



PUBLIC OPINION SERIES

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON US FOREIGN POLICY IN A
TRANSITIONING WORLD: IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST ASIA
AND KOREA

KOREA ECONOMIC INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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ABOUT KEI

The Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) is a US policy institute and public outreach organization dedicated to helping Americans understand the breadth and importance of the relationship with the Republic of Korea. Through our publications, social media, programs, and public events, KEI seeks to advance scholarship and understanding of Korea in ways that will inform policymakers and the American public of the security, economic, and political implications of our connections to the Korean Peninsula.

For over 40 years, KEI has been promoting dialogue and understanding between the United States and the Republic of Korea through objective and in-depth analysis. KEI draws on the expertise of its staff; provides a platform on which leading policy experts and academics from the United States, Korea, and beyond can share their research and opinions; promotes scholarship by commissioning and publishing original articles; and hosts public and off-the-record conversations. These activities are intended to ensure that policy decisions are soundly based within the context of the Korean Peninsula's complexity and significance.

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49%



51%



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International stability seems precarious in 2024. With over 70 countries having scheduled elections this year, the stage has been set for domestic political landscapes to undergo significant transition. Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine threaten to spark broader conflict with major implications for the United States. In Asia, tension is building in the South China Sea as China continues to take bolder measures against neighboring countries. North Korea is expanding its influence beyond the Korean Peninsula through its cooperation with Russia and involvement in Ukraine. Amid these developments, how is the American public thinking about US foreign policy? What implications do these findings hold for East Asia, South Korea, and US-Korea relations?

The Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) partnered with YouGov to launch its fifth annual survey during September 3 to 13, 2024. The matched and weighted sample consists of 1,184 American adults over the age of 17. The survey gauges public attitudes toward key foreign policy issues and the US-Korea relationship in particular.

KEY FINDINGS

The survey results indicate that Americans regard the United States as the most influential global power, with 91 percent of respondents rating the United States as “very” or “fairly influential.” Following the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Japan are perceived as influential, with South Korea viewed positively by 42 percent of respondents. Although South Korea is not ranked as highly as these other countries in terms of influence, its reputation remains positive and stable.

East Asia

China continues to dominate US public concern as the top foreign policy challenge, although worries about China have decreased since 2022. For instance, in 2022, 63 percent of survey participants stated that China was major foreign policy challenge. In 2023, this number decreased to 58 percent. This is likely due to concerns about other geopolitical issues, such as the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. Concerns about North Korea and its nuclear program remain significant, with 90 percent of surveyed respondents stating that the North Korean nuclear issue is an “important” one, which is higher than 84 percent that stated the same in 2022.

The US public remains particularly supportive of sustained military engagement in East Asia, with 64 percent of Americans stating that they support maintaining or increasing the US troop presence in South Korea. Notably, even in the event of North Korean denuclearization, nearly half of the respondents advocate keeping US troops in the region. 68 percent of survey participants stated that the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interest of the United States. This figure has remained relatively stable since KEI/YouGov first began asking this question in 2021. This finding highlights American perceptions of the long-term strategic importance of the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea Relations

American views on South Korea remain positive, and the US-ROK alliance continues to enjoy strong public support, with 69 percent of surveyed Americans expressing a “favorable” opinion of South Korea and 68 percent stating that “engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States.” Americans recognize the value of South Korea as a critical ally in addressing regional security challenges, particularly in light of the persistent North Korean threat. This is evidenced by broad support for US military presence and the maintenance of defense commitments in South Korea.

The report also finds strong backing for US-Korea-Japan trilateral cooperation. Among those that selected South Korea and Japan as a “critical partner,” nearly 90 percent would support either the same level of more cooperation between the United States, South Korea, and Japan, particularly in the fields of national security, technology, and trade. This outcome signals a growing recognition of the importance of unified action in East Asia to address both traditional and emerging threats.

Additional Insights

Although the report notes some differences in emphasis among supporters of key US presidential candidates—Harris and Trump—regarding East Asia and South Korea, there are significant overlaps in both groups’ concerns about China and North Korea. Both groups also believe broadly that trade between the United States and South Korea is beneficial to the United States (Harris supporters: 75.6 percent; Trump supporters: 67.8 percent) and that the US-ROK alliance is in US national interest (Harris supporters: 77.1 percent; Trump supporters: 67.5 percent). Both groups support either increasing or maintaining the current US troop level in South Korea (Harris supporters: 67.6 percent; Trump supporters: 68.3 percent).

There are some differences in the level of support for particular areas of cooperation. For instance, Harris supporters appear to be interested in bilateral and trilateral cooperation on a broad range of issues that include regional security, economy, technology, and non-traditional security (i.e., climate change, human rights, and global health) while Trump supporters are more focused on regional security, economy, and technology.

Conclusion

American public opinion reflects the enduring importance of East Asia, particularly South Korea, in US foreign policy. Bipartisan support for the US-South Korea alliance and a continued military presence on the Korean Peninsula underscore the strategic role the region plays in ensuring regional stability. As US policy continues to adapt to global challenges, South Korea remains a key partner in securing US interests in East Asia. This report provides critical insights into how the evolving public perceptions of East Asia, particularly South Korea, may shape future US foreign policy.

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON US FOREIGN POLICY IN A TRANSITIONING WORLD: IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST ASIA AND KOREA

Introduction

International stability seems precarious in 2024. With over 70 countries having scheduled elections this year, the stage has been set for the geopolitical landscape to undergo a significant transition this year. Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine threaten to spark a broader conflict that could involve the United States. In Asia, tension is building in the South China Sea as China continues to take bolder measures against its neighboring countries. North Korea is expanding its influence beyond the Korean Peninsula through its cooperation with Russia and involvement in Ukraine. Amid these developments, how is the American public thinking about US foreign policy in East Asia and South Korea? How do these shifts influence the bilateral relationship and the alliance?

The Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) has partnered with YouGov to launch its fifth annual survey from September 3 to 13, 2024. The matched and weighted sample consists of 1,184 American adults over the age of 17.

Global Influence: The United States is Still the Most Influential

KEI/YouGov explored the question of relative influence of various countries on the world stage by asking each of its respondents to rate the level of influence of a given country. Although there is some debate about how the United States should assert its global influence, the KEI/YouGov survey shows that 91 percent of Americans rated the United States as either a “very influential” or “fairly influential” country among the list of countries or regions presented. This was an increase of 3 points from 2023 and aligns with the finding from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs’ October 2023 study, which showed that most participants consistently viewed the United States as having widespread global influence.¹ Running second was China (78 percent), followed by the United Kingdom (69 percent), Russia (67 percent), and Japan (63 percent). Notably, 42 percent of Americans rated South Korea as very influential or fairly influential.

How influential do you think the following country or region is in the world? % of individuals who answered “very influential” or “influential”
KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

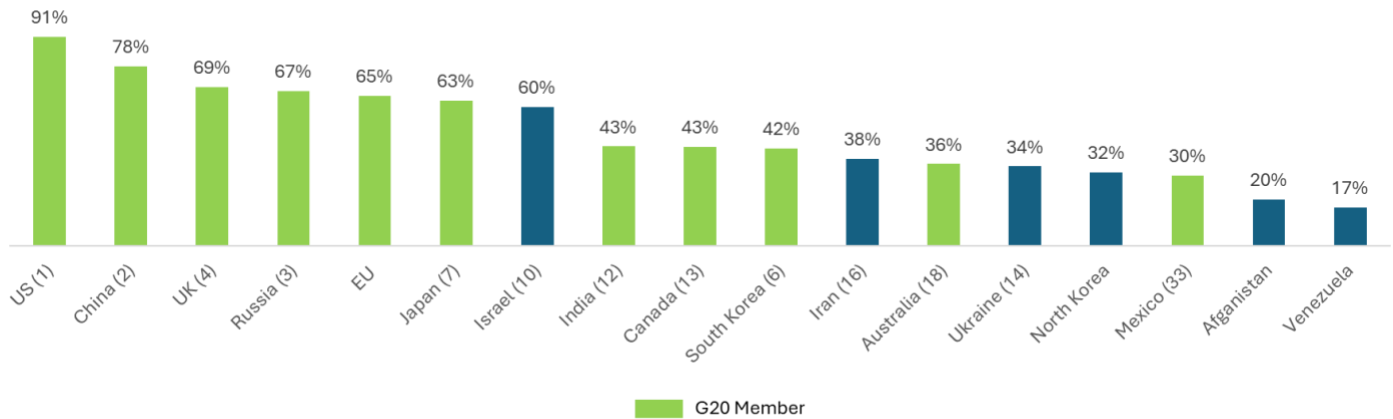


Figure in the parentheses are rankings from the US News and World Report Country Power Ranking

Figure 1. Americans have a generally informed understanding about the relative influence of nation-states on the world stage.

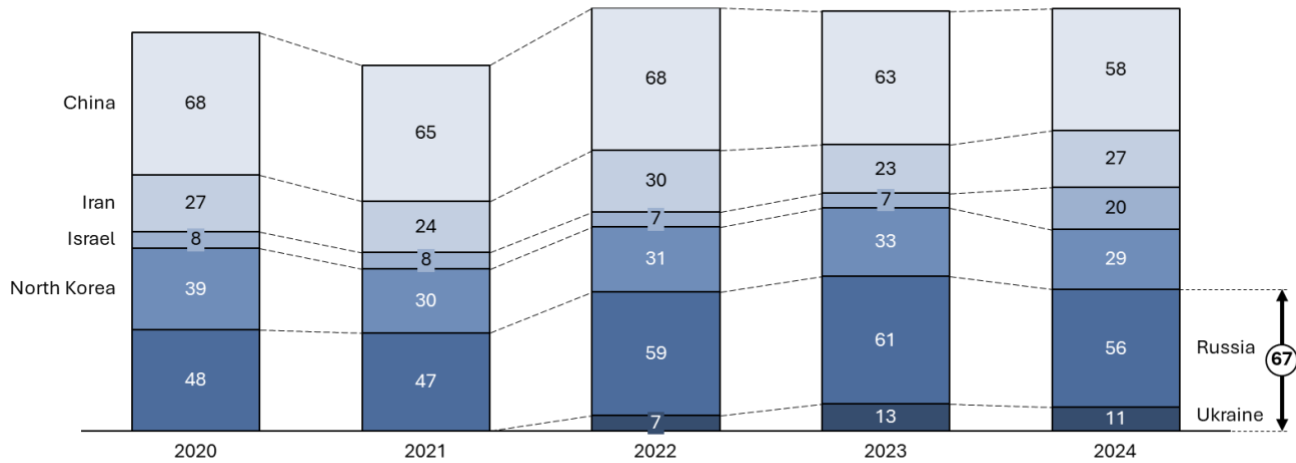
Of the countries that were listed, Israel was the highest-ranked non-G20 member nation with 60 percent of survey participants naming it as the most influential country. This was a 10-point increase from 2023, when only 50 percent of Americans stated that Israel was a very or fairly influential country in the same list of countries provided. It is likely that the conflict between Israel and Hamas played some role in shaping this view.

This result is broadly consistent with the results of the US News and World Report ranking of the most powerful countries, which cardinally orders countries by giving equal weight to global leadership, economic influence, export performance, political influence, international alliances, and military power.²

Critical Foreign Policy Challenge

When asked to name the most critical foreign policy challenge facing the United States, 58 percent of surveyed respondents named China. Although this is a significant decline from 68 percent in 2022, China is still viewed as an important foreign policy challenge by the highest number of respondents, followed by Russia (56 percent), North Korea (29 percent), Iran (27 percent), Israel (20 percent), and Ukraine (11 percent). This finding aligns with the results of other studies, such as the one by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs from November 2023 and the Pew Research Center in April 2024.³ These studies showed China and Russia consistently gaining more attention than other geopolitical challenges among the American public. An important takeaway from these findings is that the American public remains squarely focused on East Asia, including the threats posed by China and North Korea, despite ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

In your view, which of the following countries and/or geographic regions, if any, represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the US? Please select up to three responses. KEI/YouGov



Countries/regions listed in the questionnaire: Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, China, EU, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Mexico, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, UK, US, Venezuela, Ukraine.

Figure 2. Despite the emergence of conflicts in Middle East and Eastern Europe, China and North Korea are regarded by most Americans as critical foreign policy challenges.

The data also suggests that the American public sees the challenge associated with Ukraine as being linked to Russia. The number of respondents who saw Russia as a critical foreign policy challenge spiked significantly (+12 points) in 2022 when the conflict in Ukraine first began, and it has remained fairly consistent in 2023 and 2024.

Nuclear Capabilities and Proliferation

An ongoing concern is the potential for nuclear proliferation.⁴ Americans surveyed by YouGov seemed split on questions related to nuclear weapons. When asked which nuclear-weapon state should be able to *maintain* its military nuclear capabilities, just under half (49 percent) of surveyed Americans answered the United States. 39 percent stated that “no country should possess military nuclear capabilities.” This result is consistent with previous public poll findings that showed 47 percent of Americans believed that nuclear weapons make the United States safer.⁵ In general, Americans were more supportive of nuclear weapons among allies like France (29.6 percent), the United Kingdom (37.62 percent), and Israel (29.25 percent) and less so for adversaries like China (16.9 percent), Russia (19.7 percent), and North Korea (9.6 percent). The KEI/YouGov survey result suggests that a sizable number of Americans are unenthusiastic about any country possessing nuclear weapons capabilities, even while acknowledging their deterrent value.

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. KEI/YouGov

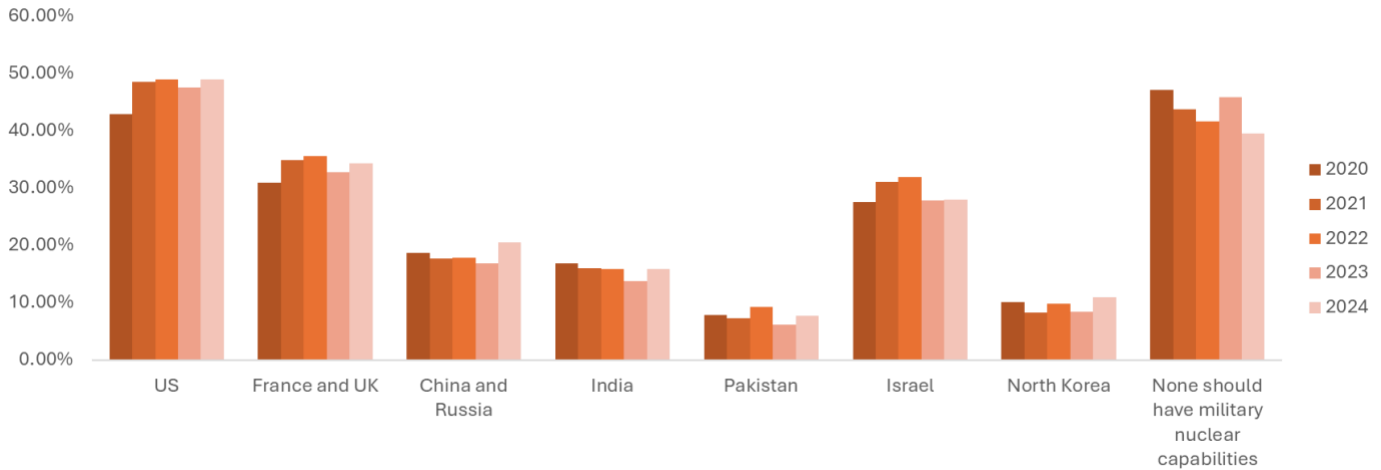


Figure 3. In general, Americans are skeptical about nuclear weapons.

Among those who have an opinion, Americans appear generally opposed to the idea of countries *developing* their own nuclear capabilities if they do not already possess them. For instance, Australia received the highest support for developing an independent nuclear capability at 28.6 percent (opposition: 38.6 percent)—Japan was next at 27.4 percent (opposition: 43.8 percent) and South Korea at 23.8 percent (opposition: 48 percent). In each case, opposition to nuclear development was *always* the modal answer. In terms of magnitude, opposition was highest among countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia (support: 6.5 percent; oppose: 69.3 percent), Qatar (support: 6.6 percent; oppose: 65.2 percent), and the UAE (support: 7.6 percent; oppose: 64.5 percent). On average, Americans were almost four times as likely to oppose non-nuclear weapon states developing their own nuclear capabilities while showing relatively greater acceptance of nuclear development among allies than among adversaries.

In your opinion, which of the following do you feel should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities? KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

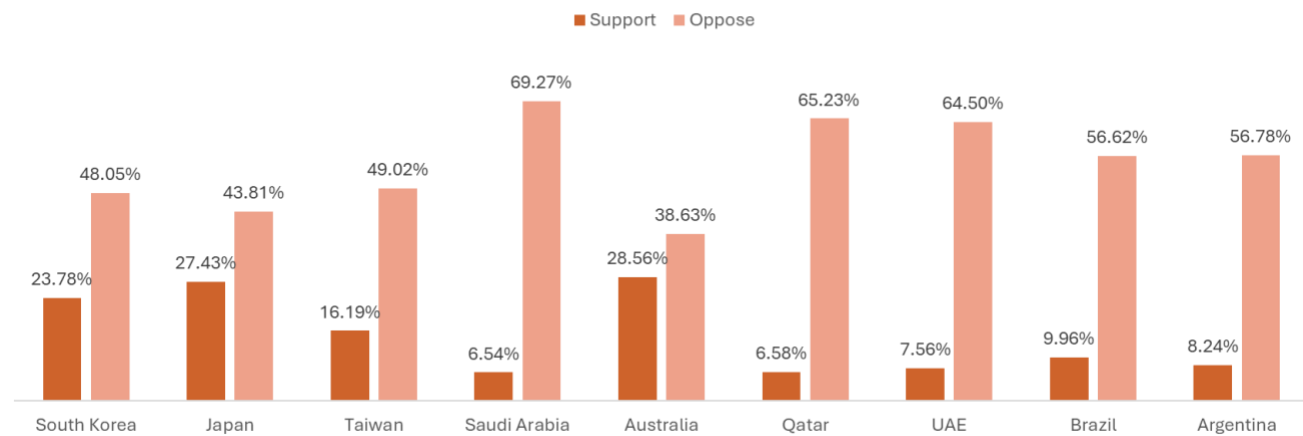


Figure 4. Americans do not favor the development of nuclear capability by non-nuclear states.

North Korean Nuclear Issue

Given the above findings on American attitudes toward nuclear weapons, it should not be a surprise to find broad and persistent opposition to North Korea’s nuclear program. The data confirms that the importance of this issue has only grown over time, as nearly 90 percent of surveyed Americans consider this an important issue, increasing from 84 percent in 2022. These findings confirm results reported by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in August 2024, which showed 52 percent of Americans stated that North Korea’s nuclear program posed a critical threat to the United States.⁶ The Pew Research Center’s recent work on this topic also revealed that four in ten Americans see limiting North Korea’s influence as an important foreign policy priority.⁷

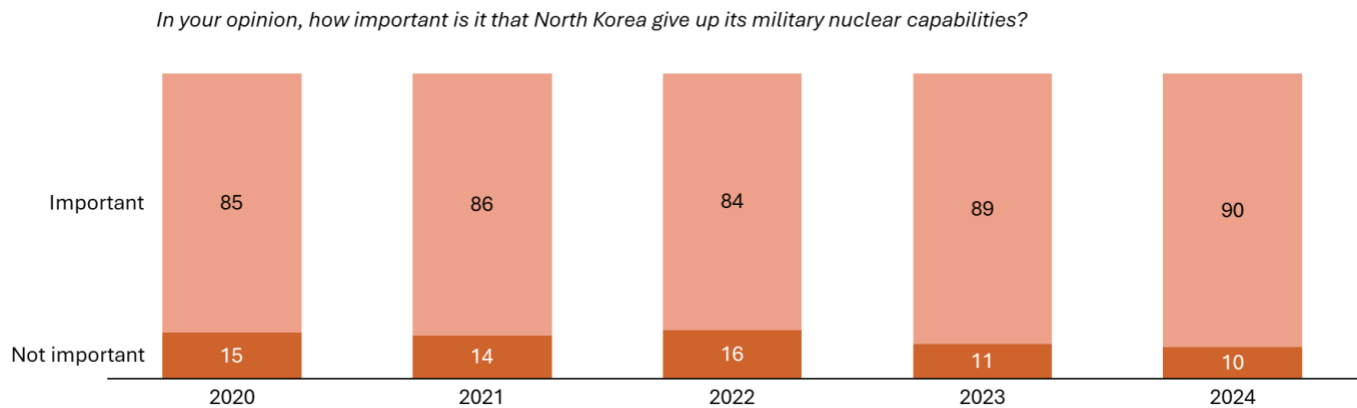


Figure 5. Americans have never lost sight of the importance of North Korea’s denuclearization.

Military Alliances and Regional Cooperation

In thinking about US military alliances around the world, Americans have been generally positive — 51 percent favor maintaining existing alliances in some form but desire some changes. Only 23 percent of those surveyed expressed support for maintaining the status quo. A plurality of those surveyed preferred that the United States take a more selective approach to alliance management by pursuing reforms within respective alliance relationships. Only 4 percent supported ending all alliances. Cross-temporal comparison shows that the overall desire to maintain existing alliances in some form increased from 45 percent in 2020 to 51 percent in 2024.

Which comes closest to how you feel about current U.S. military alliances? KEI/YouGov

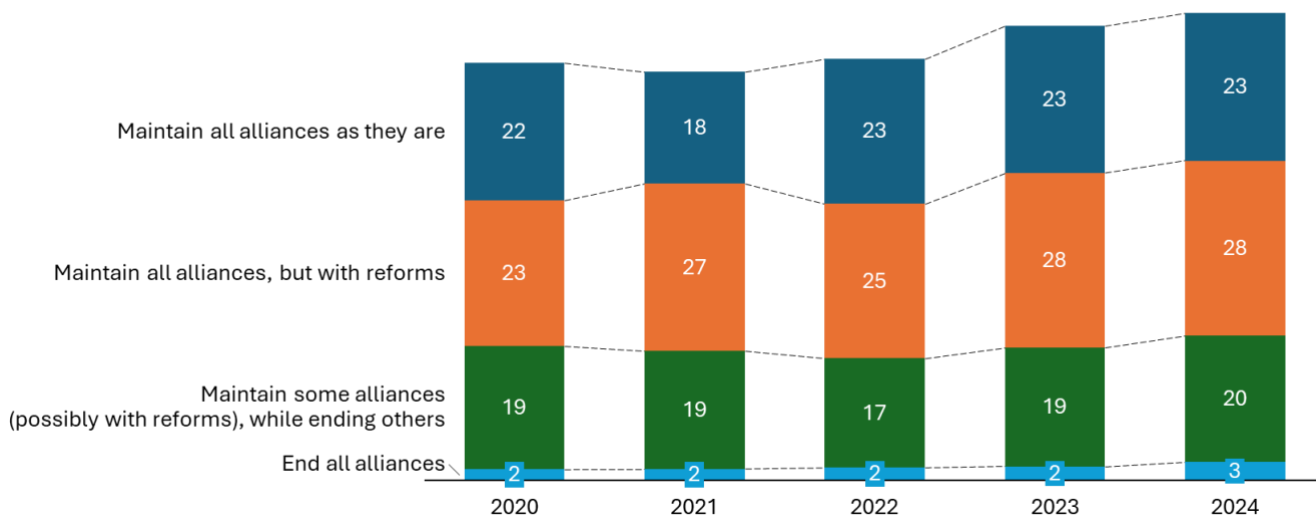


Figure 6. Americans see value in maintaining an alliance network but increasingly prefer a more selective approach to the perpetuation of alliance relations.

US Troop Presence on the Korean Peninsula

To explore American views on US Forces in Korea (USFK), the survey asked whether the United States should maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea. 64 percent supported increasing or maintaining the current troop level, and 13 percent expressed a desire to reduce the troop level. Notably, only 4 percent expressed a desire to withdraw from South Korea completely. This finding suggests that while 48 percent of Americans have expressed a desire to make changes to the existing alliance network, as discussed above, there is broad support for not making any downward changes to the existing troop level in South Korea.

Do you believe the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interests of the US or do you not feel this way? KEI/YouGov

The U.S. currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea. For context/comparison, the U.S. also has 54,000 troops in Japan and currently has 35,000 troops in Germany. In your opinion, should the United States increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea? KEI/YouGov

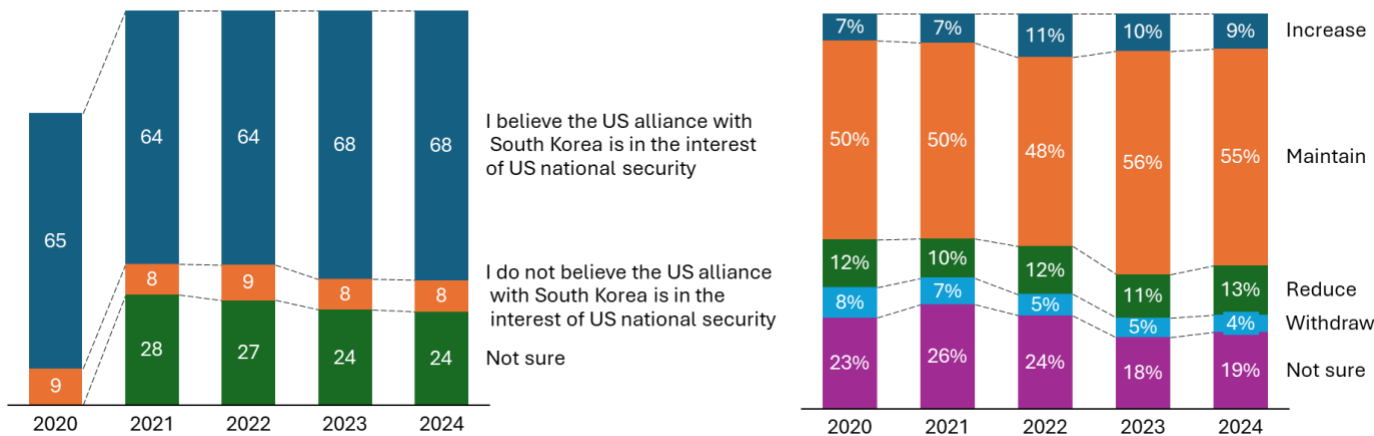


Figure 7. There is robust support for maintaining US troops on the Korean Peninsula and that US-ROK alliance is in US national interest.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that a large portion of the American public (68 percent) sees the US military alliance with South Korea as aligned with the national security interest of the United States.

States. This figure has remained relatively unchanged since KEI/YouGov first began asking this question in 2021. Similar results have been confirmed by numerous studies on both sides of the relationship.⁸

If the United States were to reach an agreement with North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, should the U.S. change its troop presence in South Korea? KEI/YouGov

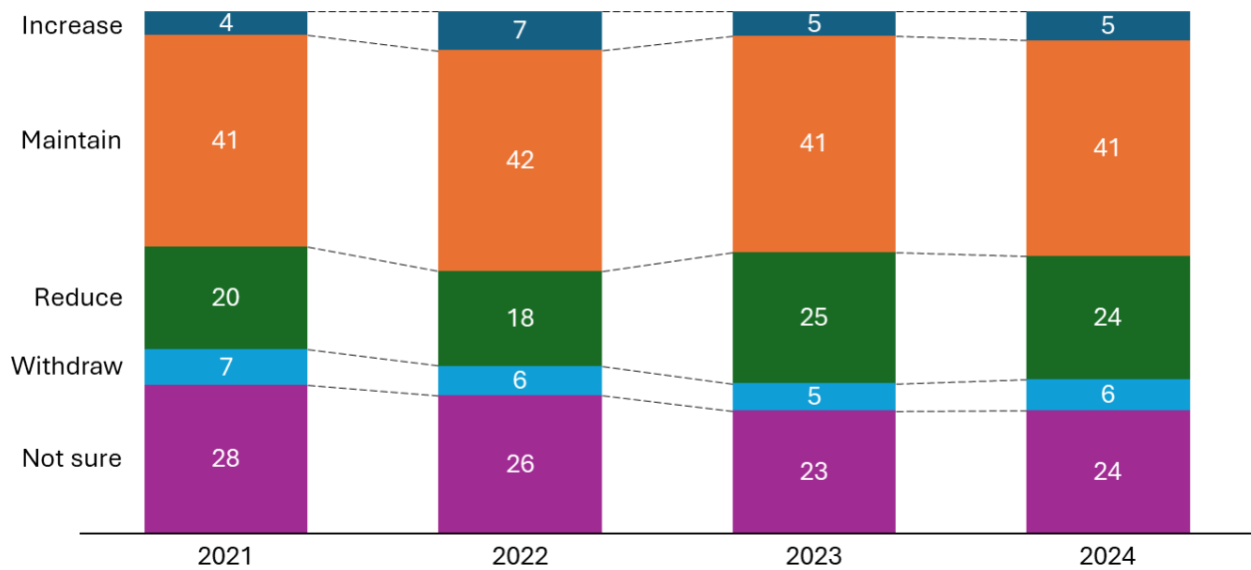


Figure 8. If North Korea were to give up its nuclear weapons, a plurality of Americans would still support a continued US troop presence on the Korean Peninsula. Only 7 percent would support full withdrawal.

When asked whether the United States should increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw USFK forces on the Korean Peninsula if North Korea were to give up its nuclear weapons, support for increasing or maintaining the troop presence declined to 46.8 percent. This is twice as large as the number of individuals who supported troop reduction (23.6 percent) and the number of respondents unsure of the impact on the US force presence (24 percent). A little under 6 percent stated that they would like the troops withdrawn in this case. The above data suggests that support for the military alliance between the United States and South Korea would continue even if the North Korean threat recedes, highlighting the durability of the US-South Korea alliance in light of growing uncertainties in regional geopolitics.

US-ROK Steady

On other alliance-related matters, 68 percent of respondents stated that they believed “engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States,” in comparison to the 7 percent who said that they did “not believe that engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States.”

