

# American Public Attitudes on U.S. Foreign Policy in Northeast Asia and on the Korean Peninsula, 2025

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## Executive Summary

This year's KEI/YouGov survey comes at a moment of profound uncertainty in U.S. foreign policy. The Donald Trump administration has unsettled established trade arrangements, raised questions about the durability of U.S. alliance commitments, and injected unpredictability into U.S. engagement with long-standing partners such as South Korea.

Against this backdrop, American public opinion provides a clearer sense of continuity. The survey reveals enduring support for South Korea as a partner, stable recognition of the alliance's value, and consistent preference for more open trade, investment, and cultural exchange, even as geopolitical turbulence and partisan divides complicate policymaking. Yet, there are signs that American public opinion toward foreign countries may be undergoing a transition, suggesting possible shifts in global alignments. Finally, within this evolving perception, the type of state appears to matter: Americans tend to weigh national security, trade, and investment differently depending on whether a country is viewed as an ally, partner, competitor, or adversary.

When we drill down deeper, the data shows that Americans continue to view their country as the most influential global actor, though perceptions of U.S. power have softened slightly in recent years. China is perceived as the second-most important or very influential state, with South Korea and Japan forming the second tier of influential states. At the same time, the distinction between allies and adversaries appears to be eroding. Since 2020, Americans have grown less certain in categorizing countries like Mexico, India, and China, reflecting an administration that is blurring traditional friend-foe lines through its rhetoric and actions. Yet even in this shifting landscape, South Korea's position is remarkably consistent: two-thirds of Americans maintain a favorable view of the country, and cultural exposure—through food, films, music, and travel—continues to deepen goodwill.

Support for the U.S.-South Korea alliance is one of the survey's most striking constants. Roughly 63 percent of Americans affirm that the alliance advances U.S. national security, and about 60 percent favor keeping or increasing U.S. troop levels on the Korean Peninsula. Even if North Korea were to denuclearize, nearly half expressed a desire to maintain or strengthen the U.S. presence. These responses indicate that the American public views the alliance not only as a hedge against North Korea but also as a stabilizing arrangement with significant regional implications. When asked about defending South Korea and Taiwan in a contingency, nearly half of the respondents favored defending both. Among those who chose only one country, South Korea was viewed as the bigger priority. On nuclear weapons, however, the public draws a clear redline. Americans overwhelmingly oppose South Korea developing its own arsenal, reinforcing their confidence in U.S. extended deterrence.

Economic issues are another domain of resilience. Nearly 68 percent of Americans believe trade with South Korea benefits the United States, and only one in ten supports higher tariffs on South Korean goods—an important counterweight to the Trump administration’s protectionist impulses. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from allies such as Japan, Germany, and South Korea is viewed positively, while investment from China is met with skepticism. On defense industrial cooperation, a majority favors closer supply chain integration with allies, though concerns about technology transfer persist. These attitudes point to a nuanced public consensus: openness is welcome but must be paired with safeguards that protect U.S. technological advantages and national security.

When it comes to North Korea, Americans remain as wary as ever. Only about 12 percent view North Korea favorably, while large majorities continue to prioritize denuclearization, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. Yet, approval of the Trump administration’s handling of South Korea policy has sunk to a record low at 33 percent, driven less by outright opposition than by uncertainty as nearly half of Americans say they are “not sure.” This ambivalence underscores the lack of consistency and certainty in Washington and the degree to which sudden policy shifts and surprises have eroded public confidence.

Looking ahead, the survey offers a roadmap for constructive U.S.-South Korea cooperation that is firmly aligned with American public sentiment. Americans want the two countries to focus on economic security (i.e., technology, supply chains, and trade rules) alongside security priorities tied to China and North Korea. Human rights, global health, and climate change are also seen as important areas of collaboration, though less central. These preferences suggest that even as the U.S. government lurches between protectionism and unpredictability, the American public remains the steady hand for policies that reinforce alliance stability, deepen economic integration, and position South Korea as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region.

This year’s survey illustrates a paradox. On the one hand, public approval of the Trump administration’s handling of South Korea is at its lowest point in years, reflecting confusion about tariffs, inconsistent messaging, and diplomatic missteps. On the other hand, public support for the alliance, trade, investment, and cultural exchange with South Korea remains deeply entrenched. For policymakers in Washington and Seoul, the lesson is clear. Beneath the noise of a volatile administration, the American public continues to support a strong and resilient partnership with South Korea. Harnessing that support by aligning alliance policy with public priorities, communicating its value in terms of U.S. prosperity and security, and reinforcing shared democratic interests will be essential to navigating the uncertainties of the present moment.

*“The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right...”*

Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson’s letter to Edward Carrington dated January 16, 1787<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Every year, KEI and YouGov conduct an annual survey to assess American public attitudes about U.S. foreign policy and relations with allies, including South Korea. The last annual survey from 2024 confirmed several patterns and trends that showed the American public maintaining a positive impression of critical allies and partners while threatened by and wary of rivals. The majority of Americans also appeared supportive of sustained military engagement and trade with South Korea, while concerned about the North Korean nuclear threat. There was also strong foundational support for the U.S.-South Korea-Japan trilateral partnership and U.S.-South Korea bilateral cooperation, in addition to a recognition of the importance of stronger ties with critical partners to address security and economic challenges.

The domestic political environment surrounding U.S. foreign policy and national security has changed significantly since the inauguration of the Donald Trump administration in January 2025. In light of the series of tariff threats and trade negotiations that have followed since Trump took office, how have American attitudes about South Korea and Northeast Asia changed? What implications, if any, can be drawn about the findings from this year’s survey that could inform policymakers as they move forward in this unprecedented period of uncertainty?

There are three important macro trends that can be highlighted from this year’s data. One is that Americans continue to support existing alliances and trade relations, including with South Korea. Second, the American public opinion appears to be undergoing a transition with respect to how they view U.S. relations with other states, especially with respect to countries perceived as “partners” or “adversaries.” The third trend is that Americans tend to weigh U.S. policies on national security, trade, and investment differently depending on whether the country on the other side of these policies is viewed as an ally, partner, competitor, or adversary.

The key findings from this year’s survey are as follows:

- **Global Influence:** Americans continue to see the United States as the most influential global actor, with 68 percent describing it as “very influential,” though this is a small decline from 72 percent last year. China follows at 49 percent, while Japan (with an overall influence of 86 percent) and South Korea (75 percent overall influence) fall into the second tier of influential countries.
- **Foreign Policy Challenges and Threats:** Russia (66 percent) and China (64 percent) are seen as the most critical foreign policy challenges, followed by Israel (40 percent), North Korea (35 percent), and Iran (27 percent). On threats to U.S. national security, Russia (54 percent) and China (48 percent) rank highest, with North Korea (36 percent) and Iran (34 percent) also looming large.

- **Partners vs. Adversaries:** There is growing ambiguity in how Americans categorize allies and adversaries. The partner-adversary gap has narrowed by 13.5 points since 2020, with Mexico showing the sharpest decline from 50 percent identifying it as a partner in 2020 to just 36 percent in 2025.
- **South Korea's Favorability and Soft Power:** Attitudes toward South Korea remain stable and positive, with 66 percent viewing it favorably. Soft power plays an important role, as 60 percent say South Korean culture improves the country's image in the United States, led by food (42 percent), movies (15 percent), beauty products (15 percent), fine art (15 percent), K-pop (12 percent), and TV shows (12 percent). Among U.S. travelers to South Korea, 64 percent reported their impressions became more positive after visiting the country.
- **U.S.-South Korea Alliance:** Public support for the alliance remains strong. Nearly 63 percent say the alliance serves U.S. national security, and about 60 percent support maintaining or increasing the current U.S. troop levels. Even if North Korea denuclearized, nearly half (46 percent) expressed a need to maintain or increase troops.
- **Taiwan vs. Korea Contingencies:** A plurality (47 percent) says the United States should defend both South Korea and Taiwan in a contingency. If forced to choose, more would prioritize South Korea (24 percent) over Taiwan (14 percent).
- **Nuclear Weapons:** Americans oppose South Korea developing its own nuclear arsenal, with only 20 percent supporting the proposition.
- **Trade, Tariffs, and Investment:** A strong majority (68 percent) say trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States, and only 10 percent support raising tariffs on South Korean goods. Investments from allies such as Japan (71 percent), Germany (70 percent), and South Korea (62 percent) are seen as positive, while only 34 percent say the same of China.
- **Defense Industrial Cooperation:** A majority (56 percent) favor closer cooperation with allies in defense supply chains, although 30 percent expressed support for stricter limits on defense technology sharing.
- **North Korea:** Perceptions remain deeply negative, with just 11.6 percent expressing a favorable view. Strong majorities emphasized the importance of denuclearization (87 percent), human rights (85 percent), and humanitarian aid (54 percent).
- **Assessment of the Trump Administration's Policies Toward South Korea:** Approval of the Trump administration's handling of South Korea policy is at a record low (33 percent approve, 49 percent unsure). Looking forward, Americans want cooperation to focus on technology (50 percent), supply chains (48 percent), and trade rules (39 percent).

## Methodology

KEI partnered with YouGov to conduct a nationwide survey. The final dataset includes 1,181 respondents: 1,000 adults representing the general U.S. population, and 181 additional adults who were identified as being especially interested in international news. The sample was drawn from the YouGov panel in the United States (6.6 million) between September 2 and 12, 2025.

To build this sample, YouGov first interviewed about 2,000 people taken from its U.S. panel. From that group, 1,000 respondents were carefully selected and adjusted so the group matched the U.S. population on key factors such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, region, homeownership, and past presidential vote choice. This process ensured that the survey accurately reflected the makeup of the broader U.S. population.

The oversample of individuals who follow international news was gathered and weighted separately to make sure they were properly represented. Afterward, this group was combined with the main sample in a way that preserved a balance between the general public and those who were more engaged with global affairs.

The survey results represent both a reliable snapshot of overall American public opinion and a more detailed look at the views of Americans who pay close attention to international issues. The margin of error in this survey is  $\pm 3.34$  percentage points.

See Appendix I for a more detailed explanation of the survey method and Appendix II for the questionnaire and baseline distribution.

## Perception of Global Influence, Challenges, and Threats

One question that KEI has continued asking in its annual survey is how Americans perceive the influence that different countries have on the world stage. While research in international relations emphasizes the role that balance of power plays in the international system and how relative power is an important consideration for shaping nation-state behavior, public perception about relative influence informs how a nation-state's realized impact within the system can be measured.<sup>2</sup> That is, relative power forms the basis for potential influence, while relative influence measures a nation-state's ability to affect others' actions.

When we observe this data over time, there is a generally stable trend in U.S. perception about the relative influence of countries, especially with respect to how they see the United States and China (See Figure 1). Nearly 68 percent of Americans consider the United States “very influential,” down from 72 percent last year. Although this percentage is higher than the response for China (49 percent), China is perceived as more influential than Russia (33 percent) and the European Union (29 percent), placing it in the highest tier of global influence. This also explains why the two countries also top the list of perceived influence.

Considerably more respondents thought that Japan (42 percent), the European Union (35 percent), India (33 percent), Israel (33 percent), Russia (33 percent), and South Korea (32 percent) were “fairly influential.” It is no surprise that these cases make up the next tier, where the difference in perception of overall influence between the third-ranked Japan (86 percent) and eighth-ranked South Korea (75 percent) is only about 11 percentage points.

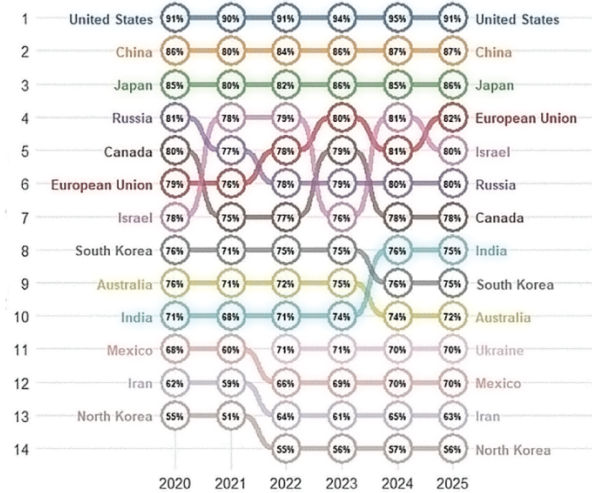
Even as some significant changes have been underway on the global stage since KEI first launched its annual survey, perceptions about the relative influence of countries have been relatively stable. Where we see hints of possible shifts is with respect to the relative positioning of Russia, Europe, and Israel. Although one may argue that the cross-temporal shifts in the magnitude of these changes are statistically meaningless—the typical difference in the share of respondents identifying these countries as being (very, fairly, or even slightly) influential is less than two percentage points in any given year—there are suggestive undertones associated with the overall trend in their relative ranks. This suggests that the perceived influence of Russia has considerably lagged in comparison to that of the European Union and Israel over the past several years, despite Russia's continued military involvement in Ukraine.

**Figure 1. American perception of relative influence of countries are generally stable with the largest share of Americans identifying the United States and China as being most influential countries on the world stage. South Korea has consistently ranked in the middle of this group.**

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

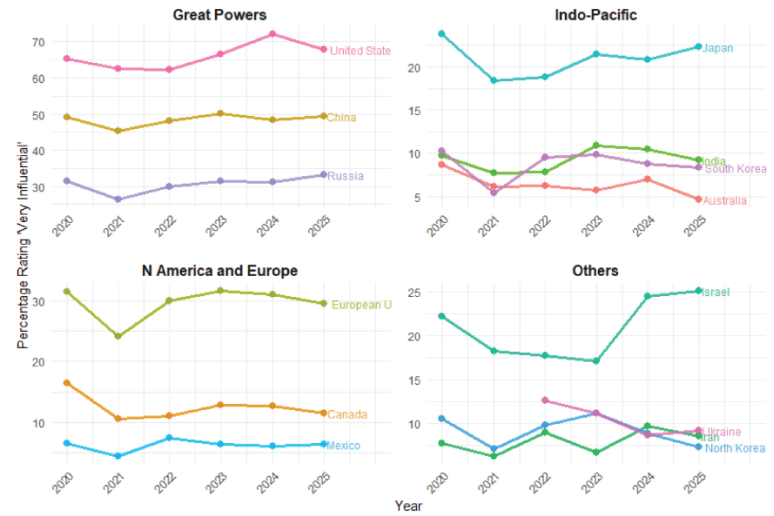
**Rank ordering of "overall influence" represents aggregate relative frequency of response for "very influential," "fairly influential," and "slightly influential" categories.**

Circular badges show actual percentage values for each country across all years (2020-2025)



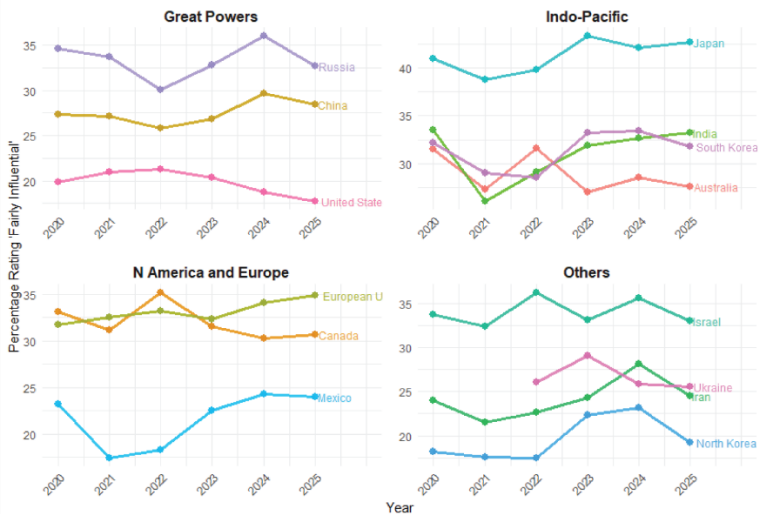
**'Very Influential' Ratings by Country Type (2020-2025)**

