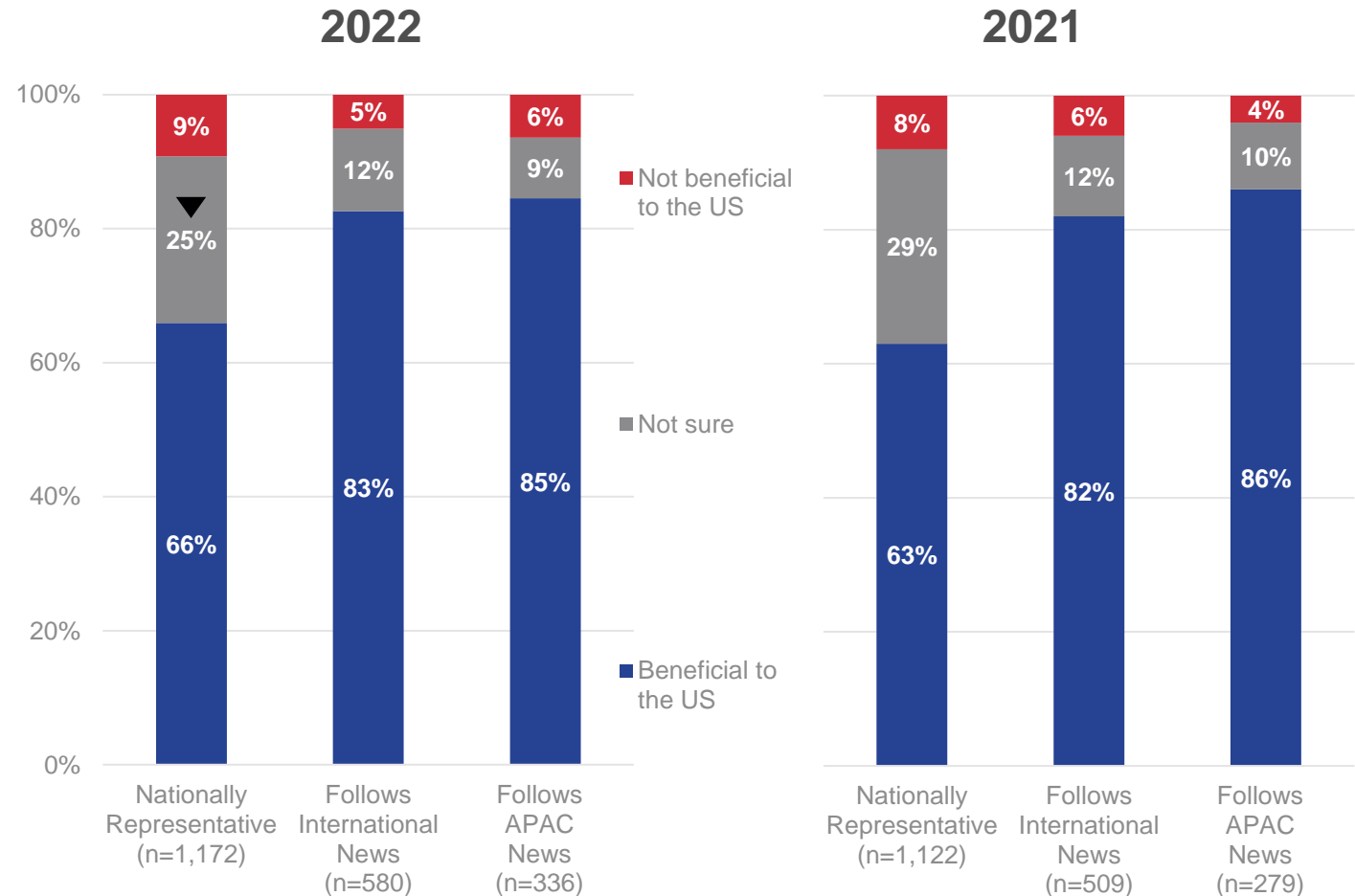


Nearly two-thirds of Americans see trade with South Korea as beneficial to the US.



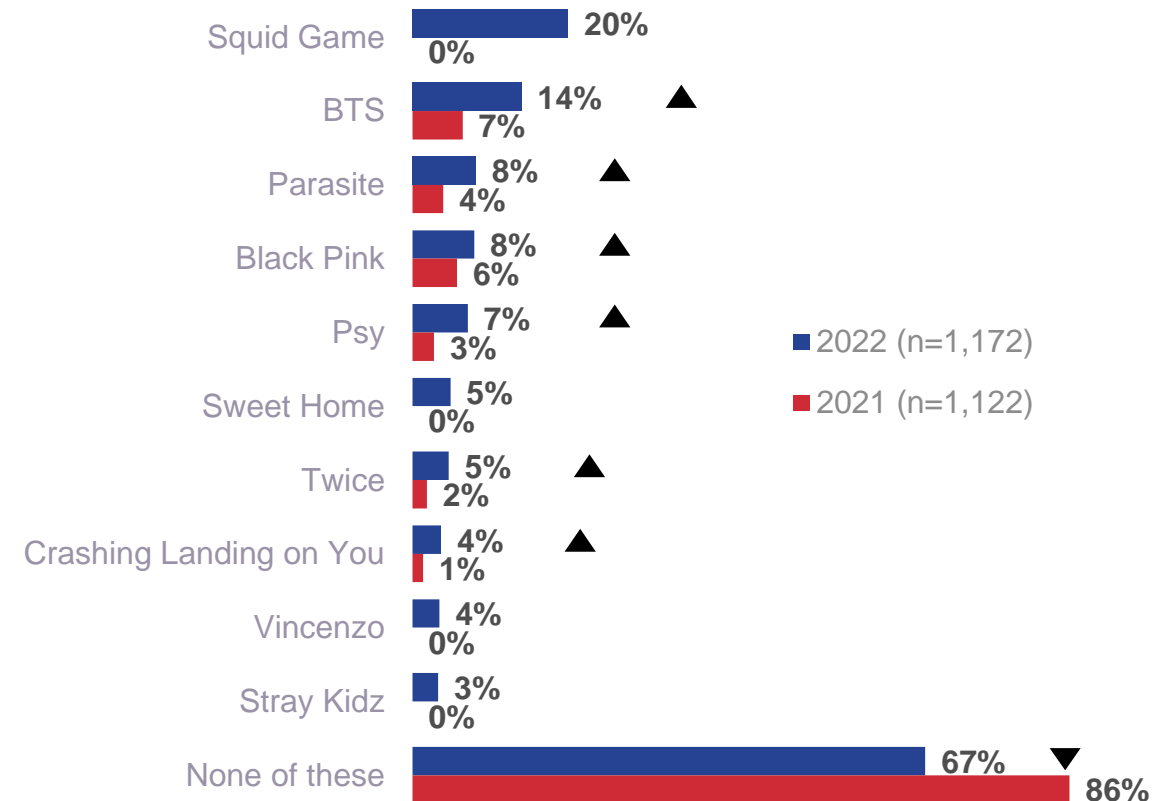
Over eight in ten Americans who follow international news or APAC news see trade with South Korea as beneficial to the US.

Views on Trade Between US and South Korea



Awareness levels of Korean movies and music increased significantly in 2022.

Viewing of South Korean Musical Artists, Movies, or TV Shows

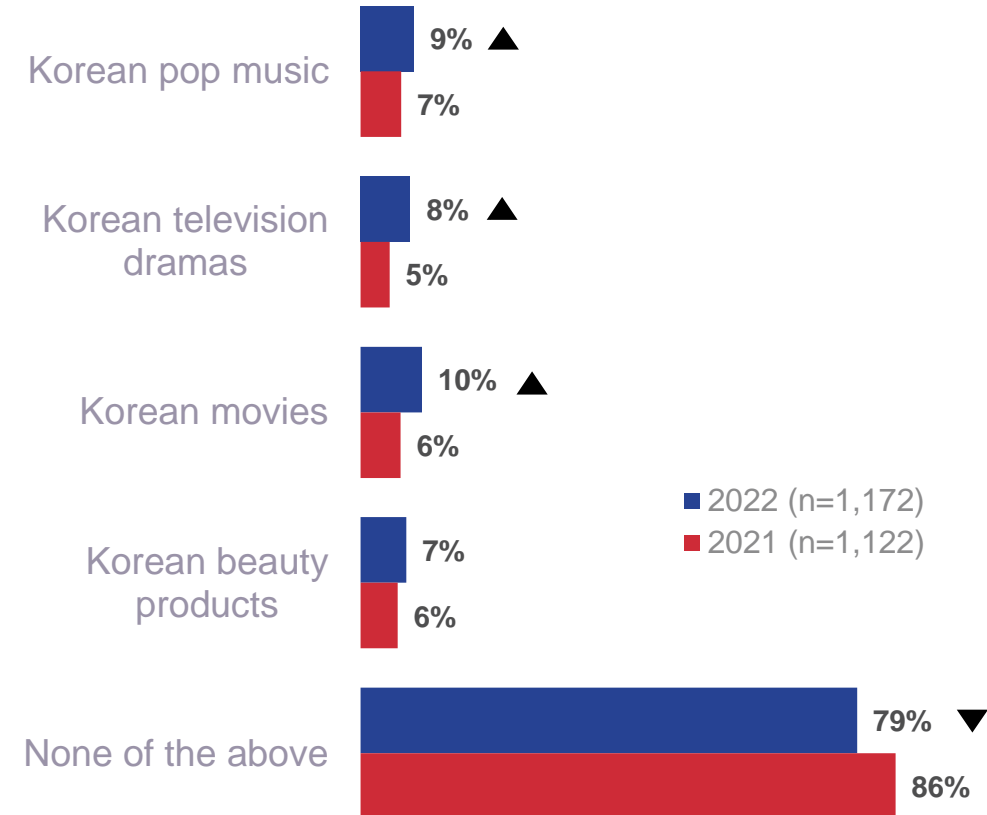


Q6. Which of the following musical artists, movies, or TV shows, if any, have you watched, listened to or followed in the past 12 months? Select all that apply.
 Note: Squid Game, Vincenzo, Sweet Home, and Stray Kidz were added as response options in 2022.
 Note 2: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.