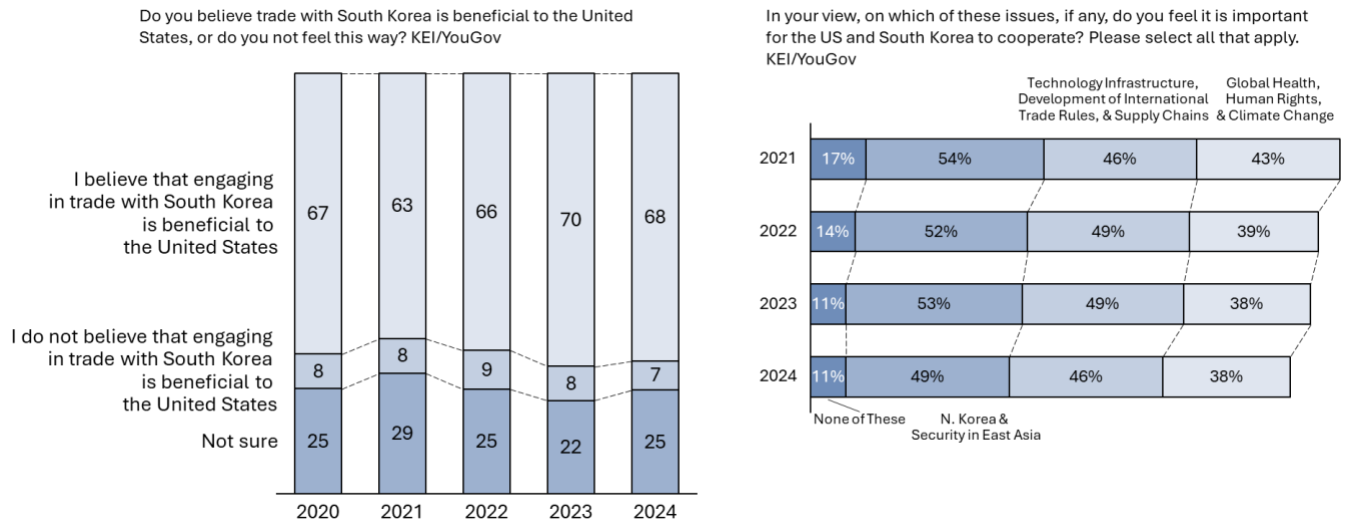


Figure 9. Americans see trade with South Korea as beneficial to the United States.

When asked to select the most important issues for cooperation between the two countries, the two leading sets of issues were regional security matters (49 percent) and technology and economy (46 percent). Issues linked to the non-traditional security domain, such as global health, human rights, and climate change, were considered by respondents as less important (38 percent).

North Korean Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance

An area of cooperation between the United States and South Korea that has been emphasized under the Yoon Suk-yeol administration is the issue of North Korean human rights. When asked, “How important is it that the United States pushes for human rights improvements in North Korea,” 85 percent responded that it is important to do so. This result has not changed since KEI/YouGov first polled this data in 2020. However, when asked about humanitarian assistance to the North Korean people, only 49 percent of respondents approved—this also has not shown significant change during the last five years.

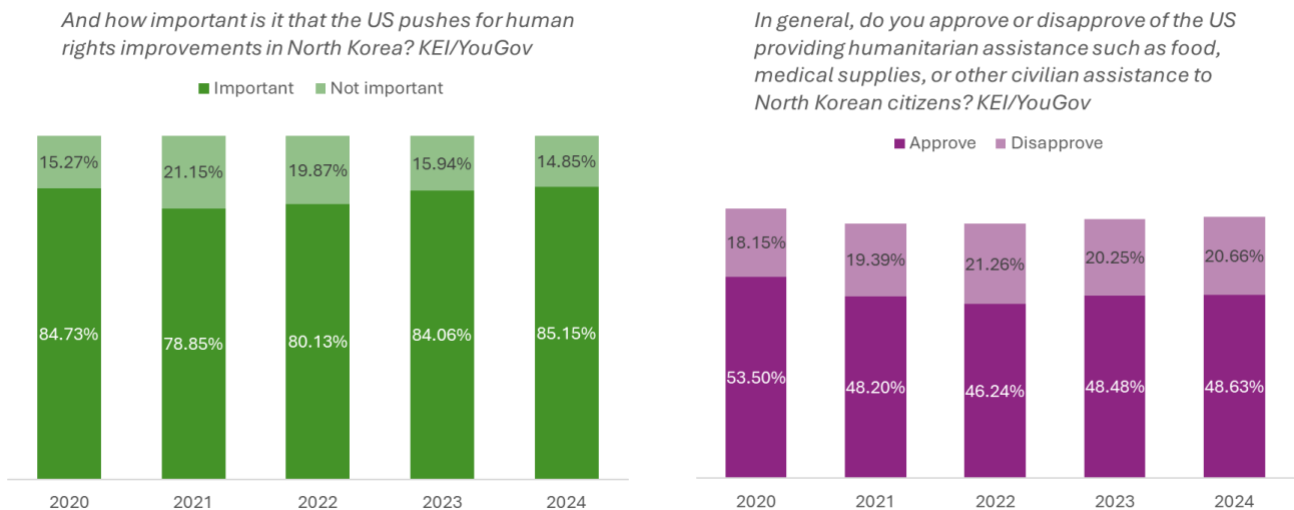
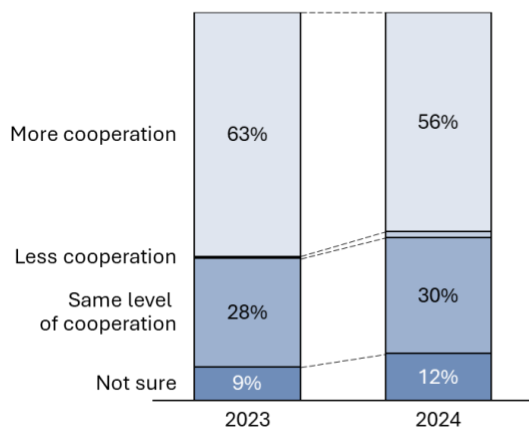


Figure 10. American public attitudes on North Korean human rights and humanitarian assistance have not changed much.

US-Korea-Japan Trilateral Engagement

Among those that selected South Korea and Japan as a “critical partner” (34.6 percent), the KEI/YouGov survey asked whether they would like to see more, similar, or less cooperation between the United States, South Korea, and Japan. A large majority of respondents support more cooperation between the three countries. 57 percent expressed support for more cooperation, and 30 percent stated that they would like to see a similar level of cooperation. Only 2 percent wanted less cooperation in the trilateral relationship. Among those that supported more cooperation, 75 percent expressed a desire for enhanced cooperation in national security, 71 percent in supply chains, 66 percent in the development of international trade rules, 67 percent in technology infrastructure (like 5G), and 54 percent on North Korea. The lowest levels of support were toward global health (51 percent), climate change (48 percent), and global health (45 percent).

If you view both South Korea and Japan as critical partners, how should the United States approach three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan? KEI/YouGov



Dates: 8/22-8/29/2023 (n = 460); 9/3-9/13/2023 (n = 410)

In what areas should the United States, South Korea, and Japan deepen cooperation? Select all that apply. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 245

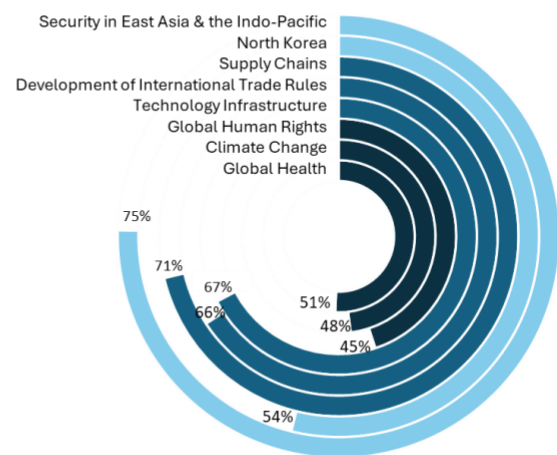


Figure 11. Among those individuals who selected South Korea and Japan as “critical partners,” an overwhelming majority expressed a desire for more or the same level of cooperation between the United States, South Korea, and Japan with an emphasis on economic and regional security.

The Tale of Two Koreas

The Korean Peninsula serves as a story of contrast between the totalitarian North and the democratic South. Therefore, American public attitudes about the two Koreas differ as well. KEI/YouGov polling since 2020 has consistently found that American favorability toward South Korea is equivalent to its unfavorability toward North Korea. Given the nature and focus of the US-South Korea alliance and North Korea’s hostility toward dialogue with the United States, it appears likely that American attitudes toward South and North Korea will continue to be in opposition with one another.

Q: Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of South Korea?

Q: Now thinking about North Korea, overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of North Korea?

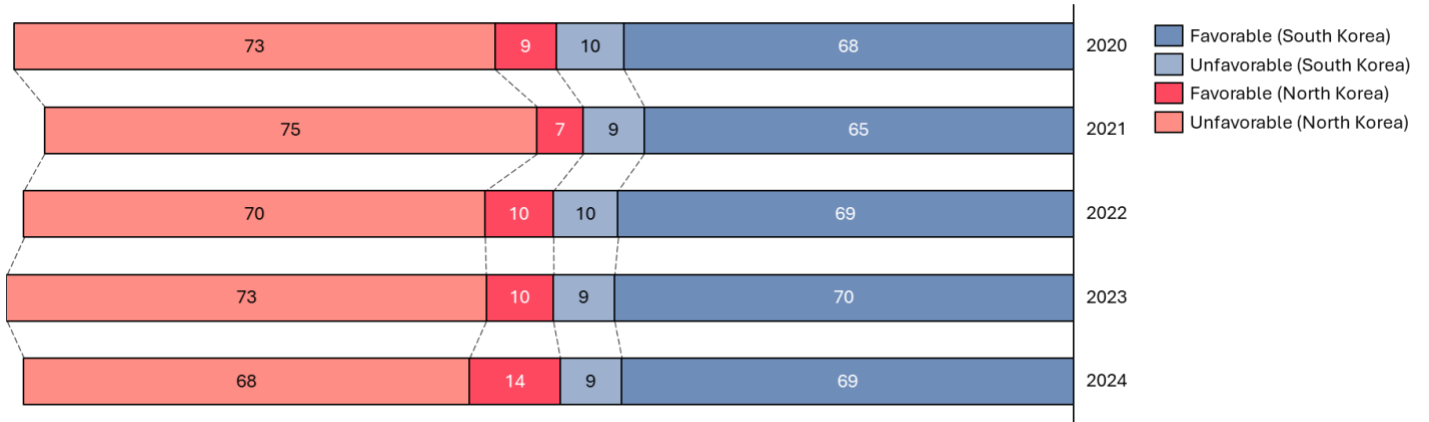


Figure 12. American unfavorability toward North Korea remains equivalent to American favorability toward South Korea.

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION IN THE US ELECTION

This year’s KEI/YouGov poll on American attitudes toward Korea coincides with the run-up to the 2024 US presidential election and an accompanying rise in interest in public polls that address election-related topics. With Joe Biden’s withdrawal from the race and Kamala Harris’ acceptance of the Democratic Party’s nomination in August, there is growing interest in what these developments may imply for East Asia and South Korea.

Electorate for Trump and Harris

Similar to other national polling, the KEI/YouGov poll shows Harris (44 percent) in a virtual tie with Trump (42 percent). Approximately 93 percent of self-identifying Republicans and 39 percent of Independents endorsed Trump, while 88 percent of self-identifying Democrats and 37 percent of Independents supported Harris. Most of the respondents appear to have made up their minds. Only 5 percent of those surveyed have yet to decide whether to endorse one of the two leading candidates, and 7.5 percent of the sample population are either not eligible to vote or will not vote altogether.

*If the election were held today, for which candidate for President of the United States would you vote?
(9/3-9/13/2024, n=1019)*

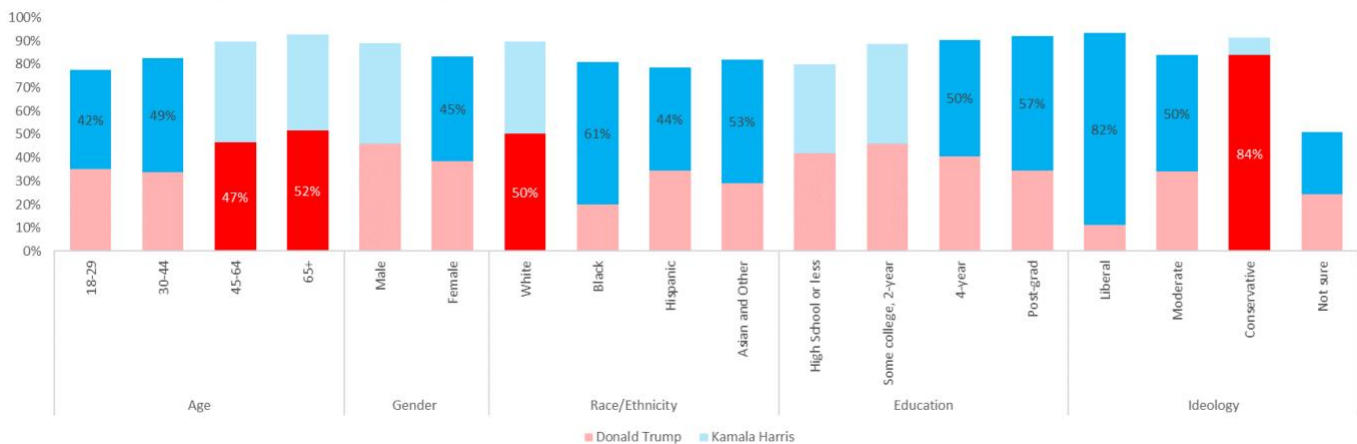


Figure 13. Younger, female, minority, higher educated, and moderate respondents tend to support Harris while older and white respondents lean toward Trump.

The survey also shows that Harris has a strong following among respondents under 44 years of age, who identify as women and/or people of color, and who have higher education levels. Self-identifying ideological moderates also narrowly tended to favor Harris. Trump, on the other hand, was clearly favored by White voters and individuals over the age of 45.

Foreign Policy Challenges

There was relatively little difference in what both candidates' supporters saw as central foreign policy challenges for the United States. China and Russia were leading concerns for voters aligned with either candidate, followed by Iran, North Korea, Israel, and Ukraine. Trump's support base clearly indicated greater concern toward China than individuals aligned with Harris.

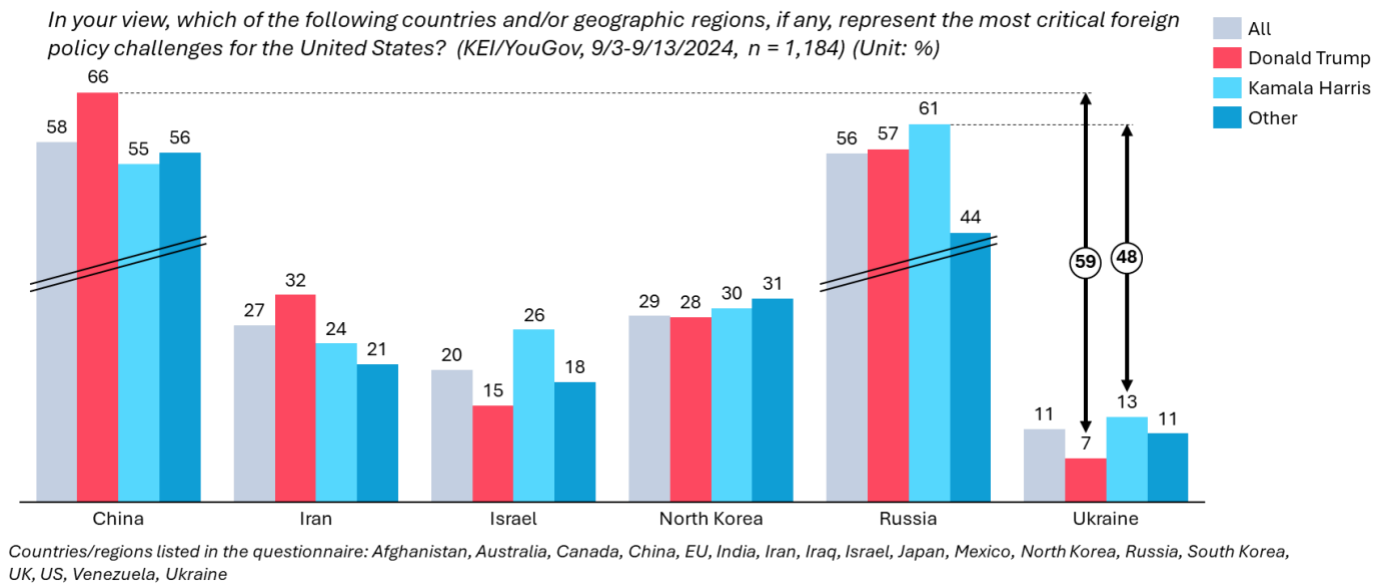


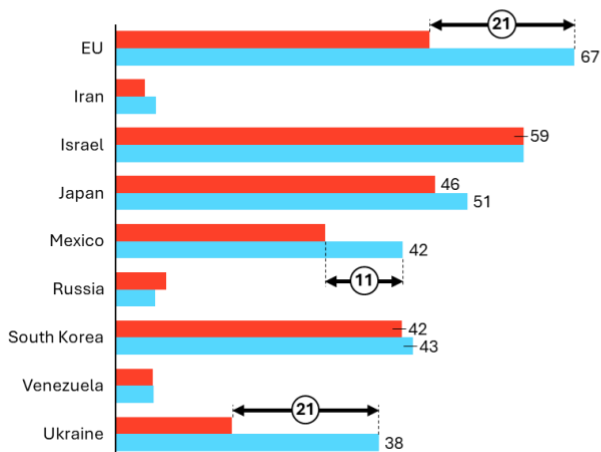
Figure 14. There is little difference in how Trump and Harris supporters see the most critical foreign policy challenges for the United States.

While Ukraine is an area of the world that is more concerning for Americans than countries such as Afghanistan or Venezuela, other geopolitical issues—particularly those linked to the Middle East—may also be gaining more attention. Studies by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Pew Research Center confirm that concerns about Ukraine began to wane as early as August 2022.⁹ The KEI/YouGov survey shows that there may be some partisan differences regarding Ukraine, with Trump supporters expressing less concern about this issue than Harris supporters. The KEI/YouGov survey also suggests that the respondents link Russia to the Ukraine issue. For instance, past KEI/YouGov annual data shows that the number of people who saw Russia as a foreign policy challenge increased from 47 percent in 2021 to 59 percent in 2022—the year of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Partners or Adversaries?

As for perceptions regarding potential partners or adversaries, the 2024 KEI/YouGov survey did not show major partisan differences in views toward most countries. However, there were some notable differences in how Trump supporters saw European countries or countries such as Mexico and Ukraine. When asked to “select the countries that [the respondents] feel are critical partners of the United States,” only 46 percent of Trump supporters chose the European Union compared to 67 percent of Harris supporters. Similarly, 17 percent of Trump supporters saw Ukraine as a “critical partner” compared to 38 percent of Harris supporters. Finally, 31 percent of Trump supporters named Mexico as an important partner compared to 42 percent of Harris supporters. This is consistent with reports that show Republicans—and Trump-aligned Republicans in particular—tend to associate Mexico with immigration and drug cartel-related issues.¹⁰

Please select the ones that you feel are critical partners of the United States (KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184) (Unit %)



Please select the ones that you feel are adversaries of the United States (KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184) (Unit: %)

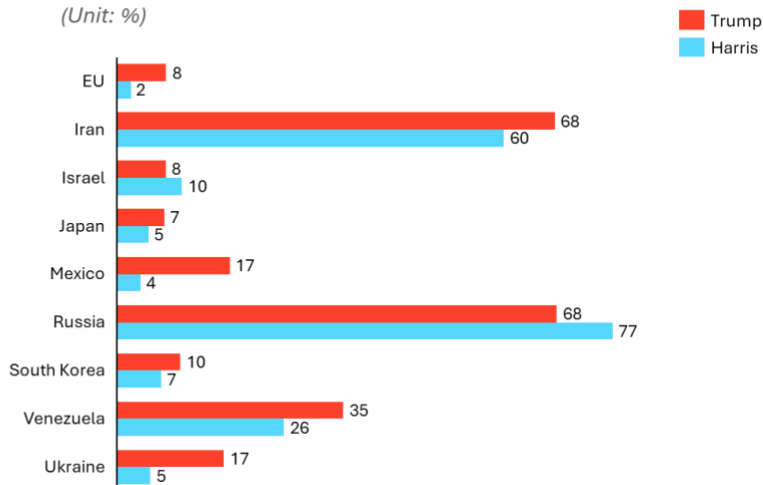


Figure 15. However, Trump supporters tend to downplay the importance of traditional partners like the EU, Mexico, and Ukraine.

To the extent that these opinions mirror the foreign policy priorities of the Harris and Trump campaigns, differences between the two sides on issues such as ending the Ukraine conflict, border security, and transatlantic security cooperation are meaningful as we look to November.¹¹

Perspectives on Policy Priorities in East Asia

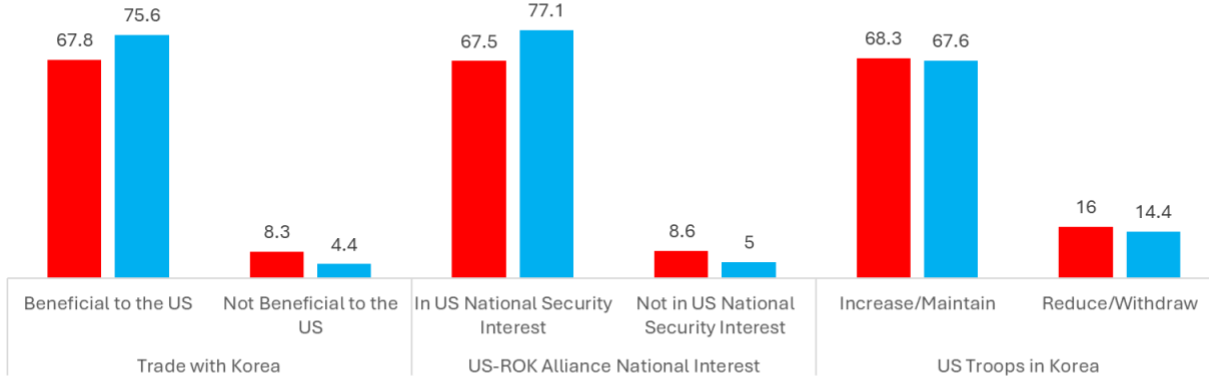
Americans aligned with Trump appear to have a different approach compared to those aligned with Harris regarding East Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. When asked to choose the most important interest for the United States in East Asia, nearly 42 percent of Trump supporters chose countering China’s rise as the most important priority, while 41 percent of Harris supporters prioritized trade and economy. After these two major priorities, defending US friends and allies came next for both Harris (28.6 percent) and Trump (24.2 percent) supporters.

The US-ROK Alliance Dimension

Regarding the alliance, more than two-thirds of supporters of both candidates agreed that 1) the US-South Korea alliance is in the interest of US national security, 2) US-South Korea trade is beneficial to the United States, and 3) US troops on the Korean Peninsula should be maintained or increased. In short, supporters for both campaigns value the US-South Korea relationship despite other global demands. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs’ 2024 survey also showed bipartisan majorities agreeing that the US relationship with South Korea strengthens US security and that they value having US bases on the Korean Peninsula.¹² One key difference with our data is that Harris supporters were more likely than Trump supporters to view the US-South Korea trade relationship as beneficial (Harris: 75.6 percent; Trump: 67.8 percent) and appreciate the impact of the alliance on US national interests (Harris: 77.1 percent; Trump: 67.5 percent). The fact that there was strong support for increasing or maintaining the US troop presence in South Korea (Harris: 67.6 percent; Trump: 68.3 percent) will be a source of policy continuity regardless of the election result, and this is good news for the alliance.

KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,038, (Unit: %)

■ Trump ■ Harris



- Q: Do you believe trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States, or do you not feel this way?
- Q: Do you believe the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interests of the United States or do you not feel this way?
- Q: The United States currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea. For context/comparison, the United States also has 54,000 troops in Japan and currently has 35,000 troops in Germany. In your opinion, should the United States increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea?

Figure 16. There is some difference in views about the alliance and trade among Harris and Trump supporters. But Americans generally appear to understand the value of this relationship.

One interesting finding is that Trump supporters in the 2024 KEI/YouGov survey appeared to favor a more focused view of alliance cooperation than Harris supporters. On average, 42.8 percent of Trump supporters thought the United States and South Korea should cooperate on technology, developing international trade rules, and supply chains, and 48.7 percent pointed to North Korea and security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific. However, only 26.7 percent supported alliance cooperation on global health and human rights and 17.3 percent on climate change.

Unlike Americans aligned with Trump, those aligned with Harris tended to be more supportive of bilateral cooperation between the United States and South Korea on a wider range of issues. For instance, on matters that both groups thought were equally important, such as security in East Asia (57.8 percent) and North Korea (53.7 percent), Harris supporters tended to favor cooperation by 6 to 8 percentage points more than those supporting Trump. Like Trump supporters, Harris supporters also prioritized technology (52.3 percent), the development of international trade rules (52.8 percent), and supply chains (54.1 percent). But unlike Trump supporters, they were more supportive of cooperation on global human rights (55.6 percent), global health (54 percent), and climate change (56.1 percent).

In your view, on which of these issues, if any, do you feel it is important for the United States and South Korea to cooperate? Please select all that apply. (KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,038)

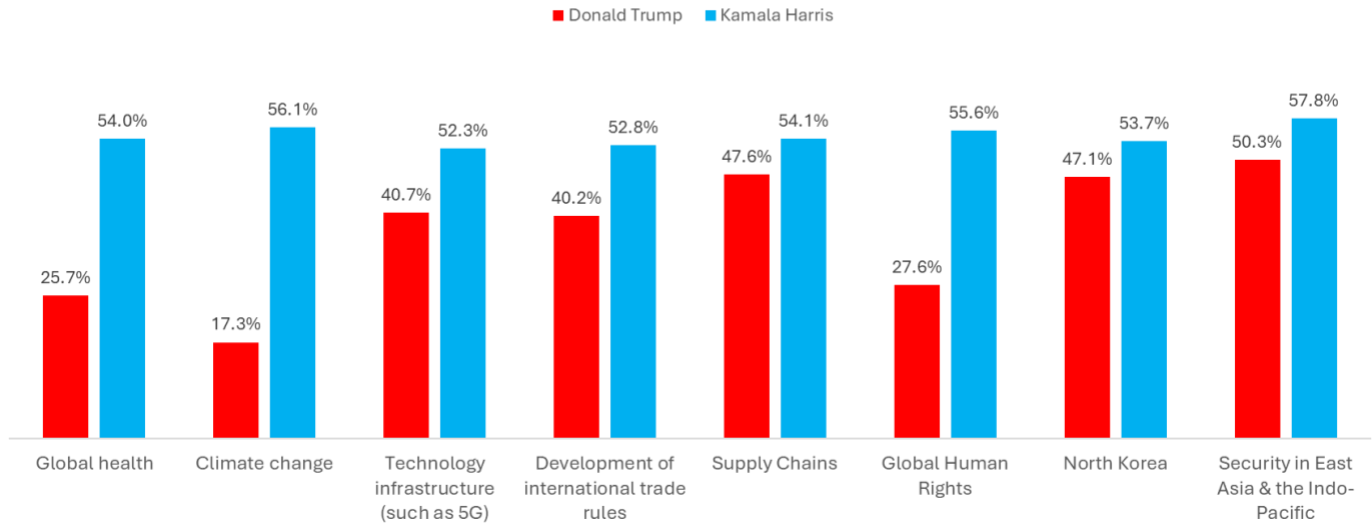


Figure 17. Trump supporters tend to have a more focused view of the alliance than Harris supporters.

A similar ordering and contrast of policy priorities is apparent regarding US-South Korea-Japan trilateral cooperation. Trump supporters are more likely to favor cooperation on technology (65 percent), supply chains (71 percent), the development of international trade rules (54 percent), North Korea (45 percent), and security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific (69 percent). Meanwhile, global health (22 percent), human rights (15 percent), and climate change (11 percent) are at the bottom of this list. Harris supporters favor cooperation in all of these areas at a higher level.

In what areas should the United States, South Korea, and Japan deepen cooperation? Select all that apply. (KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 245) (Unit: %)

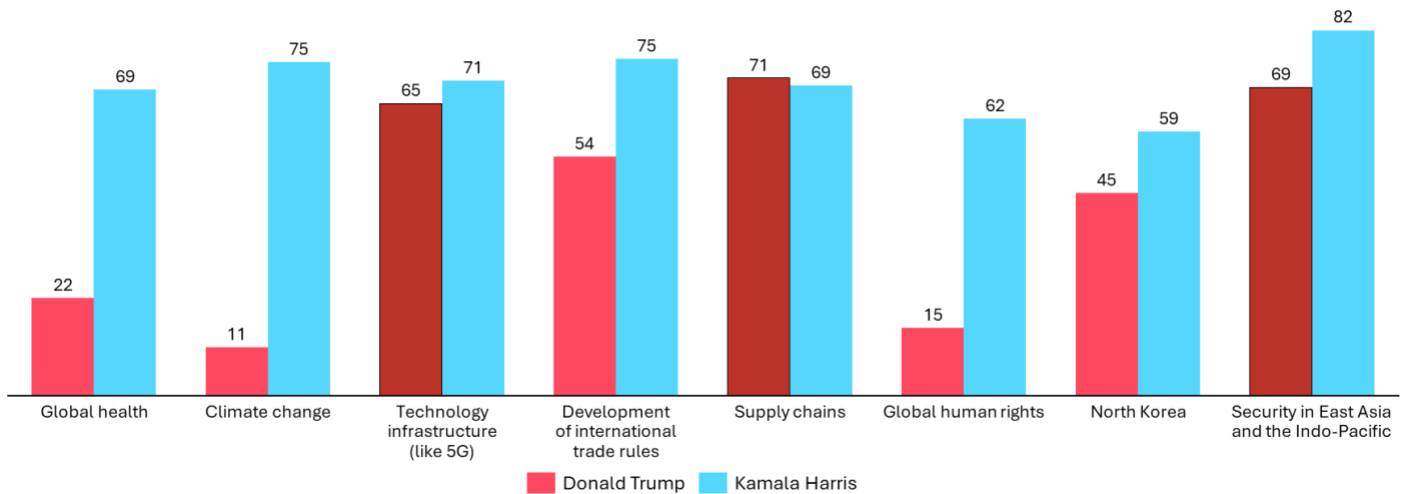
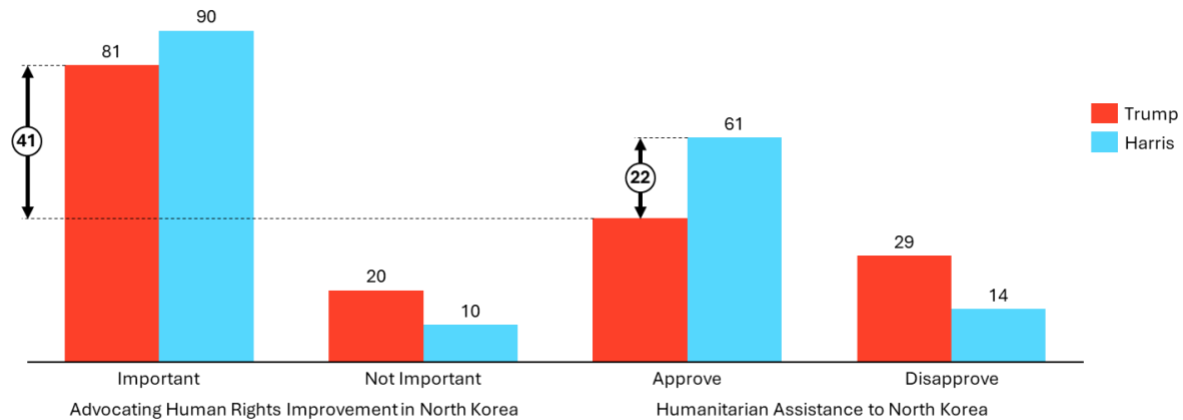


Figure 18. Trump supporters have a more focused view on US-South Korea-Japan cooperation with a preference for greater focus on technology, supply chains, and regional security.