Time series showing individual country trajectories



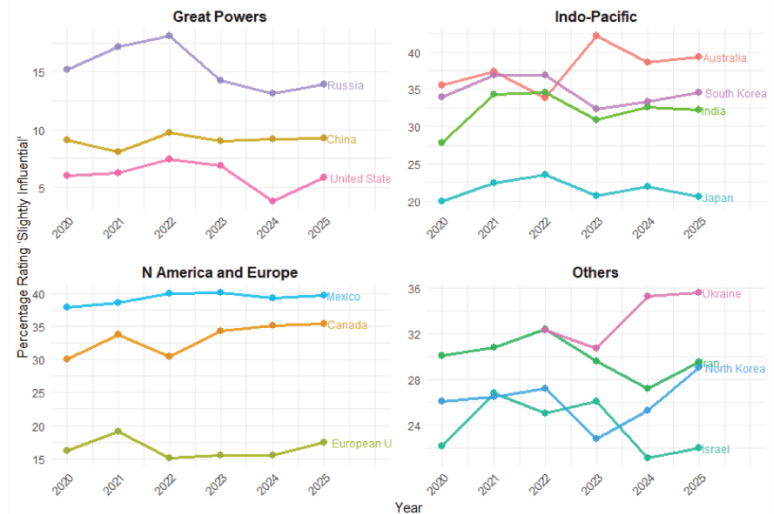
**'Fairly Influential' Ratings by Country Type (2020-2025)**

Time series showing individual country trajectories



**'Slightly Influential' Ratings by Country Type (2020-2025)**

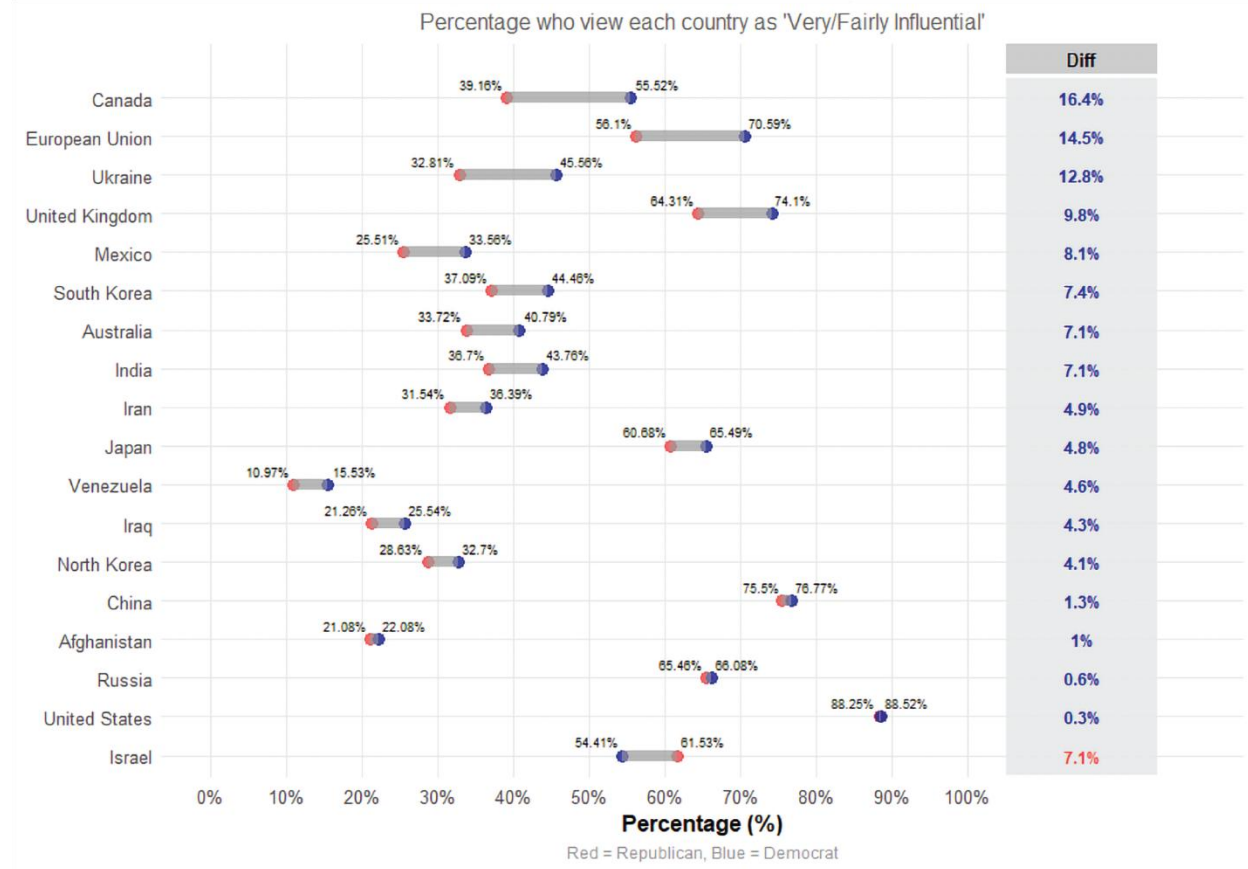
Time series showing individual country trajectories



Some recent research suggests that shifting attitudes on Russia and Israel may be attributed to widening partisan differences.<sup>3</sup> However, the data from this year’s KEI survey suggests that partisan differences in perceptions about Russia and Israel’s influence have been relatively small—or non-existent—compared to differences in partisan assessments of the influence among cases like Canada, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, or the European Union (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Data from the latest (2025) survey on American views about the relative influence of these countries suggests that the main driver behind trending recognition of Russia’s influence on the international stage is not due to partisan differences.

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



This result should be viewed alongside data on American public views regarding key U.S. foreign policy challenges. It is worth noting that while China is one of the most important foreign policy challenges for Americans, a greater number of Americans are recognizing Russia as an important challenge than in previous years. One could argue that as the conflict in Ukraine becomes more prolonged, American public concern about Russia will only continue to grow.

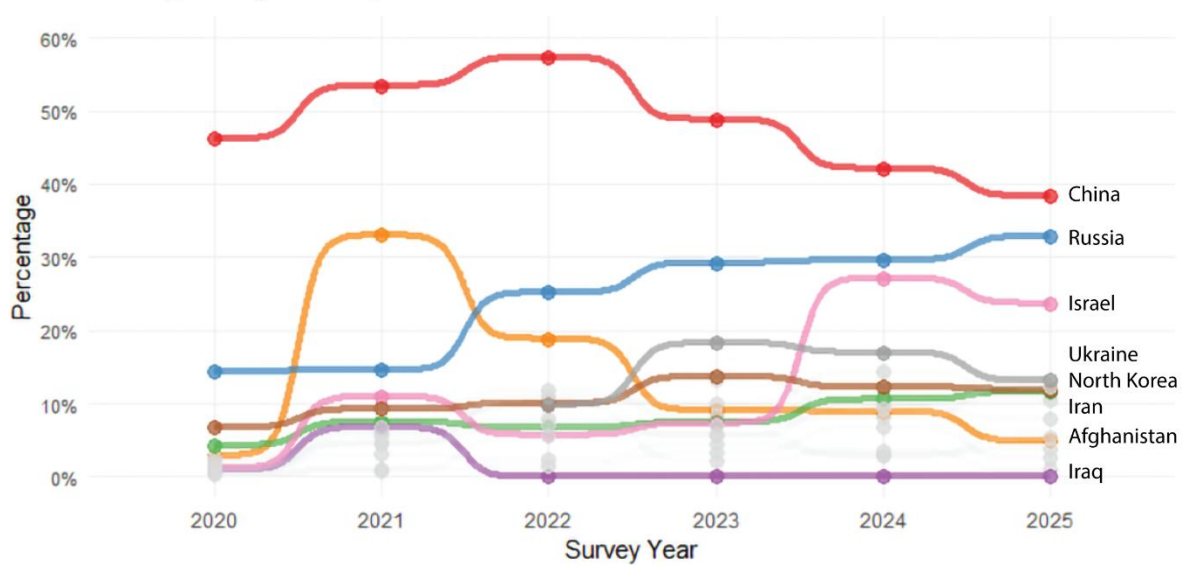
It is important to balance this observation with another question that asks the respondent to identify the most important foreign policy challenge for the United States. It is worth noting that China’s perception as a top foreign policy challenge is decreasing while Russia’s perception is trending up. When asked “which... countries and/or geographic regions... represent the most critical foreign policy challenges for the United States,” nearly 66

percent of respondents answered that Russia was either the greatest or second-greatest challenge, while 64 percent answered the same for China (See Figure 3). Roughly 40 percent of respondents identified Israel as the third-most important challenge, ahead of North Korea (35 percent).

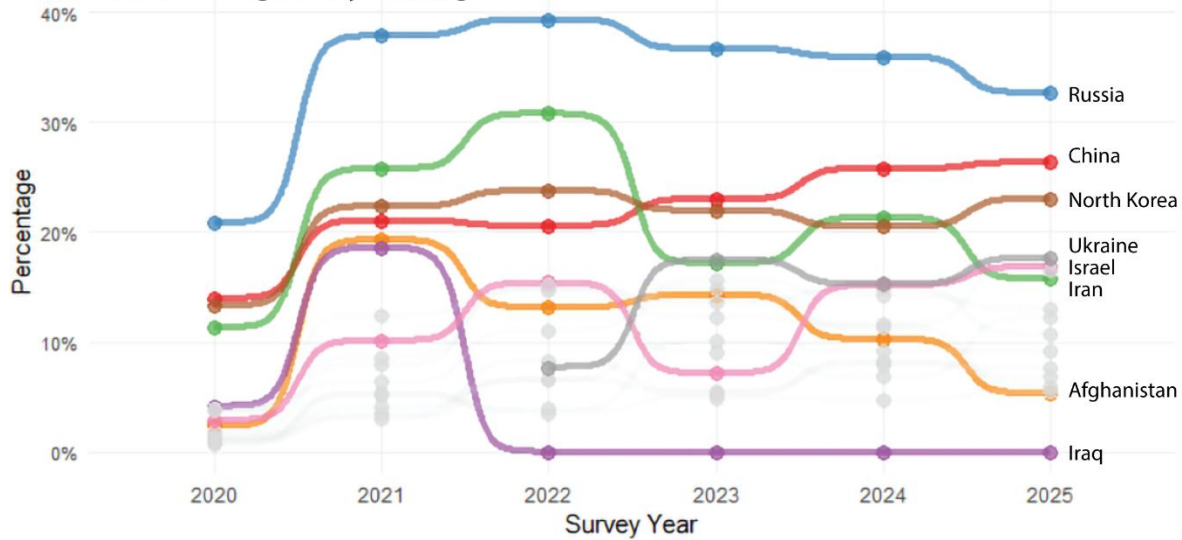
**Figure 3. China is still the greatest foreign policy challenge but American perception of China has been trending down compared to Russia. Israel has emerged as an important foreign policy challenge in recent years.**

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

**Greatest Foreign Policy Challenge**



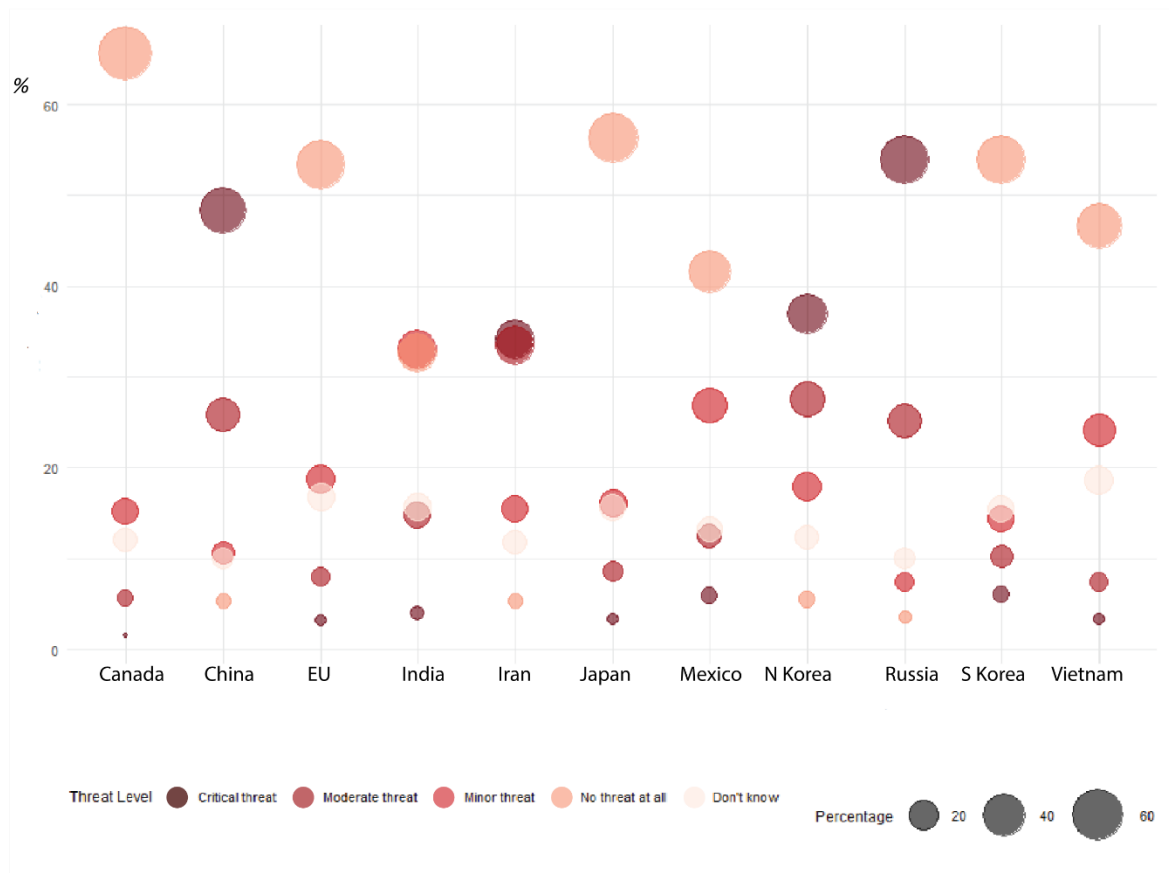
**Second Greatest Foreign Policy Challenge**



One factor potentially related to the perception of foreign policy challenges is the perception regarding the threat that these countries pose to the U.S. national security interest (See Figure 4). When asked how the respondent rated “the threat each country or region poses to the national security interest of the United States in the next 10 years,” nearly 54 percent named Russia as a critical threat, followed by China (48 percent), North Korea (36 percent), and Iran (34 percent).

