

navigator*

Wednesday, March 18th

The Conflict With Iran



Credit: Shutterstock/macondofotografcisi

Key Takeaways:

- Views of the American military operation against Iran are net negative, with MAGA Republicans being the main group strongly in favor.
- Americans report feeling like the world and their community are less safe because of it, and many say this could extend for months if not years and are concerned about a prolonged conflict.
- Americans are acutely feeling the rise in gas prices since the conflict began, more so than groceries or utilities.

Key Takeaways:

- Trump's approval ratings overall and on the economy continue to sink, with his ratings on foreign policy in the same double-digit negative territory now.
- The war with Iran dominates what Americans are hearing on Trump this week, and it is the primary issue 2024 Trump voters cite when they say they regret voting for him.
- Neither party is trusted on foreign affairs issues. While Trump and Republicans hold a small trust advantage over Democrats on foreign policy, only about two in five trust the GOP – with a quarter or more of Americans not trusting either party or feeling unsure.
- Trump and Republicans' focus on foreign policy is a potential liability for them, as many say it's not a priority for them personally. Further, Americans feel the U.S. spends far too much money on foreign conflicts and not enough on health care, education, and retirement programs.

The Case Against the War With Iran

Trump's war against Iran is unnecessary, dangerous, and disconnected from Americans' priorities at home. It threatens to drag the U.S. into a prolonged conflict, drive up costs including gas prices, and take billions away from health care and other needs at home. It also puts U.S. troops and civilians at risk and raises the likelihood of broader global escalation, leaving America and the world less safe, not more.

Why It Works:

- **Wrong priorities:** Billions spent on war instead of lowering costs or investing in health care and other priorities at home
- **Economic pain:** Rising gas prices and broader economic fallout
- **Endless conflict fears:** No clear plan, risk of a long, costly war
- **Safety concerns:** Threats to U.S. troops, civilian lives, and global stability

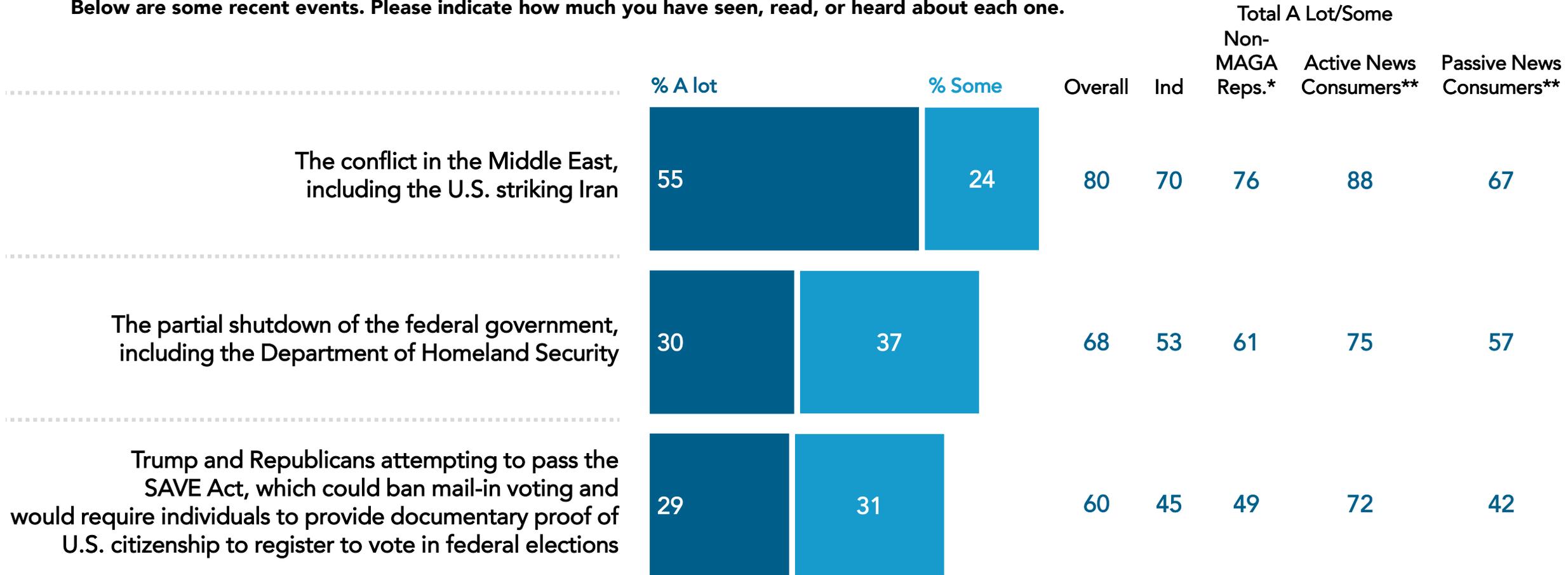
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Landscape

Most Are Hearing About the Conflict in the Middle East

Even two in three passive news consumers** report hearing “a lot” or “some” about the conflict (67%).

Below are some recent events. Please indicate how much you have seen, read, or heard about each one.

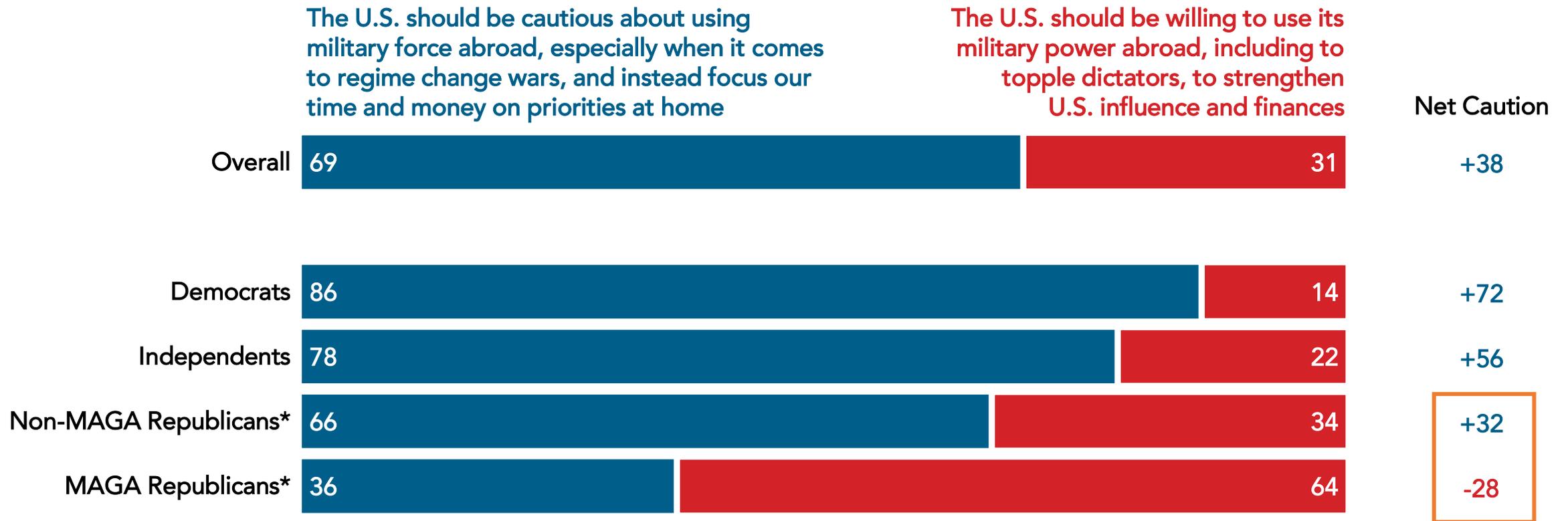


*“MAGA Republicans” are Republicans who identify as “a supporter of the MAGA movement” on a separate question, while “non-MAGA Republicans” are Republicans who do not consider themselves supporters of the MAGA movement or are not sure. **Active news consumers say they “seek news out” while passive news consumers say “news come to me.” Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted March 12-March 16, 2026. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

Americans Continue to Want to See Caution in Foreign Conflicts

Views have shifted notably among Republicans compared to before the latest conflict began: non-MAGA Republicans* have grown a net 16 points more likely to favor the U.S. using its power abroad since February (from net +48 caution to net +32) and MAGA Republicans* have shifted by a net 38 points to favor the same (from net +10 caution to net -28).

Which statement do you agree with more about America's role in the world, even if neither fully represents your view?