However, there was little difference in the relative policy positions between Harris and Trump supporters on North Korea. Individuals aligned with both Harris (67.5 percent) and Trump (70.6 percent) had an unfavorable view of North Korea. Both sides also agreed (89.8 percent) that North

Korea giving up “its military nuclear capabilities” is important. This consensus suggests that any negotiated compromise involving North Korea under either a Harris or Trump administration may be perceived as a political failure if North Korea does not concede on the nuclear issue.

KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,038 (Unit: %)



- Q: How important is it that the United States pushes for human rights improvements in North Korea?
- Q: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the United States providing humanitarian assistance such as food, medical supplies, or other civilian assistance to North Korean citizens?

Figure 19. There was little difference in attitudes about North Korea, except on the issue of humanitarian assistance. For Trump supporters, allocating humanitarian aid to North Korea is less acceptable than advocating for improved human rights in North Korea.

Another difference between Harris and Trump supporters relates to the topics of North Korean human rights and humanitarian assistance. For Trump supporters, allocating humanitarian aid to North Korea was less acceptable (40 percent) than advocating for improved human rights in North Korea (81 percent). Although there was a similar difference in allocating humanitarian aid for North Korea (61 percent) versus advocating for human rights improvement in North Korea (90 percent) among individuals aligned with Harris, their support for humanitarian assistance was significantly higher than that of Trump supporters.

Conclusion

Every election cycle generates uncertainty about continuity and change in US foreign policy and how a new administration might manage relationships with counterparts on the international stage. Despite an increase in global volatility during 2024, North Korea remains one of the top concerns of respondents in both camps. Moreover, there is bipartisan recognition of and support for the US-South Korea relationship. Concerns related to North Korea and China remain at the forefront of American public opinion. The 2024 KEI/YouGov survey, nonetheless, highlights the contours of a noticeable difference in opinion regarding the overall scope of the US-South Korea military alliance and how far it should extend into and prioritize economic and other areas. Such differing priorities may provide a basis for understanding possible implications for this relationship depending on the outcome of the election.

DEMOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON US FOREIGN POLICY

Several recent analyses on American public opinion have highlighted interesting demographic variations in responses with respect to US foreign policy. For instance, Chicago Council on Global Affairs' research from July 2024 shows that American public attitudes on US global engagement vary depending on age and race.¹³ Another recent study by the Pew Research Center found that younger Americans tend to prioritize climate change, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism.¹⁴ Finally, research from May 2022 by the Pew Research Center shows that gender, age, ideology, and party identification can be linked to certain individual traits that shed light on variations in attitudes on international affairs.¹⁵ In this chapter, we explore the demographic dimension of American public opinion on foreign policy across a wide range of issues in the 2024 KEI/YouGov annual survey.

Generational Differences

The KEI/YouGov survey reveals important generational differences in attitudes about US foreign policy. When asked about the critical foreign policy challenges facing the United States, older respondents (65 years and older) tended to have stronger opinions compared to younger participants (18-29 year olds), especially with respect to traditional rivals like China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. For instance, 77 percent of those 65 and older named China as a critical challenge while only 43 percent of the respondents 18-29 years old agreed. This is a 34-point difference between age groups. On average, Baby Boomers (65 and older) were 22 points more likely than Generation Z (18-29 year olds) to name any of the above four countries as the most critical foreign policy challenge. This was not the case with Israel. Millennials and Generation Z (under 45) were also more likely to identify Israel as a critical foreign policy challenge compared to Baby Boomers (65 and older).

In your view, which of the following countries and/or geographic regions, if any, represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the US? Please select up to three responses. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184 (Unit: %)

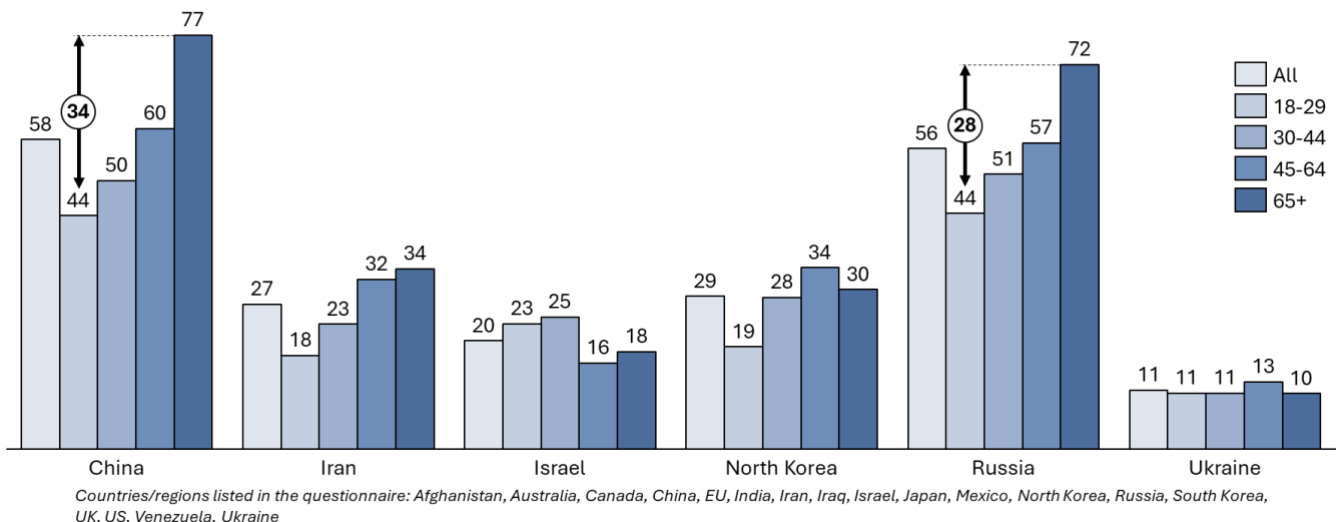
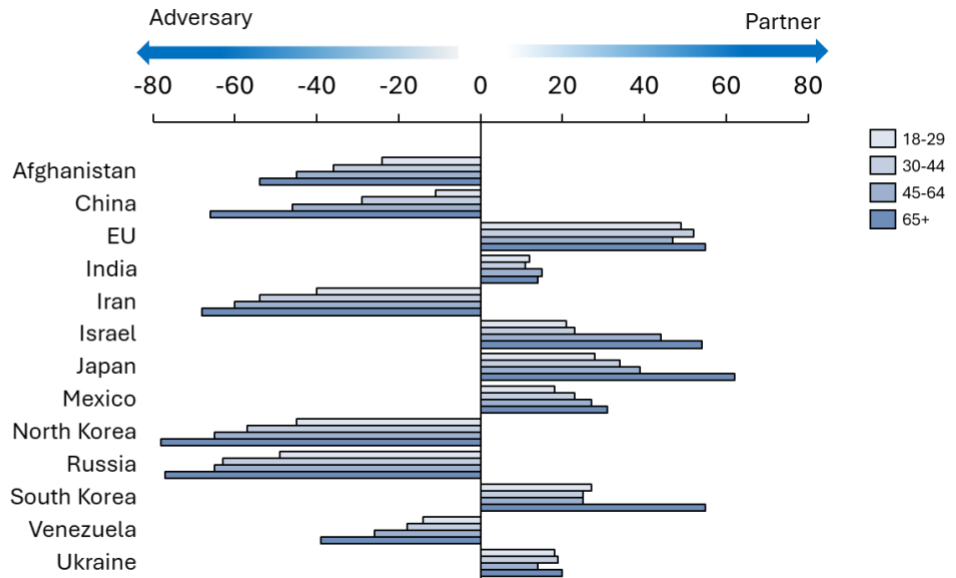


Figure 20. There is a generational difference in responses on the question of the most critical foreign policy challenge facing the United States.

Generational differences also cropped up in views regarding countries that are “critical partners” or “adversaries.” Individuals 65 and older tended to be more consistent in their categorization of a given country as an ally or adversary than other cohorts. Although all age categories generally agreed about a given country’s status as a partner or adversary, the magnitude of agreement was greater among the older cohorts in the KEI/YouGov sample.

Please select the ones that you feel are [critical partners / adversaries] of the United States. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184 (Unit: %)

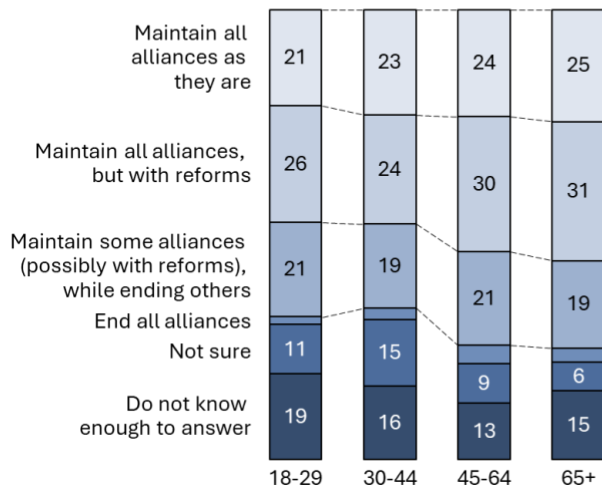


* The value along x-axis represents (% of respondents answered "critical partner") – (% of respondents answered "adversary")

Figure 21. Older Americans tend to have greater consensus on which countries are “critical partners” and “adversaries” of the United States.

On military alliances, 55 percent of individuals aged 45 and over favor maintaining all existing alliances in some form compared to 47 percent of individuals under 45 years old. With respect to USFK, 69 percent of individuals 45 and older are more likely to favor increasing or maintaining the current troop level on the Korean Peninsula, which is 11 points higher than individuals under 45 years old (58 percent). This resonates with a recent study by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs that showed Generation Z and Millennials are “less likely to support the US maintaining long-term military bases” in other nations and “favor a free trade policy that prioritizes lower prices over protecting American jobs.”¹⁶

Which comes closest to how you feel about current US military alliances? KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184



The U.S. currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea. For context/comparison, the U.S. also has 54,000 troops in Japan and currently has 35,000 troops in Germany. In your opinion, should the United States increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea? KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

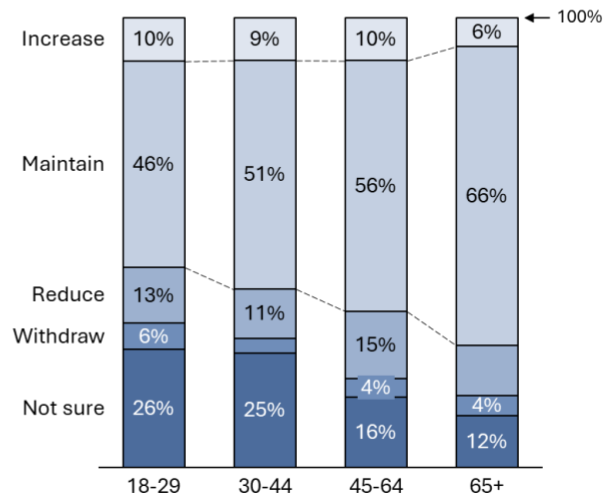
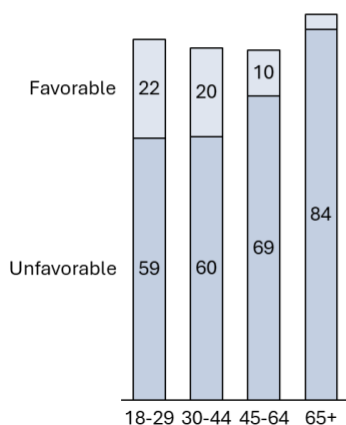


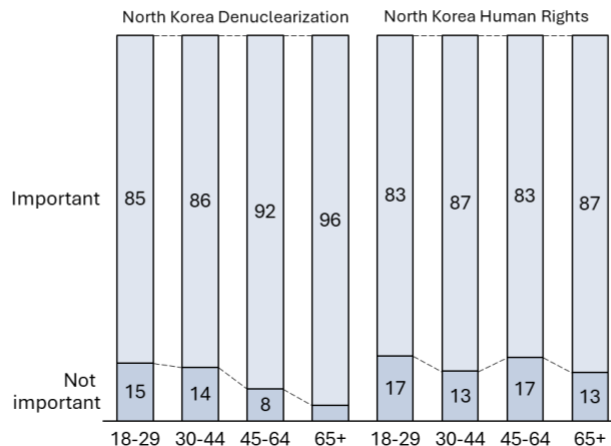
Figure 22. Older Americans tend to favor military alliances more so than younger Americans.

On North Korea, older respondents consistently expressed greater disdain for North Korea and showed more concern about the North Korean nuclear issue and human rights issue than respondents under 45 years olds. Individuals 65 and older also tended to be less approving of humanitarian assistance to North Korea (40 percent) compared to those under 45 year olds (55 percent).

Now thinking about North Korea, overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of North Korea?



Q: In your opinion, how important is it that North Korea give up its military nuclear capabilities?
Q: And how important is it that the US pushes for human rights improvements in North Korea?



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?

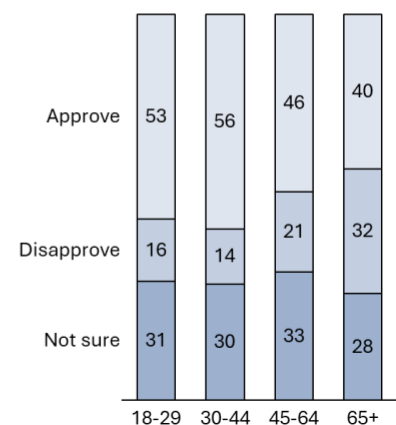


Figure 23. Older Americans tend to have a more unfavorable opinion of North Korea and express greater concern about denuclearization and human rights. Younger Americans are more likely to approve North Korean humanitarian assistance.

Finally, there appears to be a relationship between age, perceptions about the relative status of a given country (i.e., partner/adversary), and support for the maintenance of nuclear capabilities. Among countries that were deemed “critical partners” of the United States (including the United States), there was a positive correlation between age and support for maintaining military nuclear capabilities. Among countries that were considered “adversaries,” there was a negative correlation between age and support for maintaining nuclear capabilities.

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. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

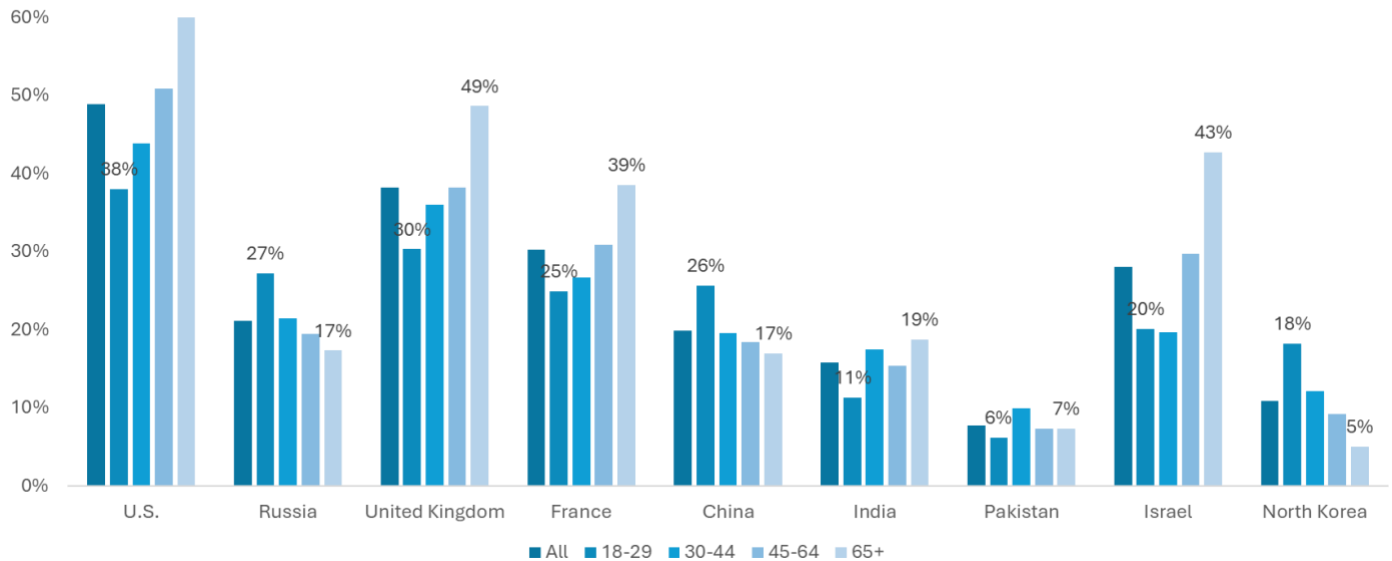


Figure 24. Older Americans tend to be more supportive of countries maintaining their nuclear capability if they are a “critical partner” of the United States. But they are less supportive if the country is an “adversary” of the United States.

There are several possible explanations for this trend. One explanation centers on the relative amount of knowledge that different generations have about international affairs. According to the Pew Research Center’s study from May 2022, older generations tend to have more knowledge about international issues than younger cohorts.¹⁷ The study suggests that people who are more knowledgeable about a given issue tend to have a clearer position. For instance, the Pew Research Center’s data found that people with higher levels of knowledge on international affairs tended to see China and Russia as adversaries. The KEI/YouGov survey also shows that older participants had a greater tendency to see China and Russia as adversaries. Finally, the KEI/YouGov data also shows that the younger cohorts had a greater tendency to be unsure about a given survey issue when the choice was presented to them.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs’ work on this topic also suggests that younger Americans are generally less likely to prefer more active US global engagement and each successive generation of Americans is *less likely* than the preceding generation to support active US engagement around the world.¹⁸ One key factor driving this trend, according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, is the concern about the costs of US global engagement.

Seeming Gender Differences

Aside from age, the 2024 KEI/YouGov survey found noticeable gender differences in attitudes on specific issues. For instance, women were twice as likely as men to answer “not sure” on questions about the relative influence of countries, trade, and US military alliance—this approach to the questions is largely responsible for the observed difference between men and women.

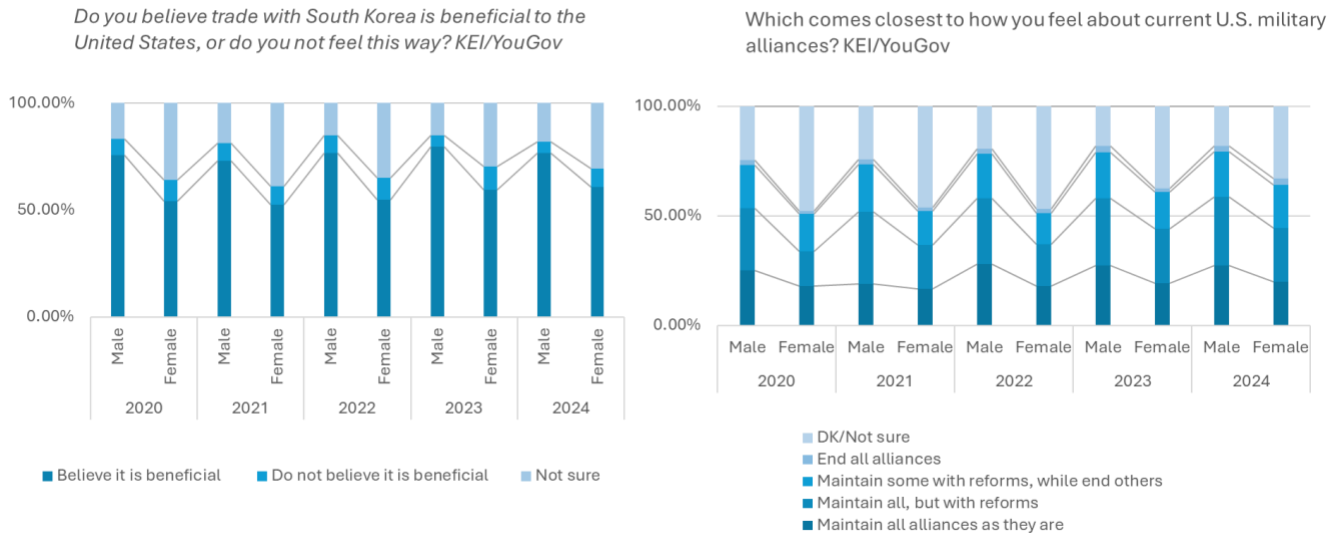


Figure 25. Women are more likely to choose “not sure” on various international affairs-related questions when presented with the option to do so.

On certain issues, such as North Korean humanitarian assistance, where the gender gap in the percentage of “not sure” answers was less pronounced, the male and female responses were similar. For instance, 48-49 percent of men and women answered that they would approve of sending humanitarian aid to North Korean citizens. In cases where the respondents were *not* presented with a “not sure” option and were forced to respond, the gender differences were not significant. For instance, when asked about the importance of North Korea giving up its military nuclear capabilities,” 90-91 percent of men and women both answered that it was important or very important. On the question about the importance of North Korean human rights, 83 percent of men and 87 percent of women agreed that this was an important or very important issue.

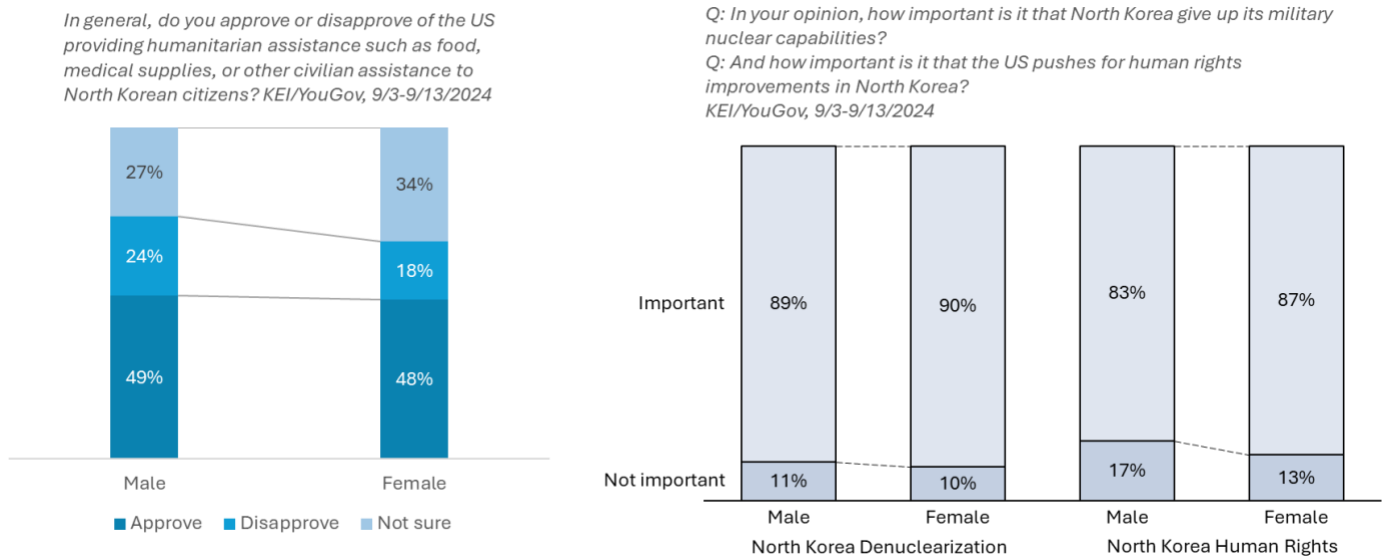


Figure 26. The gender difference is not significant on issues where the difference in “not sure” is within the margin of error or where “not sure” is not one of the response options.

Together, these findings are consistent with a series of other studies, which indicate that variations in attitudes about international affairs across genders (unlike generations) have more to do with differences in the respondents’ willingness to answer the question or guess than the level of knowledge that they have.¹⁹

Racial and Ethnic Differences

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs' latest work on the racial divide in American attitudes on international affairs suggests that Black Americans tend to be more skeptical about the notion of US exceptionalism and prefer less US global engagement, while Hispanic Americans are more concerned about the economic implications of US global engagement.²⁰ The same study highlights cross-cutting divisions among White Americans, who favor a more open stance on immigration and more US global engagement versus those who prefer more restrictive immigration and isolationism. Finally, Asian Americans tend to favor less global intervention, except in matters involving regional security in East Asia.

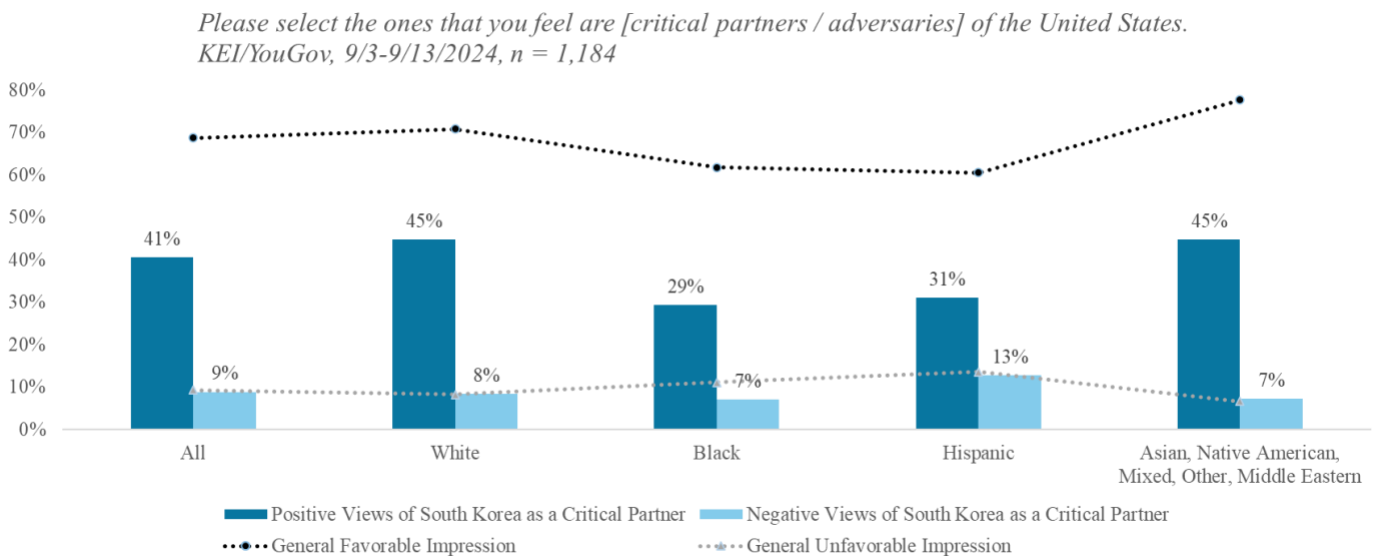


Figure 27. Perceptions about South Korea as a “critical partner” vary according to race/ethnic categories.

The 2024 KEI/YouGov survey shows notable variations in how various race/ethnic groups categorized different countries as either “critical partners” or “adversaries.” When asked about the status of South Korea as either a “critical partner” or “adversary,” 41 percent of White Americans and 45 percent of Asian/Other participants identify South Korea as a critical partner. When framed more generally as an individual’s impression of South Korea, the majority of White (71 percent), Black (62 percent), Hispanic (61 percent), and Asian/Other (78 percent) participants held a favorable view of South Korea.

In your view, on which of these issues, if any, do you feel it is important for the US and South Korea to cooperate? Please select all that apply. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

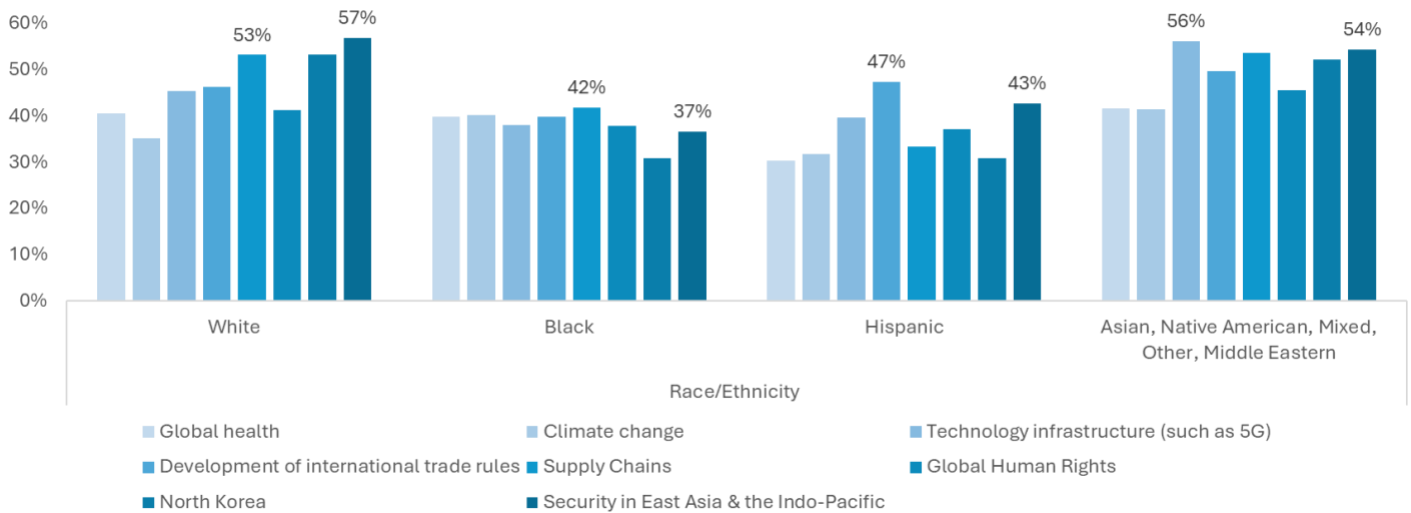


Figure 28. In general, White, Hispanic, and Asian/Other Americans appear to prioritize regional security and economic issues when it comes to bilateral cooperation between the United States and South Korea, while Black Americans emphasize both economic issues and non-traditional security issues.