**Figure 4. Most Americans perceive Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran as the most critical threat to U.S. national security interest.**

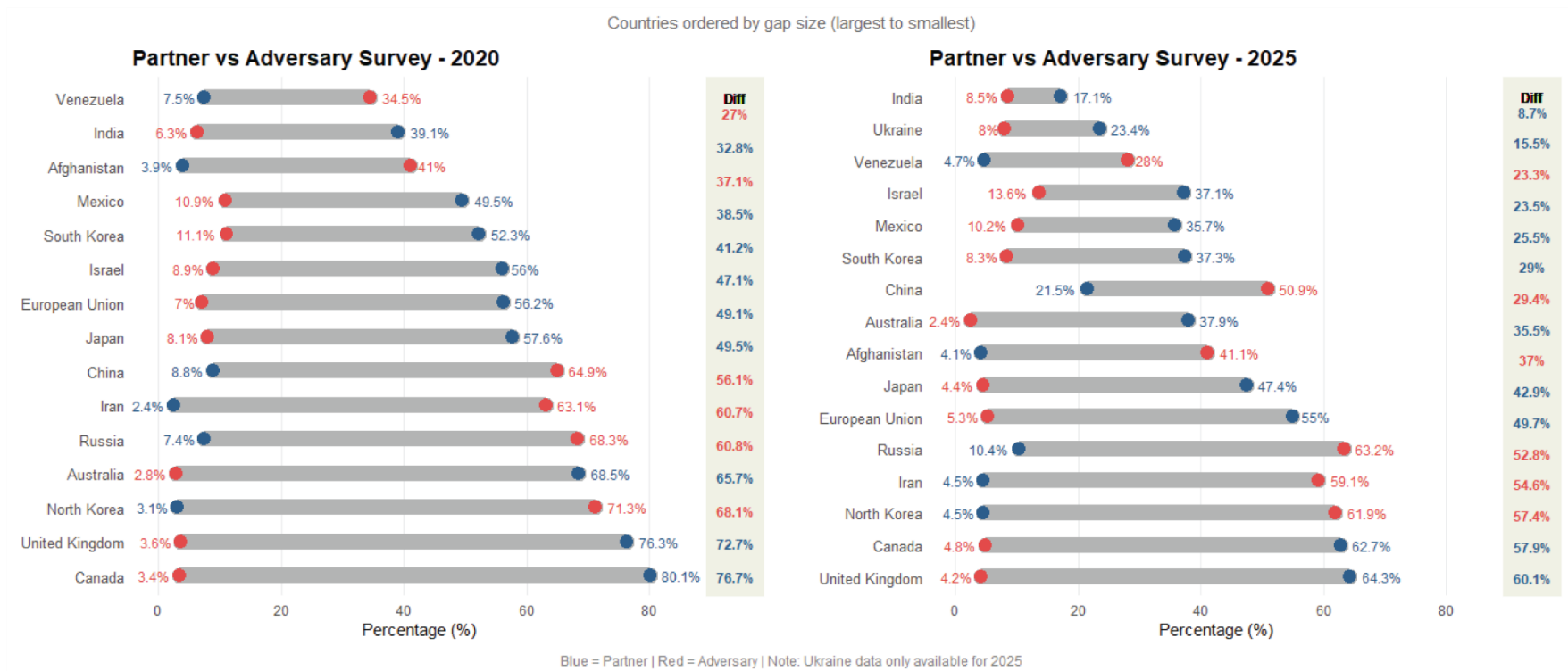
*Q: How would you rate the threat each country or region poses to the national security interest of the United States in the next 10 years?*



Whether the respondent sees the country as a partner or adversary may also be related to the above trends. When asked to rate whether the individual respondent sees the country as a critical partner or adversary of the United States, there is little to no doubt that the countries identified as a threat to U.S. national security interests were also perceived as adversaries of the United States (See Figure 5). Not surprisingly, this order has not changed over time. However, it is also worth noting that Americans appear less clear as to how they should categorize countries such as China, South Korea, Mexico, Israel, and India today than they did six years ago.

Figure 5. The difference in perception about whether a country can be considered to be a critical partner or adversary of the United States has decreased considerably in 2025 compared to 2020.

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



That is, the difference in the percentage of Americans who identified these countries as either critical partners or adversaries has *decreased* by a significant margin over the past six years. When we calculate the average difference in the share of respondents who tended to categorize a given country as an adversary or partner, there was a 13.5 percentage point decline over this period. The decline was more pronounced among partners, with the change in the average difference decreasing from 52 percent to 36 percent, which is a 16 percentage point decline. Among adversaries, that difference was smaller at 9.2 percentage points. More Americans are unsure whether to identify countries such as India or Mexico as a partner today than in 2020. In 2020, nearly 50 percent of respondents identified Mexico as a partner, and nearly 11 percent identified Mexico as an adversary. In the latest survey, only about 36 percent of respondents identified Mexico as a critical partner, while 10 percent identified it as an adversary. This finding suggests that there is less clarity among Americans about how they view these countries today.

One possible explanation is the new administration's approach to managing its diplomatic relations on the international stage.<sup>4</sup> The American public's thinking and assessment about these countries is subject to influence when the president openly criticizes traditional allies while expressing admiration for adversaries, thereby blurring the boundaries between a friend and foe and leading to public questions about how to categorize these countries.

# South Korea

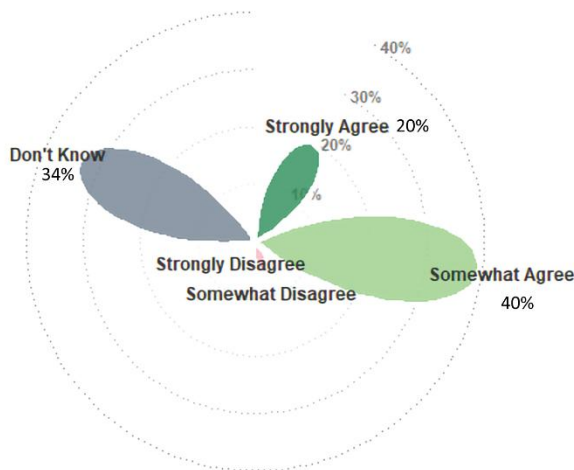
This brings us to our next discussion on American public attitudes about South Korea, an important ally in the Indo-Pacific region. While the previous section noted macro shifts at the global level, the data on American perceptions about South Korea is generally more robust and stable. When asked to rate the overall favorability of South Korea, over 66 percent of Americans expressed that they had a favorable impression. Given that this question has been included every year since 2020 and the six-year average favorability stands at about 68 percent, a discrepancy of 2.6 percentage points from the previous year of 68.7 percent is statistically non-significant. Unfavorability also declined from 9.3 percent in 2024 to 8.8 percent in 2025—a small drop from the six-year average of 9.49 percent.

“Over **68 percent** of Americans expressed that they had a favorable impression [of South Korea].”

## Soft Power

Figure 6. American impression of South Korean culture and its image in the U.S. is overwhelmingly positive.

Q: Do you think South Korean culture has a positive influence on South Korea's image in the United States?



Response

- Don't Know
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Green petals = Positive views | Red petals = Negative views | Grey petal = Uncertain

While some of this data is due to how Americans view South Korea in relation to other countries around the world, the role of soft power cannot be ignored. When asked whether the respondent thought that South Korean culture had a positive influence on the country's image in the United States, 60 percent answered in the affirmative (See Figure 6). Only 7 percent did not think so, while 34 percent did not know.

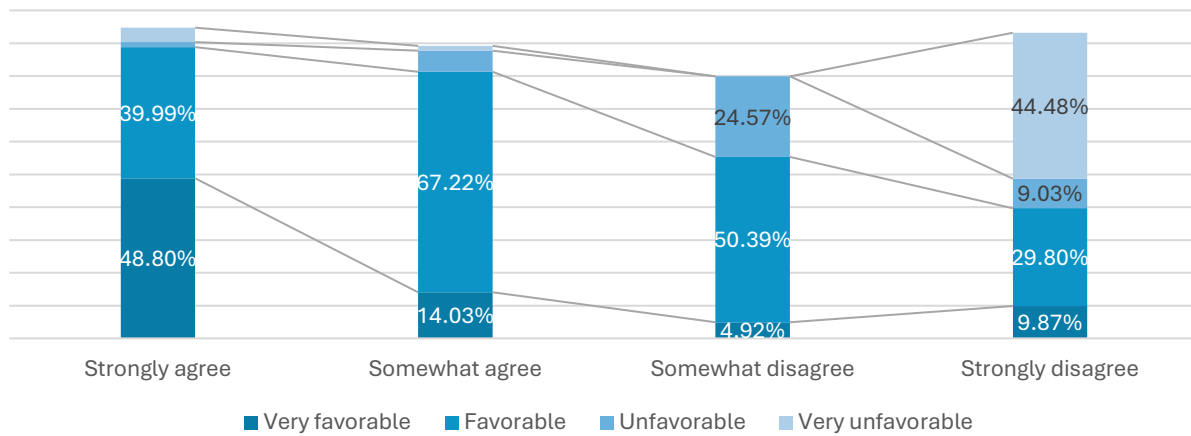
The data suggest that American perceptions of South Korea's cultural image are closely related to how Americans view South Korea as a whole. When we cross-tabulate South Korea's favorability with

impressions about South Korean culture, we can see that those who perceived South Korean culture as having a positive influence on the country’s image (“strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”) also tended to see South Korea more favorably (“very favorable” or “somewhat favorable”) compared to those who did not see South Korean culture as having a positive influence on the country’s image (See Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Americans who tend to think that South Korean culture has a positive influence on its image also maintained a favorable impression of the country.**

*Q: Do you think that South Korean culture has a positive influence on South Korea’s image in the United States?*

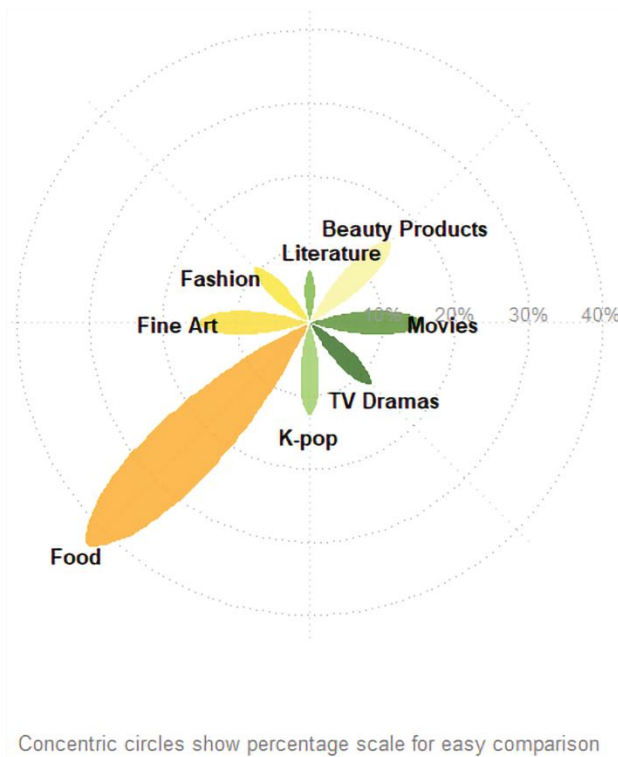
*Q: Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of South Korea?*



When asked which cultural genre the respondent is most interested in (See Figure 8), 42 percent answered “Korean food,” followed by a growing interest in popular culture through movies (15 percent), pop music (12 percent), and TV shows (12 percent). There was also a sizable interest in fashion (10 percent) and beauty products (15 percent). Interest in Korean fine art (15 percent) was relatively high compared to literature (7 percent). Some of this is due to the government’s active promotion of K-culture abroad.<sup>5</sup> But increased tourism also appears to play a role.

**Figure 8. Americans generally gain exposure to Korean culture through food, followed by movies, beauty products, and fine art. Television programming and pop music are next set of interests. along with fashion and literature.**

*Q: Which of the following South Korea culture genres are you interested in? Select all that apply.*



In 2024, nearly 16.4 million foreign visitors traveled to South Korea, which was a 48 percent increase from 2023 and a 94 percent recovery from the pandemic levels.<sup>6</sup> Over 1.3 million visitors were Americans, making up nearly 8 percent of the total. While this may seem like a lot, it only makes up about 0.4 percent of the total U.S. population. In our survey, only 6 percent of respondents stated they have visited South Korea. Roughly 34 percent of these individuals visited South Korea in the past five years, and 57 percent have not traveled to South Korea in the last five years. Around 35 percent visited for tourism, while 23 percent were for business reasons, and 12 percent traveled to study abroad or participate in exchange programs and

language studies. When asked if visiting South Korea changed their impression of the country, 64 percent reported that their impression became more positive. Only 12 percent stated that it became more negative.

“When asked if visiting South Korea changed their impression of the country, **64 percent** of past travelers reported that their impression became more *positive*.”

### The Linchpin of the Indo-Pacific

While soft power can certainly help to elevate South Korea’s visibility among the American public, there is a more direct interest-based logic to the argument as to why Americans would value the United States’ relationship with South Korea. The top reason is geopolitical. Various

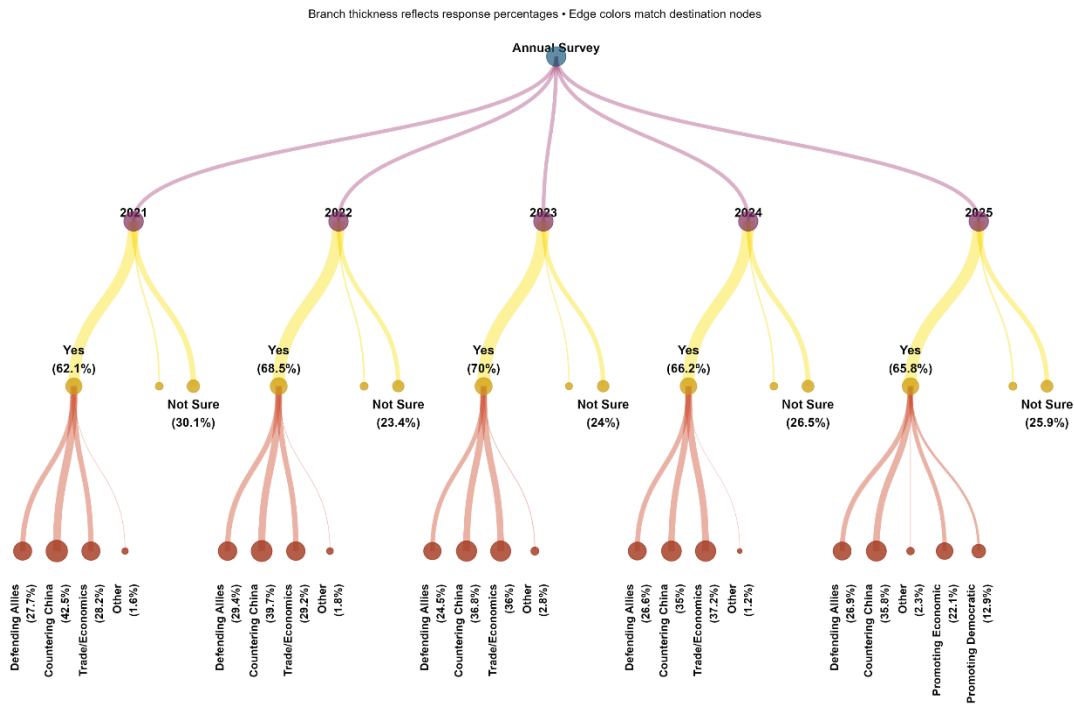
official documents and public statements by high-ranking officials identify South Korea as a vital element of the U.S. strategy in the region.<sup>7</sup> For instance, in a recent meeting between Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Hyun, both men reaffirmed that the U.S.-South Korea alliance is the “linchpin of peace, security, and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the Indo-Pacific.”<sup>8</sup> Do Americans share this view?