The percent of people saying they haven't watched any of these entertainment options decreased significantly.

Fan of South Korean Popular Entertainment and Products



There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of Americans who are fans of Korean music, movies, and TV when compared to 2021.

Though there was a significant increase in the percentage of Americans who are fans of Korean music, movies, and TV, this did not encourage more of them to take an interest in Korean language, culture, history, politics, or foreign affairs.

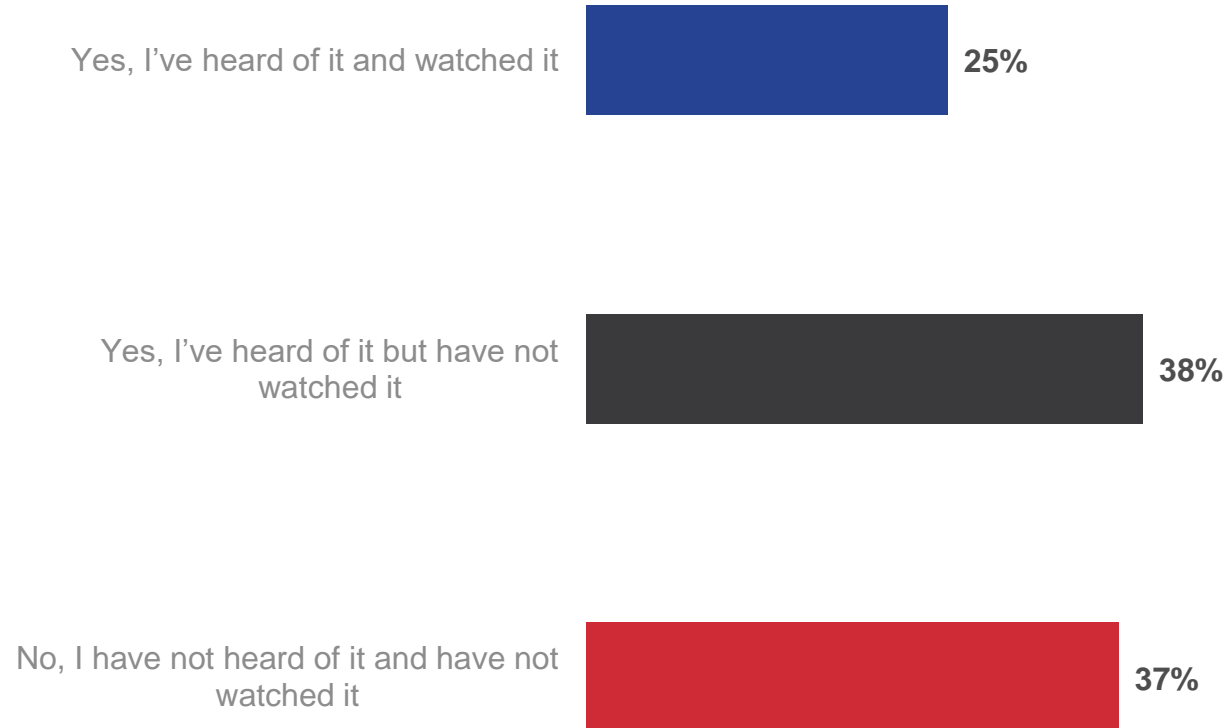
Fan of South Korean Popular Entertainment and Products

You identified as a fan of one or more of the options in the previous question. Has being a fan encouraged you to learn more about any of the following topics?

	Korean Pop Music		Korean Television Dramas		Korean Pop Movies		Korean Beauty Products	
	2022 (n=106)	2021 (n=70)	2022 (n=99)	2021 (n=52)	2022 (n=133)	2021 (n=69)	2022 (n=92)	2021 (n=67)
Korean Language	47%	40%	43% ▼	59%	41%	36%	25%	32%
Korean culture	52%	65%	63%	74%	50% ▼	65%	47%	58%
Korean History	27%	33%	54%	58%	49%	41%	16%	24%
Korean Politics	15%	19%	36%	34%	28%	25%	8%	15%
Korean Foreign Affairs	19%	24%	30%	32%	33%	21%	14%	16%
None of the Above	18%	21%	19% ▲	5%	15%	23%	35%	20%

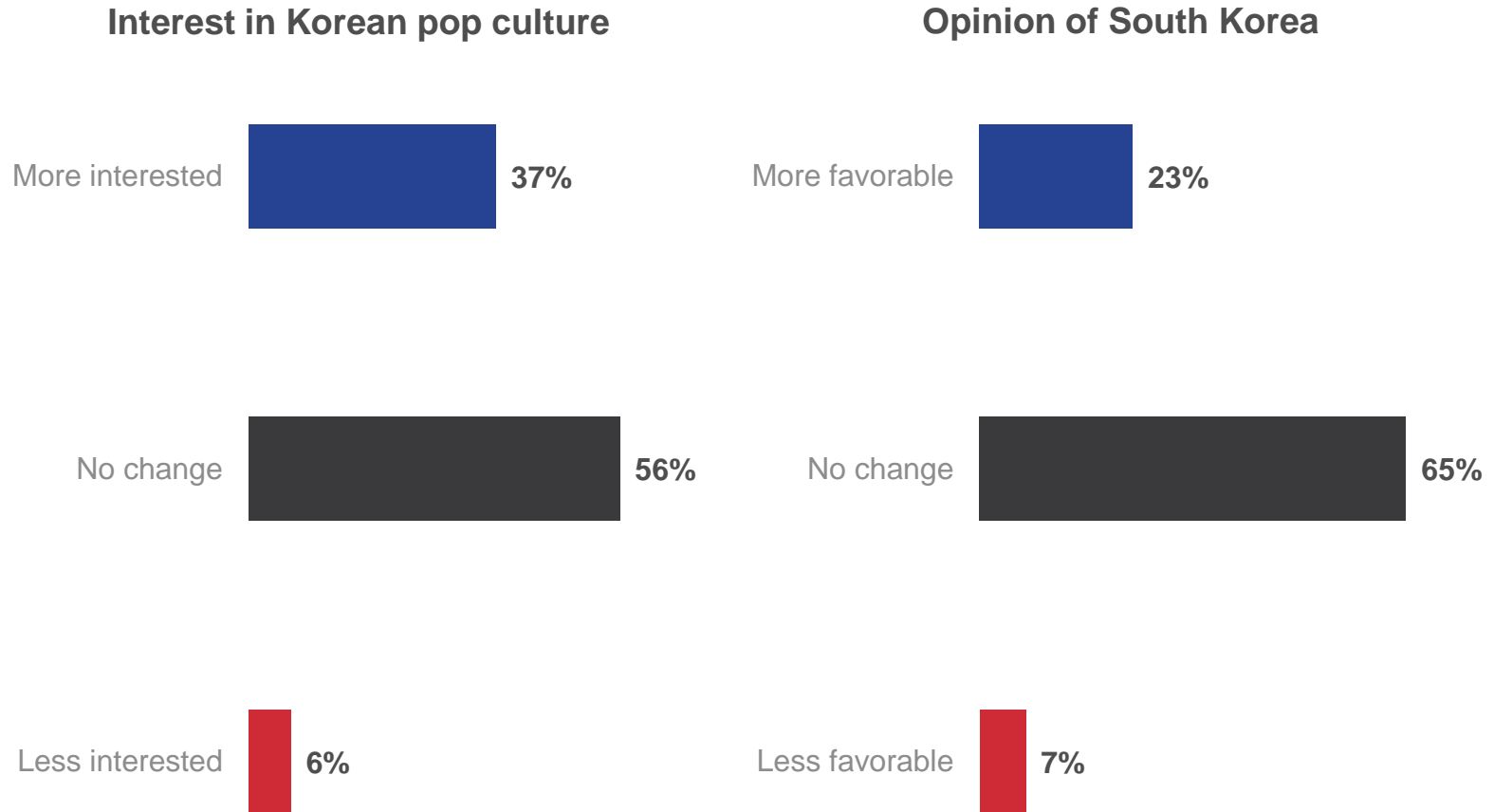
**63% of Americans
have at least heard
of Squid Game,
with 1 in 4 having
watched it.**

Fan of South Korean Popular Entertainment and Products



Of those who watched Squid Game, almost 4 in 10 Americans are more interested in Korean culture. Almost a quarter of Americans have a more favorable opinion of South Korea.