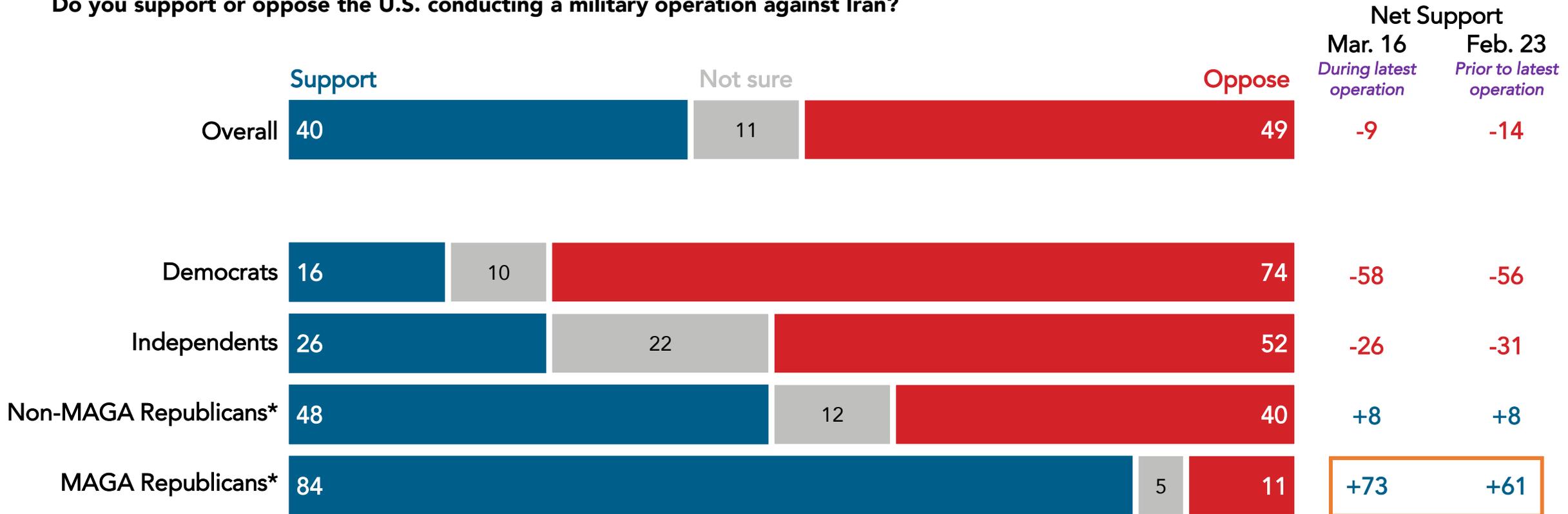


*"MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who identify as "a supporter of the MAGA movement" on a separate question, while "non-MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who do not consider themselves supporters of the MAGA movement or are not sure. Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted March 12-March 16, 2026. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

Nearly Half Oppose U.S. Military Action Against Iran, Though Support Is Higher With MAGA Now Than Prior to Latest Conflict

A majority of independents (52%) and 40% of non-MAGA Republicans* oppose the military operation.

Do you support or oppose the U.S. conducting a military operation against Iran?



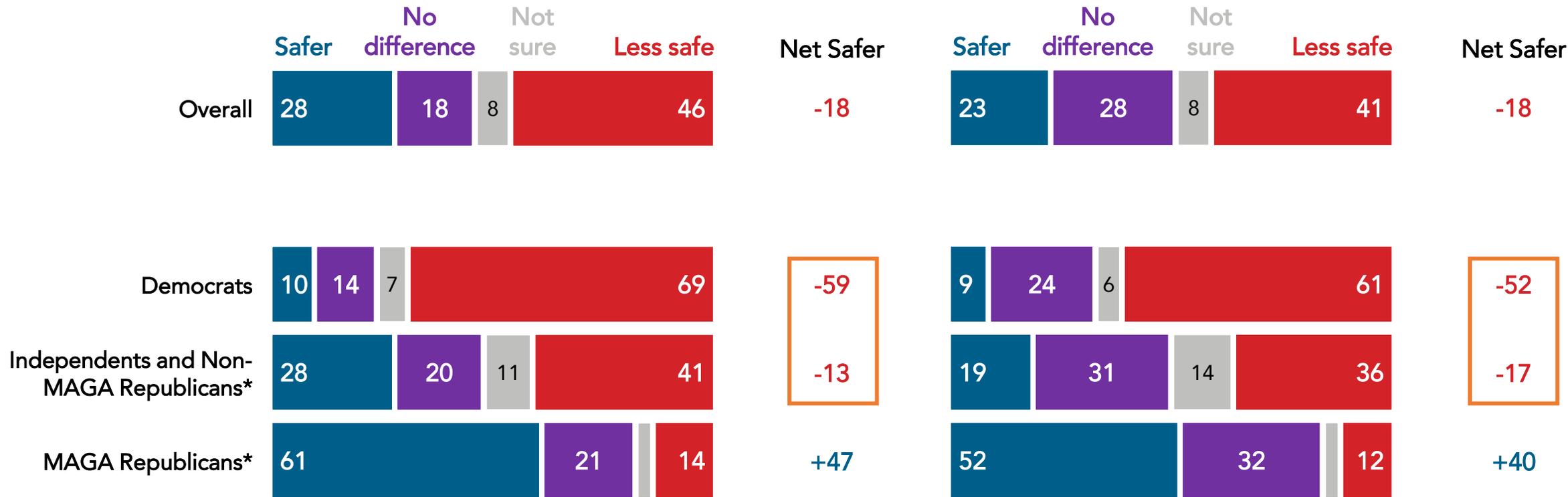
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Pluralities Say the World and Their Community Have Gotten Less Safe Because of the U.S. Military Action Against Iran

At least two in five Americans say the world, and their family/community, have gotten less safe (46% and 41% less safe, respectively).

(Split Sample) Do you think the U.S. military operation against Iran has made the world safer, less safe, or has it made no difference?

(Split Sample) Do you think the U.S. military operation against Iran has made your family and community safer, less safe, or has it made no difference?

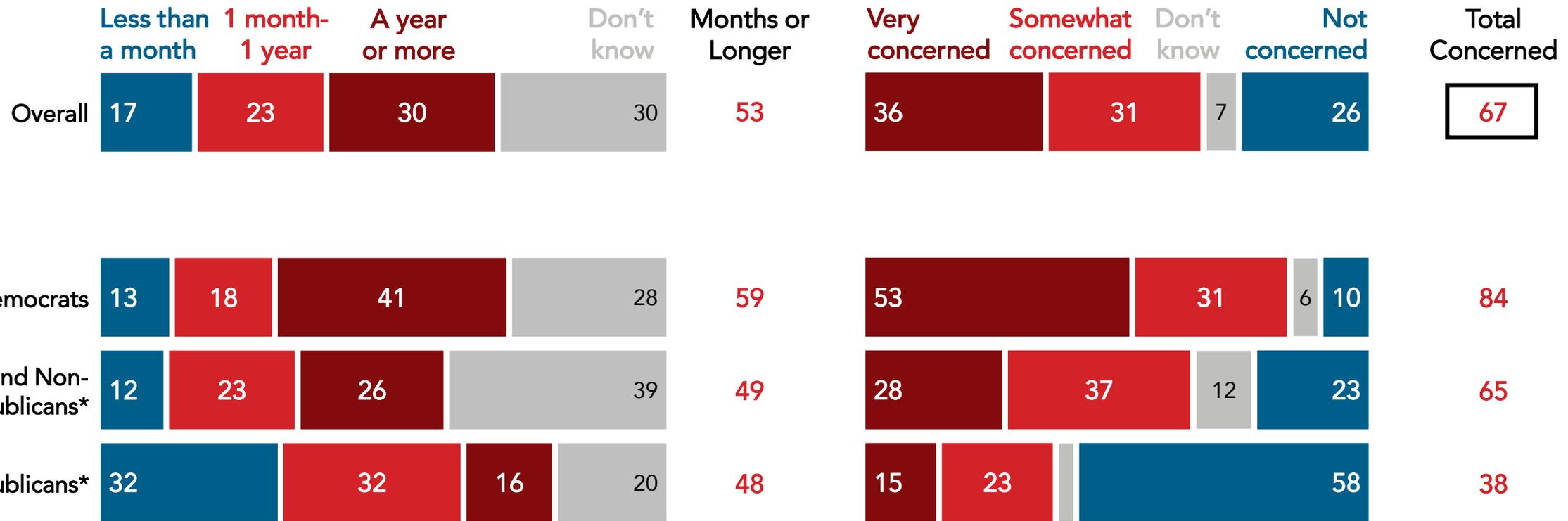


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A Majority Say the Conflict With Iran Will Take Months or Longer and Two in Three Are Concerned About a Prolonged Conflict

(Split Sample) How much longer do you think the U.S. involvement in the conflict with Iran will last?

(Split Sample) How concerned are you that the U.S. will become bogged down in a prolonged conflict with Iran?