When we posed to the survey respondents that the United States maintains military alliances with several countries in East Asia, including South Korea, and asked whether the respondent “believe(s) that East Asia is a vital region for U.S. national interests,” 66 percent responded in the affirmative. This figure is identical to the one from last year and the six-year average for the same question.

**Figure 9. Americans have consistently identified East Asia as a region that is vital to U.S. national interest. Their prevailing reasons have consistently focused on China, alliance relations, and economic interests (i.e., trade).**

*Q: 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:*

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



For respondents who viewed East Asia as crucial to U.S. interests, we asked them to specify the most important U.S. interest in the region. Nearly 36 percent stated that countering China’s rise was an important interest, followed by 27 percent who stated that defending U.S. allies and friends was important (See Figure 9). Roughly 22 percent stated that promoting U.S. economic interests was important. In general, the relative order of importance placed on China and regional alliances remained unchanged from 2020 to 2025. However, there was a seven percentage point decline in the response for China during this period, which resonates with the declining cross-temporal trend in the priority placed on China as a top foreign policy challenge.

When asked more directly whether the respondent believed that “the U.S. military alliance with South Korea is in the national security interest of the United States,” nearly 63 percent of respondents answered in the affirmative. A little under 9 percent responded that the alliance was not in the interest of U.S. national security. Almost 29 percent were uncertain. When the Chicago Council on Global Affairs asked a similar question to Korean respondents in 2019, the data revealed that 63 percent also saw the alliance as benefiting both countries.<sup>9</sup>

Support for the U.S. troop presence on the Korean Peninsula also remained robust and stable. Nearly 9 percent support an increase in U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), and 51 percent support maintaining the current troop level, suggesting that approximately 60 percent of the American public supports increasing or maintaining the current troop level. However, 11 percent supported a reduction, and 6 percent wanted to see a full withdrawal. Meanwhile, 24 percent of respondents said they are not sure. The results appear generally consistent with previous findings, given that these figures are approximately equal to the six-year average for all categories.

When asked about the U.S. troop presence in South Korea if North Korea gives up its nuclear weapons, only 5 percent supported increasing the troop presence, 41 percent agreed to maintain the current troop levels, 20 percent supported a reduction, and nearly 7 percent supported a complete withdrawal. It is striking that 46 percent of the American public would consistently support increasing or maintaining the current U.S. troop level on the Korean Peninsula even if North Korea did not possess nuclear weapons.

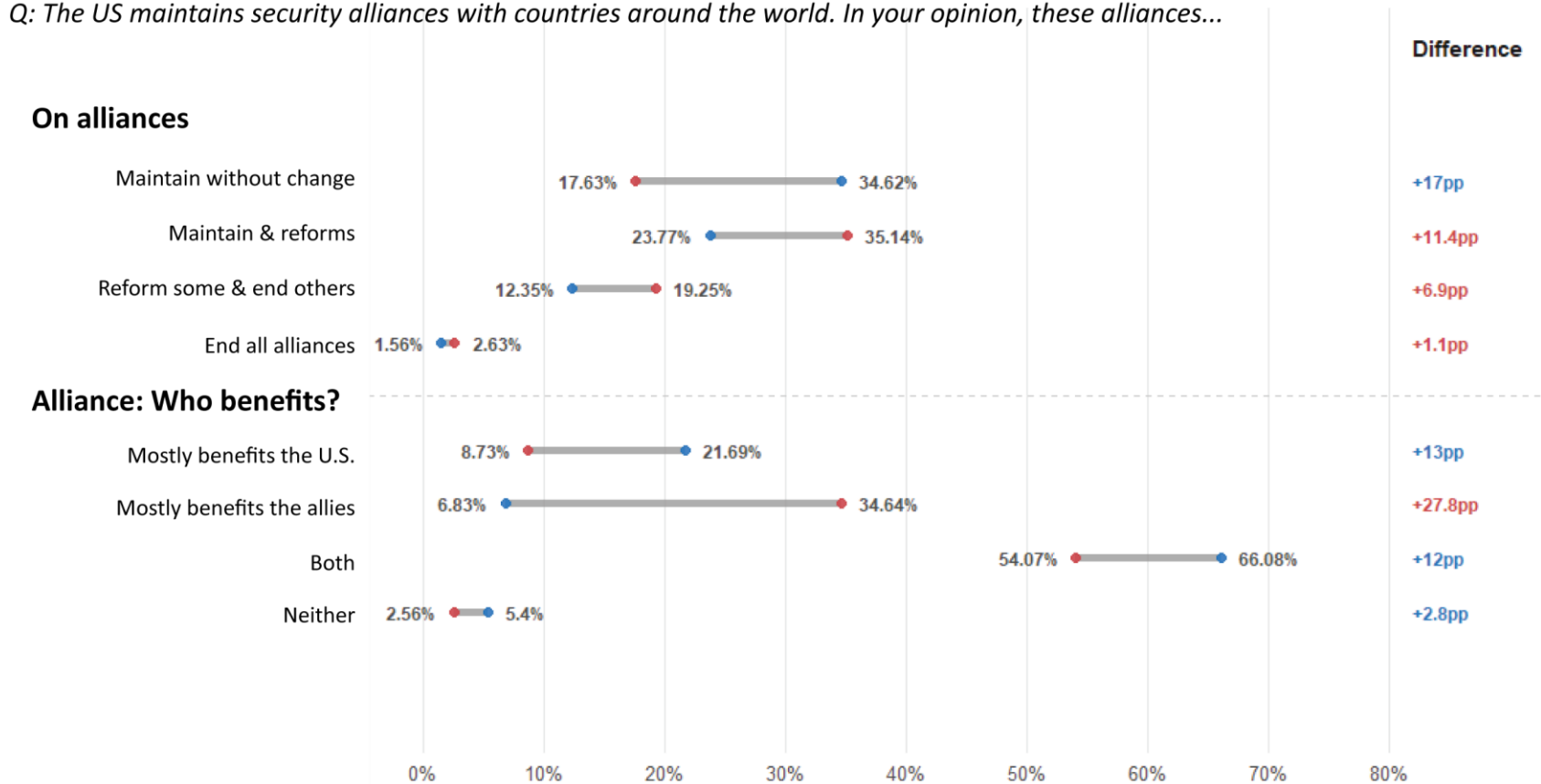
This finding suggests that the American public is sophisticated enough to understand the value of alliances. Indeed, when asked who benefits more from the security alliances between the United States and its allies, 61 percent stated that both partners benefit. Meanwhile, 19 percent thought that allies benefited more, and only 15 percent believed that the United States was the greater beneficiary.

There was a strong partisan difference in opinion with respect to alliances. Democrats (35 percent) were nearly twice as likely as Republicans (18 percent) to think that alliances mostly benefited the United States, while Republicans (35 percent) are approximately five times more likely than Democrats (7 percent) to say that the existing alliance system mostly benefits the allies. Nearly 66 percent of Democrats think that existing alliances benefit both countries, while 54 percent of Republicans thought the same.

**Figure 10. Republicans are more likely to support reforming the existing alliance system and more likely to think that allies benefit more than the U.S. under the existing system.**

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

Q: The US maintains security alliances with countries around the world. In your opinion, these alliances...

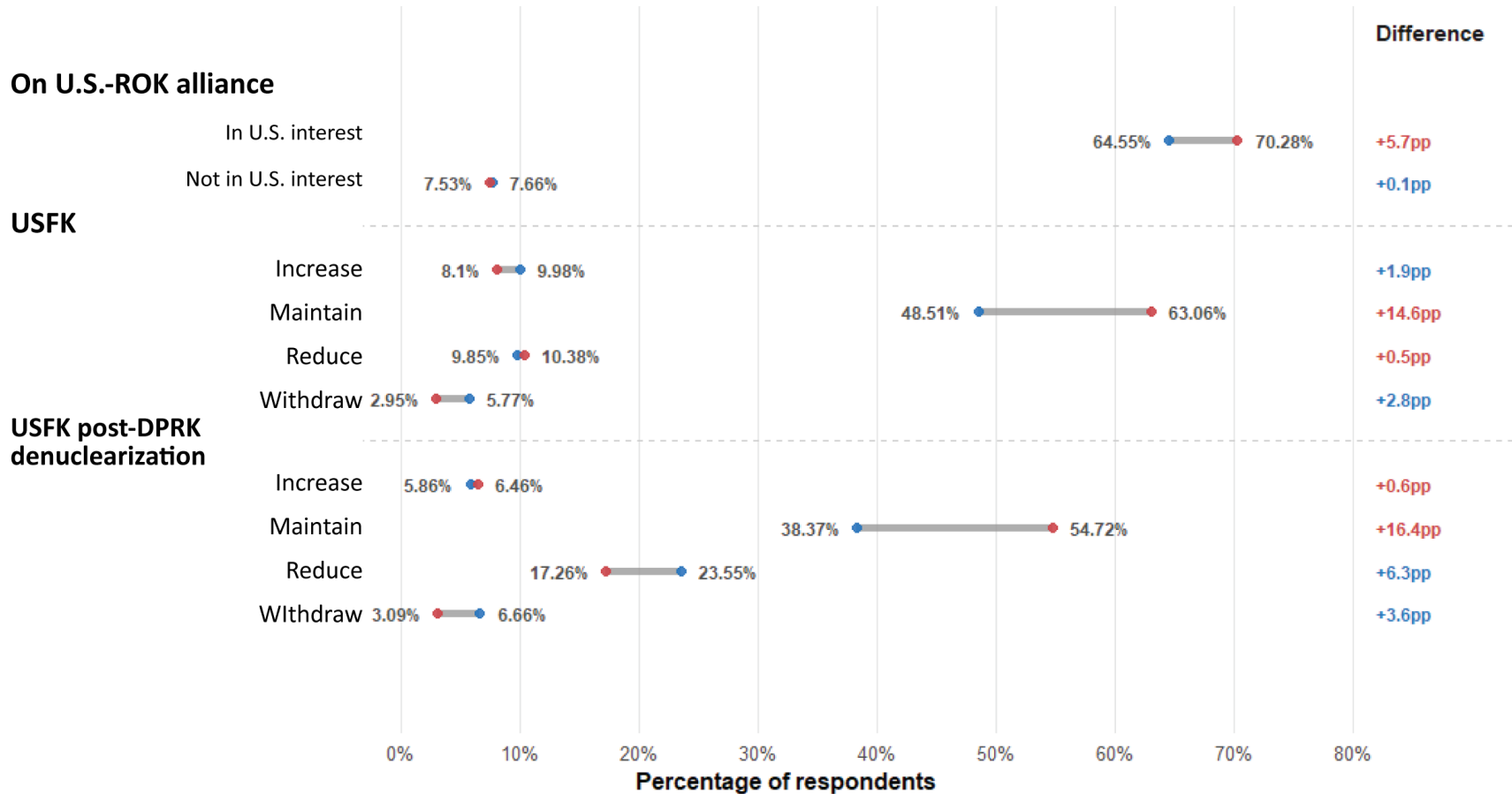


**Figure 11. Republicans appear to favor the U.S.-ROK alliance more so than Democrats. They are also more likely to support maintaining the current troop levels in the USFK even if North Korea denuclearizes**

Q: 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?

Q: 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?

Q: 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?



Note: Blue dots = Democrats, Red dots = Republicans. Lines connect response rates. Difference column shows higher value minus lower value, colored by leading party.

When asked about any possible changes to existing U.S. military alliances around the world, more than 50 percent answered that the United States should not make any changes (23.4 percent) or reform some aspects of the current arrangements (27 percent). Nearly 18 percent wanted to reform some and end others. Only 3 percent answered that the United States should end all alliances, while 28 percent was unsure or uninformed to have an opinion on this issue. What this also suggests is that maintaining the status quo without any changes to existing alliances is not the majority view. Clearly, 45 percent is in favor of some change to the existing arrangement. However, one thing for certain is that there is room for further debate on how to manage this issue. This finding is consistent with results from previous years, with deviation from the six-year average falling within the margin of error.

Partisan differences could also be impacting this issue. When we look at partisan breakdown, Republicans are more likely to want changes to existing alliances by reforming some aspect of existing alliances (Republicans: 35 percent, Democrats: 24 percent) or reforming some and ending others (Republicans: 19 percent, Democrats: 12 percent). On the other hand, Democrats (35 percent) are more likely to support maintaining the status quo with respect to alliances than Republicans (18 percent). Together, this suggests that Republicans are less satisfied by the existing alliance system than Democrats and favor making some changes.

Interestingly, this logic does not apply to the case of the U.S.-South Korea alliance. When we look at the partisan breakdown on questions related to the alliance, Republicans are more likely to think that the alliance is in the U.S. interest (Republicans: 70 percent, Democrats: 65 percent). Republicans are also more likely to support maintaining the existing U.S. troop level on the Korean Peninsula (Republicans: 63 percent, Democrats: 49 percent) and less likely to support a withdrawal (Republicans: 3 percent, Democrats: 6 percent). This logic holds even if North Korea denuclearizes.

### **Taiwan and South Korea**

In recent years, there has been a substantial and growing body of research on the possibility of a dual contingency in the Indo-Pacific region involving both Taiwan and South Korea.<sup>10</sup> Although there is room to question the likelihood of this scenario, studies emphasize the complexity facing the United States and its allies, which could be forced to split military resources or even prioritize one theater over the other.

The 2024 and 2025 KEI annual surveys examined American perspectives on potential contingencies involving South Korea and Taiwan, asking respondents to consider which region should be prioritized if forced to choose. The results indicate that a majority of Americans would prefer to defend both countries rather than select one over the other. In 2024, 53 percent of those surveyed supported defending both South Korea and Taiwan, while in 2025, 47 percent stated the same.

In **2024**, **53 percent** of those surveyed supported defending *both* South Korea and Taiwan, while in **2025**, this figure was **47 percent**.

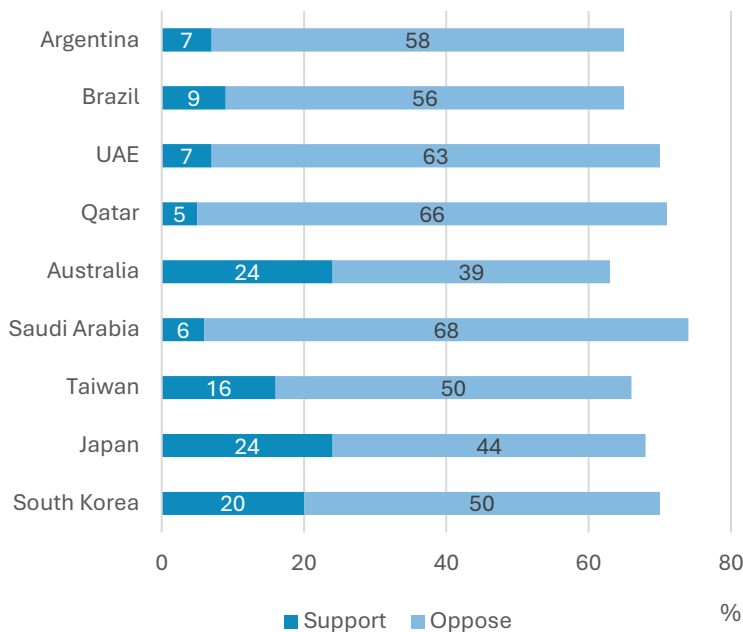
When respondents did choose a single priority, there was a noticeable inclination toward South Korea. Specifically, 20.9 percent of Americans in 2024 and 23.5 percent in 2025 selected South Korea as the more important defense priority. In contrast, 13.6 percent in 2024 and 14 percent in 2025 chose Taiwan.