Interesting variations also surfaced on the issue of bilateral US-South Korea cooperation and trilateral US-South Korea-Japan cooperation. While 57 percent of White respondents highlighted “security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific” as the most important issue, other groups focused on issues linked to the economy or technology. For instance, 42 percent of Black respondents highlighted “supply chains” as the most important issue and 47 percent of Hispanic respondents focused on “the development of international trade rules.” 56 percent of Asian/Other respondents emphasized “technology infrastructure” as the most important issue.

In what areas should the United States, South Korea, and Japan deepen cooperation? Select all that apply. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 245

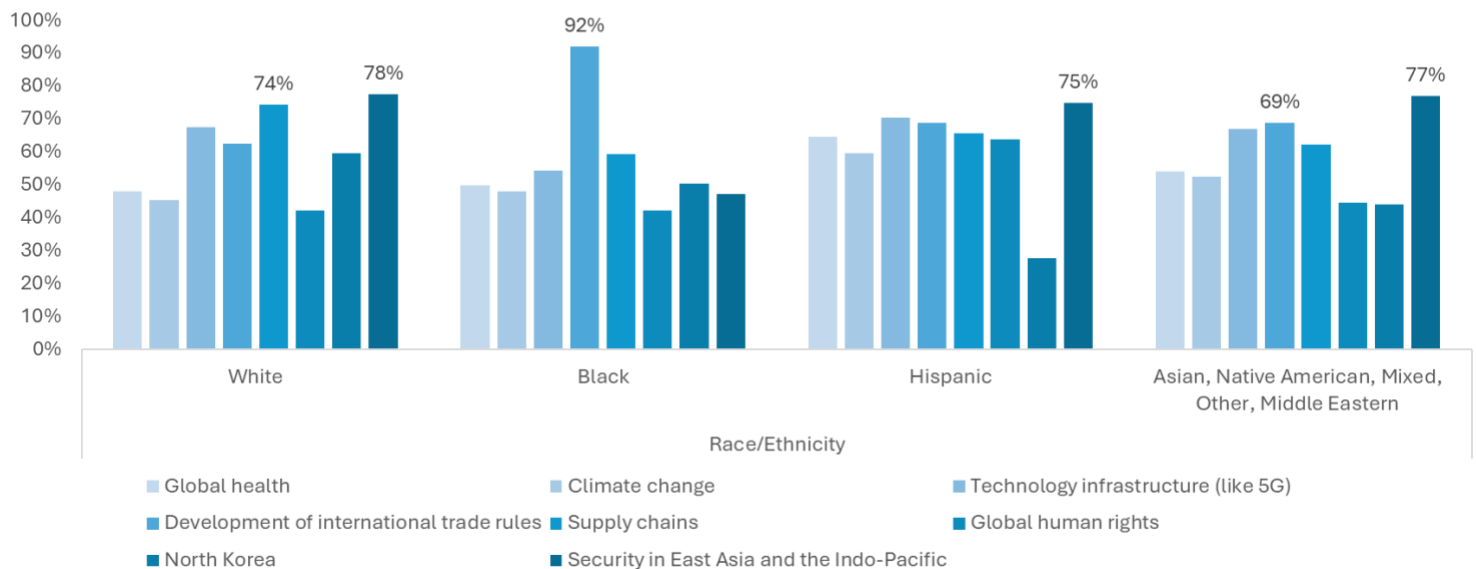


Figure 29. When it comes to US-South Korea-Japan trilateral cooperation, White, Hispanic, and Asian/Other Americans tend to focus more on economic and regional security challenges, while Black Americans are more interested in economic and non-traditional security agendas.

With respect to trilateral cooperation, White, Hispanic, and Asian/Other participants rated “security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific” as the top area of deepening trilateral cooperation. Black Americans appear to prioritize trade, with an overwhelming percentage (92 percent) stating that the United States, South Korea, and Japan should deepen cooperation on the development of international trade rules.

One common trend in both bilateral and trilateral cooperation is that White, Hispanic, and Asian/Other participants place an emphasis on both economic and regional security issues. Black Americans appear to be more interested in both economic and non-traditional security agenda, such as global health, climate change, and human rights.

Ideological Differences

Given that support for the two leading candidates in this year’s election was along partisan lines (about 90 percent of Democrats support Harris and 90 percent of Republicans support Trump), the role of partisanship in shaping public attitudes on US foreign policy has already been explored above. Ideological differences, however, are a separate matter.

With respect to categorizing countries as either partners or adversaries, liberal respondents have a tendency to categorize nation-states as partners, except in the case of Israel and Russia, which are involved in conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In all other cases, liberals and moderates tend to have a more favorable view of the country concerned than conservatives.

*Please select the ones that you feel are [critical partners / adversaries] of the United States.
KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184*

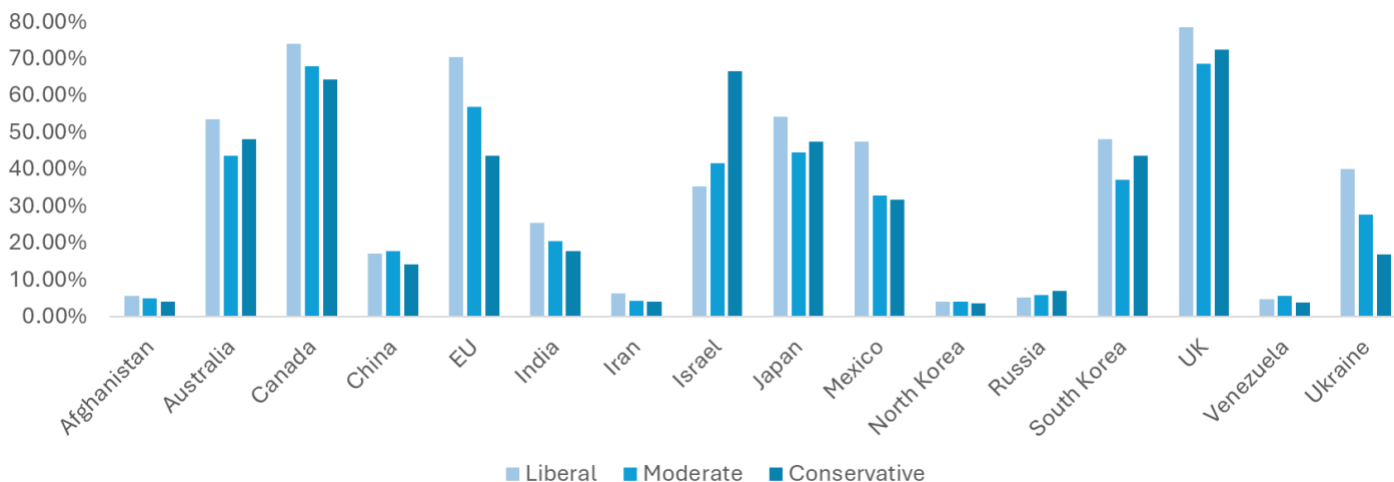


Figure 30. Self-identifying liberals tend to see more countries as partners than adversaries.

On the question of nuclear weapons, liberals and moderates are less supportive (than conservatives) of states maintaining this capability. They are also more likely than conservatives to state that no country should possess a nuclear capability. This is not to suggest that liberals are completely against the idea of nuclear possession but that they are less supportive of this idea than conservatives.

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. KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

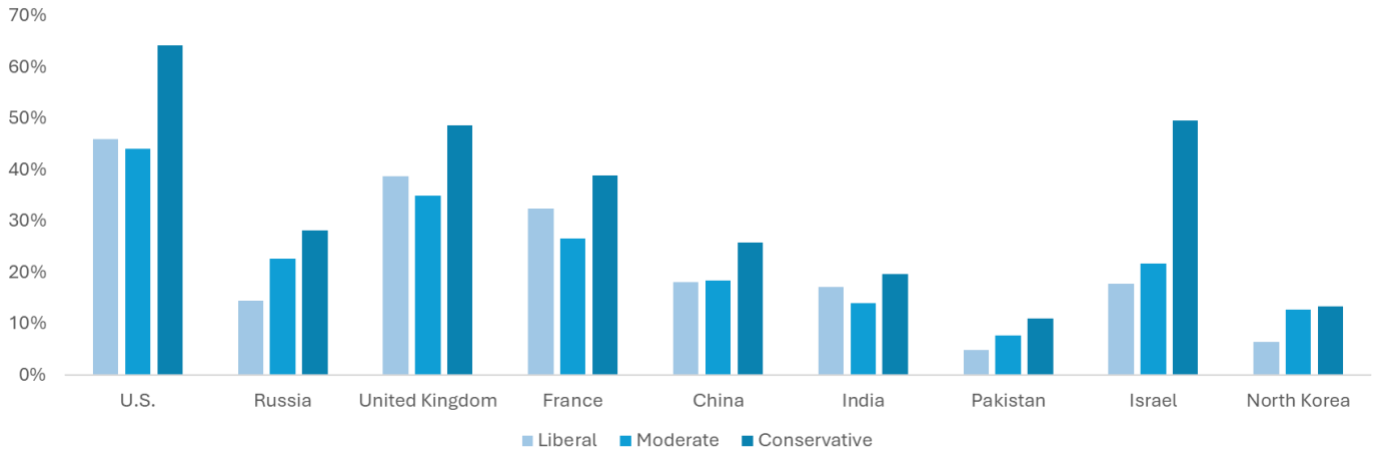
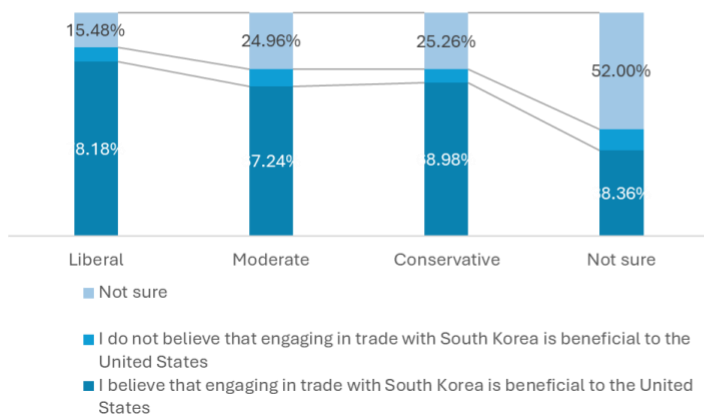


Figure 31. Ideological conservatives are more supportive of nuclear-weapon states maintaining their military nuclear capabilities.

When asked about their thoughts on current US military alliances, liberals are more likely to align with the position of maintaining all alliances without any change, while moderates and conservatives favor making some changes to the existing arrangements.

On the question of trade between the United States and South Korea, liberals (78 percent) are 9-11 points more likely than moderates (67 percent) or conservatives (69 percent) to believe that trade with South Korea is beneficial for the United States.

Do you believe trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States, or do you not feel this way? KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184



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? KEI/YouGov, 9/3-9/13/2024, n = 1,184

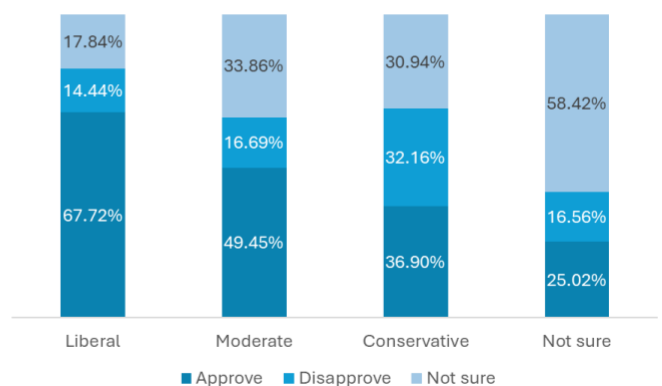


Figure 32. Liberals are more supportive of free trade with South Korea and are more likely to approve humanitarian aid to North Korean citizens.

Finally, on the issue of North Korean humanitarian assistance, liberals (68 percent) are more likely than conservatives (37 percent) or moderates (49 percent) to approve of sending goods, medical supplies, or other civilian assistance to North Korea.

In short, liberals appear more willing to engage internationally and tend to look for possible partnerships and cooperation rather than conflict when it comes to international affairs.

Discussion

This analysis confirms that the American public contains diverse points of view on international affairs and foreign policy. These views are more or less discernible but nonetheless significant. The analysis in this part of the public opinion series shows that the 2024 KEI/YouGov data confirms much-established research on this topic. Not only does this study suggest some interesting implications for the politics of foreign policymaking, but it also suggests that American public opinion on critical issues shaping US foreign policy will likely undergo shifts in response to corresponding changes in the demographic and ideological contours of the country.

METHODOLOGY

KEI commissioned YouGov to survey 1,795 respondents, including a main sample of 1,229 US respondents and an oversample of 566 respondents—184 of whom were eligible to complete the survey based on their interest in international news. The sample was drawn from the YouGov panel in the United States (6.6 million) from September 3 to 13, 2024.

When the exact characteristics of a group are not known, as in the case of the oversample or the US adults interested in international news, YouGov employs a census click methodology. The census click approach ensures that the sample is representative of a known population (US adults). Respondents are then screened for eligibility within the survey, and only members of the target population qualify to complete the survey. Since the sample is representative of US adults as a whole through sampling and weighting, by extension, the subgroup is also representative of the target population.

The main sample (1,229 respondents) was reduced to 1,000 using sample matching, while the oversample of 566 ineligible and eligible respondents was not reduced. Sample matching is a method in which the respondents were matched to a representative sampling frame based on age, education, gender, and race, using data from the American Community Survey, public voter records, 2020 Current Population Survey, 2020 National Election Pool exit poll, and 2020 CES surveys. Both the oversample and main sample were then weighted separately using propensity scores and post-stratification on factors like demographics, the 2020 presidential vote choice, home ownership, and, for the oversample, political ideology. The weighted oversample was then subset on 184 of 566 respondents meeting the eligibility criteria for the oversample (interest in international news). The main and oversample datasets were then combined, and the weights were post-stratified to reduce the oversample proportion to the true proportion of international news interested respondents among US adults. The margin of error in the dataset is +/- 3.22% at the 95% confidence level.

This report features data collected using the above method from the following years:

2020

Dates: August 26-31, 2020

Weighted Sample Size: 1,064

Margin of Error: +/- 2.95 percent at 95 percent Confidence Interval (CI)

Interview Method: Web Only (English)

Organization: YouGov

2021

Dates: August 30 – September 7, 2021

Weighted Sample Size: 1,122

Margin of Error: +/- 3.25 percent at 95 percent CI

Interview Method: Web Only (English)

Organization: YouGov

2022

Dates: September 1-12, 2022
Weighted Sample Size: 1,172
Margin of Error: +/- 3.5 percent at 95 percent CI
Interview Method: Web Only (English)
Organization: YouGov

2023

Dates: August 22-29, 2023
Weighted Sample Size: 1,172
Margin of Error: +/- 3.5 percent at 95 percent CI
Interview Method: Web Only (English)
Organization: YouGov

2024

Dates: September 3-13, 2023
Weighted Sample Size: 1,184
Margin of Error: +/-3.22 percent at 95 percent CI
Interview Method: Web Only (English)
Organization: YouGov

APPENDIX

KEI/YouGov 2024 Survey Questionnaire (September 3-13, 2024)

Q1. If the election were held today, for which candidate for President of the United States would you vote?

Presidential Vote 2024	All
Donald Trump	42%
Kamala Harris	44%
Other	5%
I am eligible to vote but would not	7%
I am not eligible to vote	2%

Q2. How influential do you think the following country or region is in the world?

Country/Region level of influence: Afghanistan	All
Very influential	4%
Fairly influential	16%
Just slightly influential	28%
Not at all influential	40%
Not sure	12%

Country/Region level of influence: Australia	All
Very influential	7%
Fairly influential	28%
Just slightly influential	39%
Not at all influential	15%
Not sure	11%

Country/Region level of influence: Canada	All
Very influential	13%
Fairly influential	30%
Just slightly influential	35%
Not at all influential	14%
Not sure	8%

Country/Region level of influence: China	All
Very influential	48%
Fairly influential	30%
Just slightly influential	9%
Not at all influential	6%
Not sure	7%

Country/Region level of influence: European Union	All
Very influential	31%
Fairly influential	34%
Just slightly influential	15%
Not at all influential	7%
Not sure	12%

Country/Region level of influence: India	All
Very influential	10%
Fairly influential	33%
Just slightly influential	33%
Not at all influential	13%
Not sure	11%

Country/Region level of influence: Iran	All
Very influential	10%
Fairly influential	28%
Just slightly influential	27%
Not at all influential	24%
Not sure	11%

Country/Region level of influence: Israel	All
Very influential	25%
Fairly influential	36%
Just slightly influential	21%
Not at all influential	9%
Not sure	10%

Country/Region level of influence: Japan	All
Very influential	21%
Fairly influential	42%
Just slightly influential	22%
Not at all influential	6%
Not sure	9%

Country/Region level of influence: Mexico	All
Very influential	6%
Fairly influential	24%
Just slightly influential	39%
Not at all influential	22%
Not sure	9%

Country/Region level of influence: North Korea	All
Very influential	9%
Fairly influential	23%
Just slightly influential	25%
Not at all influential	32%
Not sure	10%

Country/Region level of influence: Russia	All
Very influential	31%
Fairly influential	36%
Just slightly influential	13%
Not at all influential	11%
Not sure	8%

Country/Region level of influence: South Korea	All
Very influential	9%
Fairly influential	33%
Just slightly influential	33%
Not at all influential	14%
Not sure	11%

Country/Region level of influence: United Kingdom	All
Very influential	28%
Fairly influential	41%
Just slightly influential	18%
Not at all influential	5%
Not sure	8%

Country/Region level of influence: United States	All
Very influential	72%
Fairly influential	19%
Just slightly influential	4%
Not at all influential	2%

Not sure	4%
Country/Region level of influence: Venezuela	All
Very influential	3%
Fairly influential	14%
Just slightly influential	33%
Not at all influential	37%
Not sure	14%

Country/Region level of influence: Ukraine	All
Very influential	9%
Fairly influential	26%
Just slightly influential	35%
Not at all influential	20%
Not sure	10%

Q3. The United Nations Security Council currently has five permanent members that have veto power: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the People's Republic of China. If the Security Council were to add two additional permanent members, which two countries should it add? Select up to two.

UN Security Council Add	All
Germany	40%
Japan	46%
South Africa	11%
South Korea	17%
Brazil	11%
Indonesia	3%
India	20%
Other	5%
Not sure	23%

Q4. To the best of your knowledge, with which of the following countries/regions do you believe the US has a standing free trade agreement?

Knowledge of countries with which US has standing free trade agreement	All
Afghanistan	2%
Australia	28%
Canada	62%
China	26%
European Union	33%
India	13%
Iran	1%
Israel	27%

Japan	29%
Mexico	49%
North Korea	2%
Russia	4%
South Korea	23%
United Kingdom	50%
Venezuela	3%
Ukraine	11%
Not sure	2%

Q5. 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?

Opinion on countries with which US should cooperate with on cyber issues	All
Afghanistan	6%
Australia	34%
Canada	44%
China	25%
European Union	40%
India	23%
Iran	7%
Israel	31%
Japan	46%
Mexico	21%
North Korea	9%
Russia	18%
South Korea	31%
United Kingdom	52%
Venezuela	6%
None of the above	15%
Ukraine	17%

Q6. Changing topics, which, if any, of the following brands or items have you heard of?

Brands/Items heard of	All
Sony	87%
Samsung	92%
Toshiba	77%
LG	87%
Panasonic	81%
Philips	77%
Hyundai	82%
Honda	87%
Toyota	89%
Kia	83%

Volkswagen	82%
SK Hynix	4%
Intel	77%
Nvidia	42%
Microsoft	88%
Apple	88%
Micron	21%
AMD	34%
Kakao	4%
WhatsApp	82%
WeChat	27%
Kimchi	56%
Marmite	23%
Dim Sum	45%
Lo mein	62%
Sauerkraut	67%
Bibimbap	21%
None of the above	4%

Q7. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand Sony originates or comes from?

Sony	All
Japan	58%
Germany	0%
South Korea	4%
China	11%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	9%
Not sure where brand is from	17%

Q8. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand Samsung originates or comes from?

Samsung	All
Japan	25%
Germany	1%
South Korea	38%
China	15%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	5%
Not sure where brand is from	16%

Q9. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand Toshiba originates or comes from?

Toshiba	All
Japan	68%
Germany	1%

South Korea	5%
China	10%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	1%
Not sure where brand is from	16%

Q10. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand LG originates or comes from?

LG	All
Japan	9%
Germany	3%
South Korea	31%
China	10%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	15%
Not sure where brand is from	31%

Q11. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand Panasonic originates or comes from?

Panasonic	All
Japan	41%
Germany	2%
South Korea	5%
China	8%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	14%
Not sure where brand is from	29%

Q12. From which country do you think the home electronics/appliances brand Philips originates or comes from?

Philips	All
Japan	5%
Germany	9%
South Korea	2%
China	4%
United Kingdom	7%
United States	38%
Not sure where brand is from	35%

Q13. From which country do you think the car brand Hyundai originates or comes from?

Hyundai	All
Japan	19%
Germany	2%
South Korea	49%
China	9%

United Kingdom	0%
United States	2%
Not sure where brand is from	18%

Q14. From which country do you think the car brand Honda originates or comes from?

Honda	All
Japan	61%
Germany	4%
South Korea	4%
China	7%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	4%
Not sure where brand is from	19%

Q15. From which country do you think the car brand Toyota originates or comes from?

Toyota	All
Japan	71%
Germany	2%
South Korea	3%
China	9%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	4%
Not sure where brand is from	12%

Q16. From which country do you think the car brand Kia originates or comes from?

Kia	All
Japan	11%
Germany	4%
South Korea	52%
China	7%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	4%
Not sure where brand is from	22%

Q17. From which country do you think the car brand Volkswagen originates or comes from?

Volkswagen	All
Japan	1%
Germany	83%
South Korea	1%
China	1%
United Kingdom	2%
United States	4%
Not sure where brand is from	10%

Q18. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand SK Hynix originates or comes from?

SK Hynix	All
Japan	6%
Germany	3%
South Korea	45%
China	12%
United Kingdom	4%
United States	2%
Not sure where brand is from	28%

Q19. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand Intel originates or comes from?

Intel	All
Japan	2%
Germany	1%
South Korea	1%
China	3%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	67%
Not sure where brand is from	24%

Q20. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand Nvidia originates or comes from?

Nvidia	All
Japan	4%
Germany	2%
South Korea	5%
China	5%
United Kingdom	2%
United States	49%
Not sure where brand is from	34%

Q21. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand Microsoft originates or comes from?

Microsoft	All
Japan	1%
Germany	0%
South Korea	1%
China	3%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	84%

Not sure where brand is from | 10%

Q22. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand Apple originates or comes from?

Apple	All
Japan	3%
Germany	0%
South Korea	0%
China	5%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	82%
Not sure where brand is from	8%

Q23. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand Micron originates or comes from?

Micron	All
Japan	4%
Germany	1%
South Korea	3%
China	4%
United Kingdom	2%
United States	40%
Not sure where brand is from	47%

Q24. From which country do you think the computer/information technology brand AMD originates or comes from?

AMD	All
Japan	1%
Germany	1%
South Korea	3%
China	2%
United Kingdom	2%
United States	56%
Not sure where brand is from	36%

Q25. From which country do you think the messaging/social media brand Kakao originates or comes from?

Kakao	All
Japan	8%
Germany	1%
South Korea	54%
China	9%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	8%

Not sure where brand is from | 20%

Q26. From which country do you think the messaging/social media brand WhatsApp originates or comes from?

WhatsApp	All
Japan	1%
Germany	0%
South Korea	1%
China	8%
United Kingdom	3%
United States	52%
Not sure where brand is from	36%

Q27. From which country do you think the messaging/social media brand WeChat originates or comes from?

WeChat	All
Japan	1%
Germany	0%
South Korea	4%
China	43%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	18%
Not sure where brand is from	33%

Q28. From which country do you think Kimchi originates or comes from?

Kimchi	All
Japan	19%
Germany	0%
South Korea	63%
China	8%
United Kingdom	1%
United States	0%
Not sure where brand is from	9%

Q29. From which country do you think Marmite originates or comes from?

Marmite	All
Japan	0%
Germany	4%
South Korea	2%
China	4%
United Kingdom	66%
United States	1%
Not sure where brand is from	24%

Q30. From which country do you think Dim Sum originates or comes from?

Dim Sum	All
Japan	11%
Germany	0%
South Korea	19%
China	61%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	0%
Not sure where brand is from	9%

Q31. From which country do you think Lo mein originates or comes from?

Lo mein	All
Japan	9%
Germany	0%
South Korea	3%
China	79%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	2%
Not sure where brand is from	7%

Q32. From which country do you think Sauerkraut originates or comes from?

Sauerkraut	All
Japan	1%
Germany	87%
South Korea	1%
China	2%
United Kingdom	0%
United States	3%
Not sure where brand is from	6%

Q33. From which country do you think Bibimbap originates or comes from?

Bibimbap	All
Japan	7%
Germany	0%
South Korea	76%
China	3%
United Kingdom	2%
United States	0%
Not sure where brand is from	12%

Q34. Ranked #1 Summary Table: In your view, which of the following countries and/or geographic regions, if any, represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the US? Please select up to three responses.

Q8N_Total_Ranked_1	All
---------------------------	-----

Afghanistan	2%
Australia	1%
Canada	2%
China	30%
European Union	2%
India	0%
Iran	4%
Iraq	0%
Israel	9%
Japan	2%
Mexico	2%
North Korea	5%
Russia	20%
South Korea	1%
United Kingdom	3%
United States	0%
Venezuela	1%

Q35. Ranked Top 3 Summary Table: In your view, which of the following countries and/or geographic regions, if any, represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the US? Please select up to three responses.

Q8N_Total_Ranked_Top_3	All
Afghanistan	7%
Australia	2%
Canada	6%
China	58%
European Union	8%
India	4%
Iran	27%
Iraq	0%
Israel	20%
Japan	7%
Mexico	8%
North Korea	29%
Russia	56%
South Korea	5%
United Kingdom	9%
United States	0%
Venezuela	4%

Q36. In your view, which of the following countries and/or geographic regions, if any, represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the US? Please select up to three responses.

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Afghanistan	All
--	-----

1	9%
2	10%
3	18%
Not sure	63%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Australia	All
1	4%
2	5%
3	5%
Not sure	87%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Canada	All
1	12%
2	7%
3	13%
Not sure	68%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: China	All
1	42%
2	26%
3	14%
Not sure	18%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: European Union	All
1	10%
2	15%
3	13%
Not sure	62%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: India	All
1	3%
2	8%
3	12%

Not sure	77%
Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Iran	All
1	11%
2	21%
3	37%
Not sure	32%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Israel	All
1	27%
2	15%
3	19%
Not sure	38%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Japan	All
1	8%
2	11%
3	17%
Not sure	64%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Mexico	All
1	9%
2	12%
3	19%
Not sure	60%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: North Korea	All
1	12%
2	20%
3	37%
Not sure	30%

Countries/Regions representing greatest	All
--	-----

foreign policy challenges for US: Russia	
1	30%
2	36%
3	16%
Not sure	18%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: South Korea	All
1	3%
2	9%
3	15%
Not sure	73%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: United Kingdom	All
1	14%
2	14%
3	14%
Not sure	58%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Venezuela	All
1	7%
2	8%
3	10%
Not sure	75%

Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US: Ukraine	All
1	17%
2	15%
3	15%
Not sure	53%

Q37. 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

Countries that should be able to maintain military nuclear capabilities	All
--	-----

U.S.	49%
Russia	21%
United Kingdom	38%
France	30%
China	20%
India	16%
Pakistan	8%
Israel	28%
North Korea	11%
None should have military nuclear capabilities	40%

Q38. In your opinion, which of the following do you feel should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities?

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- South Korea	All
Strongly support	6%
Support	17%
Neutral	28%
Oppose	19%
Strongly oppose	29%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Japan	All
Strongly support	7%
Support	20%
Neutral	29%
Oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	27%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Taiwan	All
Strongly support	4%
Support	12%
Neutral	35%
Oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	29%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Saudi Arabia	All
Strongly support	2%
Support	5%
Neutral	24%
Oppose	27%
Strongly oppose	42%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Australia	All
Strongly support	7%
Support	21%
Neutral	33%
Oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	25%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Qatar	All
Strongly support	2%
Support	5%
Neutral	28%
Oppose	24%
Strongly oppose	41%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- United Arab Emirates (UAE)	All
Strongly support	2%
Support	6%
Neutral	28%
Oppose	25%
Strongly oppose	39%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Brazil	All
Strongly support	2%
Support	8%
Neutral	33%
Oppose	23%
Strongly oppose	34%

Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities: nuclear_capabilities -- Argentina	All
Strongly support	2%
Support	6%
Neutral	35%
Oppose	22%
Strongly oppose	35%

Q39. Please select the ones that you feel are [critical partners/adversaries] of the United States.