Fan of South Korean Popular Entertainment and Products



AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH KOREA

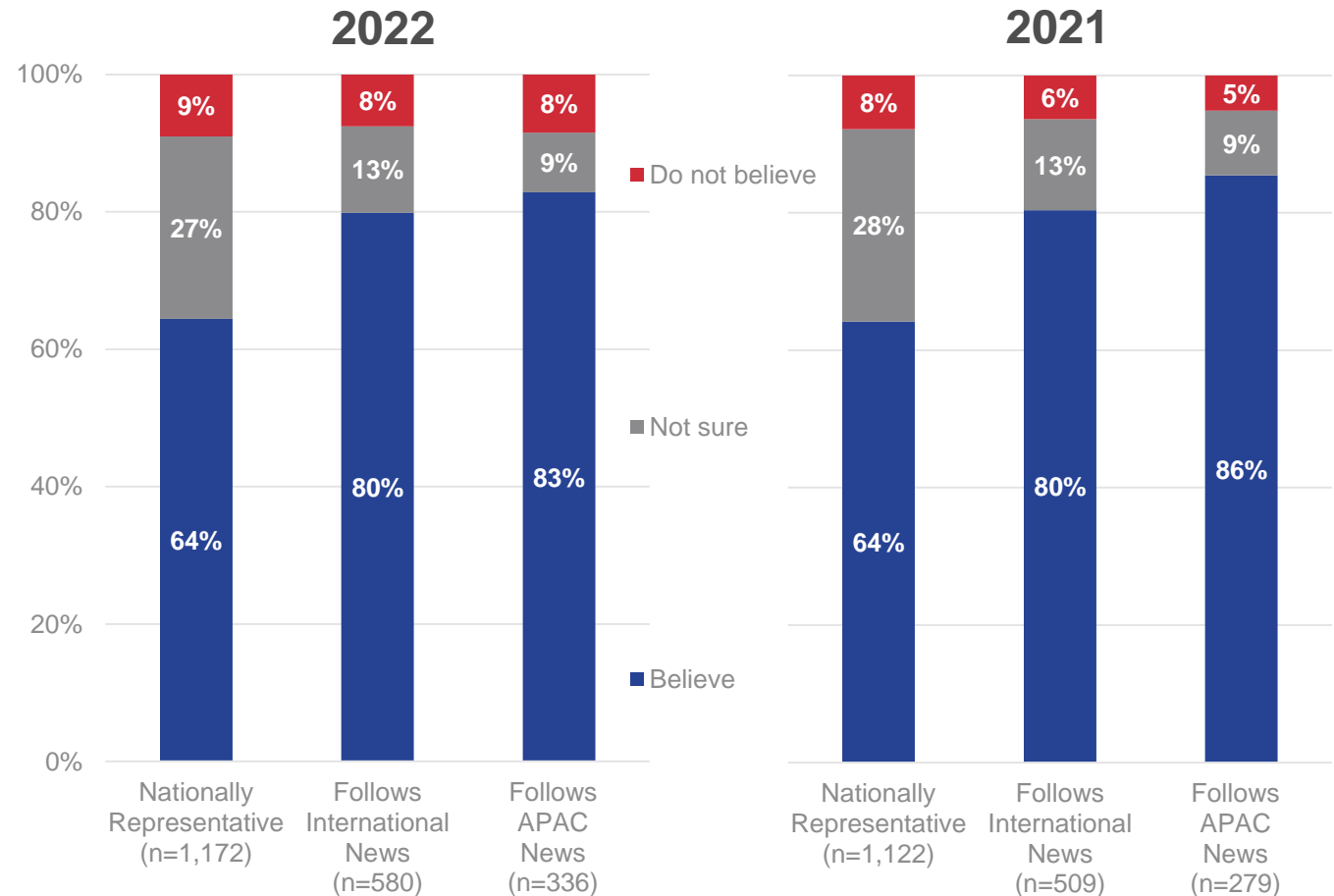
More than six in ten Americans believe the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interests of the US. The number of Americans who want to maintain all alliances grew significantly this wave to 23%.

Over six in ten Americans see the military alliance with South Korea as beneficial to the US.



Over eight in ten Americans who follow international news or APAC news see the South Korean military alliance as beneficial to the US.

Believe in National Security Importance of Military Alliance Between the US and South Korea

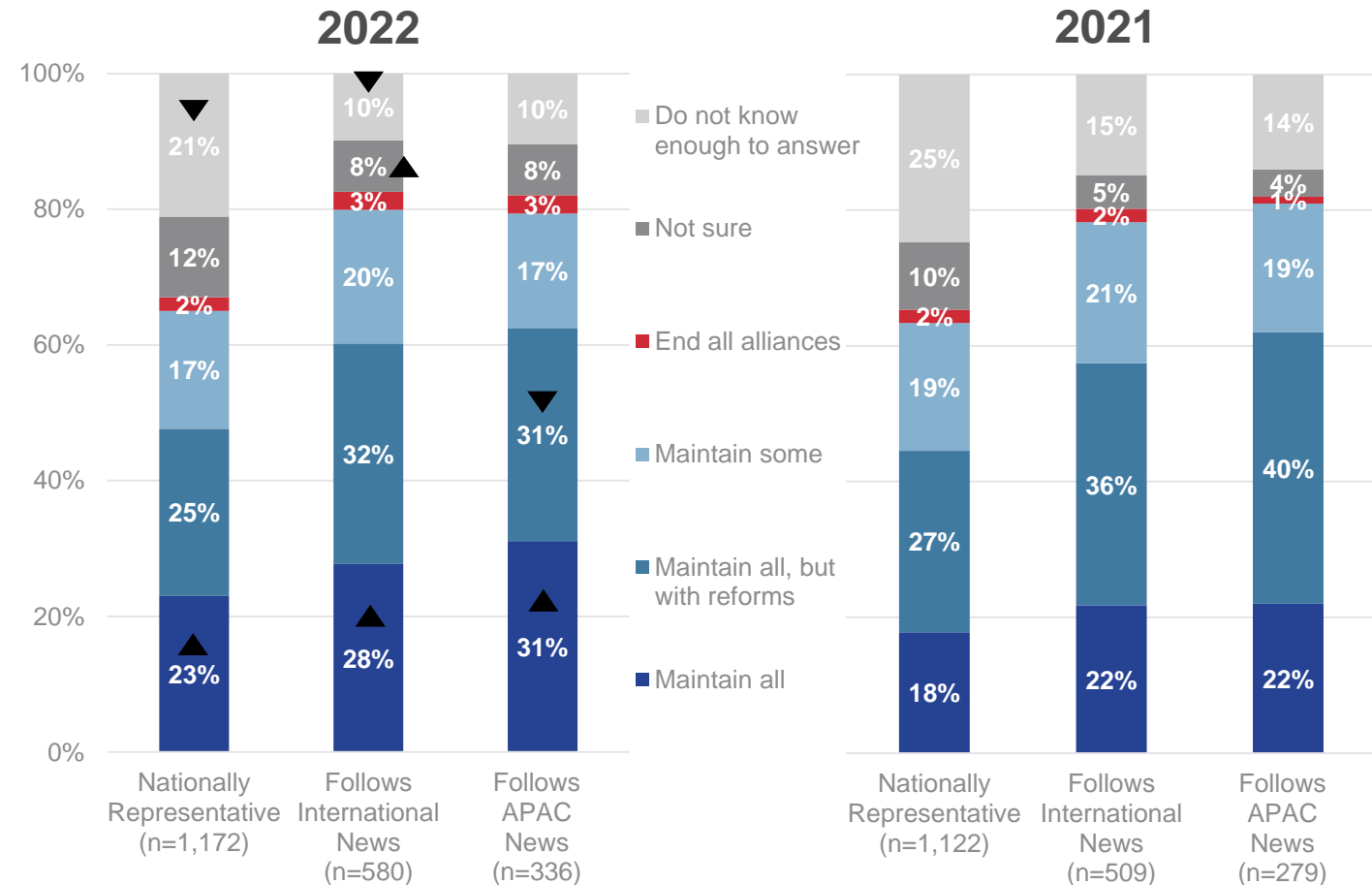


Over the past year, there has been a shift toward Americans wanting to maintain all US alliances as is, away from not knowing enough to answer.



A plurality of Democrats favor keeping alliances as they are (29%), while a plurality of Republicans favor maintaining all alliances, with reforms (27%).