The surveys also revealed a relatively low level of uncertainty regarding these defense commitments. Approximately 12 percent of respondents in both years indicated that they were “not sure” how to answer this question. Additionally, only a small minority (2024: 1.4 percent, 2025: 3.3 percent) opposed U.S. involvement in either of the scenarios.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Figure 12. In general, Americans do not support nuclear proliferation even among allies.**

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



One of the most difficult and controversial issues in the U.S.-South Korea bilateral relationship is the issue of nuclear proliferation. A major reason for heightened sensitivity regarding South Korea’s potential pursuit of nuclear weapons stems from its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). As an NPT signatory, South Korea is committed to refraining from developing or acquiring nuclear weapons, and any move toward the development of an indigenous nuclear capability would constitute a clear violation of these commitments. Beyond treaty obligations, the consideration of nuclear

development could undermine the credibility of the U.S.-South Korea alliance because the existence of an independent South Korean nuclear arsenal may signal doubts about the reliability of U.S. extended deterrence.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it also has the potential to encourage other countries to consider this option, which could trigger a nuclear domino effect in the region.

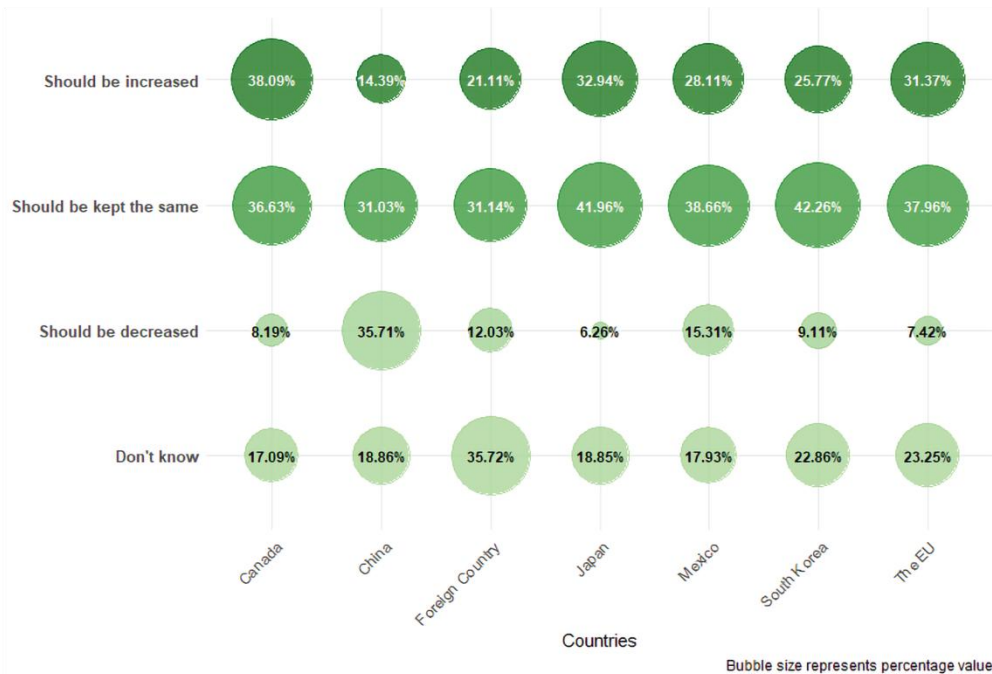
Although public opinion surveys in South Korea have repeatedly indicated a broad willingness among the public to accept the risks associated with developing nuclear weapons, American public sentiment has consistently shown less sympathy for South Korea's pursuit of independent nuclear capabilities.<sup>12</sup> This year's survey results echoed this sentiment. When asked which country should be permitted to develop military nuclear capabilities, only 20 percent of Americans expressed support for South Korea, while 50 percent opposed the idea. In fact, the American public did not support any country developing nuclear weapons. Among the list of countries proposed in this year's survey, only Australia and Japan received a higher level of support (24 percent). Opposition to both countries was also significantly lower, with 44 percent for Japan and 39 percent for Australia. This result is similar to the finding from last year when this question was first added to the KEI annual survey.<sup>13</sup> An announcement about a possible civil nuclear agreement between the two governments is spurring renewed interest in the possibility of nuclear latency in South Korea.<sup>14</sup> However, our survey results show that U.S. domestic politics will remain an important hurdle if South Korea earnestly pursues the development of nuclear weapons.

## **Trade**

One issue that has dominated policy discussions since the inauguration of the Trump administration has been the issue of trade and investments. Most certainly, there have been many twists and turns on this issue, including the recent summit between President Trump and President Lee Jae Myung and a potential meeting in late October or early November on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Gyeongju.<sup>15</sup> Given that President Trump has made trade and investment a central theme of his policy agenda and South Korea is heavily dependent on its trade with the United States, this issue will likely remain at the forefront of the bilateral relationship.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 13. Americans are generally supportive of increased or continued trade with most countries except for China. In general, over two-thirds prefer increasing or maintaining the same level of trade with Canada, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and the E.U.. Only about 45 percent are in favor of doing the same with China.**

Q: How do you think the following should be changed, if at all? The amount of U.S. trade with...

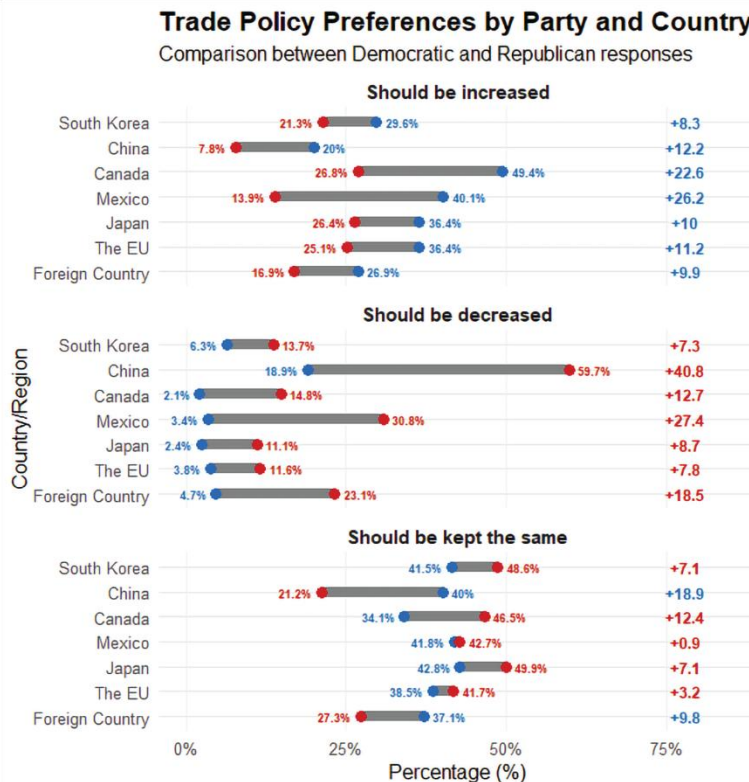


Previous research conducted by KEI on this issue showed that Americans support open trade, but there was also a sizable preference for tariffs.<sup>17</sup> We attempted to revisit these themes with this nationally representative data. When asked whether the respondent believed that “trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States,” over 68 percent answered in the affirmative. Only 7 percent said that it was not beneficial, and 24 percent said they were not sure. These figures are similar to the results from last year.

We looked to see if this sentiment varied depending on the trade partner, as results from the earlier KEI study found that there was a marked difference depending on the country (See Figure 12).<sup>18</sup> We find support for this result in the nationally representative data, with support for increased trade being relatively higher for Canada (38 percent), Japan (33 percent), the European Union (31 percent), Mexico (28 percent), and South Korea (26 percent) when compared to an unnamed “foreign country” (21 percent). This is a marked contrast from China, which showed only 14 percent support for increased trade—nearly 36 percent indicated that they would support *decreasing* trade with China, while 31 percent advocated for maintaining the current level. For Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union, less than 10 percent of respondents supported decreased trade.

**Figure 14. Democrats consistently support increase trade while Republicans are consistently the opposite. The gap between the two groups appear greatest on trade with China and Mexico. In comparison to Democrats, the Republicans also appear consistently less tolerant of existing trade relations with China and most other countries around the world.**

*Q: How do you think the following should be changed, if at all? The amount of U.S. trade with...*



The survey results also reflect notable partisan differences regarding attitudes toward trade. Consistent with previous experimental studies, Republicans were more likely to support reducing trade rather than increasing or maintaining current trade levels. In contrast, Democrats demonstrated a greater inclination toward increased trade. These findings suggest that while the overall American public tends to support open trade, partisanship plays a significant role in shaping preferences, with Republicans exhibiting comparatively more reservations about expanding trade relationships and

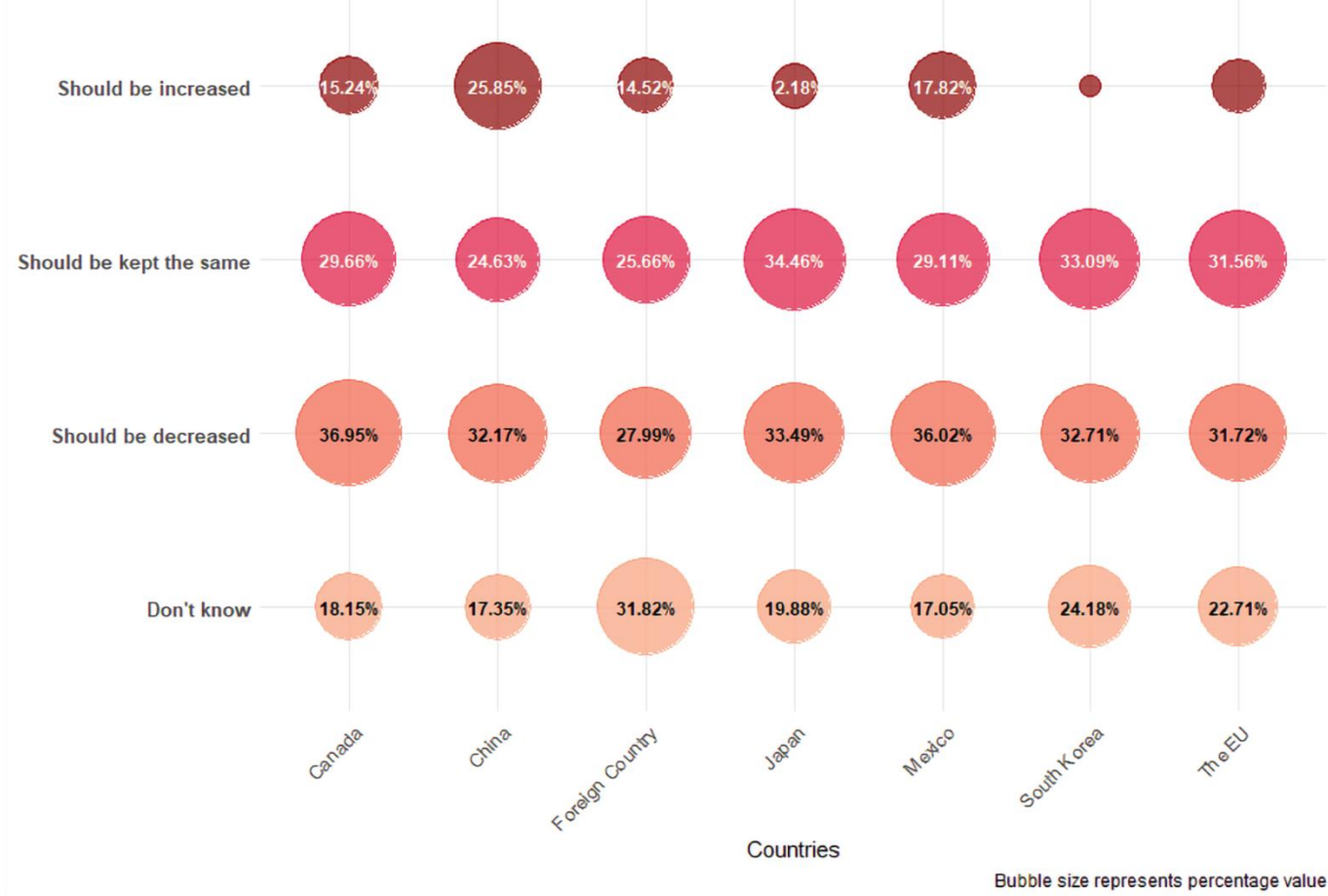
Democrats generally expressing stronger support for trade expansion.<sup>19</sup>

## Tariffs

We asked a similarly worded question on tariffs and found that most Americans favor decreasing tariffs. Even for an unnamed foreign country, more respondents favored lowering tariffs (28 percent) than keeping them at the same level (26 percent). Among the countries considered in this question, Americans were least supportive of increasing tariffs on South Korea (10 percent). It is worth noting, however, that an equally sizable group favored keeping the current tariff levels for all countries.

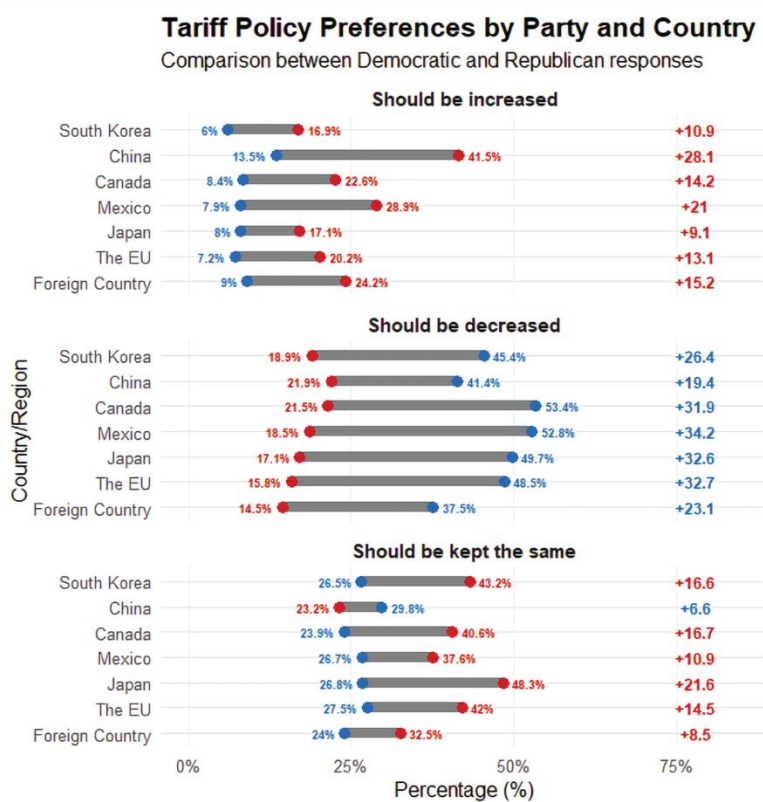
**Figure 15. Americans generally do not support increasing tariffs for most countries around the world. But a sizable share support keeping tariffs at the current level. More Americans support *decreasing* rather than increasing tariffs for all countries, including China.**

*Q: How do you think the following should be changed if at all? Tariffs on goods imported to the United States from...*



**Figure 16. Republicans consistently support more protectionism through increased tariffs while Democrats are consistently the opposite.**

*Q: How do you think the following should be changed, if at all? The amount of U.S. trade with...*



Similar to the patterns observed in attitudes on trade, Republicans consistently exhibited more protectionist tendencies than Democrats, as shown in their preferences for tariffs. More specifically, Republicans were more likely to favor increasing or maintaining the current level of tariffs, whereas Democrats tended to support lowering them. This distinction highlights a clear partisan divide on the issue of protectionism.