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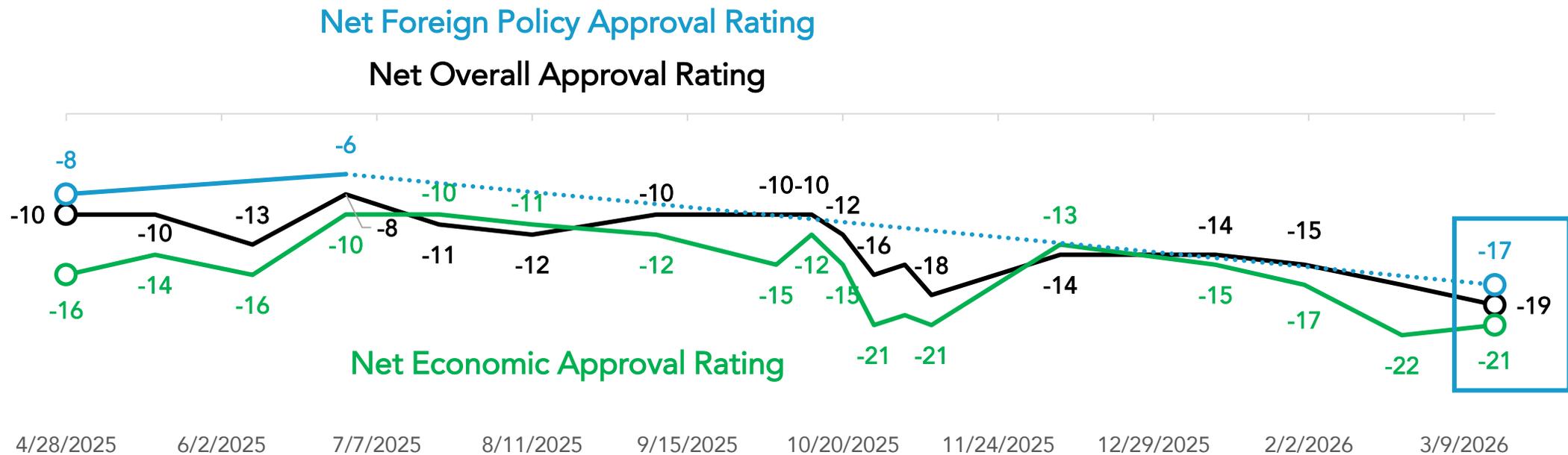
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Trump Latest

Trump's Approval Numbers Remain Deeply Negative, Worsening on Foreign Policy With Latest in Iran Conflict

Since last April, Trump's overall (from net -10 approve to net -19 now), economic (from net -16 to net -21), and foreign policy (from net -8 to net -17) approval ratings have all sharply declined.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president/**the economy**/**foreign policy**?

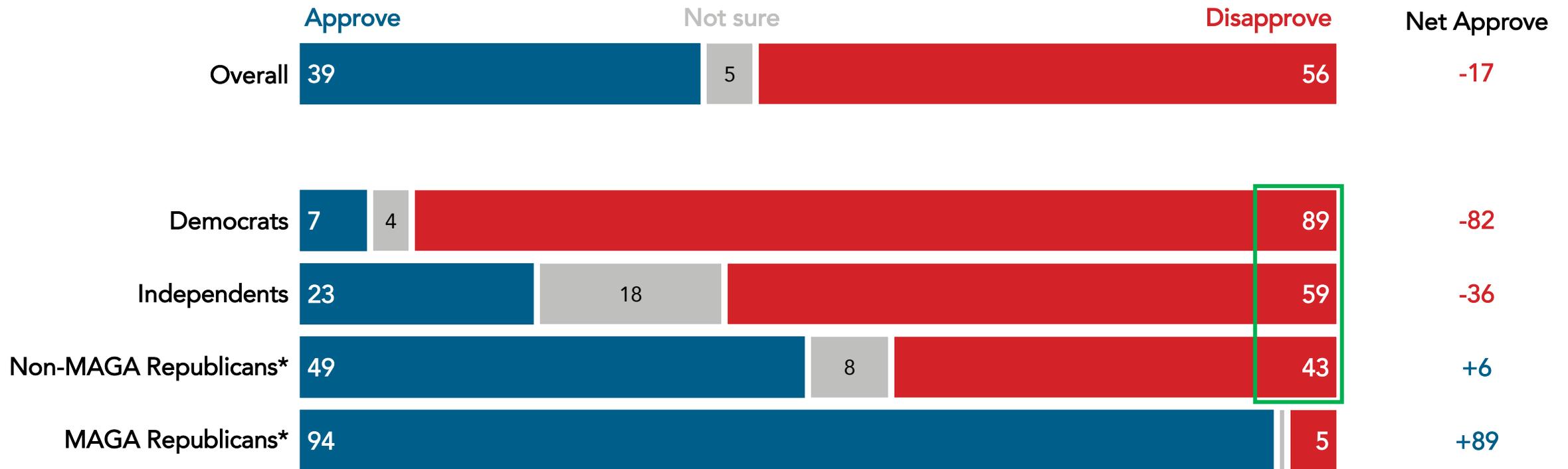


Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted March 12-March 16, 2026. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

Trump Is in the Negative By Double Digits on His Handling of Foreign Policy

A majority of Americans (56% disapprove), including 89% of Democrats, 59% of independents, and 43% of non-MAGA Republicans*, disapprove of Trump's handling of foreign policy.

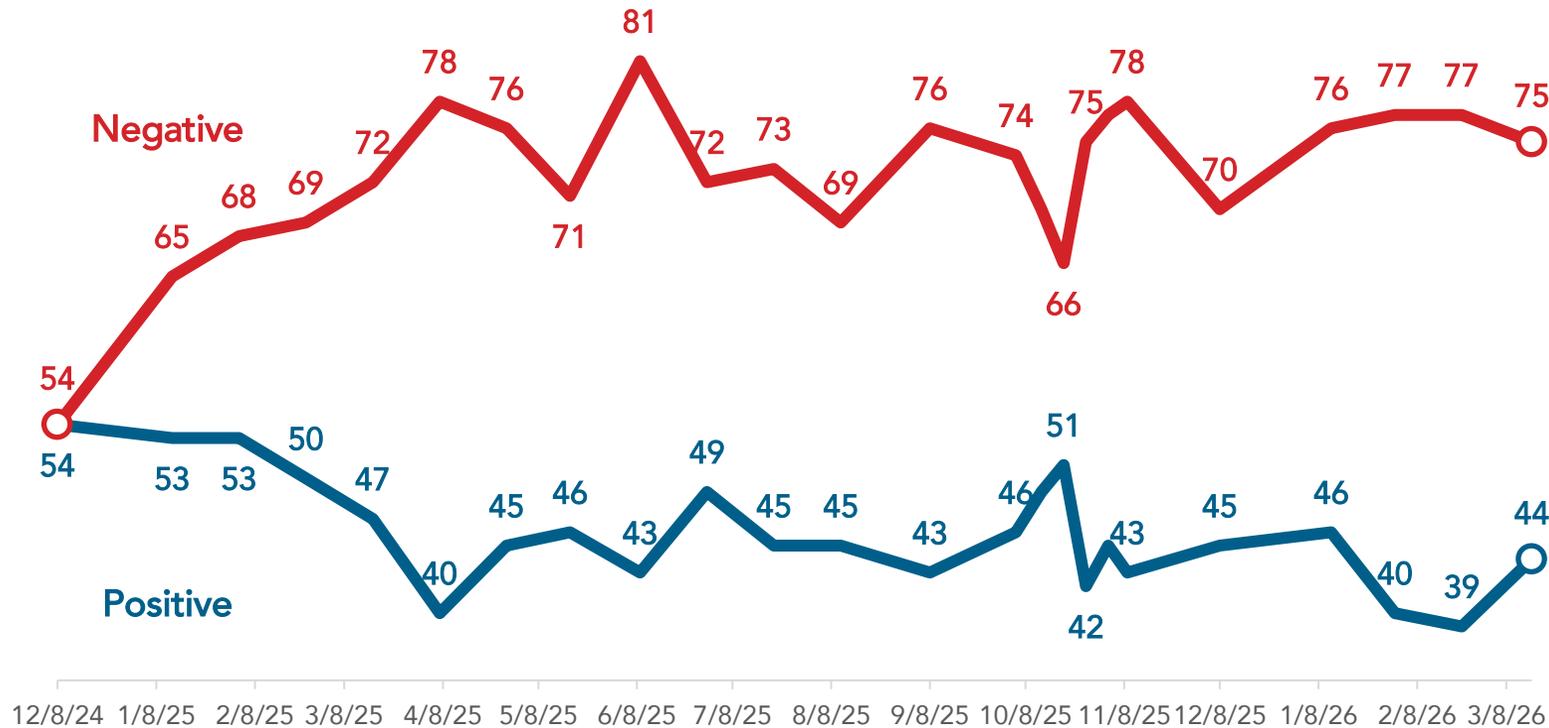
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling foreign policy?



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Trump's Actions Against Iran Are the Main Negative Story Americans Are Hearing About Him This Week

Over the past few days, has what you have seen, read, or heard recently about Donald Trump been:



[If hearing negative/mixed information] In a few words, what **negative** things have you seen, read, or heard recently about Donald Trump?