Views on Current US Military Alliances

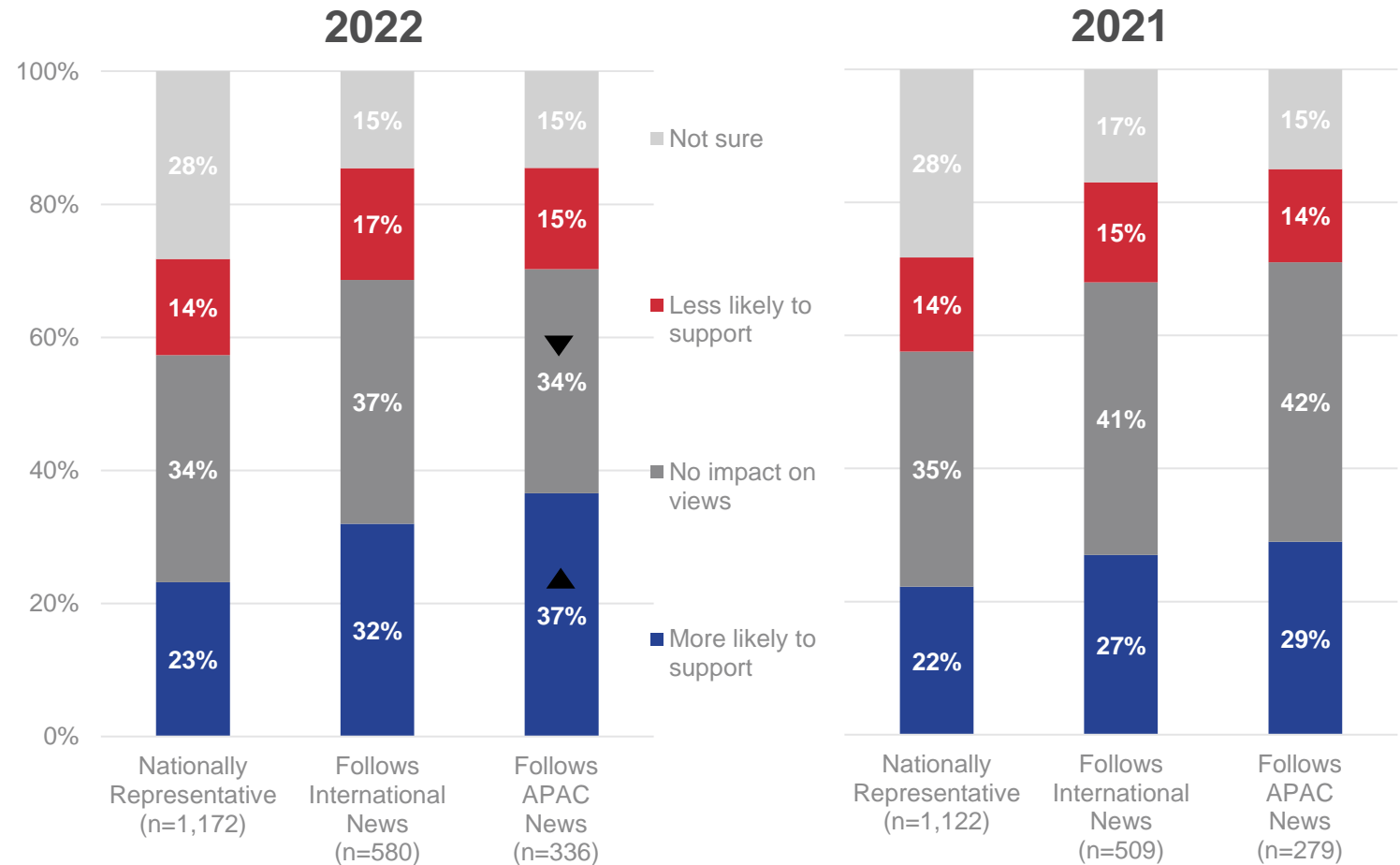


Q11. Which comes closest to how you feel about current US military alliances?
Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

For many Americans, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan did not influence their views on maintaining US security commitment abroad.

Less than four in ten who follow international and APAC news did not change their views following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. More say it made them more likely to support US security commitments abroad than less likely to do so.

Impact of Afghanistan Withdrawal on Views of US Security Commitments Abroad

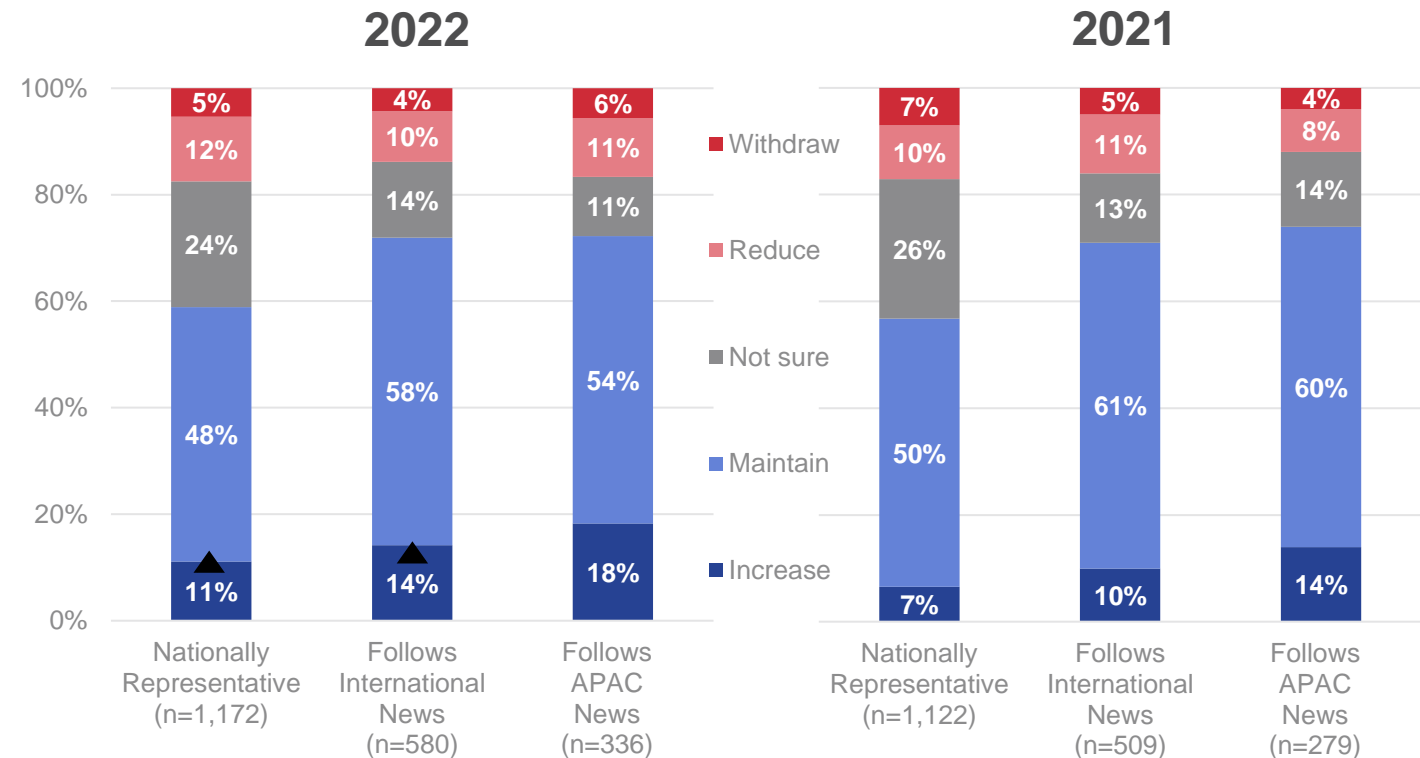


Around half of Americans would like to see the US maintain current troop presence in South Korea.



Significantly more Americans in general and those who follow International news believe the US should increase its troop presence in South Korea.

Views on US Troops in South Korea

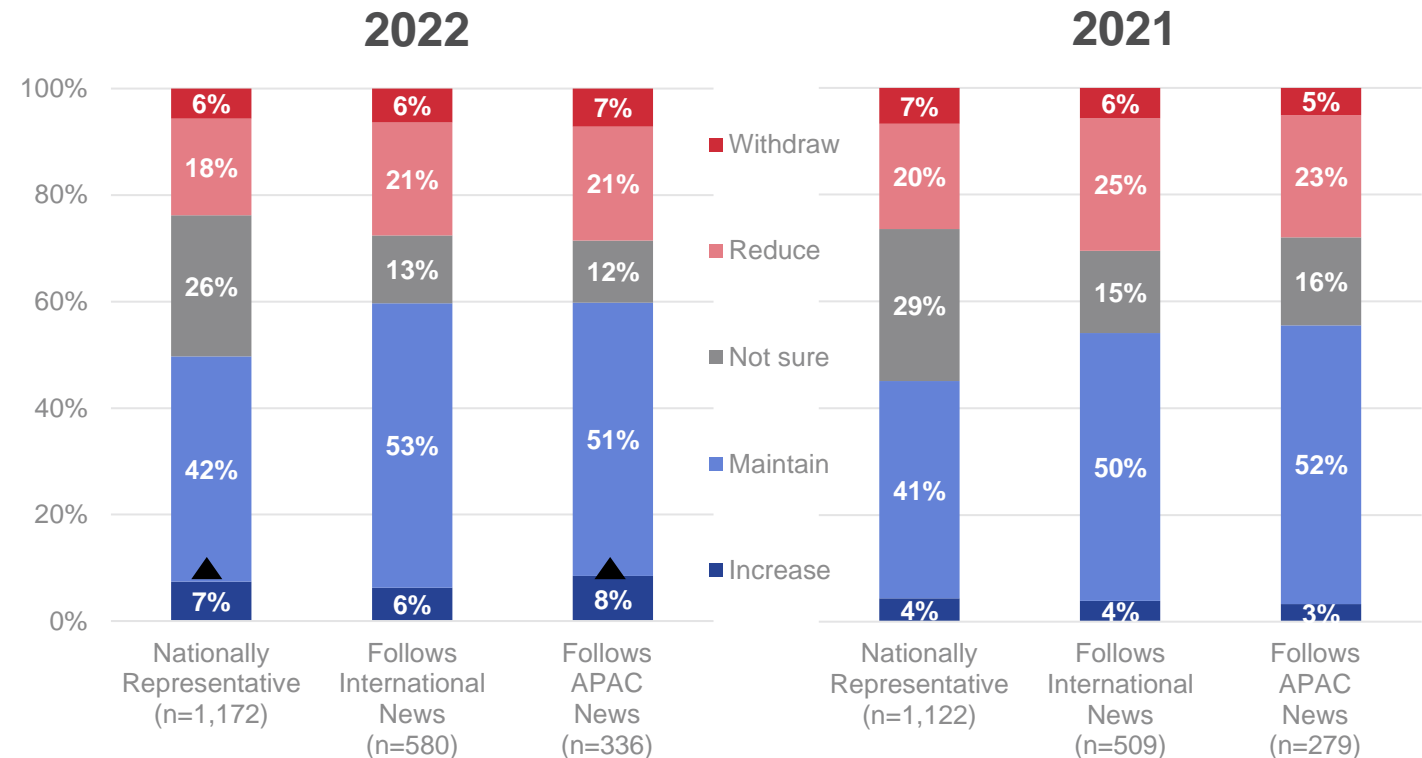


About four in ten Americans would like the US to maintain its troop presence in South Korea. Over a quarter of Americans reported being “Not sure”, which is a higher rate than that among Americans who follow international news and APAC news.