While Americans generally express support for more open trade, these results indicate that Republicans are relatively more inclined to support

protectionist policies than Democrats.

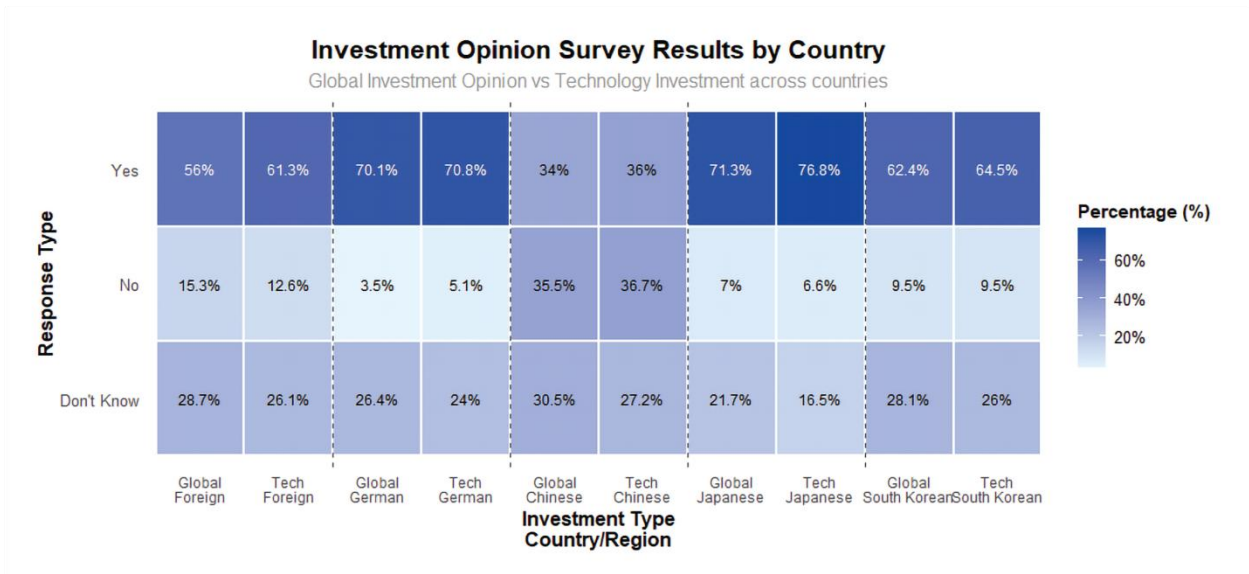
### Investments

On the question of foreign direct investment (FDI), approximately 60 percent of Americans agreed that inbound FDI is beneficial to the United States. Approximately 54 percent also believed that they contribute positively toward domestic job creation. However, the data also shows that the respondents care where these investments come from. For instance, when asked whether FDIs from particular countries are “good” for the U.S. economy, respondents were more likely to answer in the affirmative for countries that they would typically identify as friends (Germany: 70 percent; Japan: 71 percent; South Korea: 62 percent) rather than adversaries (China: 34 percent). The response did not change even if the question was posed for investments in high-tech manufacturing. In general, this suggests that, similar to trade and tariffs, Americans have a discerning mind when it comes to attitudes on FDIs despite understanding the value of these investments.

**Figure 17. Americans generally believe that foreign direct investments are “good” for the United States but more so if they originate from countries that are not adversaries.**

*Q: In recent years, \_\_\_\_\_ companies have invested in the United States. Do you think these investments are good for the U.S. economy?*

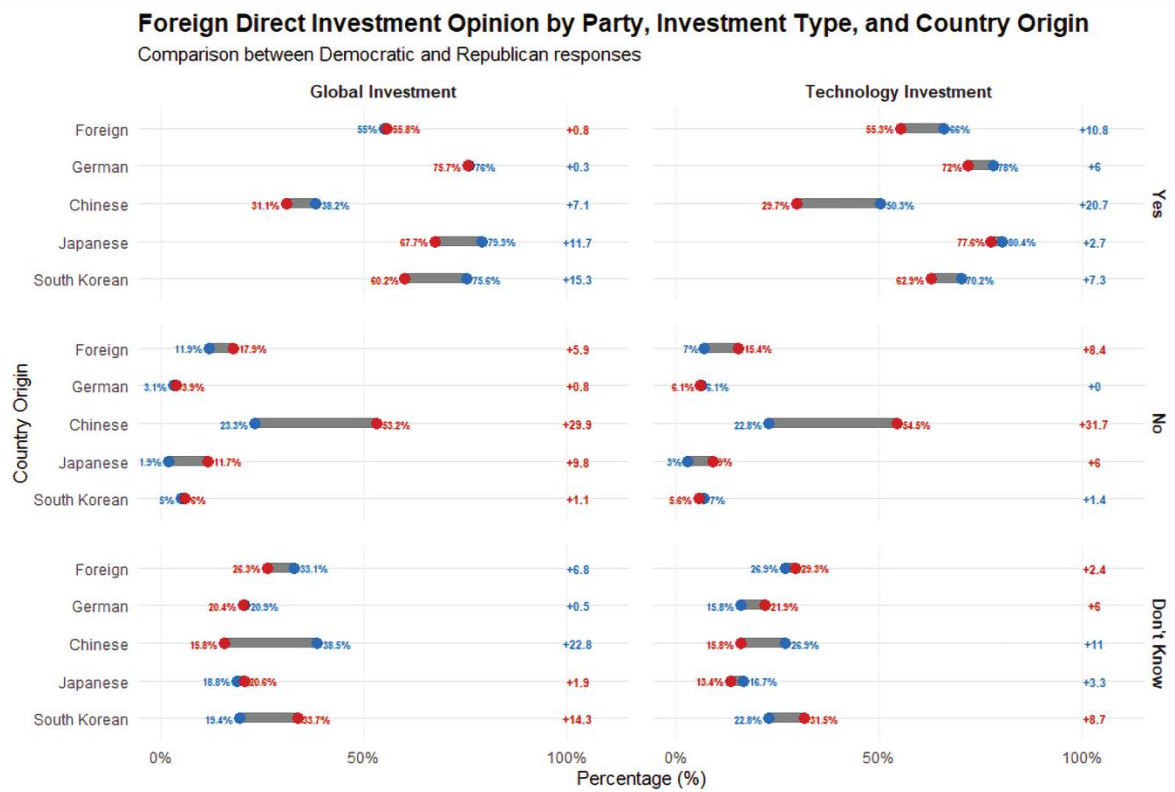
*Q: In recent years, \_\_\_\_\_ companies have invested in new high tech manufacturing plants in the U.S.. Do you think these investments are good for the U.S. economy?*



One interesting pattern observed in the data relates to the partisan divide. While there are some partisan differences in opinions about FDI, the gap is not as uniform nor pronounced as it is on questions related to tariffs and trade. In particular, a majority of Republicans (greater than 50 percent) think that investments originating from China are not good for the economy, while a majority of Democrats (50 percent) think that high-tech investments from China remain beneficial. However, partisan differences about investment from other countries are not consequential enough to lead to different conclusions about the impact of these investments. For instance, 76 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of Republicans think that investment from South Korea is “good” for the U.S. economy.

**Figure 18. There is a strong difference of opinion among Democrats and Republicans with regards to investment from China. On particular, Republicans tend to think that investment from China are more harmful to the U.S. economy than Democrats.**

Q: In recent years, \_\_\_\_\_ companies have invested in the United States. Do you think these investments are good for the U.S. economy?  
 Q: In recent years, \_\_\_\_\_ companies have invested in new high tech manufacturing plants in the U.S.. Do you think these investments are good for the U.S. economy?



### Defense Industrial Cooperation

Aside from investments, one issue gaining growing attention in the tariff negotiations between the United States and South Korea has been defense industrial cooperation in areas such as shipbuilding.<sup>20</sup> One of the central challenges to deepening defense industrial cooperation is domestic regulatory hurdles, which are necessarily linked to technology transfer and national security concerns. We posed two questions related to this issue.

One question asked whether the respondent thought that “the U.S. government should cooperate with allies like South Korea and Japan in the manufacturing supply chain for U.S. defense products and systems.” Around 56 percent answered in the affirmative, and only 14 percent said no. Democrats (Yes: 61 percent; No: 9 percent) appeared slightly more receptive to this idea compared to Republicans (Yes: 54 percent; No: 19 percent). Among both groups, however, the majority consensus was to expand this type of cooperation.

The survey asked a second question to focus on military equipment and technology sharing: “the U.S. government has many restrictions on the countries they will partner with to make or share military equipment and technology. Do you think that these restrictions should be made stricter, kept the same, made less strict, or don’t know?” Around 30 percent of respondents said

the rules should be “made stricter,” 38 percent stated that they should be “kept the same,” and only 6 percent said “made less strict.” When we break down the distribution of these responses along party lines, there is a large gap between Democrats and Republicans, with only 17 percent of the former stating that the rule should be stricter and 45 percent of the latter stating the same. Only a small minority in both groups (Democrats: 10 percent; Republicans: 4 percent) supported loosening restrictions on sharing military equipment and technology.

Together, the findings suggest that the details of the cooperative arrangement will matter for the American public when it comes to the framing of this issue. On the one hand, the economic implications laid out in the previous discussion about investments imply that defense industrial cooperation is ideal from an economic standpoint (i.e., job creation). On the other hand, national security concerns related to technology transfer will remain an important concern for most Americans. Still, there is a way forward if the two sides can thread the needle to place the emphasis on creating a more resilient defense industrial supply chain that strengthens U.S. national security.

## **North Korea**

One of the most difficult and vexing foreign policy challenges for any country in Northeast Asia is North Korea. While much has happened since the end of the Korean War in 1953, the most remarkable truth about North Korea is how little has changed after all these years. This is most certainly the case with respect to American public opinion toward the country. Ever since KEI first began surveying the American public about this issue in 2020, we saw little to no change in American public attitudes about North Korea—and this year was no exception.

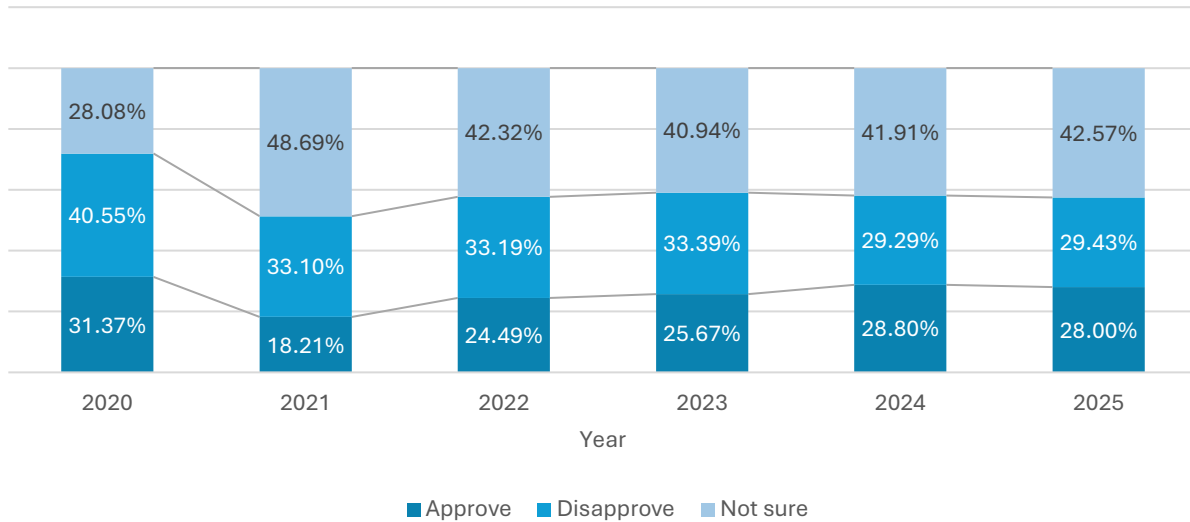
When asked how the respondent would rate the overall favorability of North Korea, 68 percent stated that they did not have a favorable opinion. Only 11.6 percent had a favorable view. This is a marginal improvement over 9.3 percent in 2020 but within the margin of error. In fact, the six-year average in overall favorability of 10.4 percent suggests that there has not been much change in American public opinion about North Korea.

On the issue of North Korean denuclearization, more than 87 percent of surveyed respondents stated that this issue was important to them. Once again, this is a marginal increase from 85 percent in 2020. Regarding human rights, 85 percent stated that it was important for the U.S. government to continue pushing for human rights improvement in North Korea. Approximately 54 percent also supported sending humanitarian assistance to North Korea. In both instances, American public attitudes have not changed in over six years.

There was, however, a marked change in sentiments about U.S. policy on North Korea as of 2021 (see Figure 20). Public approval of the U.S. administration’s handling of North Korea policy notably declined from 31 percent in 2020 to 18 percent in 2021. While this bounced back to 24 percent in 2022, the approval remained under 30 percent as of 2022. Overall, support for the U.S. policy toward North Korea decreased marginally from 31 percent in 2020 to 28 percent in 2025.

**Figure 20. American public opinion on the current administration’s handling of North Korea policy has been relatively stable from the first Trump administration to the Biden administration.**

*Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the job the current US administration is doing handling relations with North Korea?*



There was a more notable shift in disapproval from 41 percent in 2020 to 29 percent in 2025. Again, we can see that this is largely due to a substantial uptick in the number of people who became less sure about forming an opinion on this issue, which is not surprising given that the U.S. policy on North Korea largely took a backseat to conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. The policy itself also underwent significant changes after the failed U.S.-North Korea summit in Hanoi in February 2019. In 2020, the share of respondents answering “not sure” was only 28 percent. In 2021, this figure jumped to 49 percent and moderated to 42 percent in 2022. This year, 42.6 percent of respondents are “not sure” about the Trump administration’s policy on North Korea, suggesting that there is not enough public awareness or interest about this issue.