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Afghanistan	All
Positive	6%
Negative	46%
No Opinion	48%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Australia	All
Positive	46%
Negative	2%
No Opinion	52%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Canada	All
Positive	67%
Negative	4%
No Opinion	29%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: China	All
---	-----

Positive	17%
Negative	56%
No Opinion	27%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: European Union	All
Positive	55%
Negative	5%
No Opinion	40%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: India	All
Positive	20%
Negative	7%
No Opinion	73%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Iran	All
Positive	5%
Negative	61%
No Opinion	34%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Israel	All
Positive	46%
Negative	10%
No Opinion	45%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Japan	All
Positive	46%
Negative	6%
No Opinion	48%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Mexico	All
Positive	35%
Negative	10%
No Opinion	55%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: North Korea	All
---	-----

Positive	4%
Negative	65%
No Opinion	31%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Russia	All
--	-----

Positive	6%
Negative	70%
No Opinion	24%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: South Korea	All
---	-----

Positive	41%
Negative	9%
No Opinion	50%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: United Kingdom	All
--	-----

Positive	71%
Negative	4%
No Opinion	25%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Venezuela	All
---	-----

Positive	5%
Negative	29%
No Opinion	66%

Critical partners/Adversaries of the US: Ukraine	All
---	-----

Positive	28%
Negative	10%
No Opinion	62%

Q40. If you view both South Korea and Japan as critical partners, how should the United States approach three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan?

Trilateral cooperation: US-South Korea-Japan	All
---	-----

More cooperation	56%
Less cooperation	1%
Same level of cooperation	30%
Not sure	12%

Q41. In what areas should the United States, South Korea, and Japan deepen cooperation? Select all that apply.

Areas to deepen US-South Korea-Japan cooperation	All
Global health	51%
Climate change	48%
Technology infrastructure (like 5G)	67%
Development of international trade rules	66%
Supply chains	71%
Global human rights	45%
North Korea	54%
Security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific	75%
Other	1%
None of these	0%
Not sure	4%

Q42. Which comes closest to how you feel about current U.S. military alliances?

Feelings about US military alliances	All
Maintain all alliances as they are	23%
Maintain all alliances, but with reforms	28%
Maintain some alliances (possibly with reforms), while ending others	20%
End all alliances	3%
Not sure	10%
Do not know enough to answer	15%

Q43. What do you believe to be the most important interest for the United States in East Asia:

Most important interest for the US in East Asia	All
Defending U.S. friends and allies	27%
Countering the rise of China	35%
Trade and economics	37%
Other	1%

Q44. 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.

South Korean media observed in last 12 months	All
BTS	14%
Black Pink	9%

Parasite	12%
Crash Landing on You	3%
None of these	62%
Squid Game	23%
Stray Kidz	5%
Extraordinary Attorney Woo	4%
The Glory	4%
Ateez	3%
New Jeans	5%
Queen of Tears	4%
Physical 100	3%
Singles Inferno	2%

Q45. Do you identify as a fan of any of the following? Select all that apply.

Identify as a fan of any Korean pop culture	All
Korean pop music	11%
Korean television dramas	11%
Korean movies	15%
Korean beauty products	10%
None of the above	72%

Q46. 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 influence	All
Korean language	41%
Korean culture	68%
Korean history	41%
Korean politics	28%
Korean foreign affairs	24%
None of the above	9%

Q47. 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 television dramas influence	All
Korean language	45%
Korean culture	75%
Korean history	37%
Korean politics	23%
Korean foreign affairs	23%
None of the above	11%

Q48. 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 movies influence	All
Korean language	36%
Korean culture	67%
Korean history	44%
Korean politics	17%
Korean foreign affairs	21%
None of the above	14%

Q49. 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 beauty products influence	All
Korean language	28%
Korean culture	68%
Korean history	34%
Korean politics	12%
Korean foreign affairs	23%
None of the above	18%

Q50. Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of South Korea?

Opinion on South Korea	All
Very favorable	20%
Favorable	49%
Unfavorable	6%
Very unfavorable	4%
Not sure	22%

Q51. Now thinking about US and South Korea relations, do you approve or disapprove of the current US administration's handling of relations with South Korea?

Approve of current US administration handling relations with South Korea	All
Approve	49%
Disapprove	11%
Not sure	40%

Q52. Do you believe trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States, or do you not feel this way?

Trade with South Korea beneficial	All
I believe that engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States	68%
I do not believe that engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States	7%
Not sure	25%

Q53. In your view, on which of these issues, if any, do you feel it is important for the US and South Korea to cooperate? Please select all that apply.

Issues important for US and South Korea to cooperate on	All
Global health	39%
Climate change	36%
Technology infrastructure (such as 5G)	45%
Development of international trade rules	46%
Other	1%
None of these	11%
Supply Chains	49%
Global Human Rights	41%
North Korea	47%
Security in East Asia & the Indo-Pacific	52%

Q54. Do you believe the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interests of the US or do you not feel this way?

US military alliance with South Korea in national security interest	All
I believe the US alliance with South Korea is in the interest of US national security	68%
I do not believe the US alliance with South Korea is in the interest of US national security	8%
Not sure	24%

Q55. The U.S. currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea. For context/comparison, the U.S. also has 54,000 troops in Japan and currently has 35,000 troops in Germany. In your opinion, should the United States increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea?

Increase/Withdraw US troops in South Korea	All
Increase	9%
Maintain	55%
Reduce	13%
Withdraw	4%
Not sure	19%

Q56. Do you believe that the US should assist South Korea in the event of a cyber-attack from North Korea or China, or do you not feel this way?

US should assist South Korea in cyber attack from North Korea or China	All
Yes, I believe the US should assist	62%
No, I do not believe the US should assist	13%
Don't know/unsure	26%

Q57. The United States has been active in the Asia-Pacific region since the Second World War. It has military alliances with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and Thailand, as well as long standing economic ties with countries in the region. As the United States reassesses its place in the world, do you believe that East Asia is a vital region for U.S. national interests:

Believe East Asia is a vital region for US national interests	All
Yes	66%
No	7%
Not sure	26%

Q58. If the United States were to reach an agreement with North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, should the U.S. change its troop presence in South Korea?

Should US increase troop presence in South Korea if North Korea gives up nuclear weapons	All
Increase	5%
Maintain	41%
Reduce	24%
Withdraw	6%
Not sure	24%

Q59. Now thinking about North Korea, overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of North Korea?

Opinion on North Korea	All
Very favorable	5%
Favorable	9%
Unfavorable	25%
Very unfavorable	43%
Not sure	18%

Q60. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the current US administration is doing handling relations with North Korea?

Approve of current US administration handling relations with North Korea	All
Approve	29%
Disapprove	29%
Not sure	42%

Q61. In your opinion, how important is it that North Korea give up its military nuclear capabilities?

Importance of North Korea giving up nuclear capabilities	All
Very important	53%
Important	37%
Not very important	6%
Not at all important	4%

Q62. And how important is it that the US pushes for human rights improvements in North Korea?

Importance of US pushing for human rights improvements in North Korea	All
Very important	42%
Important	43%
Not very important	12%
Not at all important	3%

Q63. 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?

Approve of US providing humanitarian assistance to North Korean civilians	All
Approve	49%
Disapprove	21%
Not sure	31%

¹ Dina Smeltz and Craig Kafura, “Americans Grow Less Enthusiastic about Active US Engagement Abroad,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 12, 2023, <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/americans-grow-less-enthusiastic-about-active-us-engagement-abroad>.

² “Power,” US News and World Report, 2024, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/rankings/power>.

³ Craig Kafura, “Americans Feel More Threat from China Now than in Past Three Decades,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, November 12, 2023, <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/americans-feel-more-threat-china-now-past-three-decades>; Jacob Poushter and Laura Clancy, “What Are Americans’ Top Foreign Policy Priorities,” Pew Research Center, April 23, 2024, www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/04/23/what-are-americans-top-foreign-policy-priorities/.

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⁵ Dina Smeltz and Craig Kafura, “Majority in US Want to Learn More about Nuclear Policy,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, July 19, 2023, <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/majority-us-want-learn-more-about-nuclear-policy>.

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⁸ “2023 EAI Public Opinion Poll on the International Affairs: The US and the ROK-US Relations,” East Asia Institute, October 2023, www.eai.or.kr/new/en/etc/search_view.asp?intSeq=22174&board=eng_issuebriefing; J. James Kim, Kang Chungku, and Ham Geon Hee, “South Korean Public Opinion on ROK-U.S. Bilateral Ties,” The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, May 31, 2022, <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/south-korean-public-opinion-on-rok-u-s-bilateral-ties/>; “US-Korea Binational Survey,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, https://globalaffairs.org/research/lester-crown-center/chicago-council-survey/us-korea-binational-survey?gad_source=1&qclid=Cj0KCQjwu-63BhC9ARIsAMMTLXS-GyRG8SGPwA0qNnlkT9e4mWhzzBLoFsPXSt8ffxfh-iaLRhgRGYaaAoFPEALw_wcB.

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A photograph of three men in dark blue suits shaking hands. The man on the left is older with white hair, the man in the middle is younger with glasses, and the man on the right is also younger. They are all smiling and looking at each other. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

KEI: 2024 Report on American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula

2024 Report on American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula

This study on American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula surveyed 1,184 Americans in September of 2024. 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 1,000 respondents who were nationally representative of adults (18+) in the US. YouGov collected an additional oversample of 184 Americans who specifically follow international news, to ensure a sample size of over 500 such respondents across the main and oversample. 278 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 3-10, 2024



Average Survey Length: 15 minutes

	Margin of Error
US Adults	+/- 3.4%
Int'l News Followers	+/- 4.5%

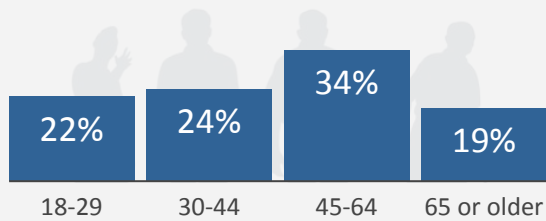
DEMOGRAPHICS: BY SAMPLE TYPE

National Representatives

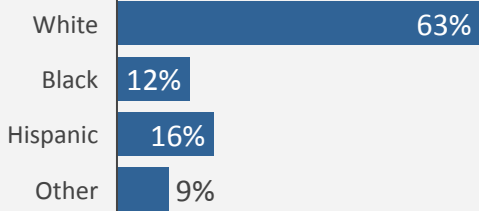
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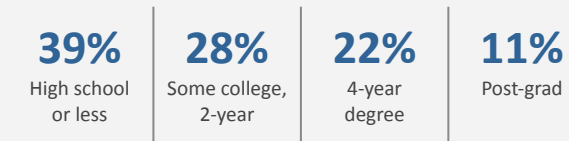
Age



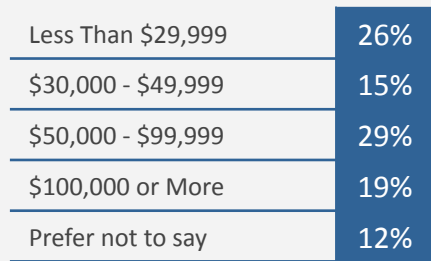
Ethnicity



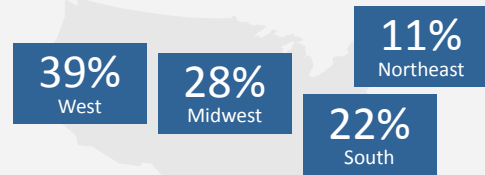
Education



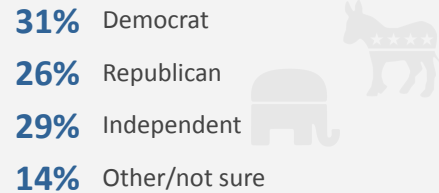
Income



Region



Political Party

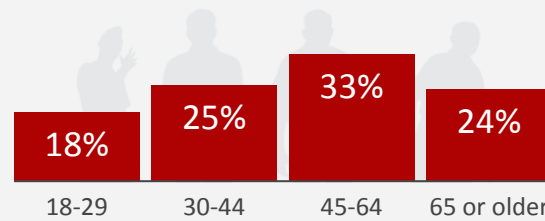


International News Followers

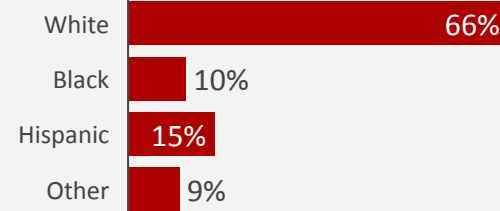
Gender



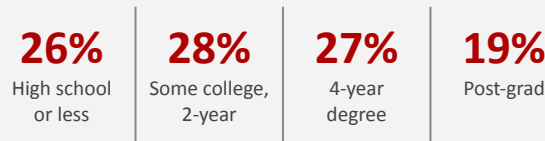
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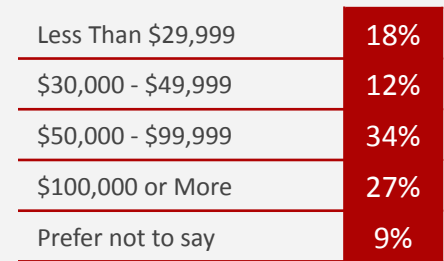
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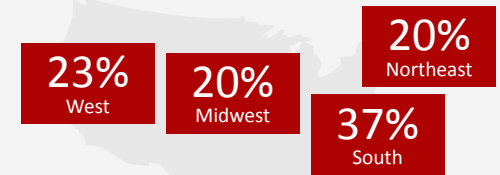
Education



Income



Region



Political Party

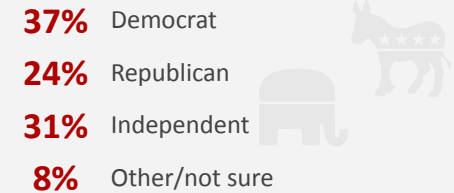


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Americans' Views on Military Alliance with South Korea

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

- Americans continue to view South Korea as one of the top 10 most influential countries in the world. American views of the country are also strongly favorable (69%) - even more so among those who follow international news (84%).
- Despite its influence and favorability, a majority of Americans do not perceive South Korea as a "critical partner." Only the UK, Canada, and the EU reach this threshold.
- For those who perceive Japan and South Korea as critical partners of the US, a majority would like to see more trilateral cooperation between the US, Japan, and South Korea, especially focused on security in the region and on economic ties. Although perceived as the most important issue, support for trilateral cooperation on security shows a relative decline (as does trilateral cooperation on North Korea). This may reflect the global security challenges that the US currently faces, with challenges in the Middle East looming large.
- Bilaterally, over half of Americans believe that the US and South Korea should focus on security in the region. Bilateral cooperation on supply chain issues and North Korea no longer exceeds 50% in 2024 (for supply chain issues, this decline is statistically significant).
- Uncertainty around how to rate the US administration's handling of relations with South Korea remains high, showing a significant increase to 33% this year for Americans interested in international news, and an associated decline in approval to 58% among this audience.
- Compared to previous years, fewer Americans in 2024 are likely to name North Korea as a critical foreign policy challenge for the US. More Americans perceived Iran as a top foe. Israel showed a steep increase as a top foreign policy challenge for the US.

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

- Awareness of a free trade agreement between the US and South Korea was already relatively low, and shows a statistically significant decrease in 2024 among international and APAC interested Americans. Awareness now stands at 23% among US adults and about 30% for those following international or APAC news. Nevertheless, the percent of Americans believing that trade with South Korea is beneficial remains strong at 68%.
- Appreciation of South Korean popular culture and entertainment remains strong. Americans are increasingly engaging with exports of South Korean popular culture and entertainment. 4-in-10 Americans report consuming South Korean popular entertainment in the past year, and 3-in-10 identify as a fan of some form of South Korean popular entertainment, such as music, television, movies, or beauty products.
- Support for the military alliance between the US and South Korea remains strong. Nearly 70% of Americans believe this alliance is in the national security interests of the US.
- A majority of Americans support maintaining US troop commitments in South Korea. This level remains stable in 2024 after a significant increase in 2023, though there is an uptick in uncertainty this year among international and APAC news interested respondents.
 - In the event of a nuclear arms agreement with North Korea, a plurality of Americans would still support maintaining or increasing US troop levels in South Korea.
- East Asia is still broadly considered a vital region for US national security interests, despite a weakening of this assessment among international news interested respondents. Defending US friends and allies continues to trail countering the rise of China and trade and economics as a top interest of the US in the region in 2024.

KEY INSIGHTS: Americans' Views on the North Korea Challenge

- After registering an increase in opposition to any country maintaining nuclear weapons in 2023, opposition shows a significantly decrease again this year. 40% oppose any country having nuclear weapons capabilities.
- Three countries receive over 20% support among Americans for acquiring nuclear weapons capabilities: Australia, Japan, and South Korea.
- About 90% of Americans again think it is important that North Korea give up its nuclear weapons program, though the share of those who think this is very important compared to just important shows a decrease again this year, continuing a trend over the past five years. But Americans do not think that relations with North Korea should focus exclusively on nuclear weapons.
 - 85% believe that the US should push for human rights improvements in North Korea. Similarly here, the share of those rating this very important shows a decline relative to those calling it just important.
 - Nearly half believe that the US should provide humanitarian or civilian assistance to North Korean citizens.

AMERICANS' GENERAL VIEWS ON SOUTH & NORTH KOREA

2024 represents a shift in American foreign policy concerns toward the Middle East. Iran now edges out China as one of the US's top three adversaries, along with Russia and North Korea. Israel shows a precipitous increase as America's top foreign policy concern. Against this backdrop, concerns about China and North Korea have fallen. There are high rates of uncertainty about the US administration's handling of North Korea, along with declines in negative sentiments toward North Korea.

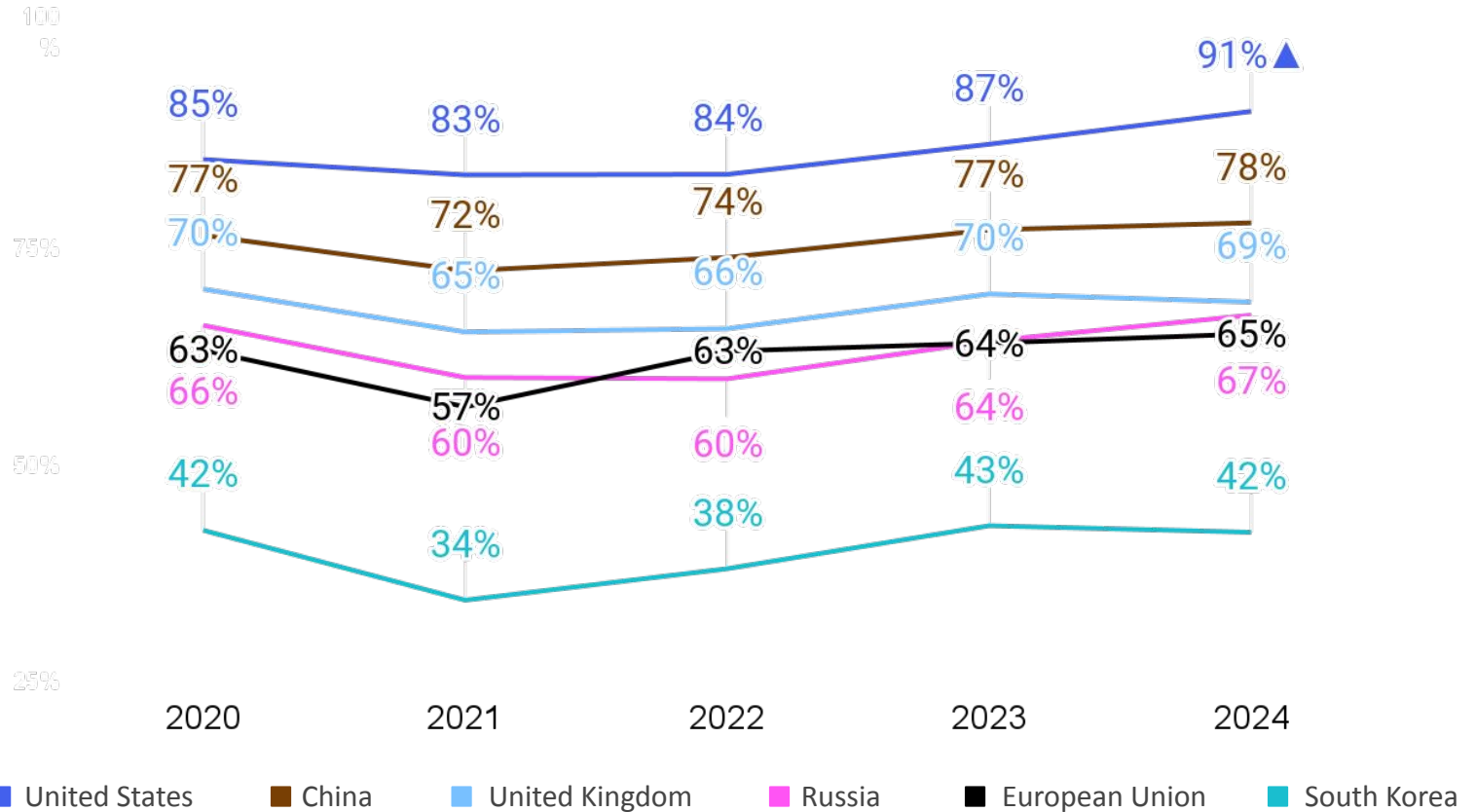
Americans still see the US-South Korea partnership as important, and security is the most important regional issue. However, a relative decline in support for trilateral cooperation on matters relating to security and North Korea may reflect a sense that the US must prioritize its various global security challenges.

Americans continue to view the US as the most influential nation or region in the world, with a significant increase to above 91% this wave.

South Korea's rating remains steady at 42% this wave.

National/Regional Influence in the World (Top 5 Plus South Korea)*

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.

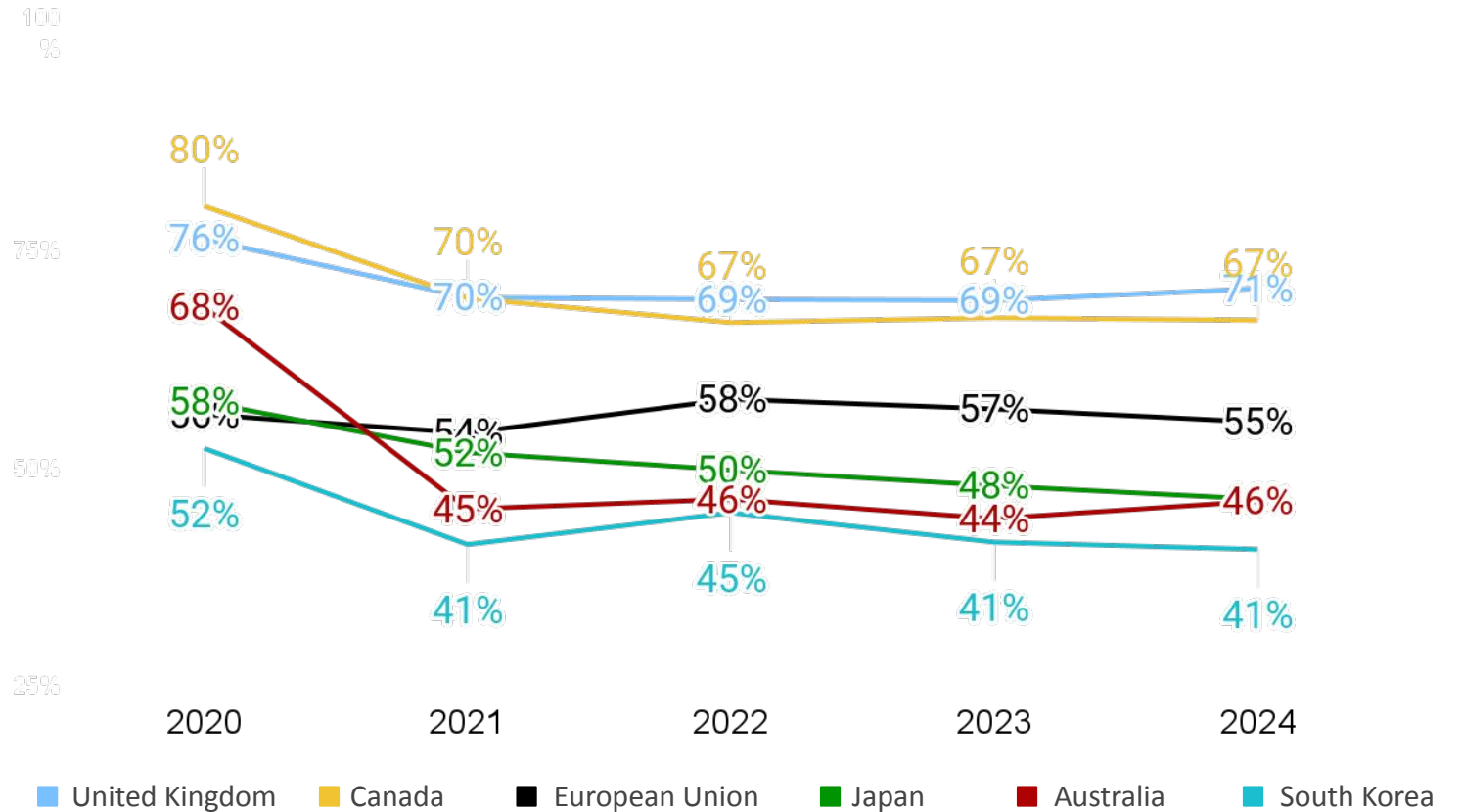
*Only top five plus South Korea out of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.

▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

2020: N=1248; 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

Across the board, countries that US adults consider critical partners of the US remain steady. The UK and Canada are the two countries most likely to be considered critical partners of the US. 4-in-10 respondents see South Korea as a critical partner of the US.

Critical Partners of the United States (Top 5 Plus South Korea)*



Q10AB: Please select the ones that you feel are [critical partners/adversaries] of the United States.

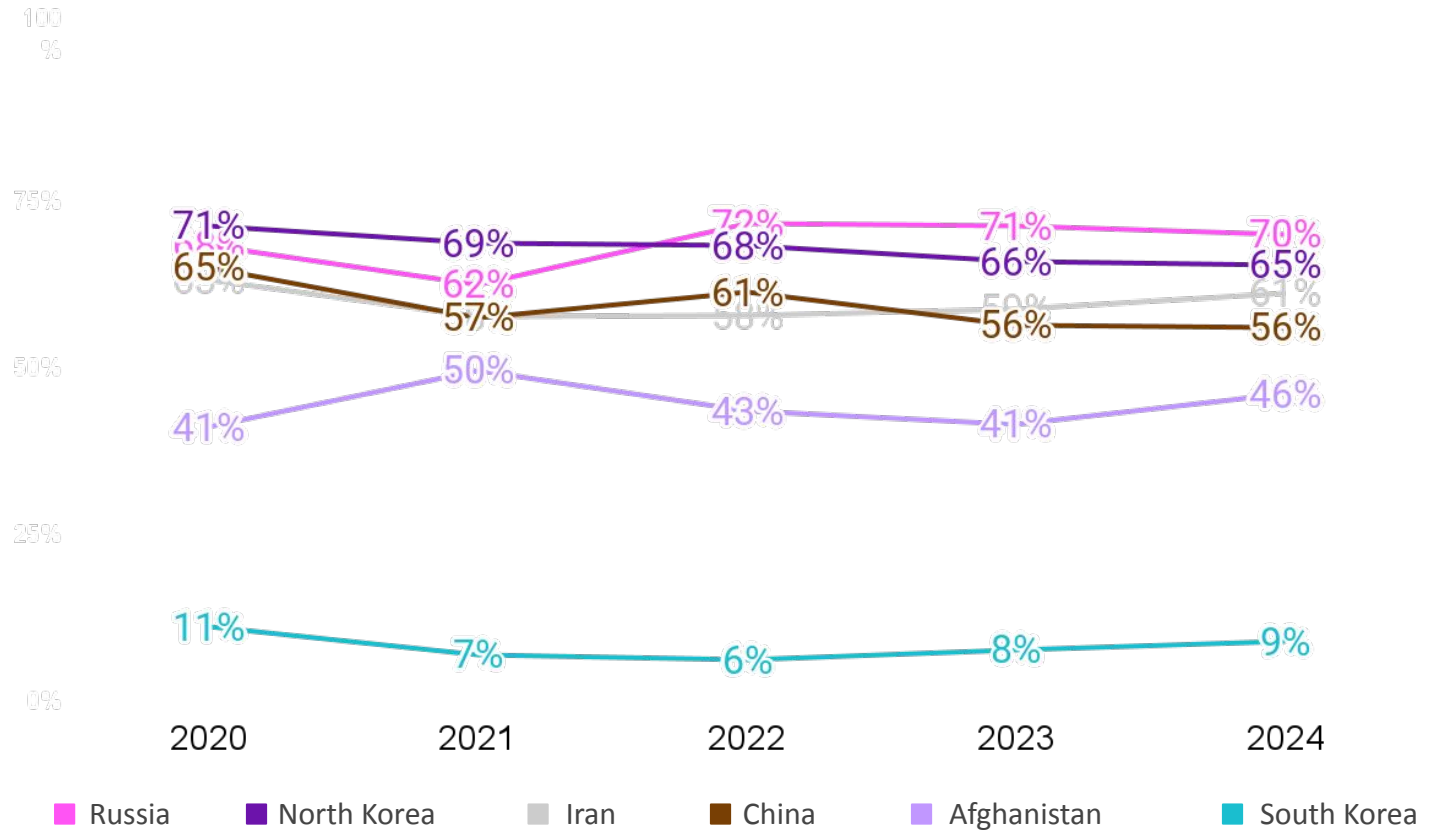
▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

*Only top five plus South Korea out of sixteen countries are displayed on this slide.

2020: N=1248; 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

Russia, North Korea, and Iran are the top three countries considered to be adversaries of the US. For the first time over the past 5 years, US adults are statistically more significantly likely to view Iran as an adversary than to view China.

Adversaries of the United States (Top 5 Plus South Korea)*



Q10AB: Please select the ones that you feel are [critical partners/adversaries] of the United States.