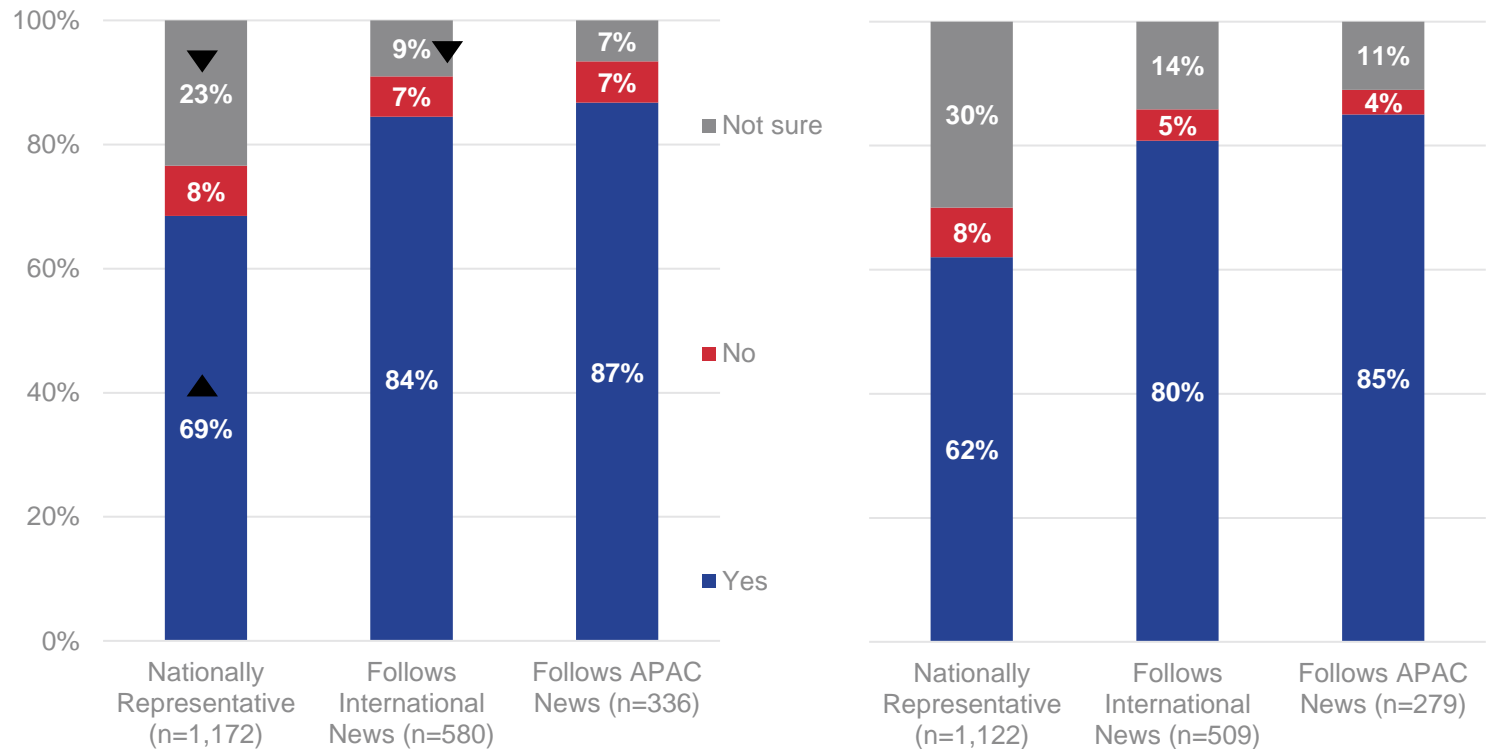
More Republicans would like the US to maintain its troops presence in South Korea than Democrats (55% vs. 44%).

Views on US Troops in South Korea Based on an Agreement With North Korea to Give Up Its Nuclear Weapons



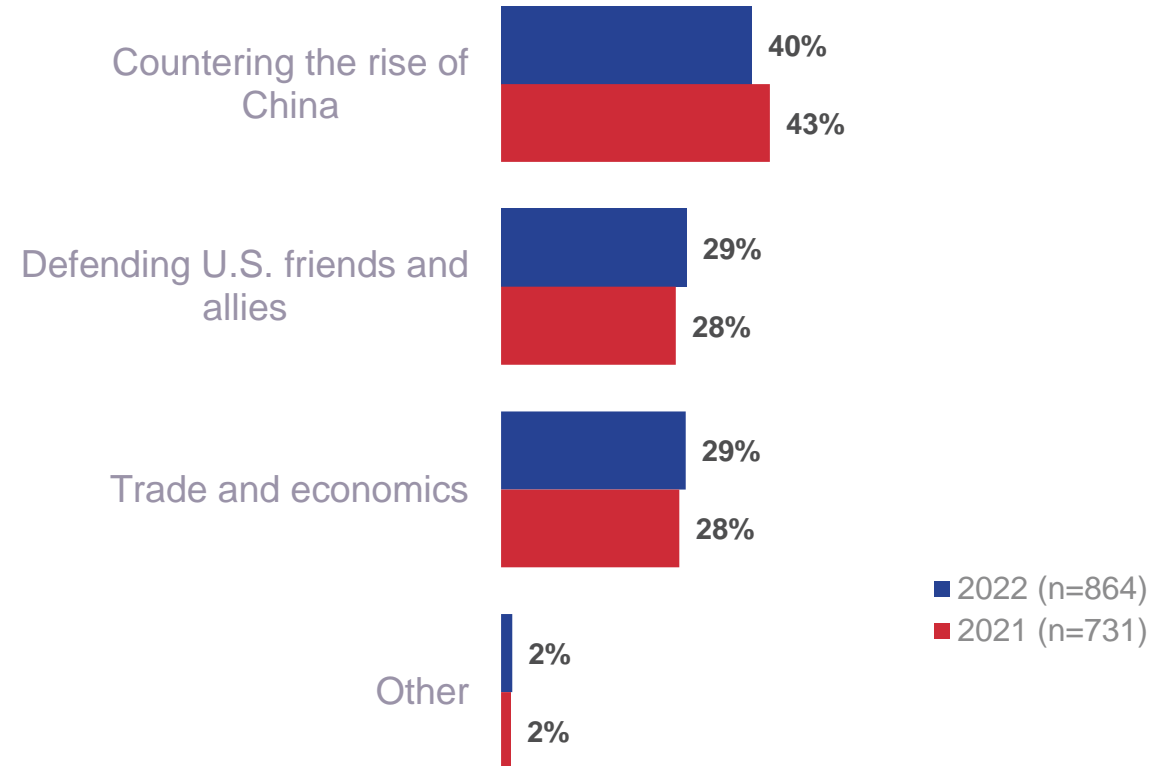
Almost seven in ten Americans believe that East Asia is a vital region for the US. This rate is even higher among international news and APAC news followers.