"He started a war with Iran with no plan of what he actually wants to do." *"Just how he totally disregards the Constitution and started a war in Iran."*

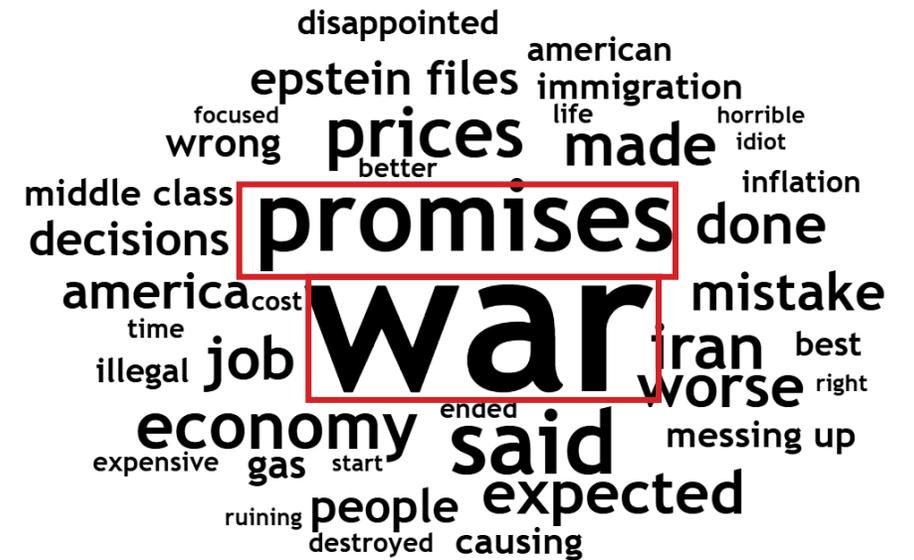
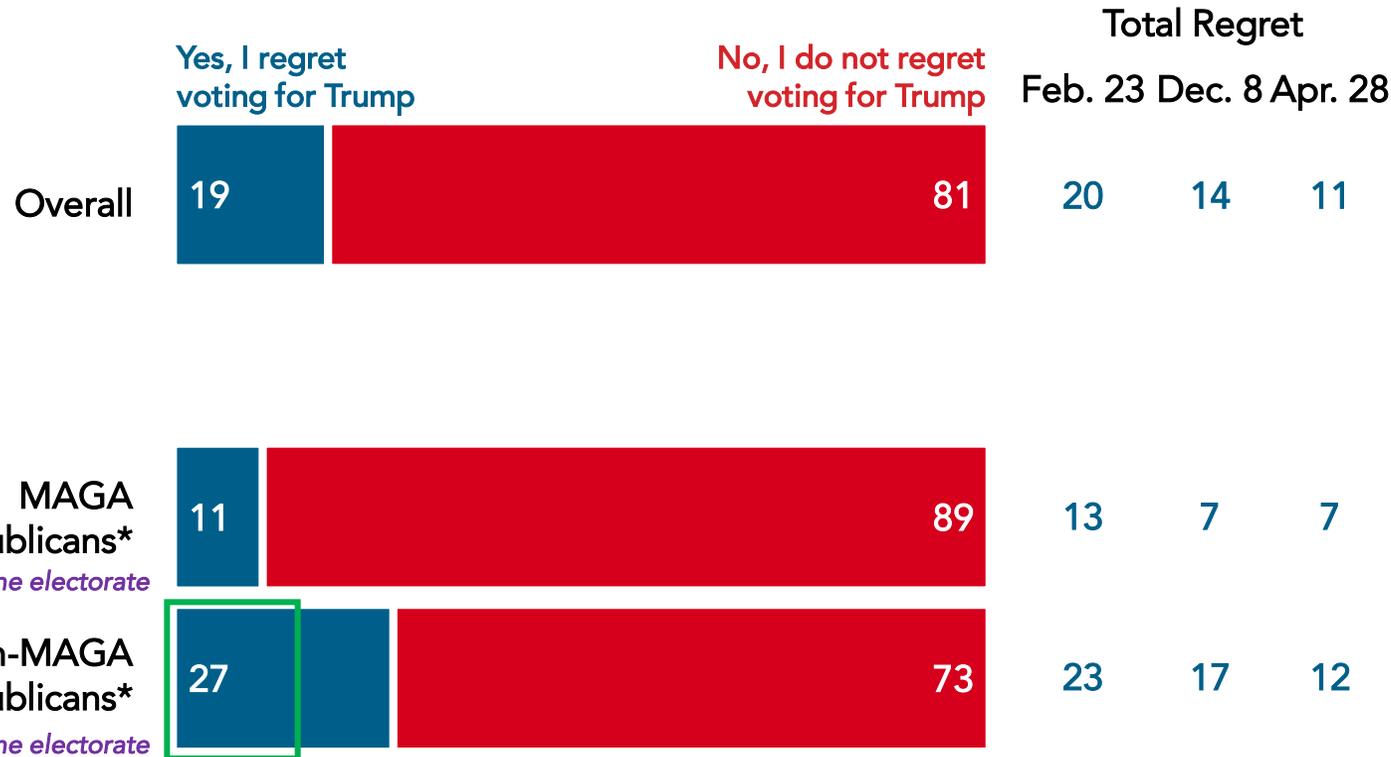
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One in Five 2024 Trump Voters Regret Their Vote, Citing Broken Promises and a New War

Since April 2025, a growing share of non-MAGA Republicans* say they regret voting for Trump (from 12% regret then to 27% now).

[If 2024 Trump voter] You indicated you voted for Donald Trump in 2024. Do you regret voting for Donald Trump?

[If voted for Trump and regret voting for him] You indicated you regret voting for Donald Trump in 2024. What makes you say that?



"He is an idiot and is ruining the country and economy and causing war."

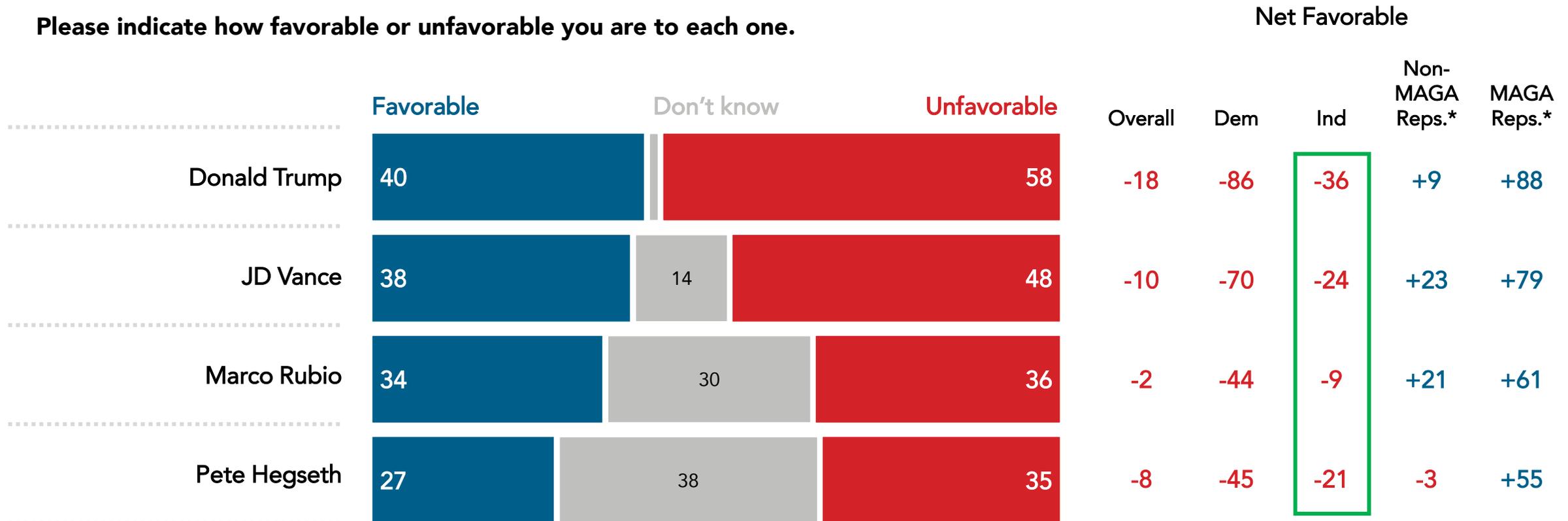
"He promised he would not start any wars."

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Leaders of the U.S. Operation in Iran Are in the Negative

Donald Trump (net -36 favorable), JD Vance (net -24), Marco Rubio (net -9), and Pete Hegseth (net -21) are all underwater with independents – and Pete Hegseth is also in the negative with non-MAGA Republicans* (net -3).

Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to each one.