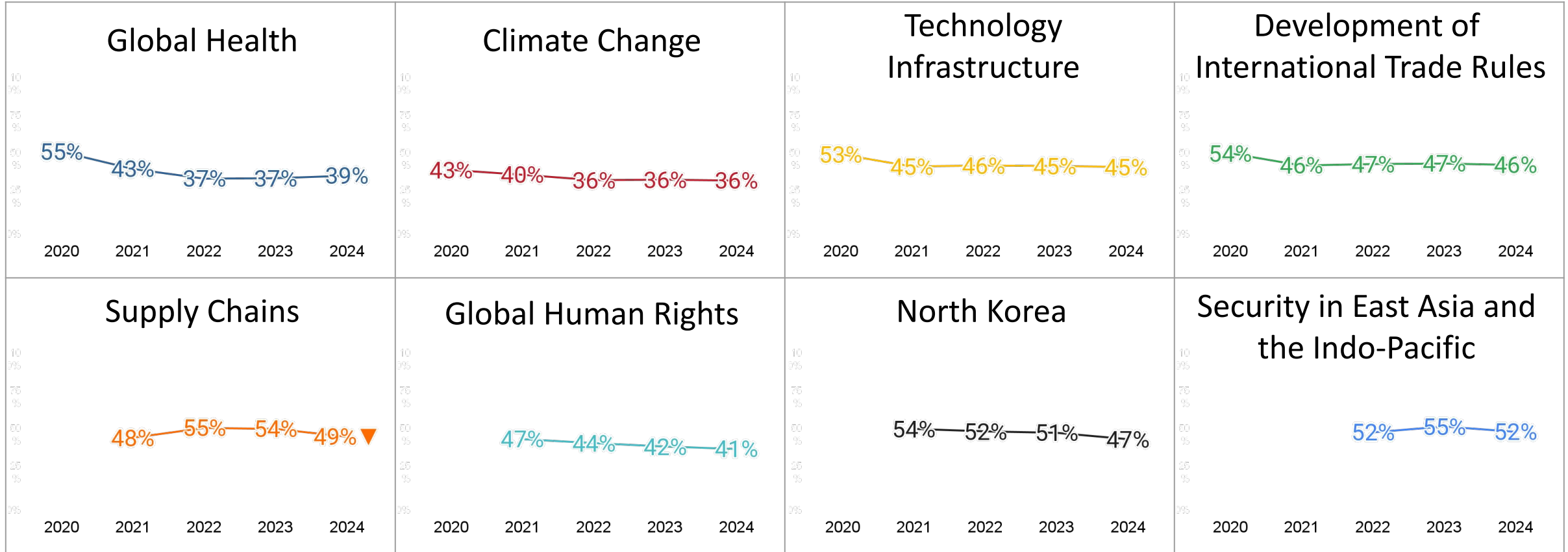
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2020: N=1248; 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

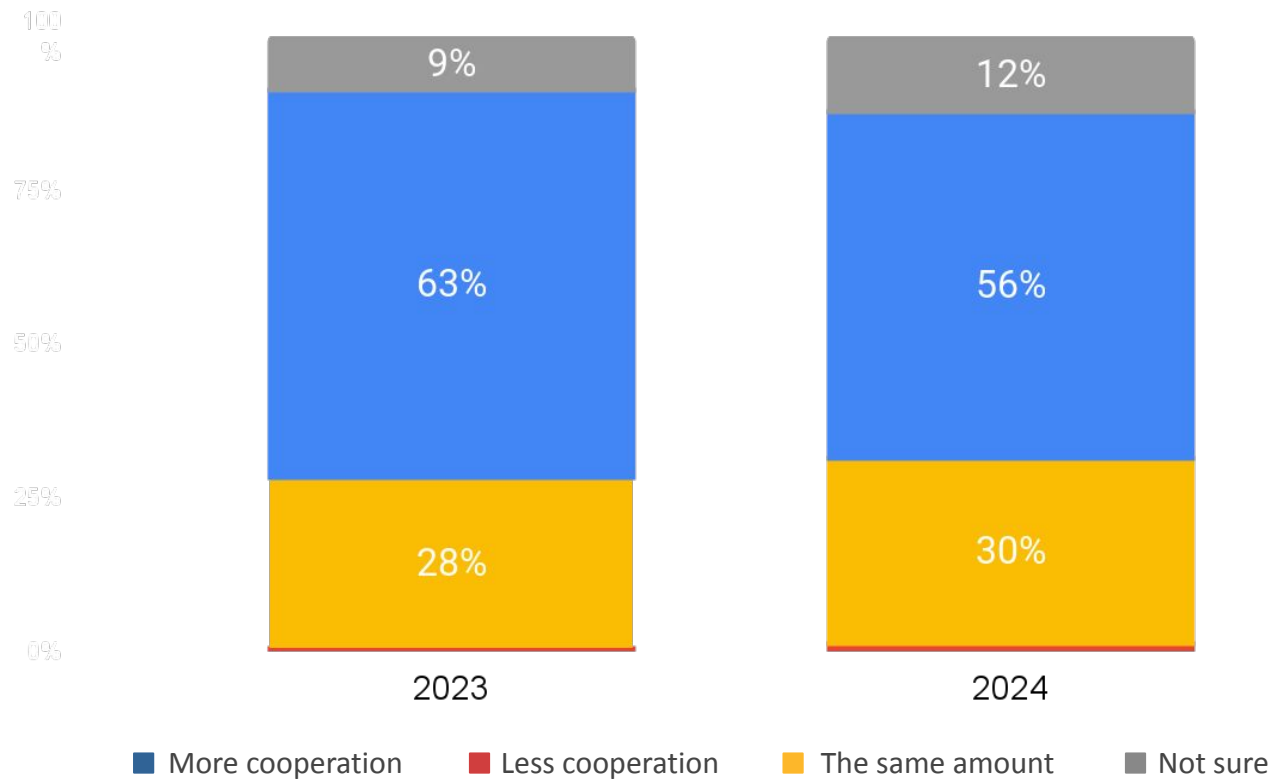
Issues on Which the US and South Korea Should Cooperate

This wave, support for bilateral cooperation between the US and South Korea remains stable on all issues except supply chains, which sees a significant decline to 2021 levels. Security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific is rated the highest among all issues for cooperation.



Among those considering South Korea and Japan as critical partners of the US, nearly 9-in-10 would like to see the same or more trilateral cooperation.

Support for Trilateral Cooperation Among Those Viewing Japan and South Korea As Critical Partners of the US



trilateral_2023: If you view both South Korea and Japan as critical partners, how should the United States approach three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan?

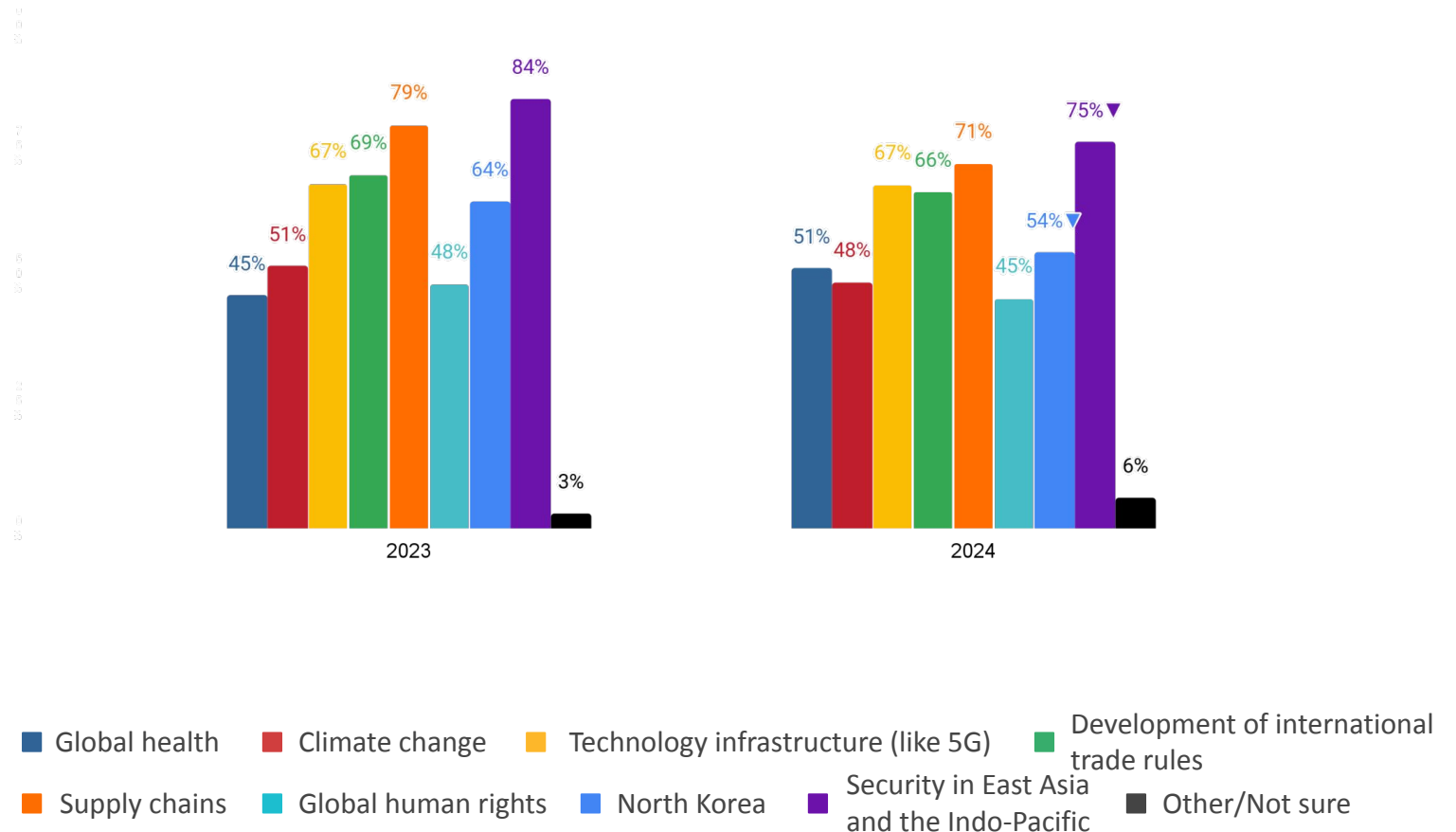
▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

*Among those who indicated South Korea and Japan are critical partners in Q10A

2023: N=460; 2024: N=410

Respondents would like to see trilateral cooperation come in the form of security in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific, facilitating supply chains, and developing tech infrastructure and international trade rules. The two security related topics (regional security and North Korea), both show significant declines in 2024.

Areas of Support for Trilateral Cooperation Among Those Who Think the US Should Deepen Cooperation



areas_2023: In what areas should the United States, South Korea, and Japan deepen cooperation? Select all that apply.

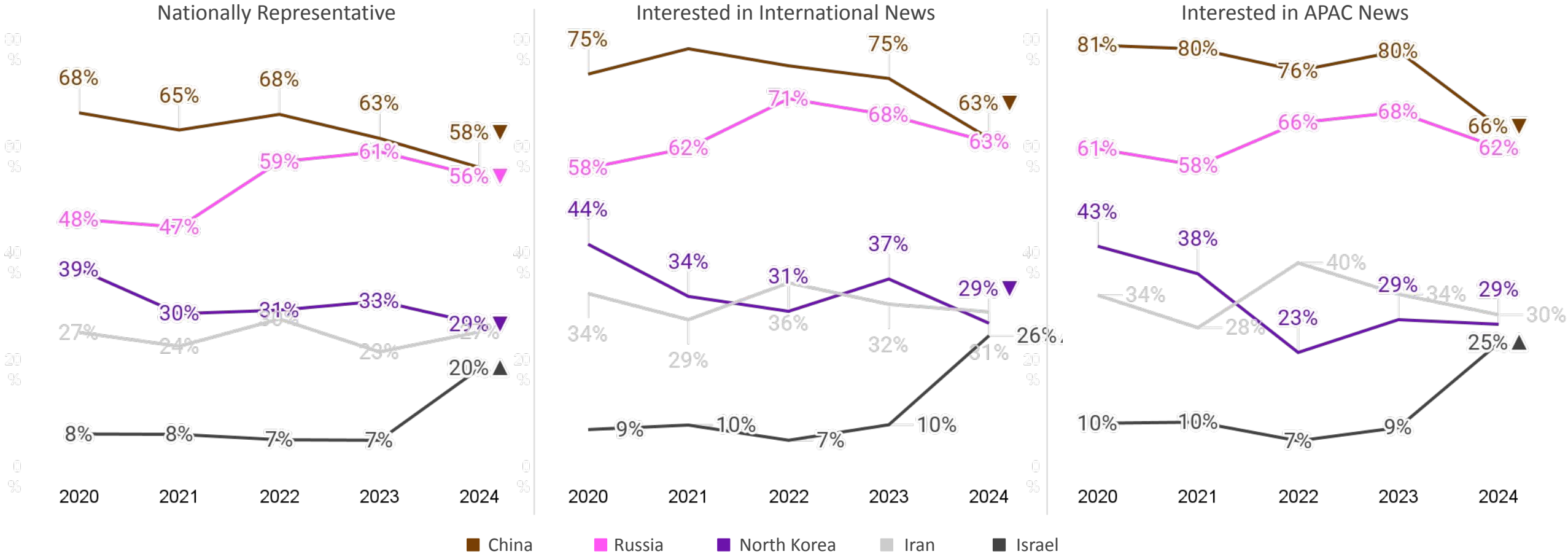
▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

*Among those who indicated the US should deepen cooperation with South Korea and Japan in trilateral_2023

2023: N=294; 2024: N=245

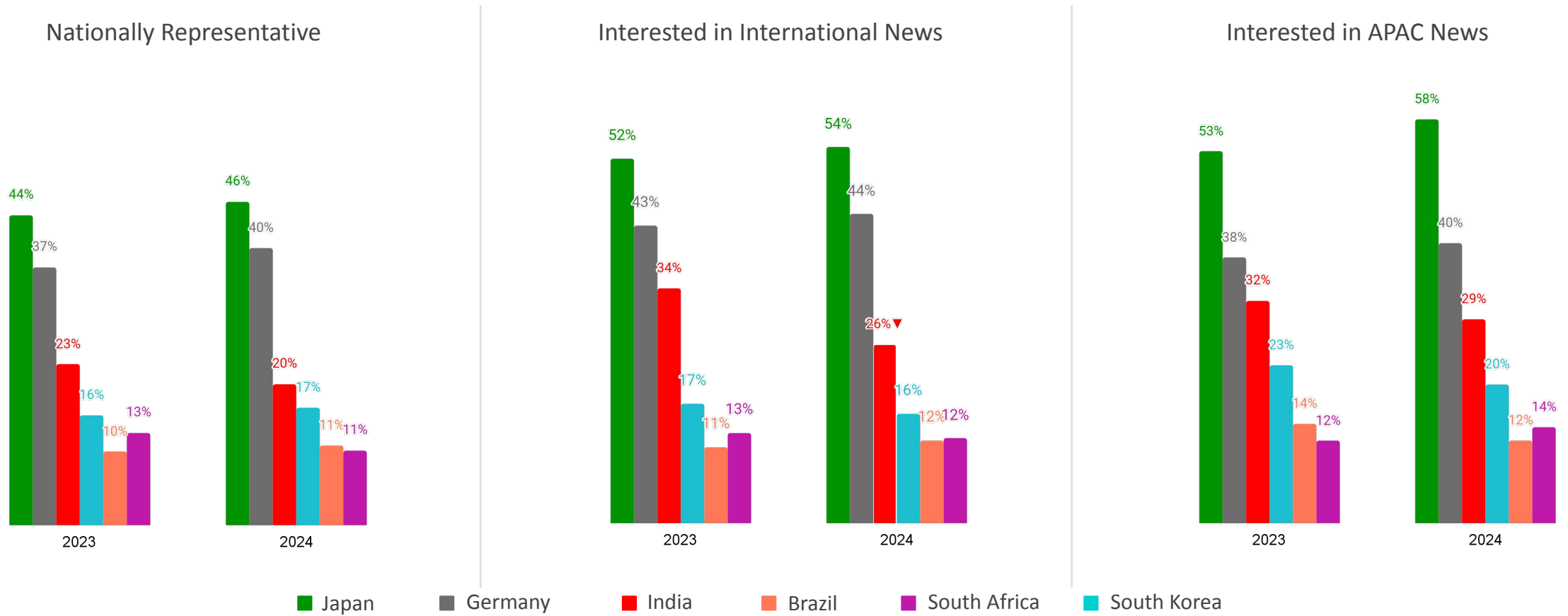
Countries/Regions Representing the Most Critical Foreign Policy Challenges to the US (Ranked in Top 3)

For Americans in general and US adults interested in international news, North Korea is receding as a top foreign policy challenge for the US. China and Russia also show declines, depending on the audience. At the same time, there is a significant increase in 2024 in Americans identifying Israel as a top concern.



Countries That Should Be Added to the United Nations Security Council

Japan and Germany receive the most support as potential additions to the UN Security Council. South Korea trails India, support for which declined significantly among US international news interested adults in 2024.



sec_council_add_2023: The United Nations Security Council currently has five permanent members that have veto power: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the People’s Republic of China. If the Security Council were to add two additional permanent members, which two countries should it add? *Select up to two.*

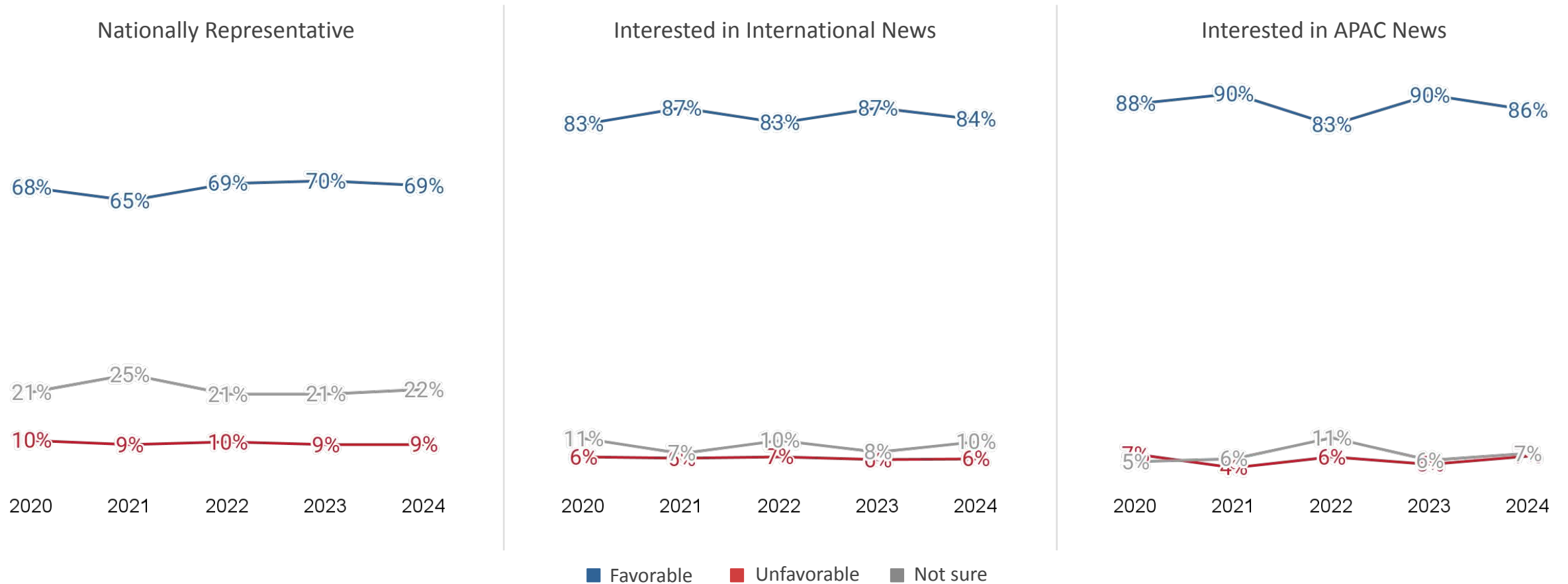
*Only top five plus South Korea out of seven countries are shown on this slide

▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

2023: Nat Rep N=1177, Internat News N=560, APAC News N=316; 2024: Nat Rep N=1184, Internat News N=542, APAC News N=278

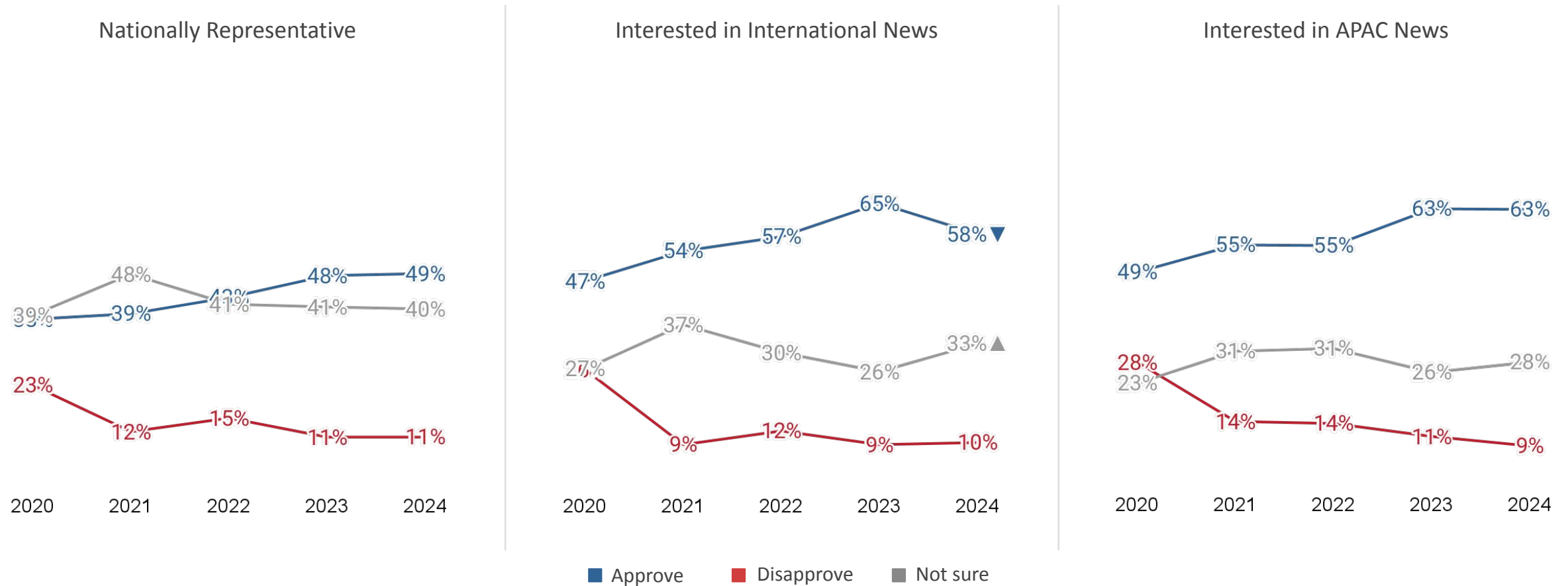
Overall Opinion of South Korea

Opinions of South Korea remain highly favorable, especially among those who are interested in international news or APAC news.



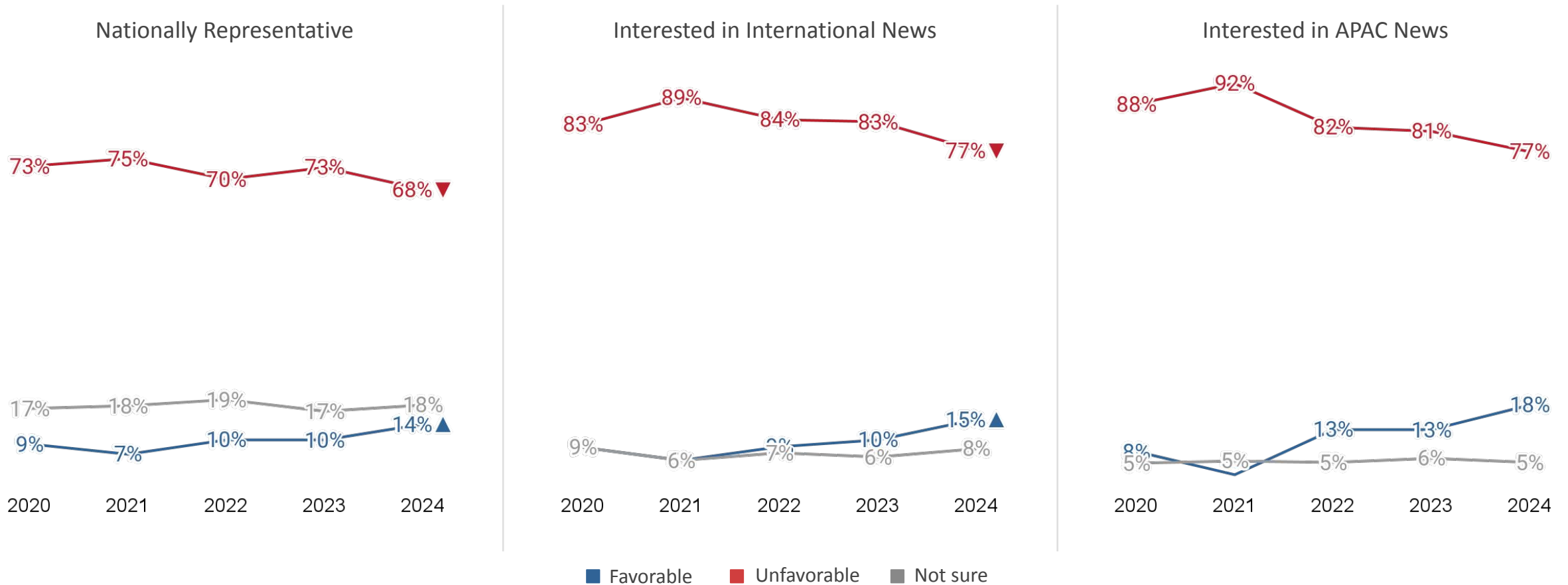
Approval of the Current US Administration's Handling of Relations With South Korea

For those who follow international news, 2024 marks a decline in confidence in the current administration's handling of relations with South Korea and an increase in those saying "Not sure." Despite high rates of uncertainty, approval of the US administration's handling of relations with South Korea is markedly higher than with North Korea.



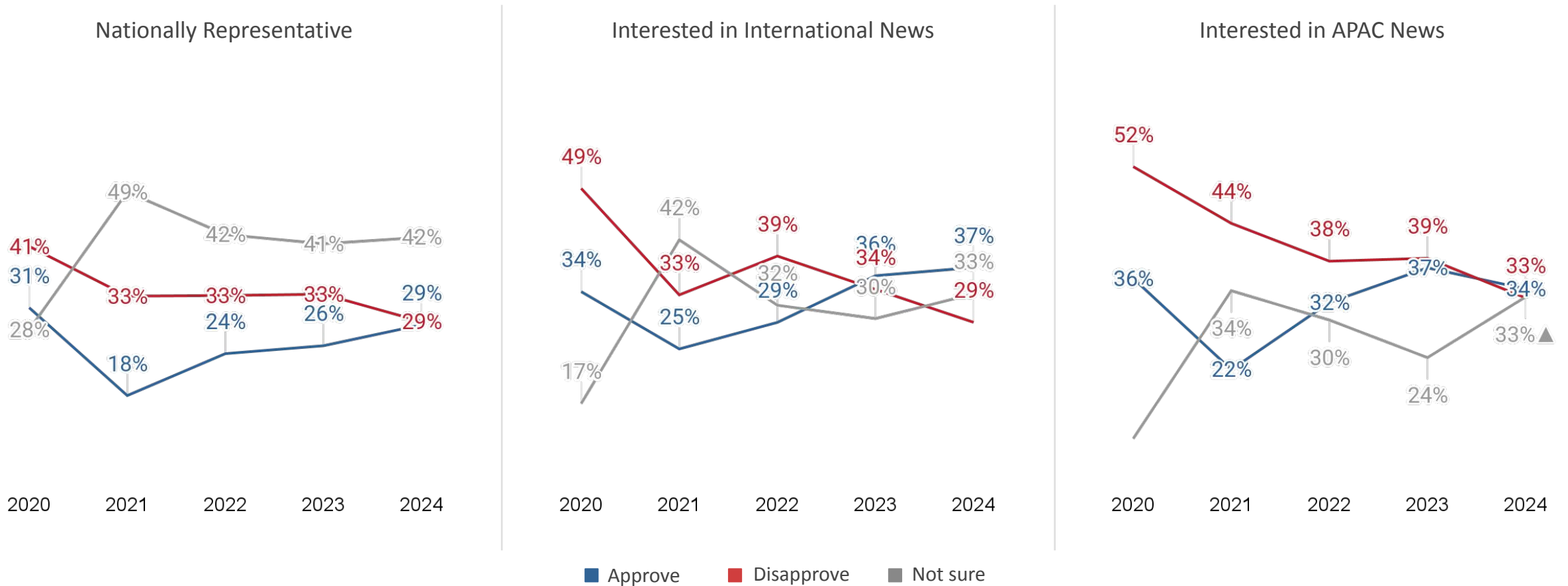
Overall Opinion of North Korea

Negative sentiments toward North Korea remain high despite some significant decreases this wave.



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

A plurality of US adults, and a third of international and APAC news interested US adults, are not sure how to rate the US administration's handling of relations with North Korea. Opinion is divided on whether the administration is handling things well or not.