Views on East Asia as a Vital Region for US National Interests



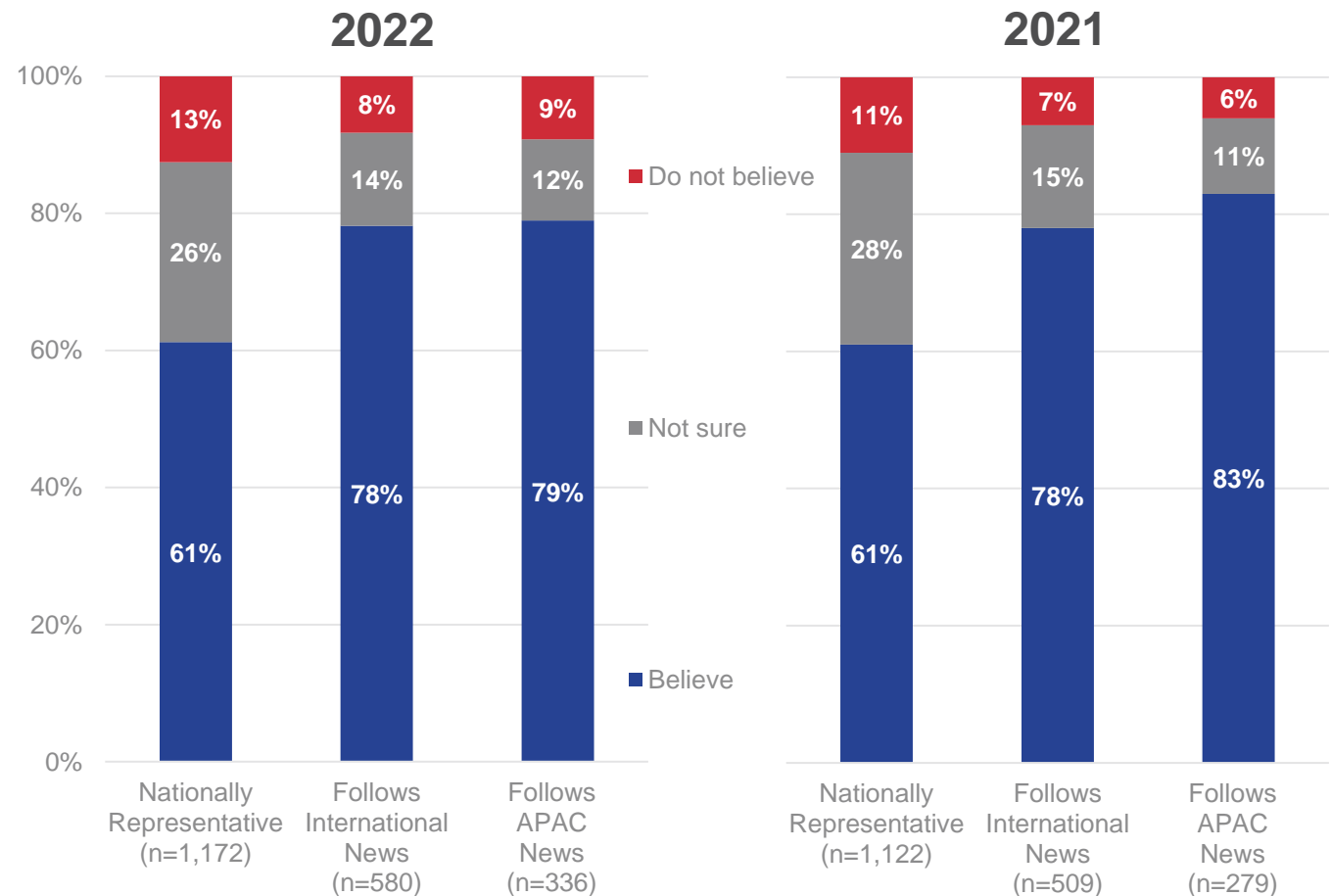
A plurality of Americans believe that the most important interest for the US in East Asia is countering the rise of China.

Most Important US National Interest in East Asia



Nearly eight in ten Americans who follow international or APAC news believe the US should assist South Korea in the event of a cyber-attack, which is higher than the view among the general public.

Views on Whether the US Should Assist South Korea in Event of a Cyber-Attack

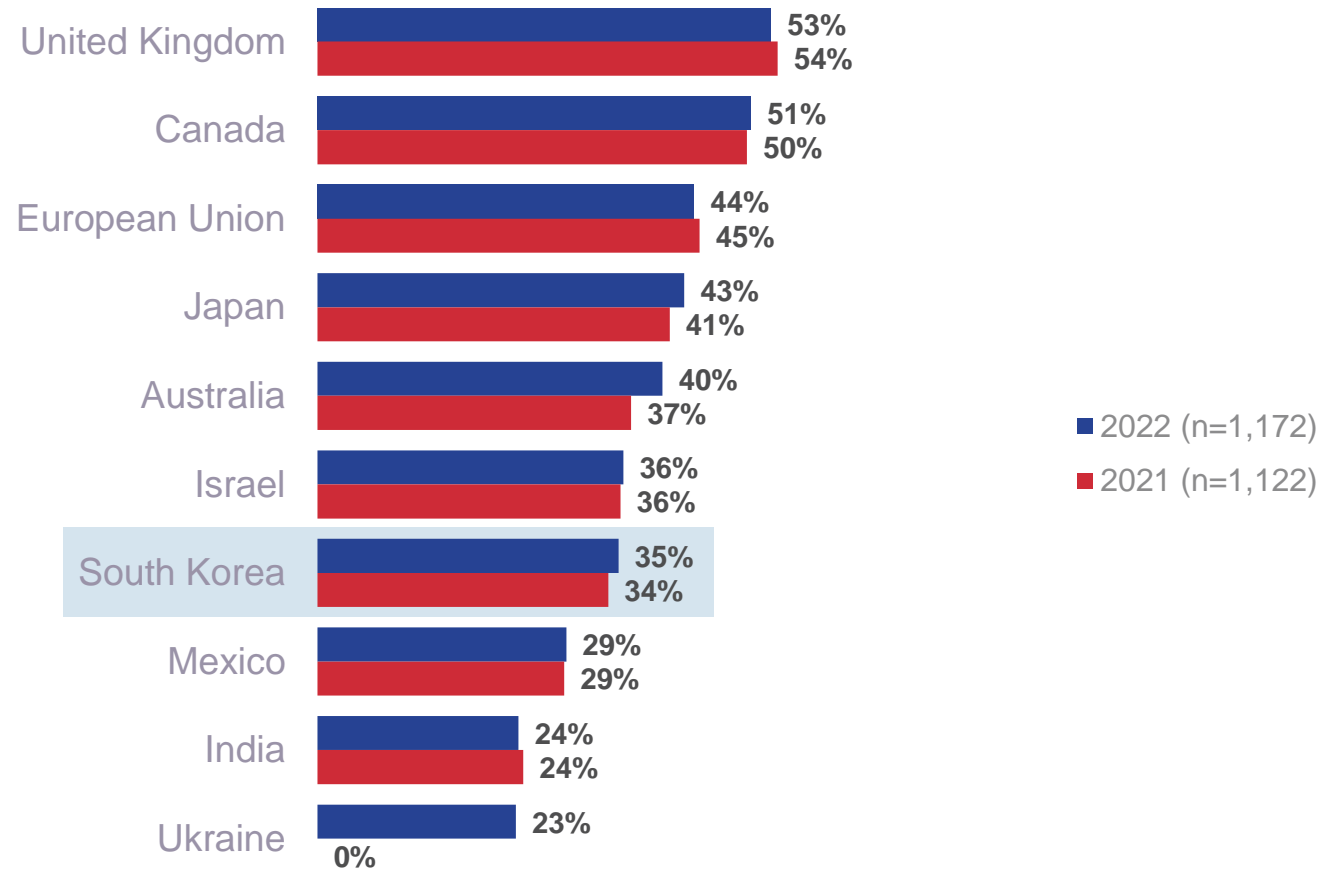


Over a third of Americans think the US should coordinate with South Korea on cyber issues.



Over half of Americans selected the UK as the country/region they would most like to see the US coordinate with on cyber issues.

Countries/Regions the US Should Cooperate With on Cyber Issues (Top 10)*



Q3. As cyber-security becomes more of a focus for the international community in the years to come, which countries (if any) would you like to see the US cooperate with on cyber issues?

Note 1: Respondents were provided a predetermined list of countries and regions to choose from for this question. Ukraine was added as a new response option in 2022.

Note 2: Only top ten out of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON THE NORTH KOREA CHALLENGE

In 2022, significantly more Americans think it is important for North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, while significantly fewer believe that it is very important for the US to push for human rights improvements in North Korea.

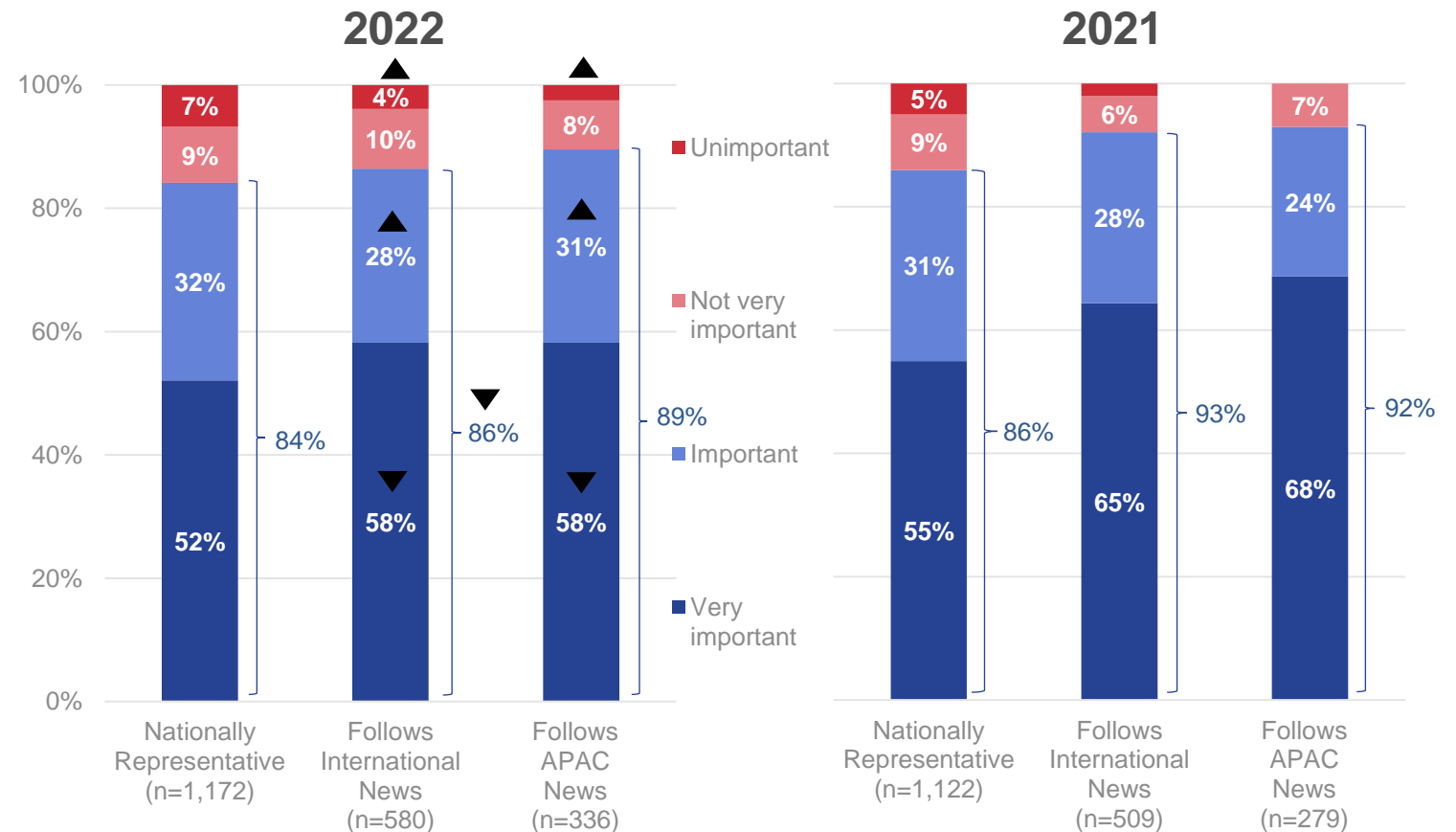
Fewer Americans who follow international news and APAC believe it is “very important” for North Korea to give up its military nuclear capabilities compared to 2021.