**Looking Back and Forward**

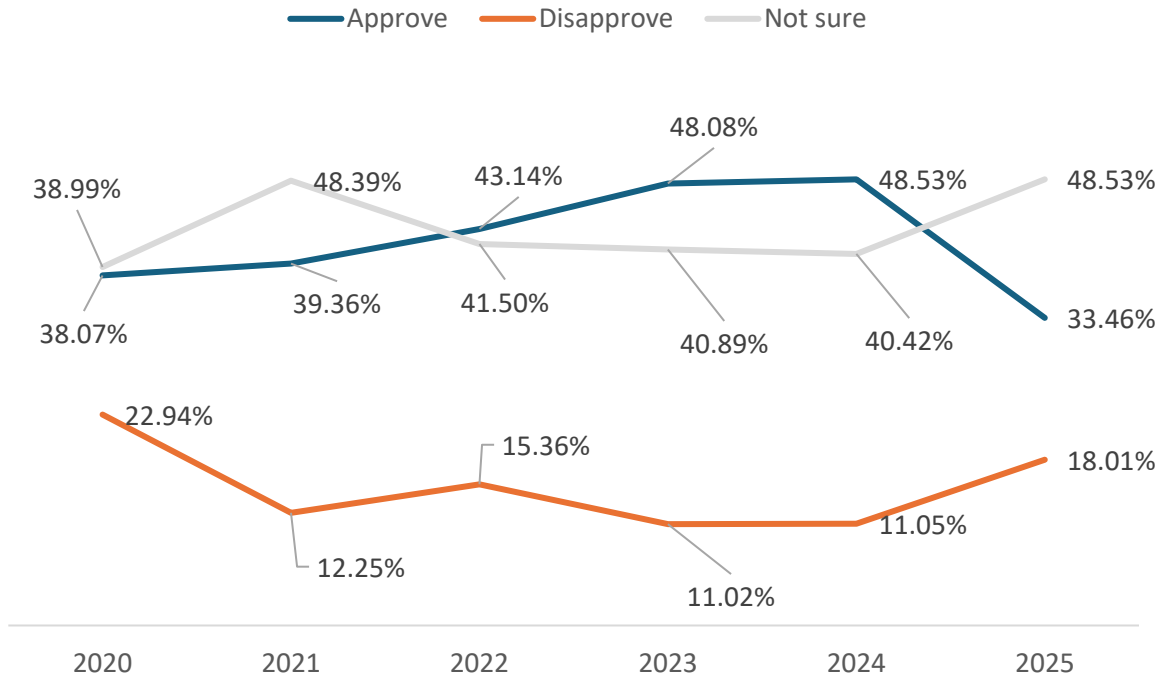
This brings us to public assessments about the Trump administration’s policies on South Korea and desired areas of cooperation for the future. As mentioned previously, the U.S.-South Korea relationship has faced various challenges since the inauguration of the Trump administration earlier this year. Existing trade arrangements were upended by unilateral tariff announcements and whispers of possible changes to the seventy-two-year-old alliance are raising abandonment fears in Seoul.<sup>21</sup>

The responses to one particular question sum up the American public sentiment about the current administration’s policies: “now thinking about U.S. and South Korea relations, do you approve or disapprove of the current U.S. administration’s handling of relations with South Korea?” Only 33 percent stated that they “approve,” which is a record low (See Figure 21). Around 18 percent “disapprove(d),” but approximately 49 percent said they were “not sure,”

which is a record high. It is worth mentioning that during the survey’s data collection period, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided and detained South Korean workers at the Hyundai-LG electric vehicle battery plant in Georgia, potential impacting the responses.<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 21. American public approval of the current administration's handling of relations with South Korea is at an all-time low.**

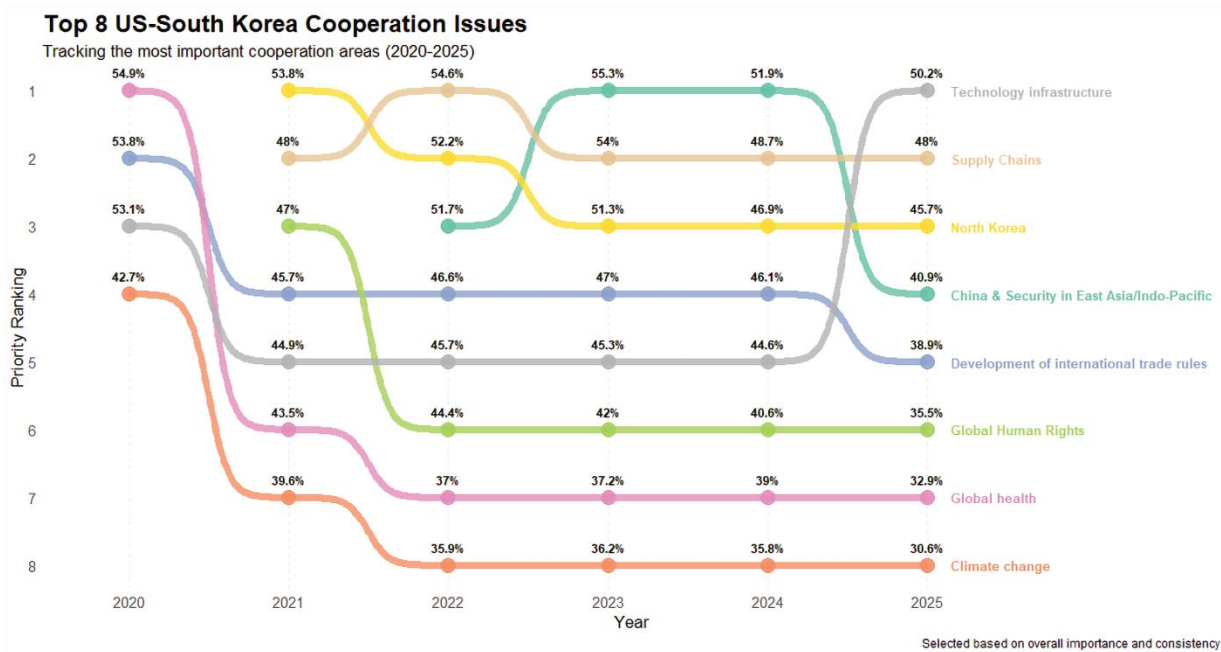
*Q: Now thinking about U.S. and South Korea relations, do you approve or disapprove of the current U.S. administration’s handl*



Not surprisingly, this year was no different than previous years in terms of partisan support for the administration’s policies, with Republicans expressing greater support than Democrats. Going back to 2020, the partisan gap on the assessment of the administration’s performance directly correlated with the party in control of the White House. One clear trend for this year, however, is that the level of uncertainty in assessing the administration’s policy on South Korea was relatively higher than in previous years. This may be symptomatic of a broader trend in the rising anxiety and new risks associated with the Trump administration’s overall approach to trade and foreign policy.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 22. Issues related to economic and national security have consistently been the important priorities when it comes to cooperation between South Korea and the United States.**

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



Looking forward, we also asked the respondents to choose the issues that they think are “important for the U.S. and South Korea to cooperate” on. Economic security topped the list, with 50 percent choosing “technology,” 48 percent answering “supply chains,” and 39 percent mentioning “international trade rules.” National security was next, with 41 percent naming “China” and 46 percent mentioning “North Korea.” Issues like global health (33 percent), human rights (36 percent), and climate change (31 percent) were also chosen, but there was less interest in these matters than in the ones mentioned above. Broadly, the relative rank ordering of these issues has been consistent over time, although economic issues appear to be gaining more attention this year than in the past.

## Conclusion

The latest KEI annual survey offers valuable insights into how the American public views foreign policy matters that are particularly significant for South Korea. Despite rising uncertainties in the bilateral relationship—driven by developments such as the Trump administration’s unilateral tariffs and the ICE raid against Korean workers in Georgia—Americans continue to hold a stable and positive view of South Korea. This favorable perception is bolstered by ongoing interest in South Korean soft power.

Another important finding is that Americans recognize and appreciate the importance of the U.S.-South Korea alliance. The survey highlights that the public understands how this alliance serves both U.S. and South Korean national interests. This awareness translates into strong support among Americans for ongoing U.S. defense commitments to South Korea, especially in

the context of potential regional contingencies in the Indo-Pacific. It is also the main reason why Americans generally do not see a necessity for South Korea to pursue the development of nuclear weapons, reflecting their confidence in U.S. security guarantees.

On economic matters, the survey reveals that there is equal appreciation for sustained open trade and continued investment between the United States and South Korea. Americans value ongoing investments by South Korean firms and the opportunities presented by open trade with countries such as South Korea. These positive attitudes toward South Korea partly explain why the American public gave a record-low approval rating for the current administration's handling of its relationship with South Korea.

With regards to national security matters, North Korea's nuclear program and human rights abuses remain a vexing and persistent concern. Nevertheless, the survey also shows that Americans are increasingly prioritizing challenges posed by China and Russia, which is not likely to change any time soon.

On a macro level, we also saw Americans continuing to support existing alliances and trade relations. But there are also signs of changing public attitudes toward U.S. relations with other states (e.g., partners vs. adversaries). Finally, within the context of this transition, we also saw that the type of state matters when it comes to U.S. policy on national security, trade, and investment.

Times of transition are also periods of uncertainty that can elicit an anxious response. However, the data suggests that South Korea is in an advantageous position relative to other countries with respect to American public opinion.

Developing an effective strategy for engaging with the Trump administration hinges on a clear understanding of the preferences and attitudes of the American public, to whom the administration is accountable. By evaluating public sentiment, policymakers in Seoul can better anticipate the administration's priorities and potential actions regarding the bilateral relationship.

It is essential to identify and address the issues that matter most within the relationship, ensuring that key concerns are framed and communicated effectively. This process should be rooted in a thorough assessment of the changing political landscape in the United States, which is especially relevant as we approach the midterm elections in 2026.

# Appendix I

## Methodology

KEI commissioned YouGov for the 2025 survey data, consisting of 1,181 observations, including 1,000 from a sample of American adults and 181 from an oversample of American adults who are interested in international news. The sample was drawn from a YouGov panel in the United States (6.6 million) between September 2 and 12, 2025.

To achieve the final sample, YouGov interviewed 2,010 respondents, including a main sample of 1,304 U.S. respondents and an oversample of 706 U.S. respondents (with the goal of screening for and surveying people who are interested in international news). During the fielding, the main and oversample were balanced to known characteristics of the general population on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, home ownership, and presidential voting choice. For the main sample, balancing was enforced on completes. For the oversample, balancing was enforced on starts.

After fielding, the main sample was matched down to a sample of 1,000. The respondents in the main sample were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The sampling frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file).

After matching, the cases in both samples were weighted separately to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched (unmatched for oversample) cases and the frame were combined, and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score functions included age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and home ownership status. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

The weights for the main sample were then post-stratified on 2020 and 2024 presidential voting choice, as well as a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories). Meanwhile, the weights for the oversample were post-stratified on 2020 and 2024 presidential voting choice, followed by a four-way stratification of gender, age, race, and education. Finally, the oversample weights went through an individual stratification on home ownership status. After post-stratification, the weighted oversample of U.S. respondents was then subsetted on those who qualified to complete the survey due to their interest in international news (N=181), and the weights were trimmed and recentered around 1 to produce the final weight for those interested in international news.

The matched and weighted main sample was then combined with the unmatched, weighted, and subsetted oversample. This combined dataset was then post-stratified on interest in

international news (the distribution found in the main sample) in order to produce the final combined weight.

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

## 2025

Dates: September 2–12, 2025  
Weighted Sample Size: 1,181  
Margin of Error: +/- 3.34 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

## 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

## 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

## 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

## 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

## Appendix II

### State

*What is your State of Residence?*

State	All	n
Alabama	2%	21
Alaska	0%	3
Arizona	2%	19
Arkansas	1%	16
California	10%	120
Colorado	2%	18
Connecticut	2%	18
Delaware	0%	3
District of Columbia	0%	4
Florida	8%	92
Georgia	4%	44
Hawaii	0%	6
Idaho	0%	6
Illinois	5%	55
Indiana	2%	27
Iowa	1%	13
Kansas	0%	4
Kentucky	1%	16
Louisiana	1%	16
Maine	0%	3
Maryland	1%	14
Massachusetts	2%	20
Michigan	3%	40
Minnesota	1%	18
Mississippi	1%	6
Missouri	2%	21
Montana	0%	1
Nebraska	0%	1
Nevada	2%	18
New Hampshire	0%	2
New Jersey	2%	26
New Mexico	1%	8
New York	7%	87

<b>North Carolina</b>	3%	38
<b>North Dakota</b>	0%	1
<b>Ohio</b>	3%	34
<b>Oklahoma</b>	1%	13
<b>Oregon</b>	3%	30
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	5%	60
<b>Rhode Island</b>	0%	3
<b>South Carolina</b>	2%	19
<b>South Dakota</b>	0%	2
<b>Tennessee</b>	3%	30
<b>Texas</b>	8%	90
<b>Utah</b>	1%	8
<b>Vermont</b>	0%	1
<b>Virginia</b>	3%	36
<b>Washington</b>	2%	20
<b>West Virginia</b>	1%	9
<b>Wisconsin</b>	2%	23
<b>Wyoming</b>	0%	1
<b>American Samoa</b>	0%	0
<b>n</b>	1181	

#### Region

<b>Region</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	19%	220
<b>Midwest</b>	20%	238
<b>South</b>	39%	466
<b>West</b>	22%	257
<b>n</b>	1181	

#### Urbanicity

*How would you describe the place where you live?*

<b>Urbanicity</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>City</b>	27%	325
<b>Suburb</b>	40%	472
<b>Town</b>	14%	162
<b>Rural area</b>	18%	215
<b>Other</b>	1%	7
<b>n</b>	1181	

## Gender

*With which gender do you most identify?*

Gender	All	n
Woman	51%	608
Man	49%	573
n	1181	

## Age Group

*What is your age?*

Age Group	All	n
18–24	10%	113
25–29	10%	124
30–39	16%	190
40–49	15%	181
50–59	16%	183
60–64	10%	123
65 or older	23%	267
Prefer not to answer	0%	0
n	1181	

## Race/Ethnicity

*Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply.)*

Race/Ethnicity	All	n
White	100%	716
Black	100%	134
Hispanic	100%	209
Asian	100%	61
Native American	100%	15
Middle Eastern	100%	2
Mixed	100%	23
Other	100%	22
n	2-716	

## Education

*What is the highest level of education you have completed?*

Education	All	n
No HS	8%	97
High school graduate	29%	342
Some college	18%	218
2-year	11%	128
4-year	20%	238
Post-grad	13%	158
n	1181	

## Marital Status

*What is your marital status?*

	All	n
Married	45%	527
Separated	1%	16
Divorced	11%	129
Widowed	5%	62
Never married	33%	387
Domestic/civil partnership	5%	60
n	1181	

## Family Income

*What was your family's income last year?*

	All	n
Less than \$10,000	7%	87
\$10,000 - \$19,999	8%	92
\$20,000 - \$29,999	9%	105
\$30,000 - \$39,999	7%	88
\$40,000 - \$49,999	7%	81

\$50,000 - \$59,999	7%	85
\$60,000 - \$69,999	5%	65
\$70,000 - \$79,999	7%	88
\$80,000 - \$99,999	10%	117
\$100,000 - \$119,999	5%	62
\$120,000 - \$149,999	8%	98
\$150,000 or more	0%	0
\$150,000 - \$199,999	4%	42
\$200,000 - \$249,999	2%	25
\$250,000 - \$349,999	2%	20
\$350,000 - \$499,999	1%	6
\$500,000 or more	0%	5
Prefer not to say	10%	114
<b>n</b>	<b>1181</b>	