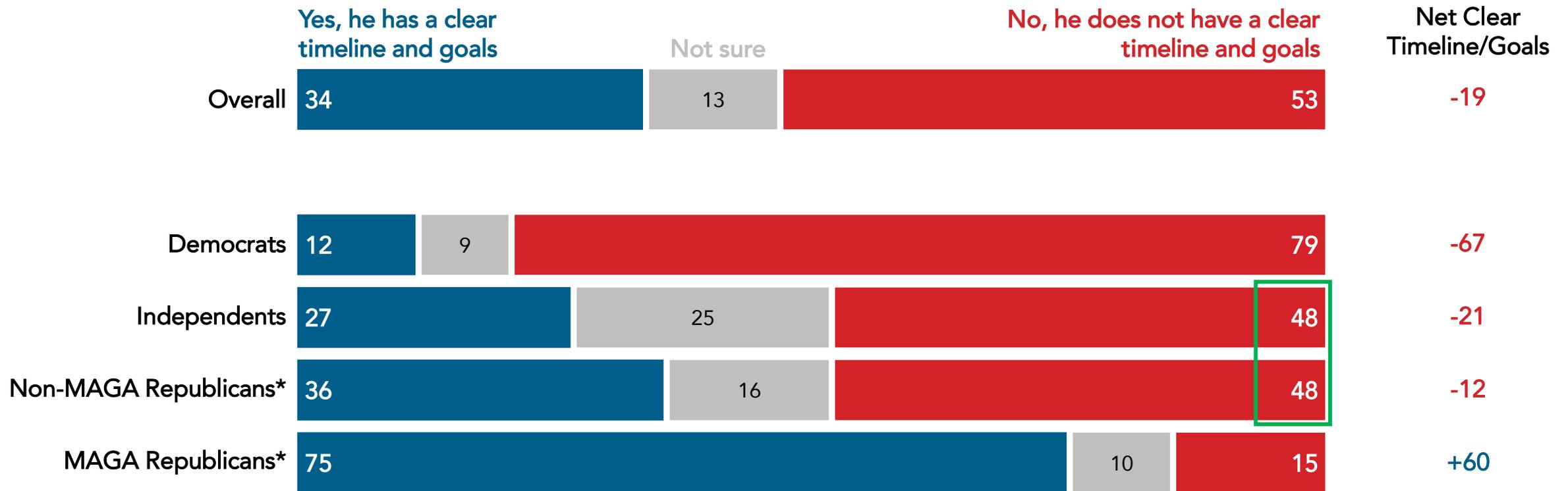


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A Majority Say Trump Lacks Clear Goals and a Timeline on Iran

Nearly half of independents and non-MAGA Republicans* (48% no each) say he does not have a clear timeline or goals; MAGA Republicans* stand alone in their perception that Trump has a clear timeline and goals for this military operation (75% yes).

Do you think Trump has a clear timeline and goals for the U.S. military operation against Iran?

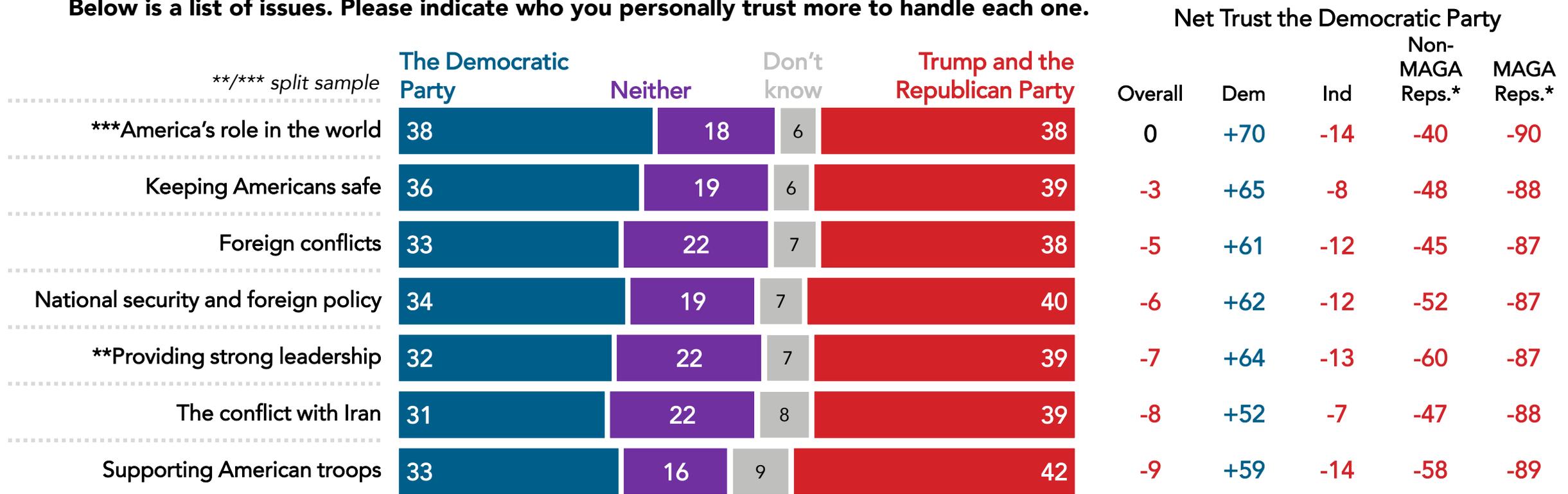


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A Quarter of Americans Do Not Trust Either Party or Are Unsure of Who to Trust on a Range of Foreign Affairs Items

Three in ten Americans (30%) say they do not trust either party or do not know who to trust on the “conflict with Iran” specifically, and nearly the same share (29%) say they do not trust either party or do not know who to trust on “foreign conflicts.”

Below is a list of issues. Please indicate who you personally trust more to handle each one.