56% of Republicans and Democrats believe it is “very important” for North Korea giving up its military nuclear capabilities.



Importance of North Korea Giving Up Its Military Nuclear Capabilities

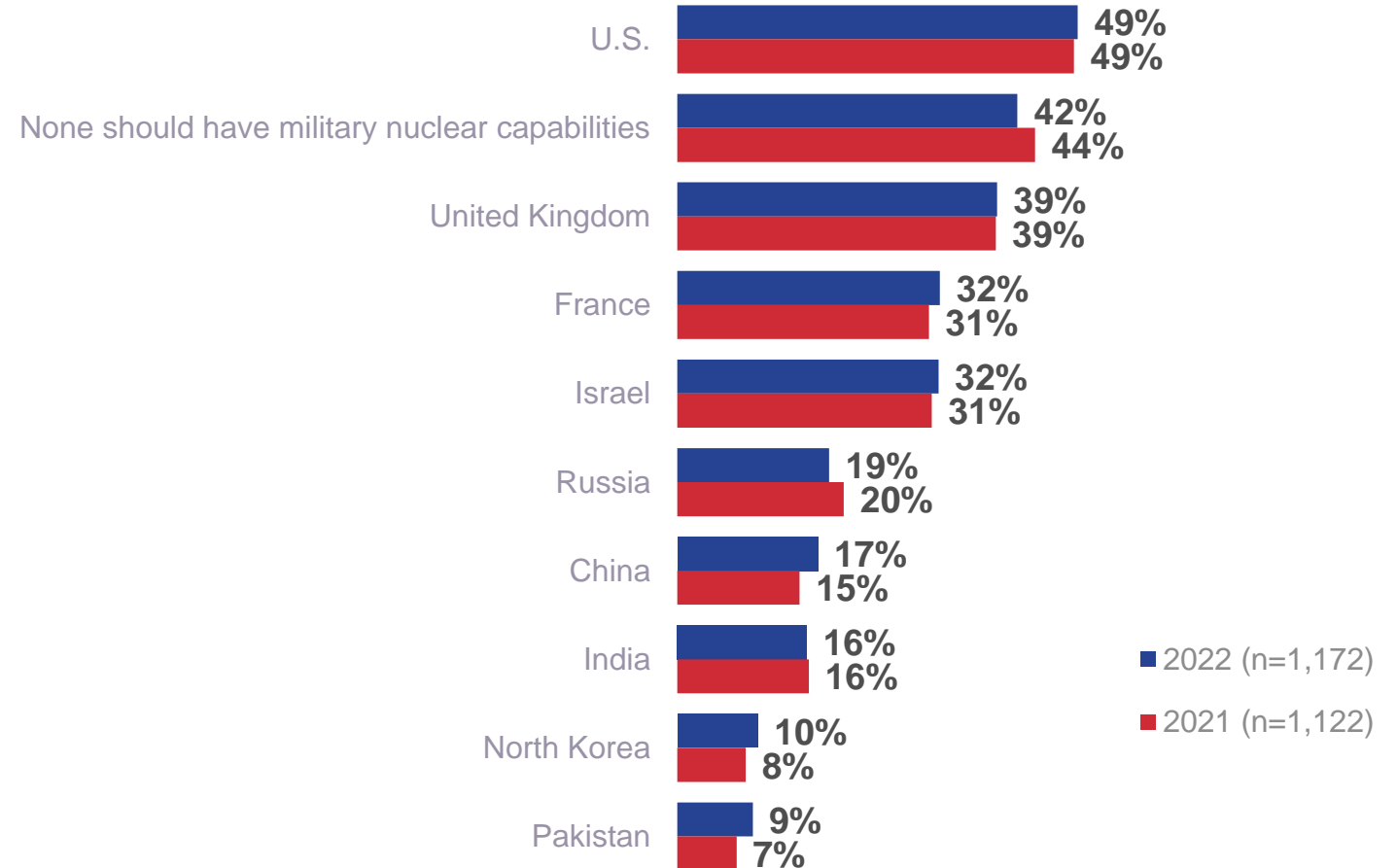


The number of Americans who believe countries should maintain their military nuclear capabilities remained stable since 2021.



Ten percent of Americans believe North Korea should maintain its military nuclear capabilities; almost half think no countries should have military nuclear capabilities.

Countries That Should Maintain Military Nuclear Capabilities*



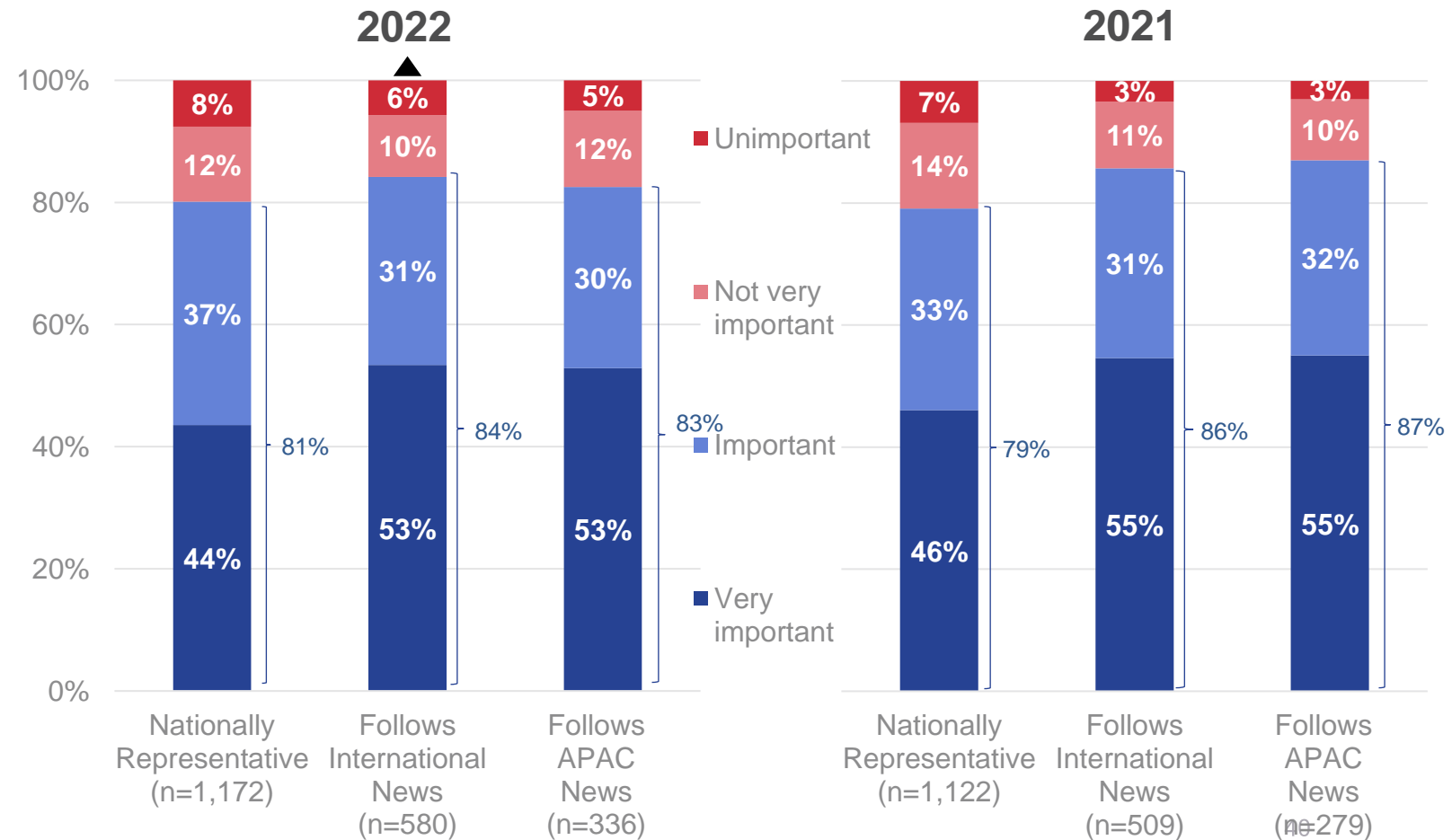
Q9. The following countries all have military nuclear capabilities. In your opinion, which of the following do you feel should be able to maintain its military nuclear capabilities? Please select all that apply.