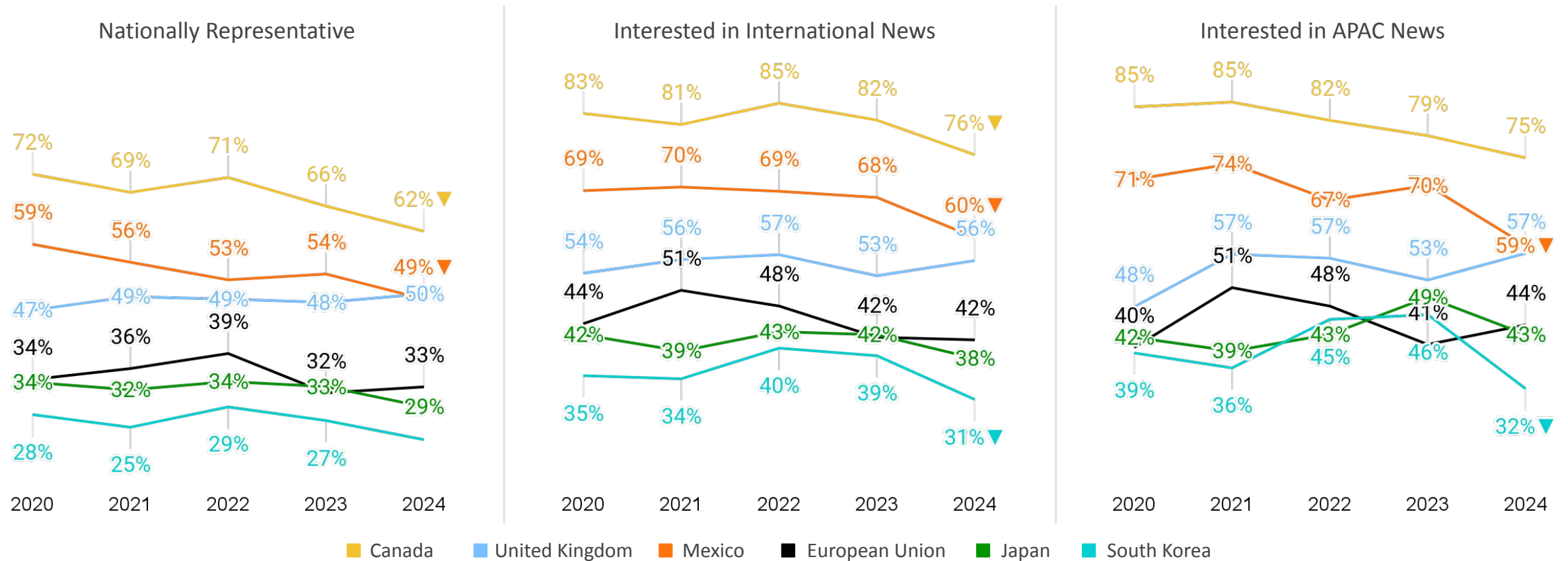
AMERICANS' VIEWS ON TRADE WITH SOUTH KOREA

While only 23% of US adults are aware of the US-Korea free-trade agreement, and international and APAC news interested adults show large decreases in awareness of the agreement, perception of the benefits of trade between the US and Korea remain strong.

US adults show persistent growth in their appreciation of South Korean pop culture. 4-in-10 Americans report consuming some form of popular culture from South Korea in the past year, and 3-in-10 consider themselves fans of music, movies, TV shows, or beauty products from the country.

Awareness of Countries That Have a Free Trade Agreement With the US (Top 5 Plus South Korea)*

Awareness of the US-Korea free trade agreement appears to have peaked in 2022, the 10th anniversary of the agreement. International and APAC news interested US adults show a large decline in awareness of this agreement in 2024. Canada and Mexico also show declining awareness levels.



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.

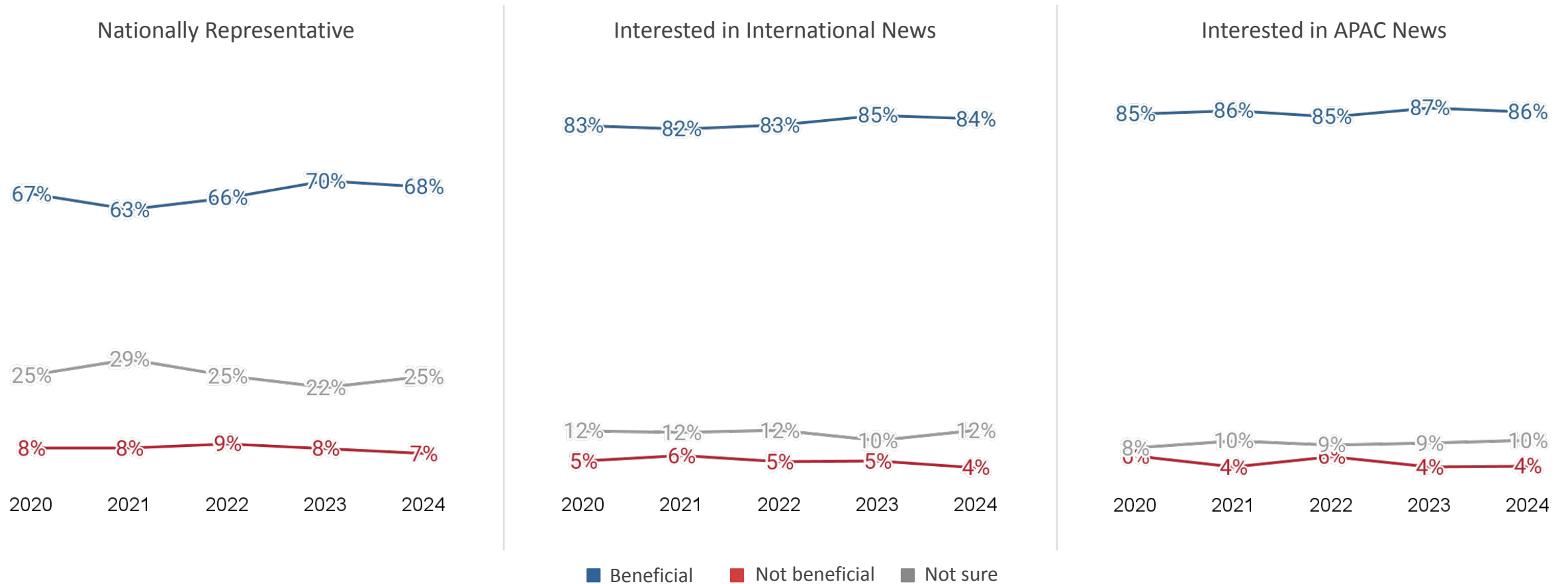
*Only top five plus South Korea out of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.

▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

Nat Rep n sizes range from 1122 to 1248. Internat News n sizes range from 509 to 580. APAC News n sizes range from 278 to 336.

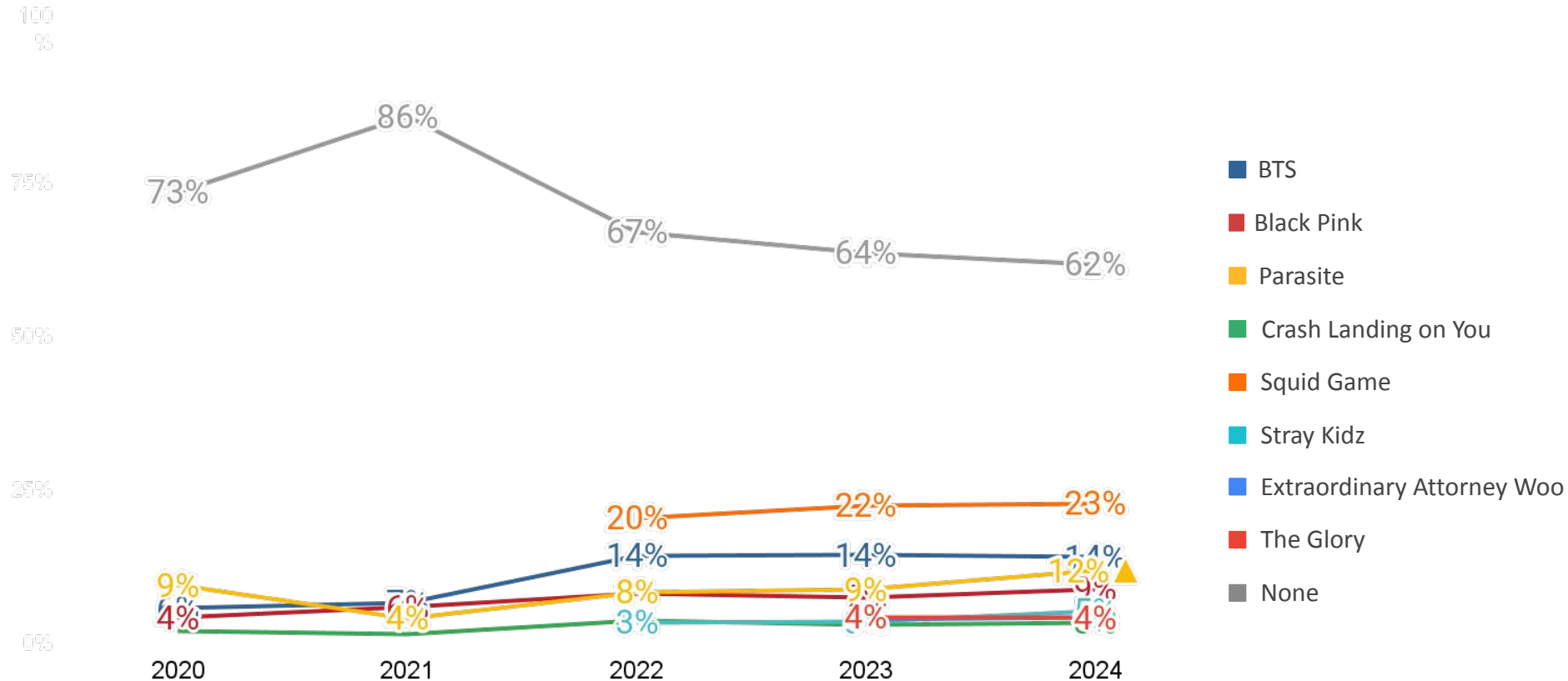
Views on Trade Between US and South Korea

Nearly 7-in-10 US adults remain certain that trade with South Korea is beneficial to the US. This opinion is even stronger among international news and APAC news interested US adults.



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

4-in-10 US adults have consumed one of the named South Korean musical entertainment acts, TV shows, or movies in the past year. *Squid Game*, *Parasite*, and BTS continue to be the most common pop culture touch points for US adults in 2024.

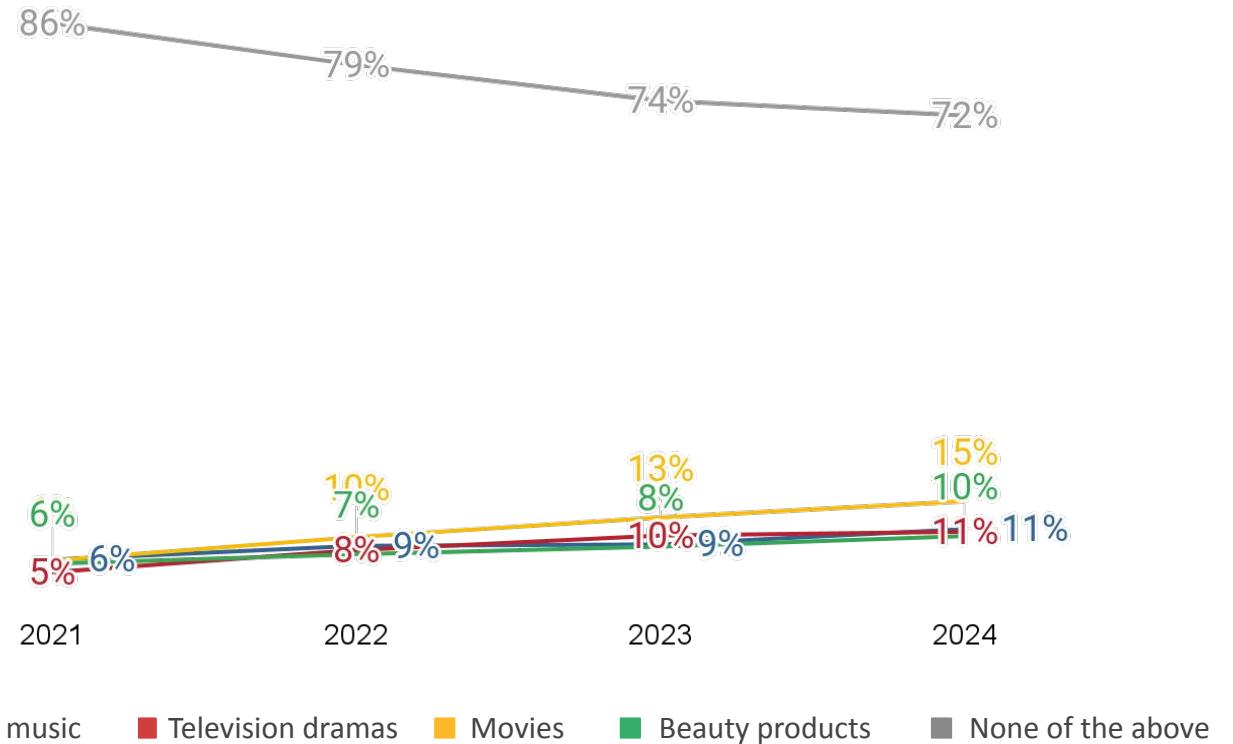


New Media Additions 2024	
New Jeans	5%
Queen of Tears	4%
Ateez	3%
Physical 100	3%
Singles Inferno	2%

Last year's growth in appreciation of South Korean popular entertainment and products holds steady this year.

3-in-10 Americans consider themselves fans of at least one cultural offering, with movies being the most popular.

Fans of South Korean Popular Entertainment and Products



Q27. Do you identify as a fan of any of the following?
 ▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.
 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

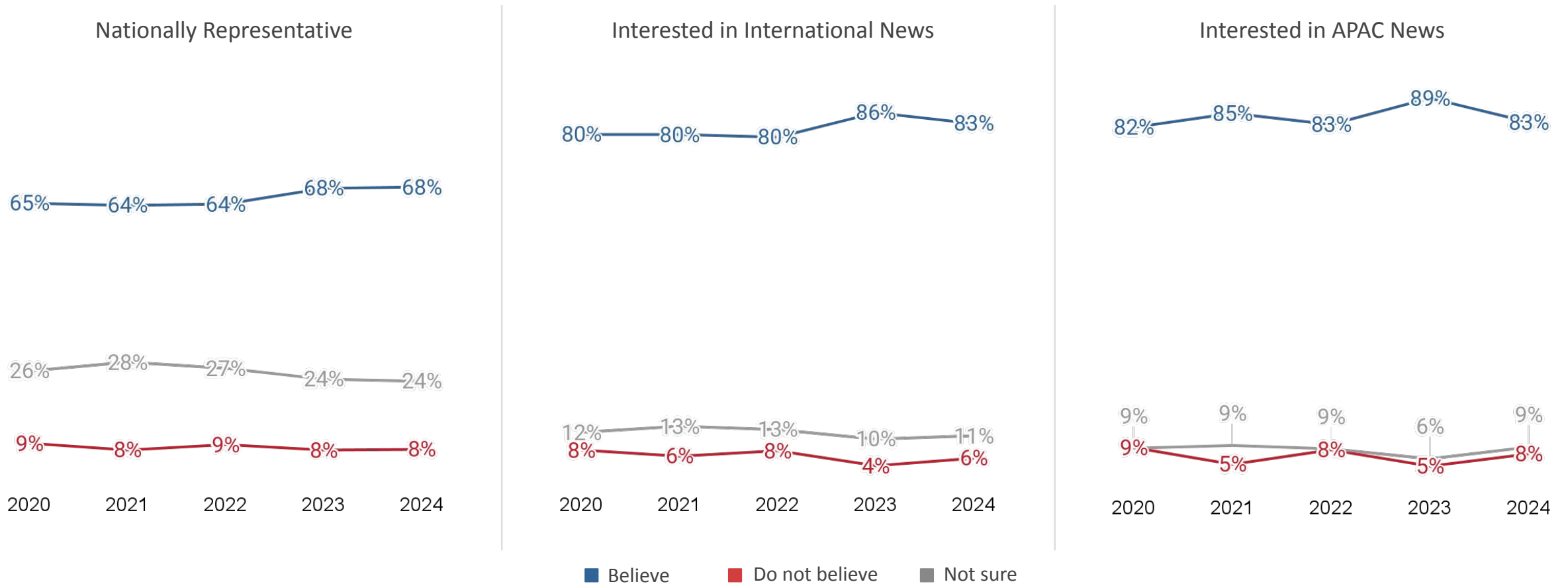
AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH KOREA

American public opinion shows strong support for the military alliance with South Korea. Majorities believe in the importance of the US-South Korea military alliance, see East Asia as a vital region for US national security interests, and support maintaining US troop levels in South Korea. Those who follow international and/or APAC news hold these beliefs to an even stronger degree.

Trade and economics and countering the rise of China are seen as the most important national security interests in East Asia, more than defending US friends and allies. However, there is still strong support for assisting South Korea in the event of a cyber-attack, and Americans resist a choice between prioritizing South Korea or Taiwan, with a majority of those committed to defense wanting to defend both.

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

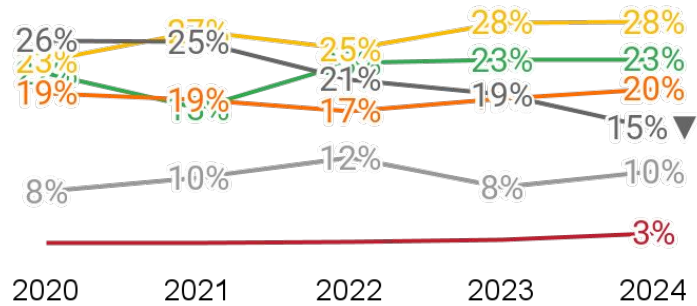
Americans hold a strong belief that the US military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interest of the US. About a quarter of Americans are not sure about this question, but news-interested Americans show greater certainty.



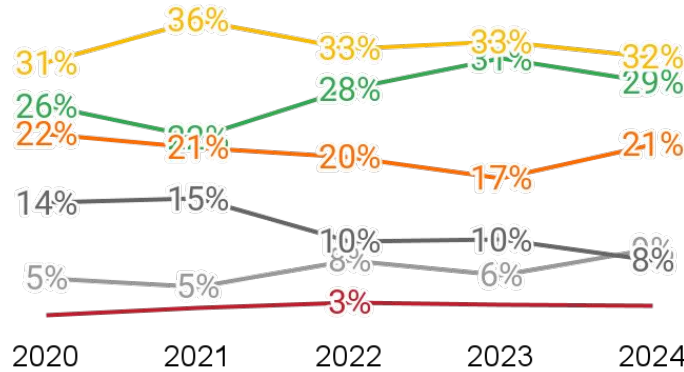
Views on Current US Military Alliances

Over the past 5 years, Americans in general and those interested in international and APAC news show decreasing uncertainty around the value of military alliances. A majority of all groups would maintain all alliances as they are or maintain all, but with reforms.

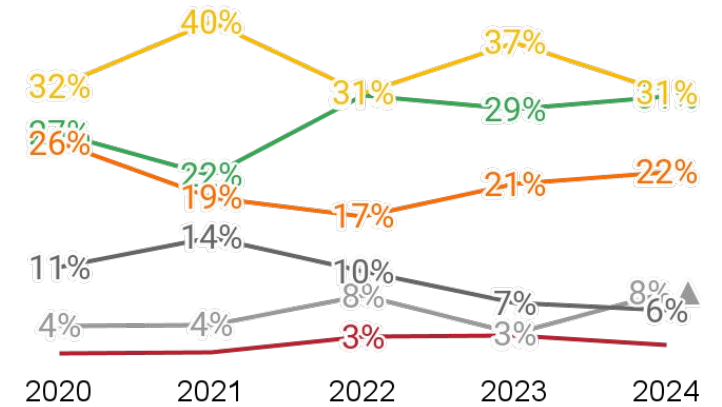
Nationally Representative



Interested in International News



Interested in APAC News



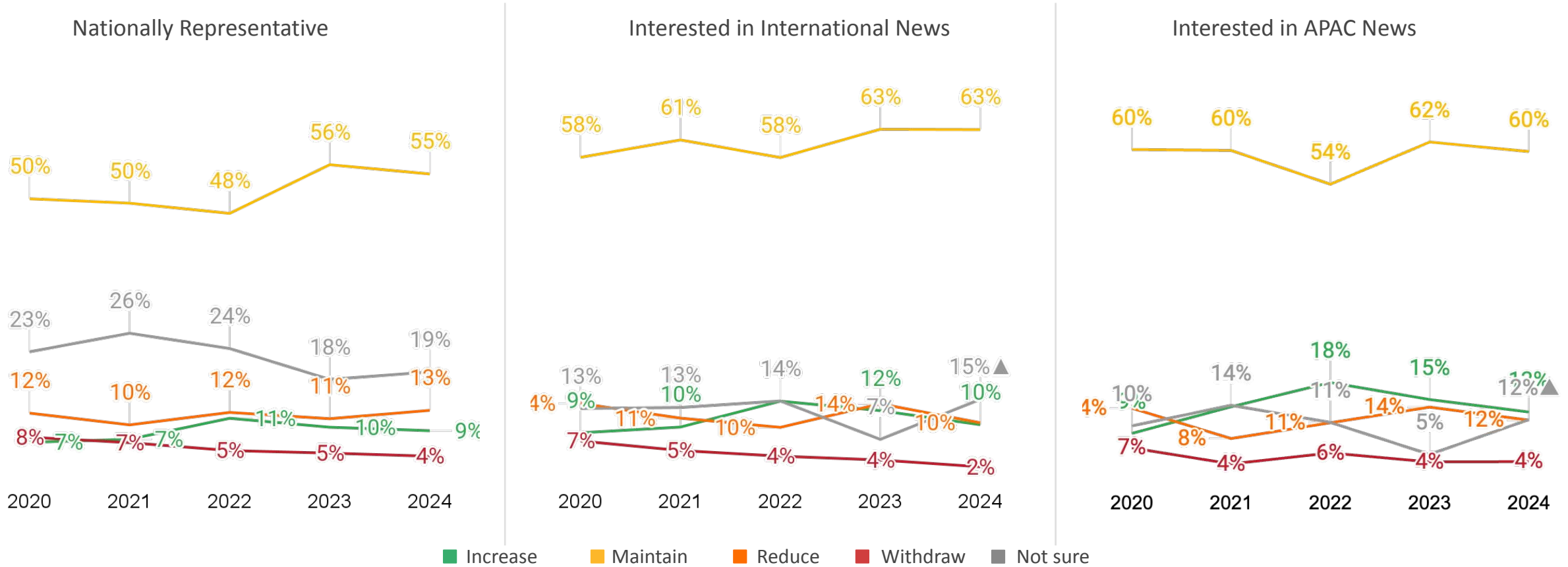
- Maintain all alliances as they are
 ■ Maintain all alliances, but with reforms
 ■ Maintain some alliances, while ending others
- End all alliances
 ■ Not sure
 ■ Do not know enough to answer



Q11. Which comes closest to how you feel about current US military alliances?
 ▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.
 Nat Rep n sizes range from 1122 to 1248. Internat News n sizes range from 509 to 580. APAC News n sizes range from 278 to 336.

Views on US Troops in South Korea

For the second year in a row, a majority of Americans support maintaining US troop levels in South Korea, although international news and APAC news interested Americans show a statistically significant increase in uncertainty on this question in 2024.



Q18. The US currently maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea. For context/comparison, the US also has 53,000 troops in Japan and currently has 35,000 troops in Germany. In your opinion, should the United States increase, maintain, reduce, or withdraw its military forces from South Korea?

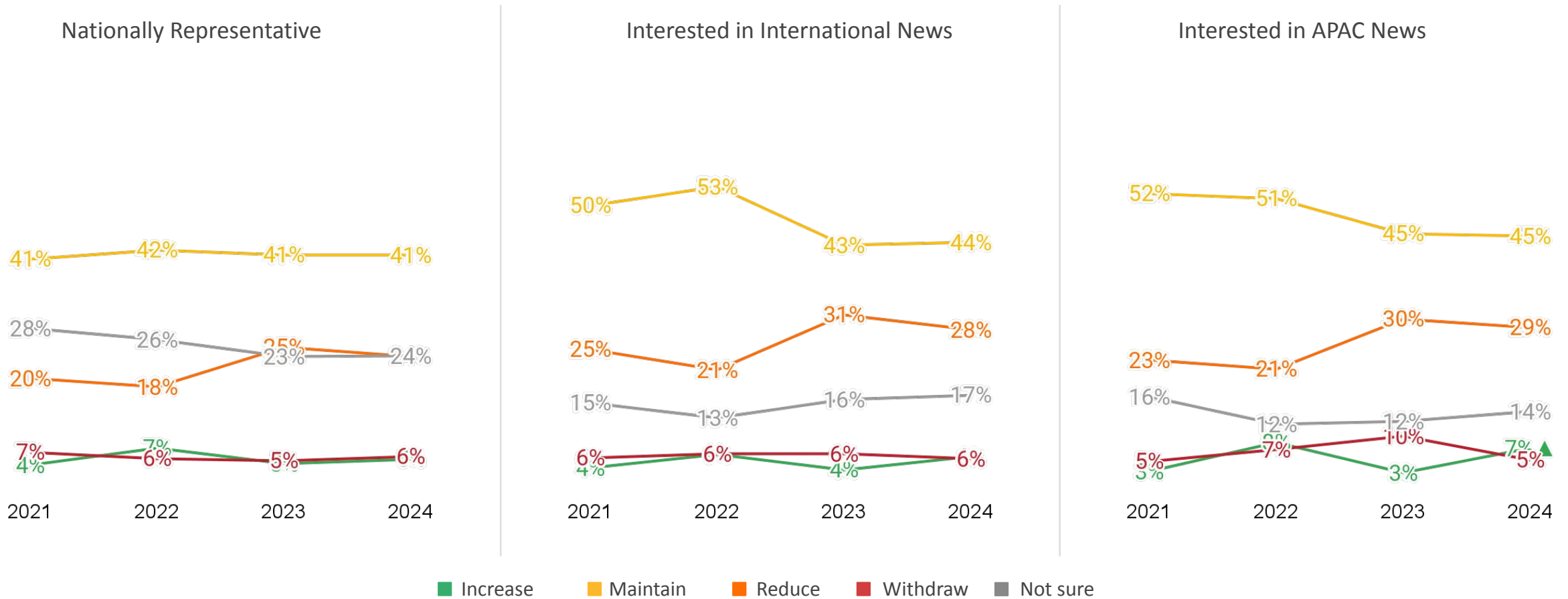
Note: Troop numbers change year-to-year.

▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

Nat Rep n sizes range from 1122 to 1248. Internat News n sizes range from 509 to 580. APAC News n sizes range from 278 to 336.

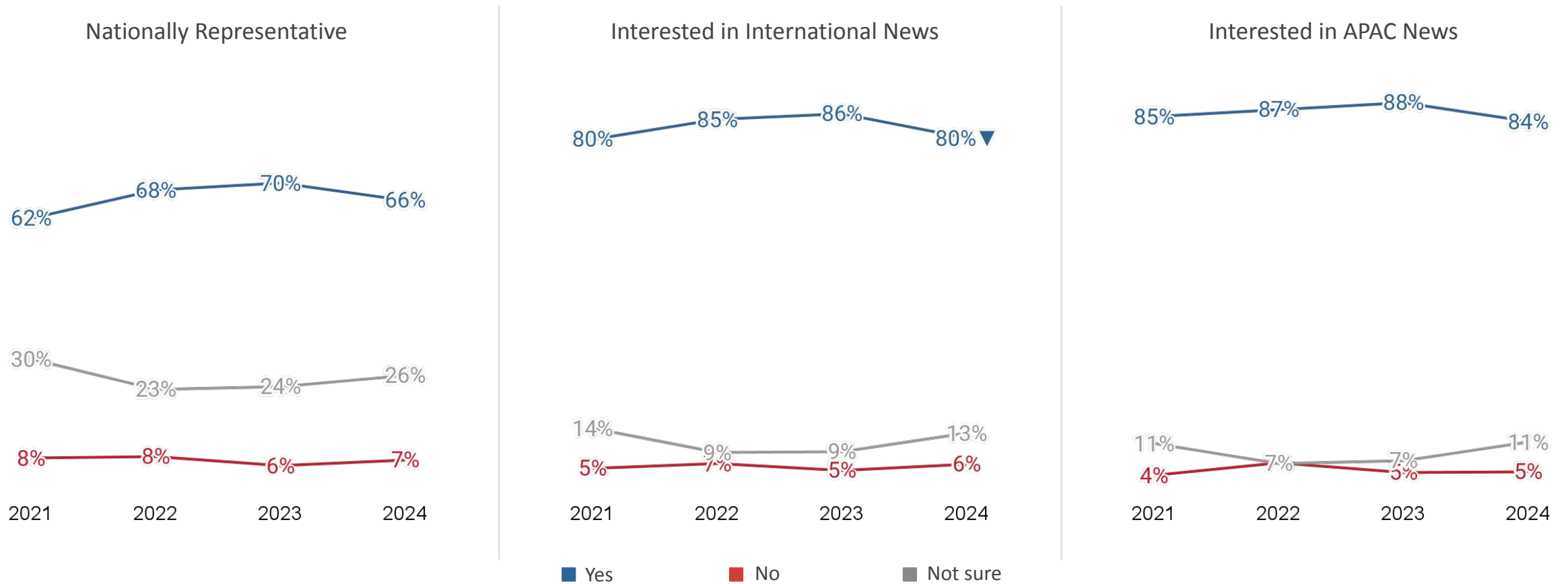
Possible Impact of Nuclear Arms Agreement With North Korea on US Troop Levels in South Korea

A plurality of Americans as well as international and APAC news interested Americans would maintain troop levels in South Korea, even if the US reaches an agreement with North Korea that it give up its nuclear weapons.