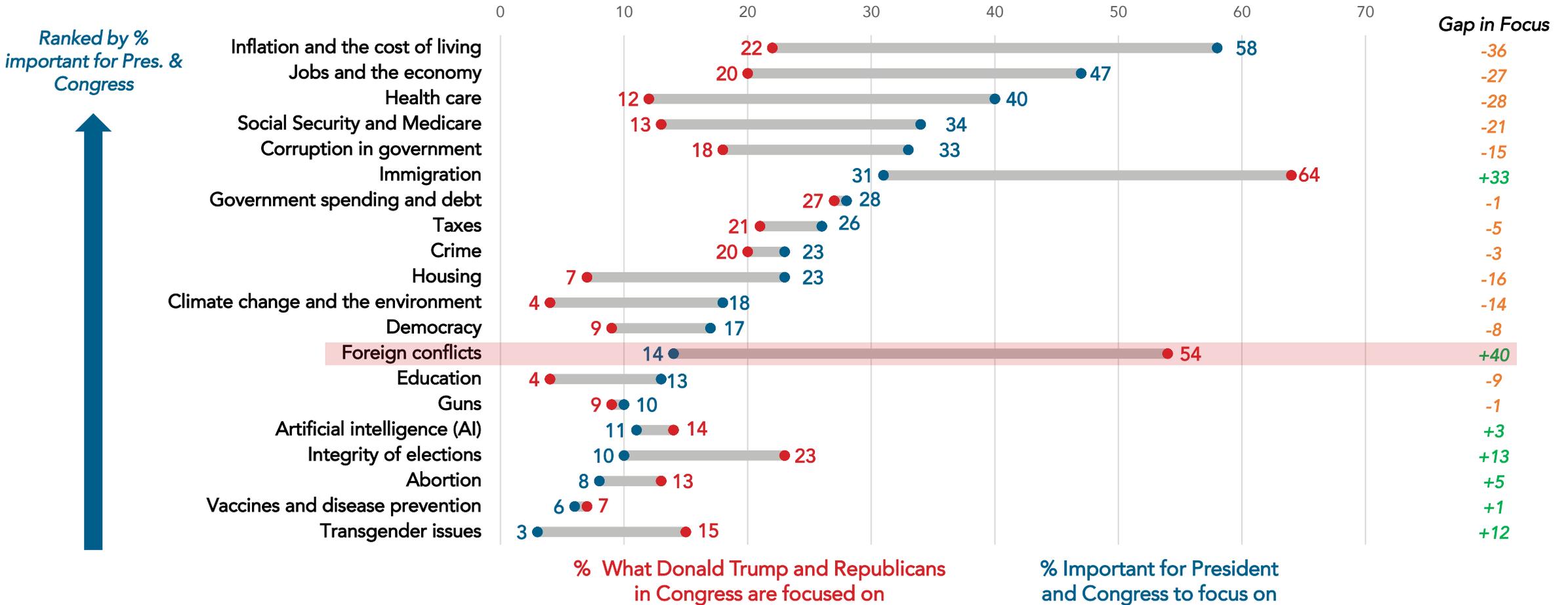


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Messaging

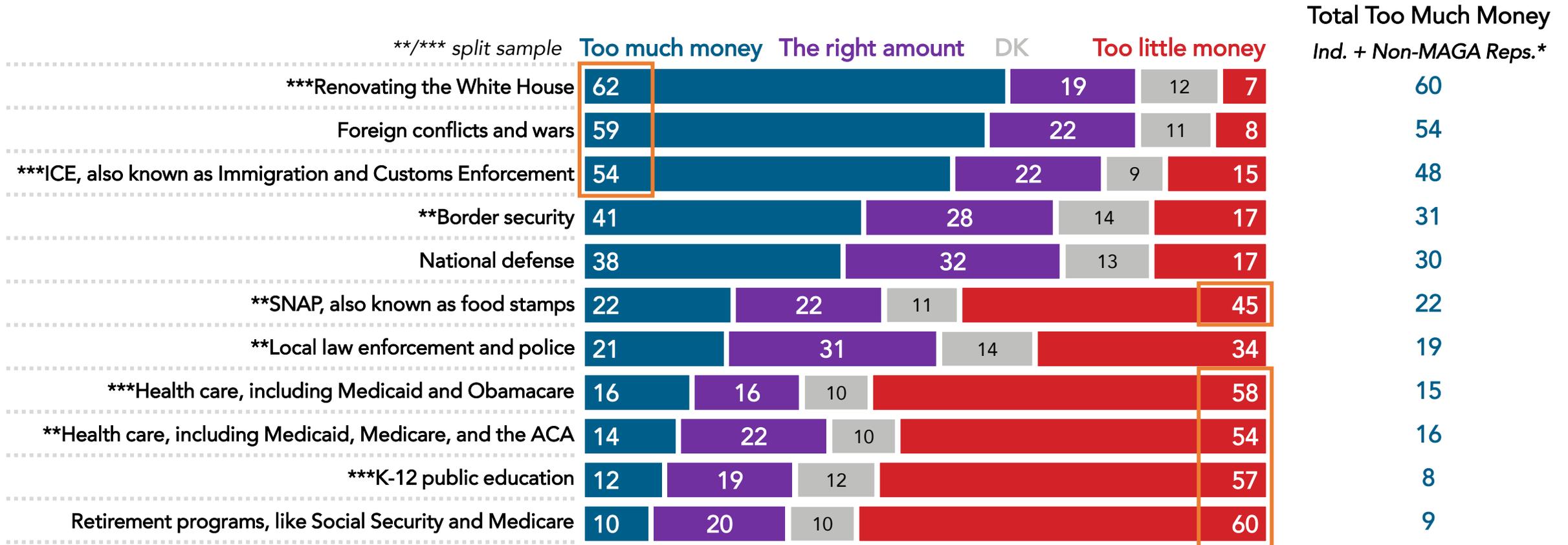
A Majority Say Trump/GOP Focused on Foreign Conflicts; Fewer Than One in Six Want Them to Prioritize the Issue



Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted March 12-March 16, 2026. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

Americans Say U.S. Spends Too Much Money on White House, Foreign Conflicts, ICE; Not Enough on Health Care, Retirement

When you think about how much money the U.S. government spends on the following things, would you say the government spends too much money, too little money, or the right amount of money on each one?

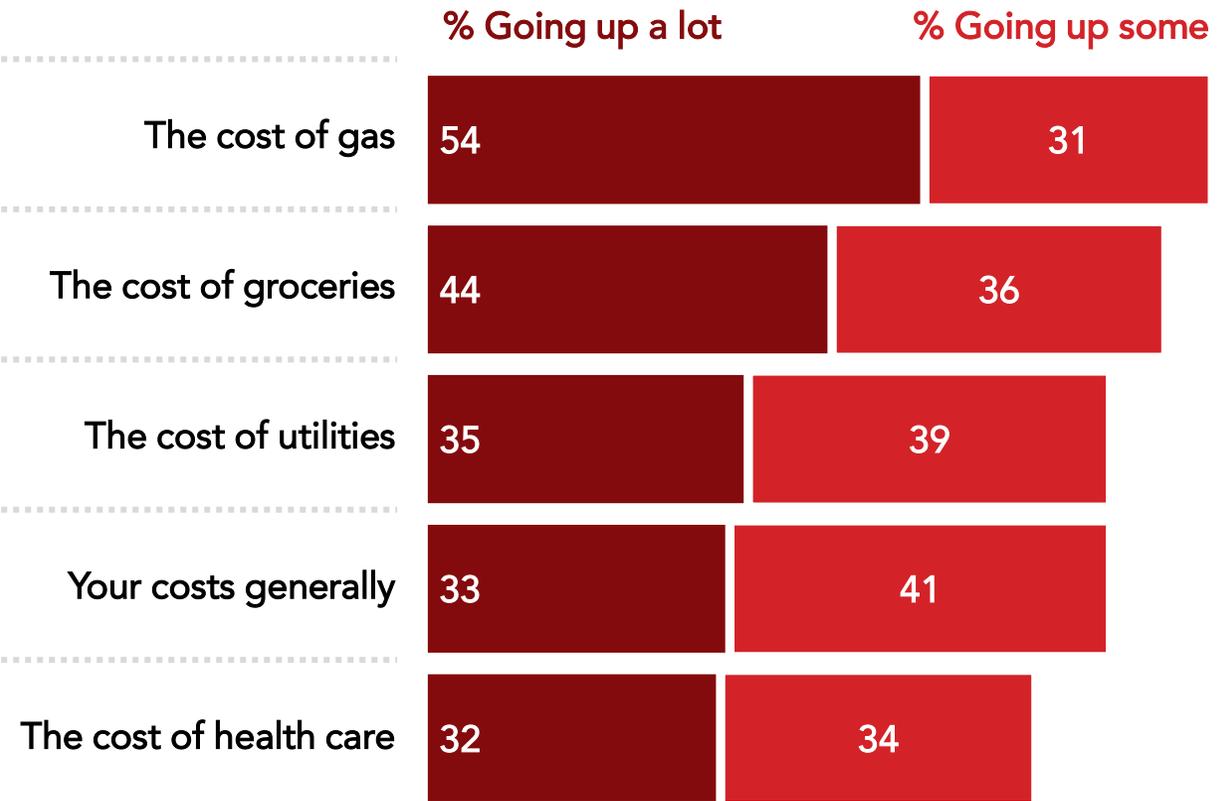
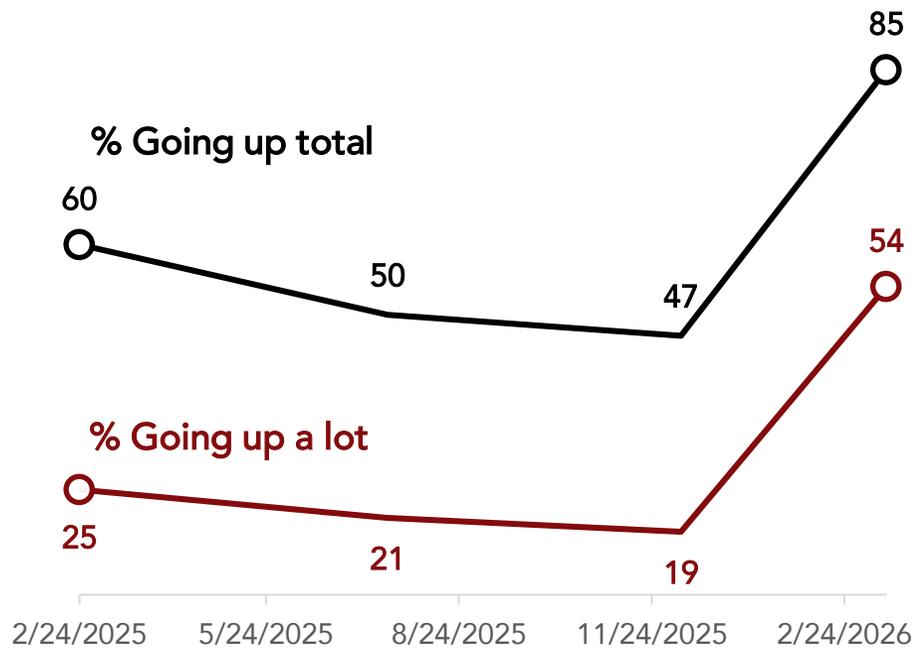


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Americans Are Acutely Feeling Changes in Gas Prices, More So Than Groceries, Utilities, Health Care

Please indicate, for each one, whether you feel like those costs are going up, going down, or staying the same.