*Respondents were provided a predetermined list of countries and regions to choose from for this question.

Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Fewer Americans who follow international news believe that it is not important for the US to push for human rights improvements in North Korea.

Importance of US Pushing for Human Rights Improvements in North Korea



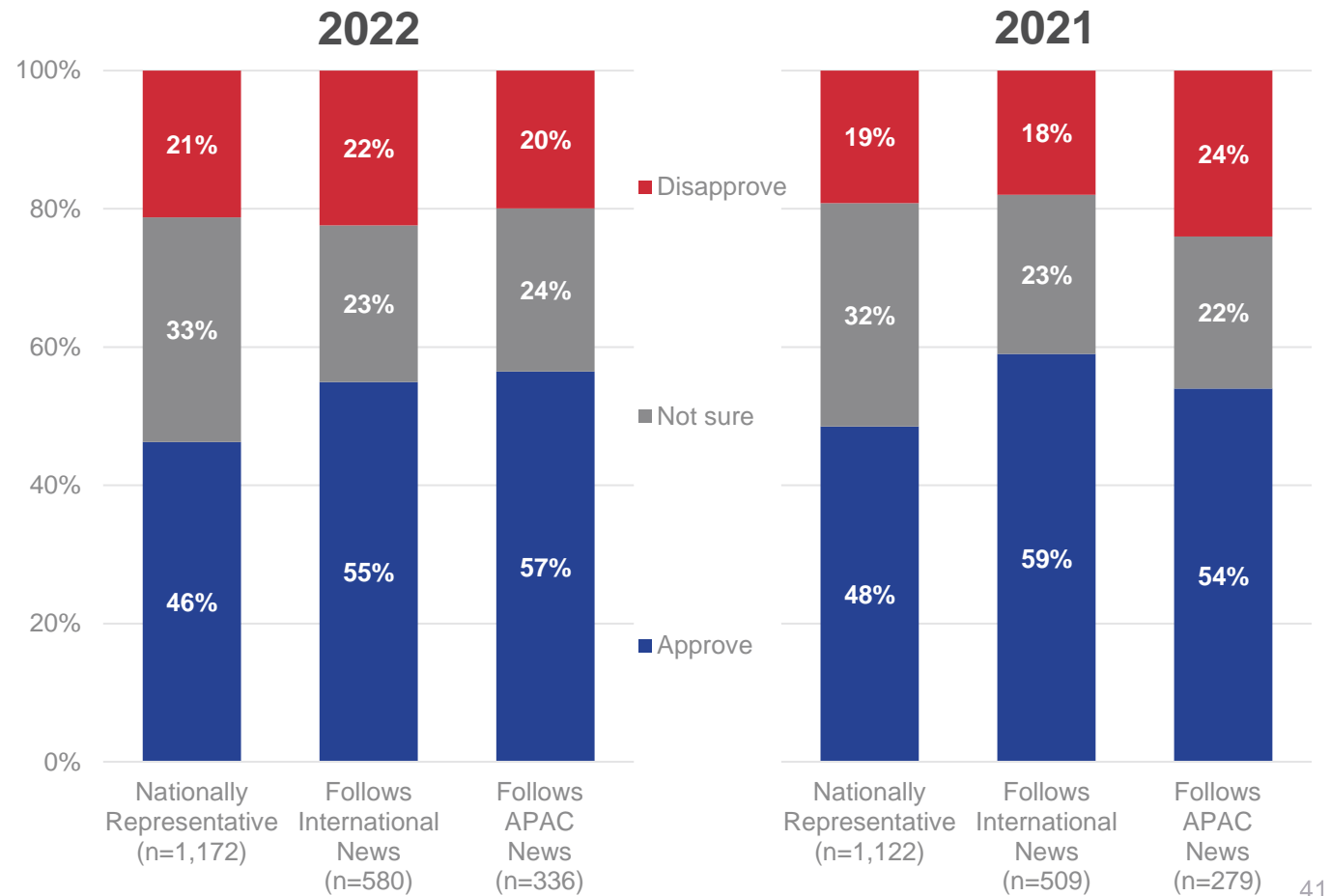
Q23. And how important is it that the US pushes for human rights improvements in North Korea?
 Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Nearly half of Americans approve of the US sending humanitarian assistance to North Korean citizens. This rate remained stable between 2022 and 2021.



More Democrats approve of sending humanitarian assistance to North Korea compared to Republicans (64% vs. 33%).

Approval of US Providing Humanitarian Assistance to North Korean Citizens

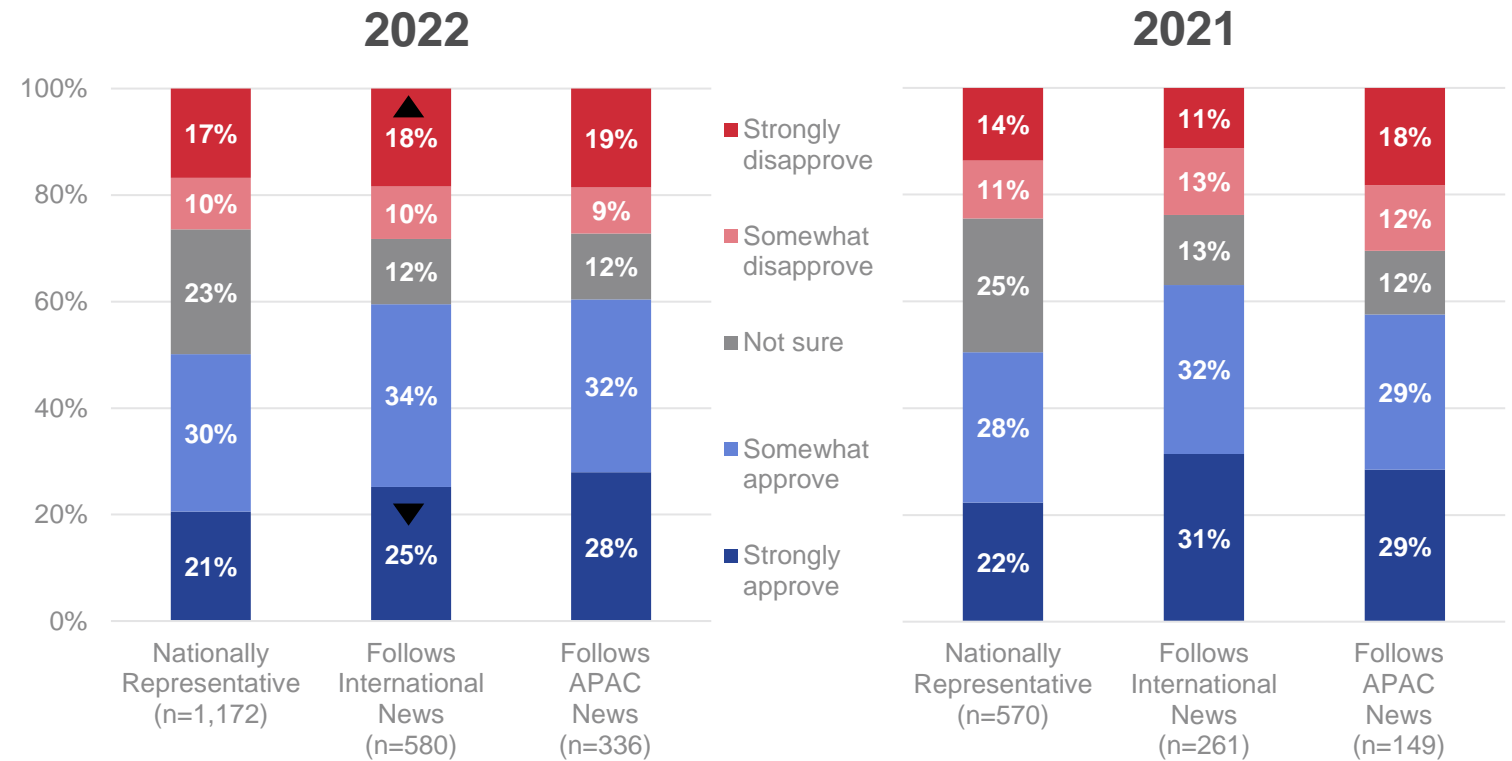


Q24. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the US providing humanitarian assistance such as food, medical supplies, or other civilian assistance to North Korean citizens?

Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Compared to 2021, significantly more Americans who follow international news in 2022 strongly disapprove of the US sending Covid-19 assistance to North Korean citizens.

Approval of US Providing Covid-19 Assistance to North Korean Citizens



Q25. In your view, would you approve or disapprove of the US providing Covid-19 assistance to North Korea?

Note: Arrows indicate change found to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Note 2: Respondents saw two versions of this questions in 2021. We are only showing responses from those who saw the same wording as 2022

Thank You