### Parent/Guardian

*Are you the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 18?*

	All	n
Yes	21%	247
No	79%	934
<b>n</b>	<b>1181</b>	

### Employment Status

*Which of the following best describes your current employment status?*

	All	n
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>407</b>

<b>Part-time</b>	10%	123
<b>Temporarily laid off</b>	2%	21
<b>Unemployed</b>	11%	129
<b>Retired</b>	21%	250
<b>Permanently disabled</b>	8%	95
<b>Homemaker</b>	7%	81
<b>Student</b>	5%	58
<b>Other</b>	1%	16
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Topics interested in

*Which, of the following general topics, if any, would you say you are particularly interested in? Please select all that apply*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Personal finance</b>	28%	330
<b>People and celebrities</b>	19%	225
<b>Religion and spirituality</b>	32%	381
<b>Parenting</b>	14%	171
<b>International news</b>	34%	402
<b>National news</b>	48%	569
<b>Business and finance</b>	18%	218
<b>Health and medicine</b>	44%	520
<b>Politics</b>	43%	505
<b>Sports</b>	32%	378
<b>None of these</b>	12%	136
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Party ID

*Political Identity (7-point scale)*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
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<b>Strong Democrat</b>	21%	243
<b>Not very strong Democrat</b>	11%	126
<b>Strong Republican</b>	18%	211
<b>Not very strong Republican</b>	9%	103
<b>Lean Democrat</b>	9%	112
<b>Lean Republican</b>	7%	83
<b>Independent</b>	22%	261
<b>Not sure</b>	3%	41
<b>Don't know</b>	0%	0
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Ideology

*In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Very liberal</b>	12%	138
<b>Liberal</b>	15%	176
<b>Moderate</b>	35%	410
<b>Conservative</b>	19%	219
<b>Very conservative</b>	11%	126
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	112
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Country/Region level of influence

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

	<b>Very influential</b>	<b>Fairly influential</b>	<b>Just slightly influential</b>	<b>Not at all influential</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Australia</b>	5%	28%	39%	15%	13%	1181
<b>Canada</b>	12%	31%	35%	13%	10%	1181
<b>China</b>	49%	28%	9%	5%	8%	1181
<b>European Union</b>	29%	35%	17%	5%	13%	1181
<b>India</b>	9%	33%	32%	13%	12%	1181

Iran	9%	24%	30%	25%	13%	1181
Israel	25%	33%	22%	8%	12%	1181
Japan	22%	43%	21%	4%	10%	1181
Mexico	6%	24%	40%	20%	10%	1181
North Korea	7%	19%	29%	31%	13%	1181
Russia	33%	33%	14%	9%	11%	1181
South Korea	8%	32%	35%	14%	12%	1181
United States	68%	18%	6%	3%	5%	1181

### UN Security Council Add

*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.*

	All	n
Germany	41%	480
Japan	52%	614
South Africa	12%	138
South Korea	17%	206
Brazil	0%	0
Indonesia	0%	0
India	20%	238
Other	5%	65
Not sure	25%	294
n	1181	

### Countries/Regions representing greatest foreign policy challenges for US

*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.*

	1	2	3	Not sure	n
Afghanistan	5%	5%	15%	75%	215
Australia	1%	5%	6%	87%	184
Canada	11%	12%	12%	65%	249
China	38%	26%	16%	19%	839
European Union	10%	11%	23%	56%	288
India	5%	8%	15%	72%	222
Iran	12%	16%	32%	41%	393
Israel	24%	17%	24%	35%	458
Japan	13%	6%	10%	71%	227

<b>Mexico</b>	8%	17%	17%	59%	273
<b>North Korea</b>	12%	23%	28%	37%	432
<b>Russia</b>	33%	33%	15%	19%	838
<b>South Korea</b>	4%	9%	11%	76%	212
<b>United Kingdom</b>	12%	13%	9%	66%	243

### Countries that should be able to develop military nuclear capabilities

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

	<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>South Korea</b>	6%	15%	30%	16%	34%	1181
<b>Japan</b>	8%	16%	33%	15%	29%	1181
<b>Taiwan</b>	5%	11%	33%	17%	33%	1181
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	2%	4%	26%	23%	45%	1181
<b>Australia</b>	7%	16%	37%	12%	27%	1181
<b>Qatar</b>	1%	4%	29%	23%	43%	1181
<b>United Arab Emirates (UAE)</b>	2%	5%	30%	20%	43%	1181
<b>Brazil</b>	2%	7%	35%	22%	34%	1181
<b>Argentina</b>	2%	5%	35%	22%	37%	1181

### Critical partners/Adversaries of the US

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

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Afghanistan</b>	4%	41%	55%	1181
<b>Australia</b>	38%	2%	60%	1181
<b>Canada</b>	63%	5%	33%	1181
<b>China</b>	21%	51%	28%	1181
<b>European Union</b>	55%	5%	40%	1181
<b>India</b>	17%	8%	74%	1181
<b>Iran</b>	4%	59%	36%	1181
<b>Israel</b>	37%	14%	49%	1181
<b>Japan</b>	47%	4%	48%	1181

<b>Mexico</b>	36%	10%	54%	1181
<b>North Korea</b>	5%	62%	34%	1181
<b>Russia</b>	10%	63%	26%	1181
<b>South Korea</b>	37%	8%	54%	1181
<b>United Kingdom</b>	64%	4%	32%	1181
<b>Venezuela</b>	5%	28%	67%	1181
<b>Ukraine</b>	23%	8%	69%	1181

### Feelings about US military alliances

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

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Maintain all alliances as they are</b>	23%	277
<b>Maintain all alliances, but with reforms</b>	27%	322
<b>Maintain some alliances (possibly with reforms), while ending others</b>	18%	210
<b>End all alliances</b>	3%	38
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	105
<b>Do not know enough to answer</b>	19%	229
<b>n</b>	1181	

### US security alliance benefits

*The US maintains security alliances with countries around the world. In your opinion, these alliances...*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
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<b>Mostly benefit the US</b>	15%	174
<b>Mostly benefit our allies</b>	19%	227
<b>Benefit both the US and our allies</b>	61%	717
<b>Benefit neither</b>	5%	64
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Country threat to US national security

*How would you rate the threat each country or region poses to the national security interest of the United States in the next 10 years?*

	<b>Critical threat</b>	<b>Moderate threat</b>	<b>Minor threat</b>	<b>No threat at all</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>North Korea</b>	37%	28%	18%	5%	12%	1181
<b>China</b>	48%	26%	11%	5%	10%	1181
<b>Japan</b>	3%	9%	16%	56%	16%	1181
<b>Russia</b>	54%	25%	7%	4%	10%	1181
<b>South Korea</b>	6%	10%	14%	54%	15%	1181
<b>India</b>	4%	15%	33%	33%	16%	1181
<b>Iran</b>	34%	33%	15%	5%	12%	1181
<b>European Union (EU)</b>	3%	8%	19%	53%	17%	1181
<b>Vietnam</b>	3%	7%	24%	47%	19%	1181
<b>Mexico</b>	6%	12%	27%	42%	13%	1181
<b>Canada</b>	2%	6%	15%	66%	12%	1181

### Global Investment Opinion

*In recent years, country case treatment companies have invested in the United States. Do you think these investments are good for the US economy?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Yes</b>	59%	694
<b>No</b>	14%	168
<b>Don't Know</b>	27%	319

n	1181
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### Technology Investment

*In recent years, country case treatment companies have invested in new high tech manufacturing plants in the US. Do you think these investments are good for the US economy?*

	All	n
Yes	62%	732
No	14%	167
Don't Know	24%	282
n	1181	

### Foreign investments impact on jobs in US

*How do you think foreign investments in the US affect the number of jobs available to US workers?*

	All	n
Increases jobs	54%	639
Decreases jobs	12%	141
No effect on jobs	11%	126
Don't know	23%	276
n	1181	

### US trade amount change

*How do you think the following should be changed, if at all? The amount of US trade with...*

	Should be increased	Should be kept the same	Should be decreased	Don't know	n
South Korea	26%	42%	9%	23%	1181
China	14%	31%	36%	19%	1181
Canada	38%	37%	8%	17%	1181
Mexico	28%	39%	15%	18%	1181
Japan	33%	42%	6%	19%	1181

<b>The EU</b>	31%	38%	7%	23%	1181
<b>A foreign country</b>	21%	31%	12%	36%	1181

### US tariff change

*How do you think the following should be changed if at all? Tariffs on goods imported to the United States from...*

	Should be increased	Should be kept the same	Should be decreased	Don't know	n
<b>South Korea</b>	10%	33%	33%	24%	1181
<b>China</b>	26%	25%	32%	17%	1181
<b>Canada</b>	15%	30%	37%	18%	1181
<b>Mexico</b>	18%	29%	36%	17%	1181
<b>Japan</b>	12%	34%	33%	20%	1181
<b>The EU</b>	14%	32%	32%	23%	1181
<b>A foreign country</b>	15%	26%	28%	32%	1181

### US cooperate with South Korea and Japan in defense supply chain

*Do you think the US government should cooperate with allies like South Korea and Japan in the manufacturing supply chain for US defense products and systems?*

	All	n
<b>Yes</b>	56%	659
<b>No</b>	14%	171
<b>Don't know</b>	30%	351
<b>n</b>	1181	

### US restrictions on military equipment partners

*The US government has many restrictions on the countries they will partner with to make or share military equipment and technology. Do you think that these restrictions should be...*

	All	n
<b>Made stricter</b>	30%	358
<b>Kept the same</b>	38%	453
<b>Made less strict</b>	6%	76
<b>Don't know</b>	25%	294

n	1180
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### Believe East Asia is a vital region for US national interests

*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:*

	All	n
<b>Yes</b>	66%	776
<b>No</b>	8%	99
<b>Not sure</b>	26%	306
<b>n</b>	1181	

### Most important interest for the US in East Asia

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

	All	n
<b>Defending U.S. friends and allies</b>	27%	209
<b>Countering the rise of China</b>	36%	278
<b>Trade and economics</b>	0%	0
<b>Other</b>	2%	18
<b>Promoting US economic interests</b>	22%	172
<b>Promoting democratic values and ideas</b>	13%	100
<b>n</b>	776	

### Defending Taiwan or South Korea

*If the US has to choose between defending Taiwan and defending South Korea, which is the more important priority?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Taiwan</b>	14%	68
<b>South Korea</b>	23%	114
<b>Both</b>	47%	229
<b>Neither</b>	3%	16
<b>Not sure</b>	12%	59
<b>n</b>	487	

### **South Korean cultural interests**

*Which of the following South Korea culture genres are you interested in? Select all that apply.*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Korean pop music</b>	12%	146
<b>Korean television dramas</b>	12%	137
<b>Korean movies</b>	15%	179
<b>Korean beauty products</b>	15%	181
<b>Korean literature (novels, poems)</b>	7%	83
<b>Korean fashion</b>	10%	124
<b>Korean fine art (ceramic, painting, sculpture, etc.)</b>	15%	177
<b>Korean food</b>	42%	494
<b>None of the above</b>	45%	527
<b>n</b>	1181	

### South Korean cultural image in the US

*Do you think South Korean culture has a positive influence on South Korea's image in the United States?*

	All	n
Strongly agree	20%	234
Somewhat agree	40%	467
Somewhat disagree	5%	63
Strongly disagree	2%	18
Don't know	34%	399
n	1181	

### Ever visited South Korea

*Have you ever visited South Korea?*

	All	n
Yes	6%	73
No	94%	1108
n	1181	

### Number of times visited South Korea

*How many times have you visited South Korea in the past 5 years?*

	All	n
0	57%	42
1-3	34%	25
4-6	2%	2
7-9	5%	4
10 or more	2%	1
n	73	

### Purpose of visit to South Korea

*What was the purpose of your visit(s) to South Korea? Check all that apply.*

	All	n
Leisure/Vacation	35%	26
Business	23%	17

Education (study abroad/exchange student program/language studies)	12%	9
Other	37%	27
Don't remember	6%	5
n	73	

### Impression of South Korea after visit

*After your visit(s), did your impression of South Korea change? If so, how?*

	All	n
Yes, my impression became more positive	64%	47
Yes, my impression became more negative	12%	9
No, my impression did not change	20%	14
Don't know	4%	3
n	73	

### Opinion on South Korea

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

	All	n
Very favorable	17%	206
Favorable	49%	576
Unfavorable	6%	71
Very unfavorable	3%	33
Not sure	25%	295
n	1181	

**Approve of current US administration handling relations with South Korea**

*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?*

	All	n
<b>Approve</b>	33%	395
<b>Disapprove</b>	18%	213
<b>Not sure</b>	49%	573
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Trade with South Korea beneficial**

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

	All	n
<b>I believe that engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States</b>	68%	809
<b>I do not believe that engaging in trade with South Korea is beneficial to the United States</b>	7%	83
<b>Not sure</b>	24%	289
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Issues important for US and South Korea to cooperate on**

*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.*

	All	n
<b>Global health</b>	33%	389
<b>Climate change</b>	31%	362

<b>Development of international trade rules</b>	39%	460
<b>Other</b>	0%	3
<b>None of these</b>	2%	27
<b>Supply Chains</b>	48%	566
<b>Global Human Rights</b>	36%	420
<b>North Korea</b>	46%	540
<b>Technology</b>	50%	592
<b>Security matters outside of Northeast Asia (i.e., Europe, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia)</b>	34%	398
<b>China</b>	41%	483
<b>Not sure</b>	19%	219
<b>n</b>	0-1181	

**US military alliance with South Korea in national security interest**

*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?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>I believe the US alliance with South Korea is in the interest of US national security</b>	63%	740

<b>I do not believe the US alliance with South Korea is in the interest of US national security</b>	9%	102
<b>Not sure</b>	29%	339
<b>n</b>	1181	

### **Increase/Withdraw US troops in South Korea**

*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?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Increase</b>	9%	101
<b>Maintain</b>	51%	598
<b>Reduce</b>	11%	129
<b>Withdraw</b>	6%	72
<b>Not sure</b>	24%	281
<b>n</b>	1181	

### **Should US increase troop presence in South Korea if North Korea gives up nuclear weapons**

*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?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Increase</b>	5%	62
<b>Maintain</b>	42%	491
<b>Reduce</b>	20%	240
<b>Withdraw</b>	7%	80
<b>Not sure</b>	26%	307
<b>n</b>	1181	

### **Opinion on North Korea**

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

	All	n
<b>Very favorable</b>	2%	28
<b>Favorable</b>	9%	109
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	253
<b>Very unfavorable</b>	46%	547
<b>Not sure</b>	21%	244
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Approve of current US administration handling relations with North Korea**

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

	All	n
<b>Approve</b>	28%	331
<b>Disapprove</b>	29%	348
<b>Not sure</b>	43%	503
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Importance of North Korea giving up nuclear capabilities**

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

	All	n
<b>Very important</b>	54%	634
<b>Important</b>	34%	399
<b>Not very important</b>	8%	100
<b>Not at all important</b>	4%	49
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Importance of US pushing for human rights improvements in North Korea**

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

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Very important</b>	43%	508
<b>Important</b>	42%	492
<b>Not very important</b>	11%	124
<b>Not at all important</b>	5%	56
<b>n</b>	1181	

**Approve of US providing humanitarian assistance to North Korean civilians**

*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?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Approve</b>	54%	636
<b>Disapprove</b>	17%	204
<b>Not sure</b>	29%	341
<b>n</b>	1181	

# Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. *The Works of Thomas Jefferson, Federal Edition*, vol. 5: Correspondence, 1786–1789, ed. Paul Leicester Ford. New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1905. Liberty Fund, Inc. 2010. p.151

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