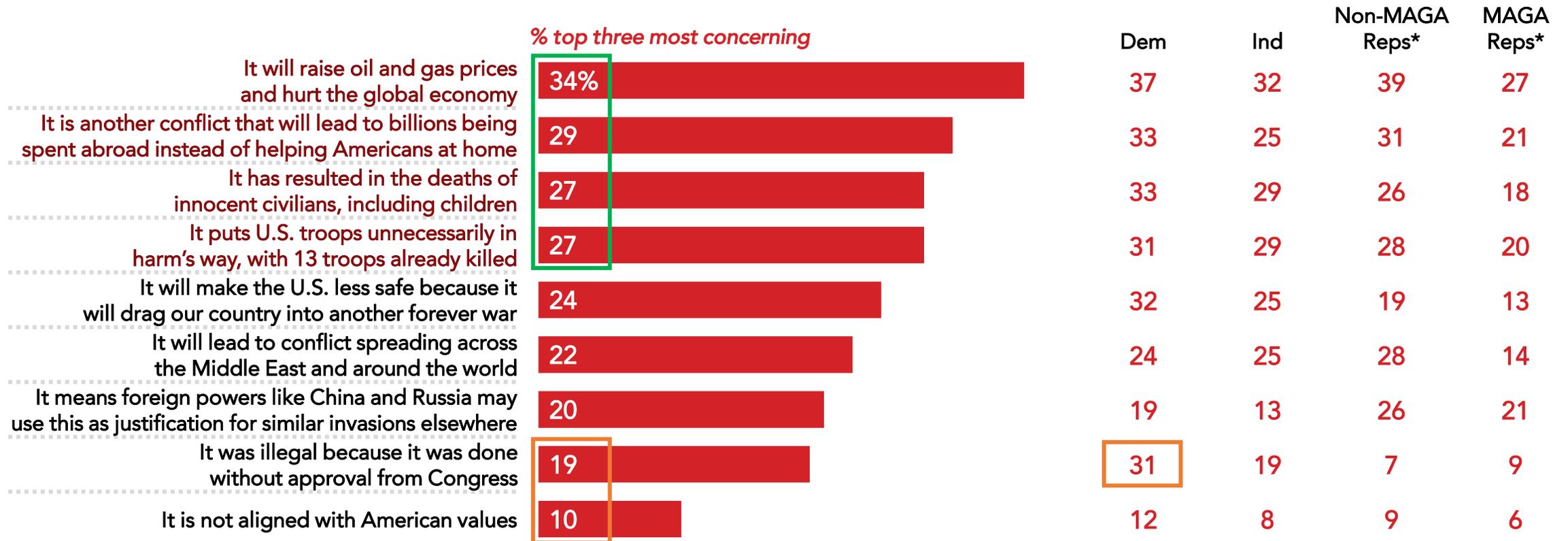
Perceptions of the cost of gas



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Greatest Concerns on Iran: Higher Oil and Gas Prices, Money Spent Abroad Instead of at Home, Civilian/Troop Casualties

Below are concerns some have about the recent U.S. military operation against Iran. Which of the following raise the most concerns for you, if any?

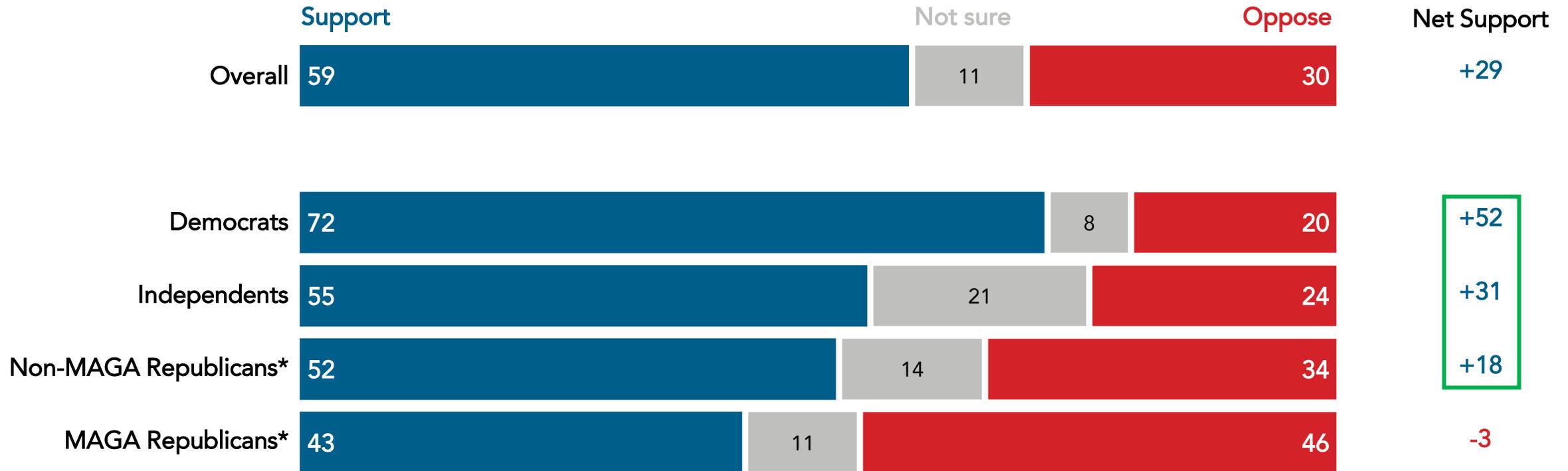


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Requiring Trump to Get Congressional Approval Before Additional Military Action Against Iran Is Broadly Popular

Majorities of Democrats (72%), independents (55%), and non-MAGA Republicans* (52%) support this, as do 43% of MAGA Republicans*.

Do you support or oppose requiring Trump to get Congressional approval before the United States continues military action against Iran?

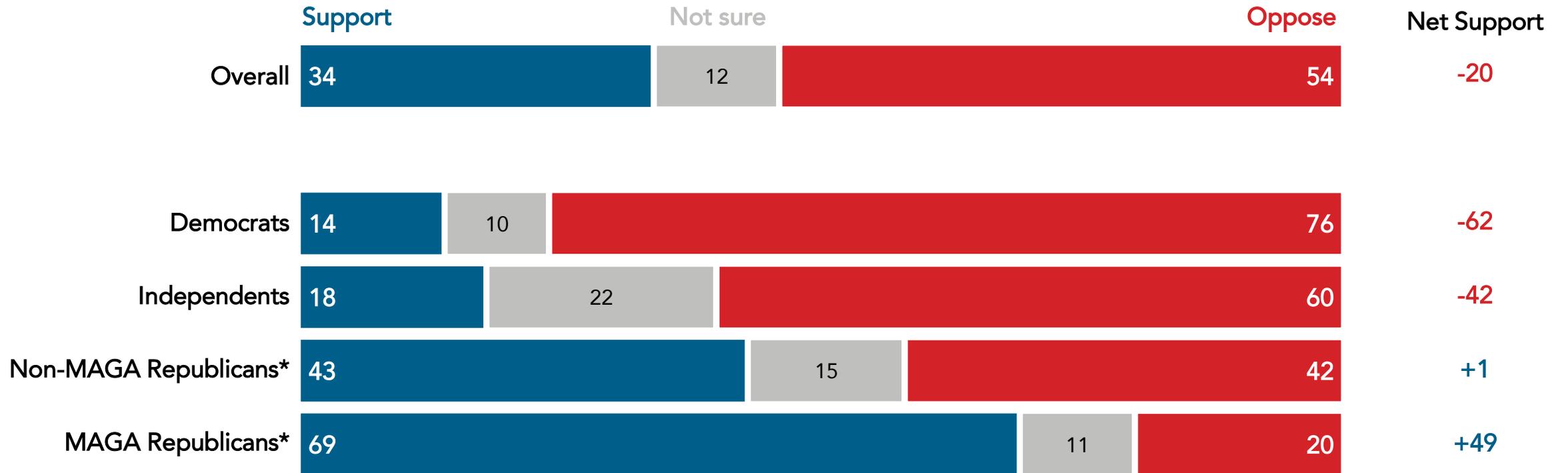


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Majorities Oppose Additional Funding for the U.S. Military Operation Against Iran

Non-MAGA Republicans* are divided (net +1 support) on additional funding for the U.S. military operation against Iran.

Do you support or oppose Congress providing an additional \$50 billion of funding for the U.S. military operation against Iran?



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Strongest Messaging Against Trump: Spending Money on Wars Instead of at Home, Harming Economy, Breaking Promises

Please indicate how concerning you find each one, where 1 means it is not at all concerning and 5 means it is extremely concerning. [Top 7 tested]

	% Extremely concerning (5)	% Somewhat concerning (4)	Total Concerning (4-5) Overall	Ind. + Non-MAGA Reps.*
<p>[SPENDING] Trump cut programs people depend on, like Medicaid and SNAP, and is using that money to fund this multi-billion-dollar war with Iran. He says we don't have the money to help Americans afford health care or keep food on the table, but we're spending billions on bombs and wars.</p>	47	14	61	56
<p>[WRONG PRIORITIES/COSTS] We can't afford Trump's war with Iran. In the first two days of the conflict alone, the U.S. spent nearly \$6 billion on the war. With no end in sight, the conflict could cost the U.S. tens of billions of dollars. We're spending time and money on the wrong things, with billions spent on bombs and war when we have a cost of living crisis at home.</p>	45	17	62	55
<p>[ECONOMY] Trump's war with Iran threatens to destabilize the global economy and has already raised oil prices by more than 20% compared to before the conflict started. If the conflict continues, it will continue to wreak havoc on the global economy and continue to raise oil and gas prices.</p>	44	19	63	57
<p>***[BROKEN PROMISE] Trump promised to put an end to the chaos of forever wars and put Americans first. Instead, he's started more conflicts than any recent President. It's only been one year of his second term and already, we've entered two conflicts with Iran, threatened to take control of Greenland, and involved the U.S. in other international conflicts.</p>	44	17	61	58
<p>***[HUMAN TOLL/CARE] Trump's war with Iran has already killed multiple American soldiers and puts many more at risk. Every escalation risks more service members not coming home. And, when Trump was asked about the deaths of American soldiers, he said, "There will likely be more before it ends. That's the way it is."</p>	43	19	62	58
<p>**[SPREAD] Trump's war with Iran has now engulfed much of the Middle East, as more than 10 countries have been targeted or hit by Iranian attacks – and the conflict could spread further. And, this comes after Trump has already ordered U.S. military strikes against six other countries, including Venezuela and Nigeria, and threatened Greenland and Cuba.</p>	43	16	59	54
<p>**[HUMAN TOLL] Trump's war with Iran has already killed multiple American soldiers and puts many more at risk. Every escalation risks more service members not coming home and more families being forced to bear the cost of another conflict we don't need to be involved in.</p>	43	15	58	52