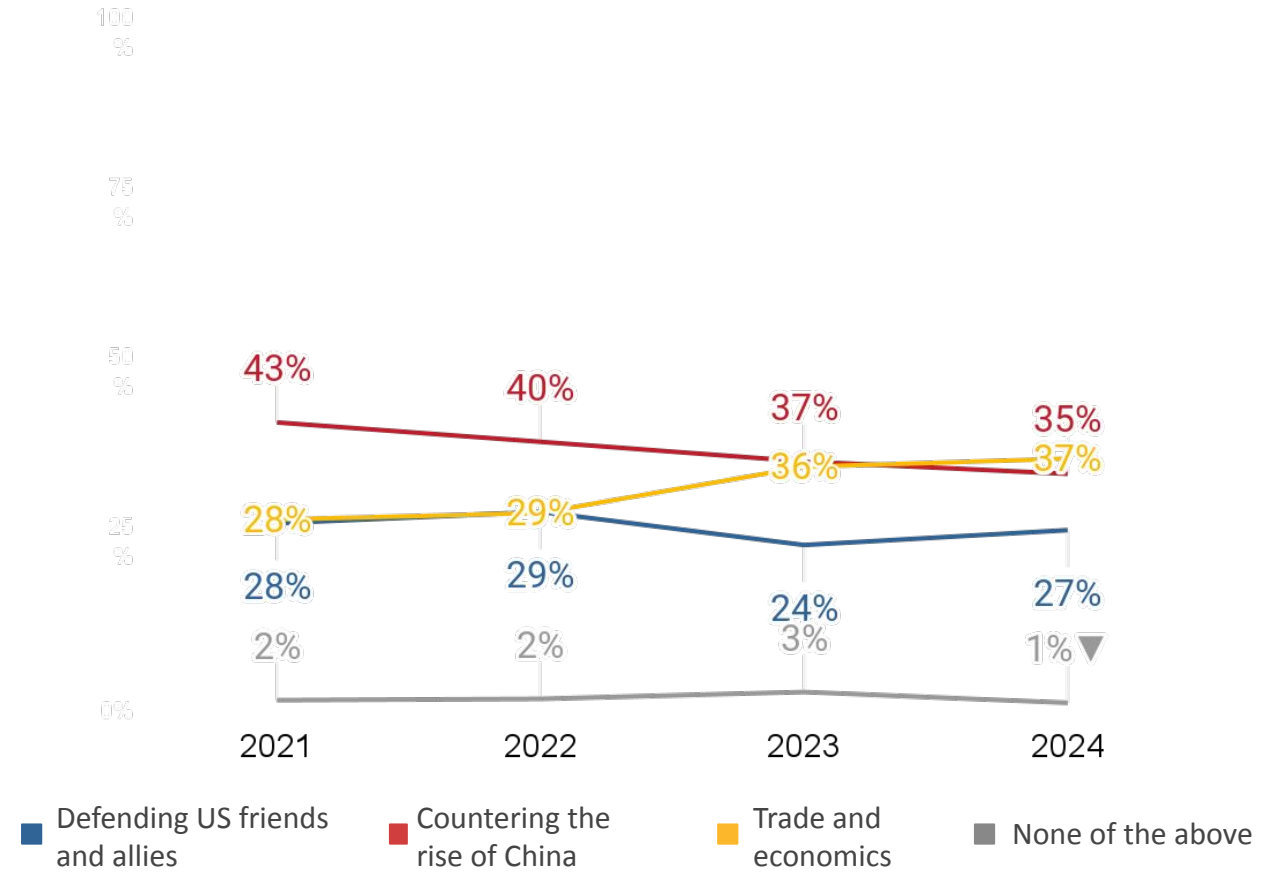
Views on East Asia as a Vital Region for US National Interests

Two-thirds of Americans and 8-in-10 Americans interested in international or APAC news believe that East Asia is a vital region to US national interests, though the percent of international news interested Americans making this assessment has declined since 2023.



Those who believe that East Asia is a vital region for US national interests are most likely to cite trade and economics and countering the rise of China as the most important US interests in the region. Trade and economics outpace defense of US friends and allies in recent years as a vital interest.

Most Important US National Interest in East Asia



Q28b. What do you believe to be the most important interest for the United States in East Asia?

IF Q28==Yes

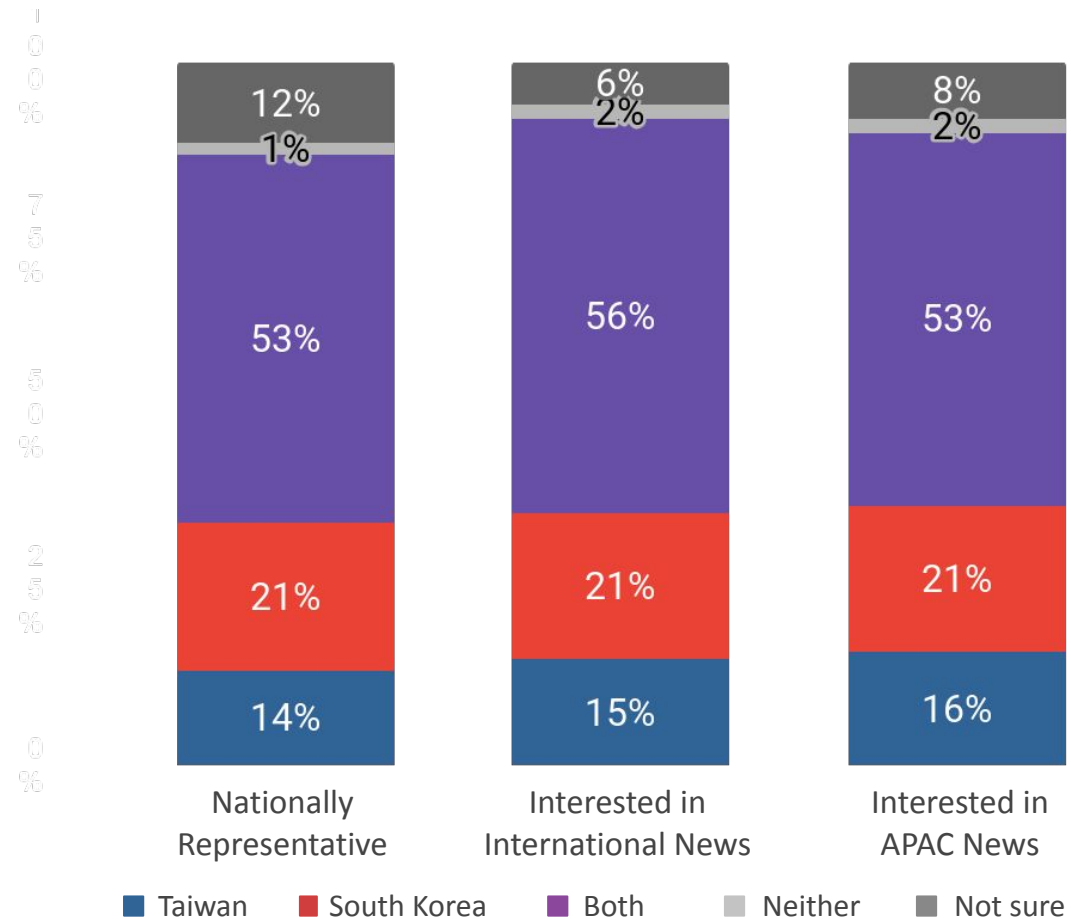
▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.

2021 n=731; 2022 n=864; 2023 n=859; 2024 n=817

US adults who support defending friends and allies or countering the rise of China resist pressure to choose between Taiwan and South Korea when it comes to their defense. Over half would come to the aid of both.

US Defense of East Asian Allies

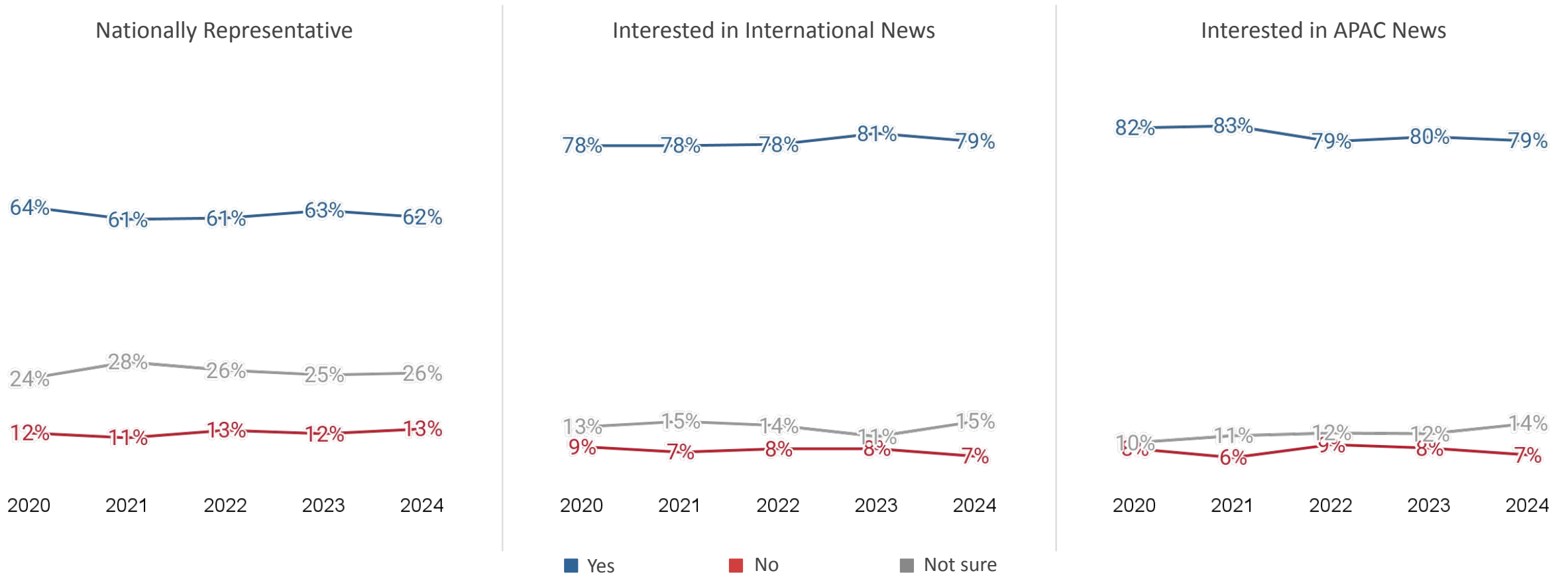
Added 2024



defend_taiwan_sk: If the US has to choose between defending Taiwan and defending South Korea, which is the more important priority? Added 2024, included "Not sure" option
 IF Q28b == "Defending US friends and allies" or "Countering the rise of China"
 Nat Rep n=508; Internat News n=281; APAC News n=139

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

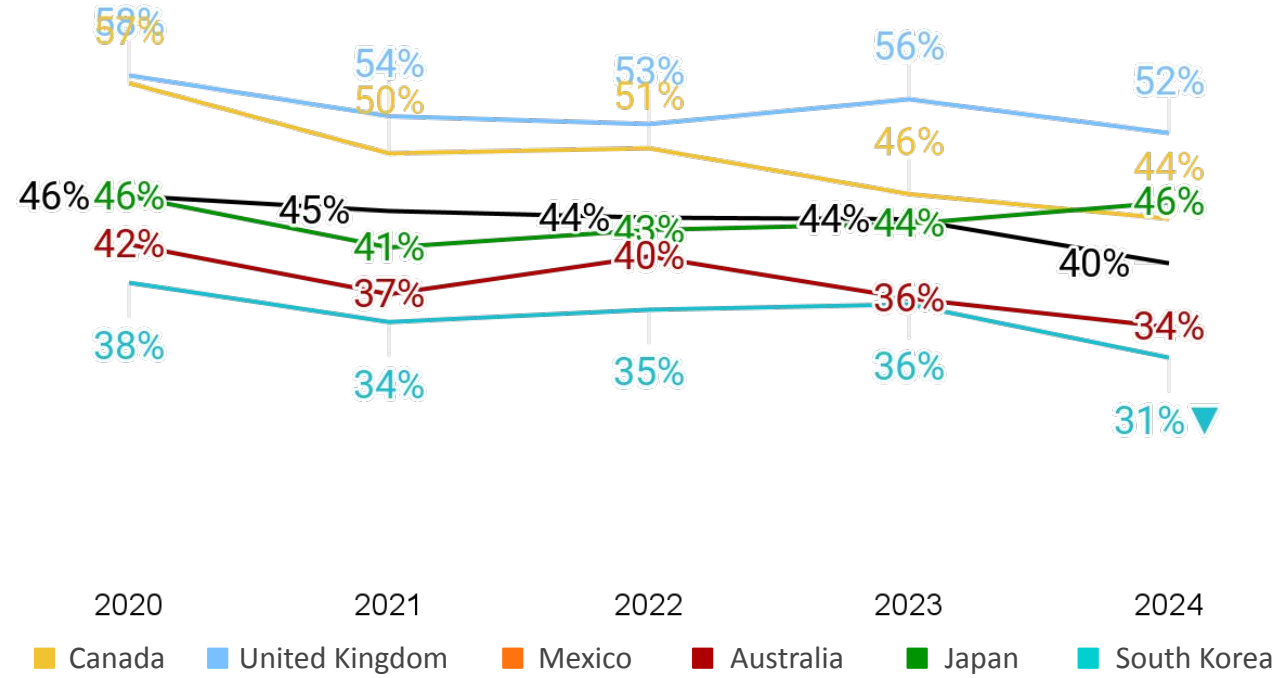
There is broad support for the US assisting South Korea in the event of a cyber-attack from North Korea or China, with those interested in international and APAC news showing even higher levels of support compared to Americans in general.



Countries/Regions the US Should Cooperate With on Cyber Issues (Top 5 plus South Korea)*

South Korea is just outside the top 5 countries that Americans would like to see the US cooperate with on cyber issues, after showing a significant year-on-year decline to 31%.

The UK receives the most support for this type of cooperation.



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

*Top five plus South Korea of seventeen countries are displayed on this slide.
 ▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.
 2020: N=1248; 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

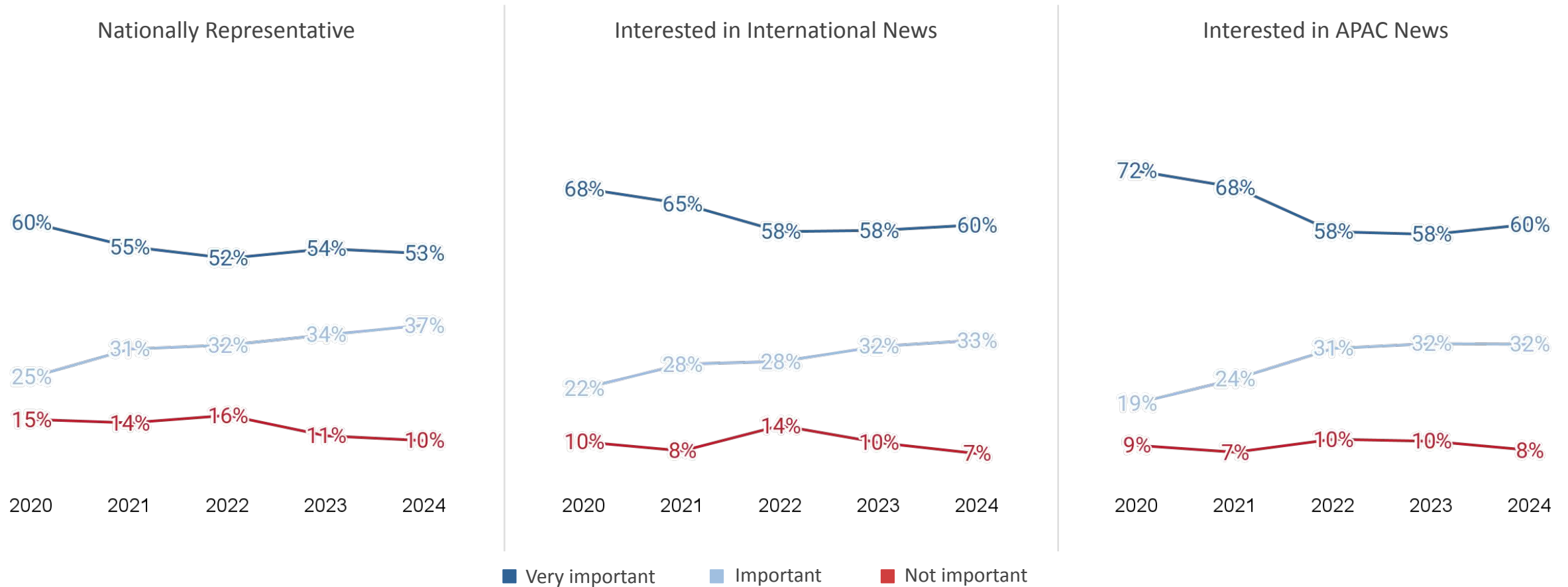
AMERICANS' VIEWS ON THE NORTH KOREA CHALLENGE

9-in-10 Americans find it important that North Korea give up its military nuclear capabilities, though fewer think this is *very* important compared to five years ago. Americans show a similar pattern around the importance of pushing for human rights improvements in North Korea (8-in-10 support it, but a decreasing share think it *very* important).

A significant decrease in Americans believing that no country should have military nuclear capabilities erases last year's significant increase. Half of Americans support the US continuing to maintain its military nuclear capabilities, while only 11% think this of North Korea. Americans group South Korea among the more acceptable countries to develop military nuclear capabilities.

Importance of North Korea Giving Up Its Nuclear Capabilities

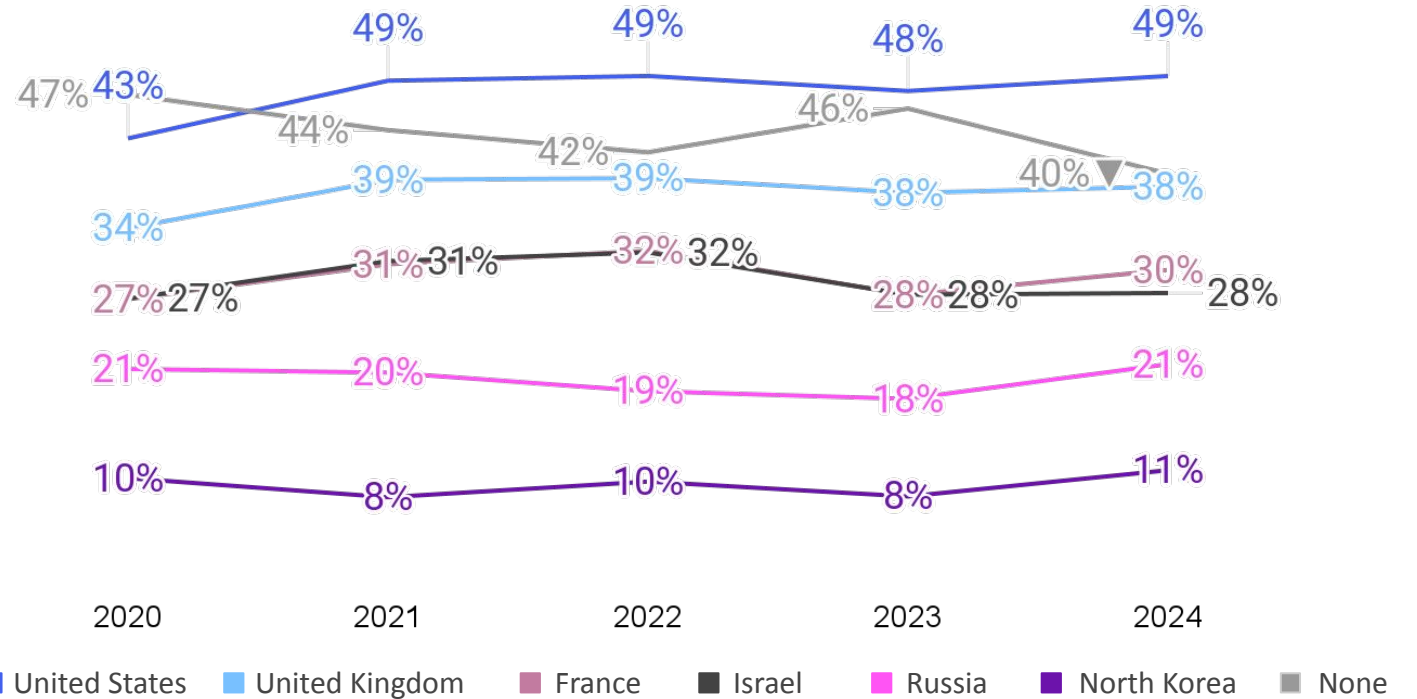
9-in-10 Americans continue to consider it important that North Korea give up its military nuclear capabilities, but the current share who consider this *very* important is lower than it was five years ago. A similar trend is apparent for those interested in international news and APAC news.



2024 marks a significant decline in the percent of Americans who believe that no country listed should maintain military nuclear capabilities.

Among those listed, there is greatest support for the US to maintain its capabilities, and least support for North Korea.

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.

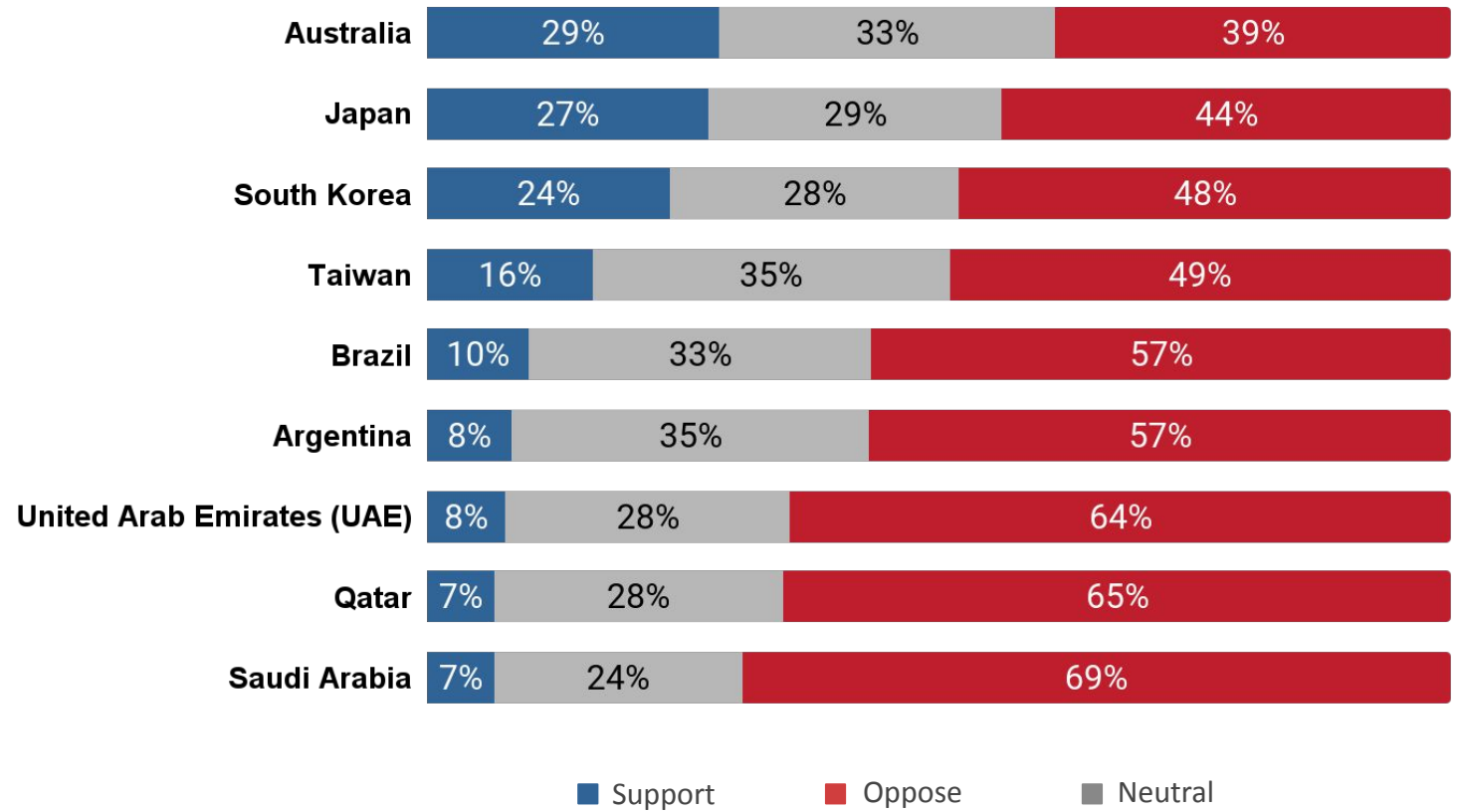
*Top five plus North Korea and "None" of nine countries are displayed on this slide.
 ▲ ▼ indicates significant change between 2023 and 2024 waves at 95% confidence.
 2020: N=1248; 2021: N=1122; 2022: N=1172; 2023: N=1177; 2024: N=1184

Nearly as many Americans support South Korea developing military nuclear capabilities as support Australia and Japan.



Support For Other Countries Developing Military Nuclear Capabilities

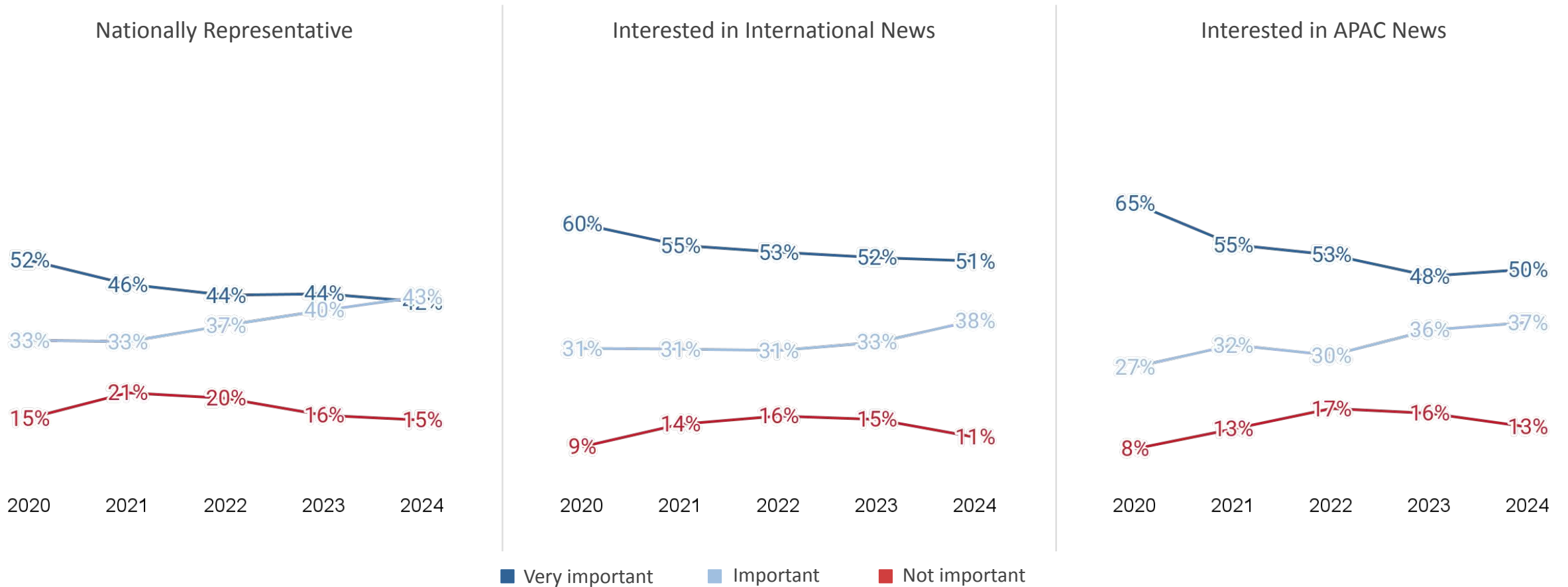
Added 2024



nuclear_capabilities: In your opinion, which of the following do you feel should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities?
2024: N=1184

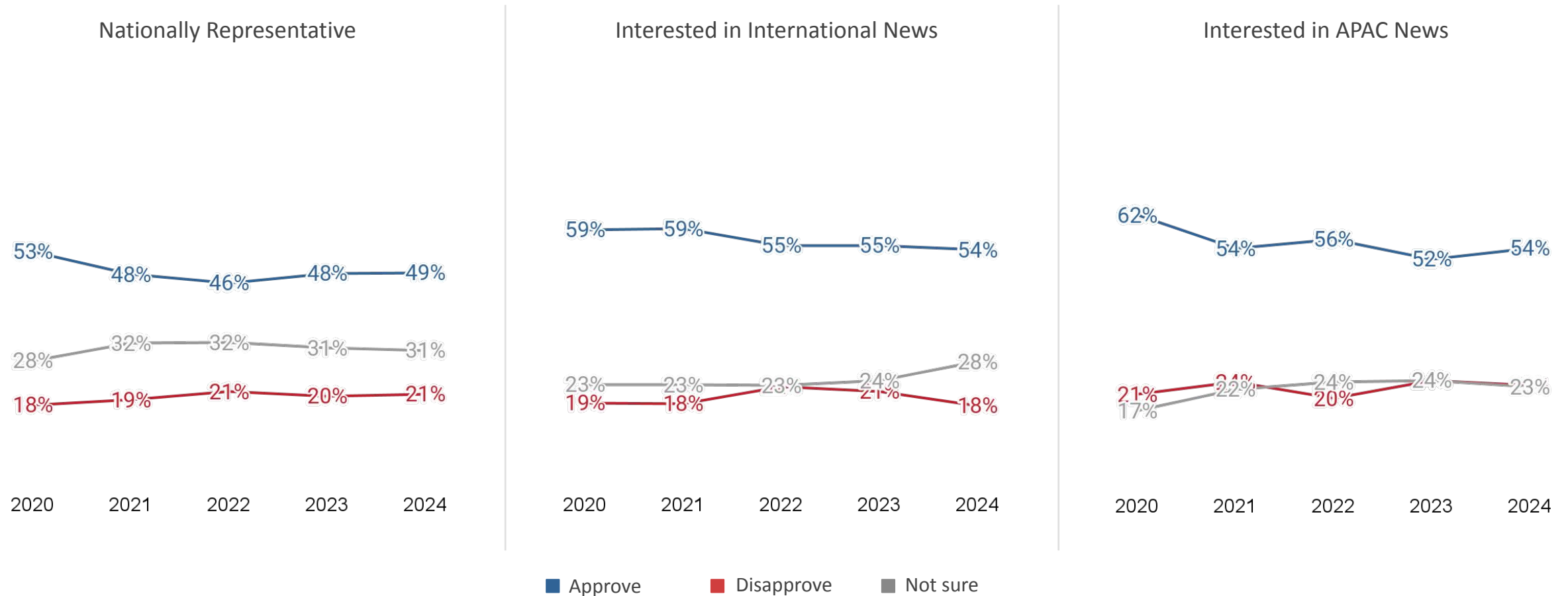
Importance of US Pushing for Human Rights Improvements in North Korea

For several years, about 80% of Americans have considered it important that the US push for human rights improvement in North Korea. Over the same period, the share of Americans considering it *very* important has declined relative to those calling it important.



Approval of US Providing Humanitarian Assistance to North Korean Citizens

About half of Americans continue to approve of the US sending humanitarian assistance to North Korean citizens.



Thank You

For additional information about this report, please contact:

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