/ indicates split sample

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Less Concerning: Netanyahu Pushing U.S. Into Conflict

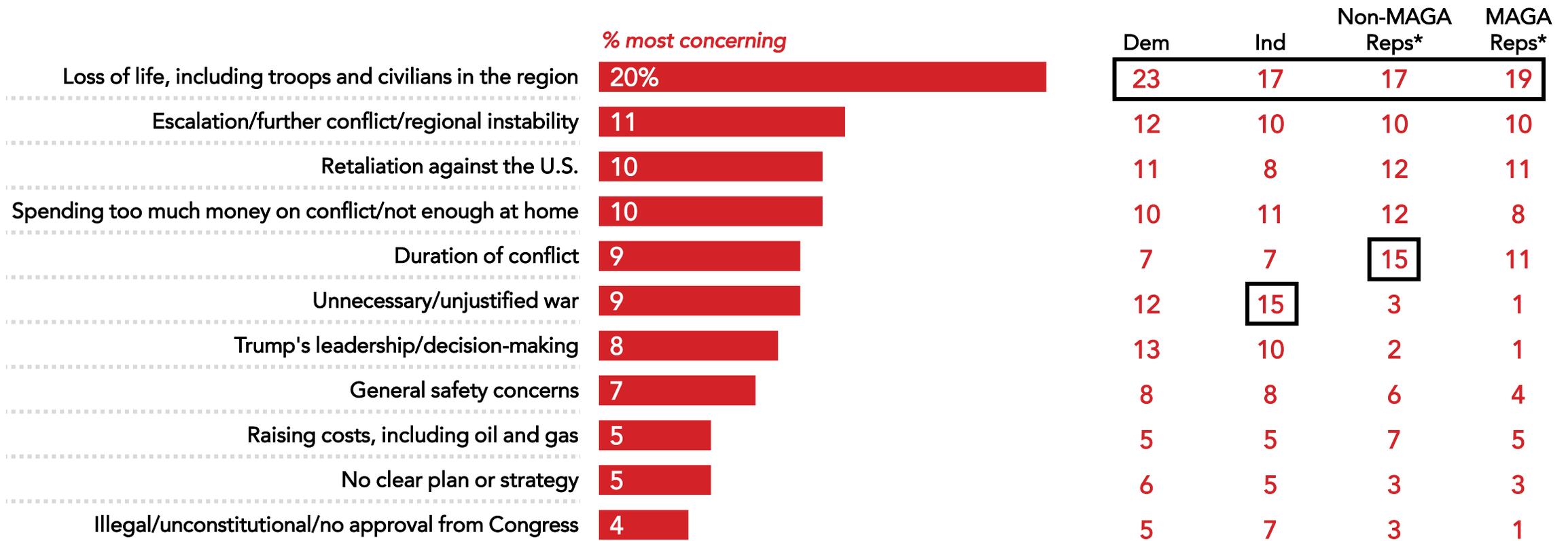
Please indicate how concerning you find each one, where 1 means it is not at all concerning and 5 means it is extremely concerning.
[Bottom 6 tested]

	<i>**/** indicates split sample</i>		<i>Total Concerning (4-5)</i>	
	<i>% Extremely concerning (5)</i>	<i>% Somewhat concerning (4)</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Ind. + Non-MAGA Reps.*</i>
[NO STRATEGY] Trump has no clear plan for the war with Iran: he and his administration are offering contradictory explanations for the attack and saying different things about what their goals are, and Trump still has not told the American people why he decided to start this conflict, what his goals are, or what it would take to end it.	42	15	57	49
[IMMORAL] Trump's war with Iran does not reflect American values, with a U.S. missile "likely" responsible for mistakenly hitting a school and killing more than 150 people, mostly children, and many more civilians injured or killed throughout the country.	42	16	58	51
[ILLEGAL] Trump's war with Iran is illegal and violates U.S. law because it was done without authorization from Congress. The Constitution is clear: only Congress can declare war, and the President cannot take the U.S. to war on his own without Congressional approval.	42	14	56	46
[SAFETY] Trump's war against Iran sows chaos and makes the U.S. and the world less safe. This ongoing conflict raises the likelihood of global warfare and risks dragging our country into another regime-change war – not to mention, it makes the U.S. a target for retaliation for countries around the world.	41	18	60	55
***[LESSON] Trump's war with Iran has now engulfed much of the Middle East, as more than 10 countries have been targeted or hit by Iranian attacks. How many wars does it take in the Middle East for America to learn its lesson? Now, with Iran, we've been pulled into another conflict with no end in sight and no clear goals.	40	18	58	53
**[ISRAEL] Trump was pressured by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into a war with Iran that most Americans didn't want, and it is not making us safer or more secure. It's not in the U.S. interest and will do far more harm than good.	35	19	53	44

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Americans Most Concerned About Loss of Life, Conflict Escalation, Retaliation Against U.S., Spending Too Much on War

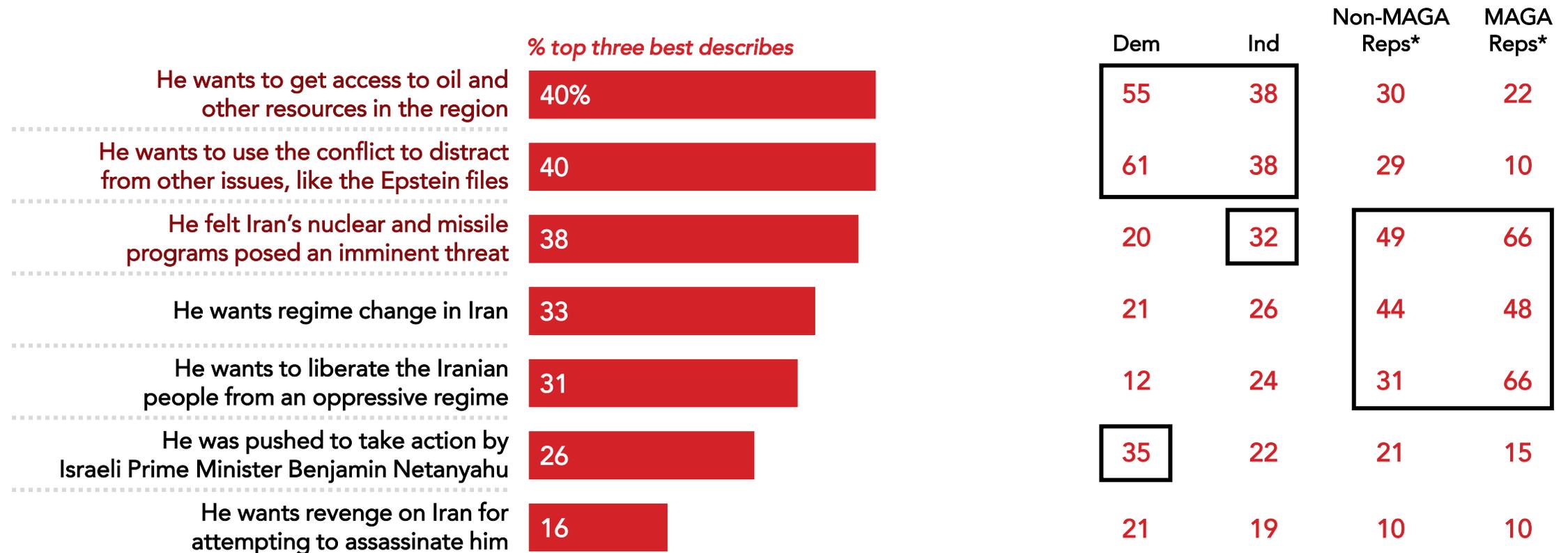
[If indicated concern with any statement] After reading those statements... What concerns you the most about the U.S. military operation against Iran, if anything? [Recoded open ends]



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Drivers for Trump on Actions Against Iran: Oil Access, Distraction from Epstein Files, Fear of Imminent Iranian Threat

Below is a list of reasons some say Trump decided to conduct a military operation against Iran. Please indicate which three you think are the main reasons he decided to conduct a military operation against Iran.



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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO.

About the Study

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a sample of 1,000 registered voters from March 12-March 16, 2026. 100 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 101 additional interviews were conducted among African American voters. 82 additional interviews were conducted among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. 100 additional interviews were conducted among independent voters. The survey was conducted online, recruiting respondents from an opt-in online panel vendor. Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the national registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

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To learn more about Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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