

# American Public Attitudes Toward ISIS and Syria

*A survey sponsored by the*

**Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland**

*in cooperation with the*

**Program for Public Consultation**

*presented at*

**The Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution**

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Steven Kull, Evan Lewis, Clay Ramsay, and Katayoun Kishi provided assistance.

Peyton Craighill provided helpful comments.

Rachel Slattery and Elizabeth Pearce contributed to the presentation.

# Survey Methodology

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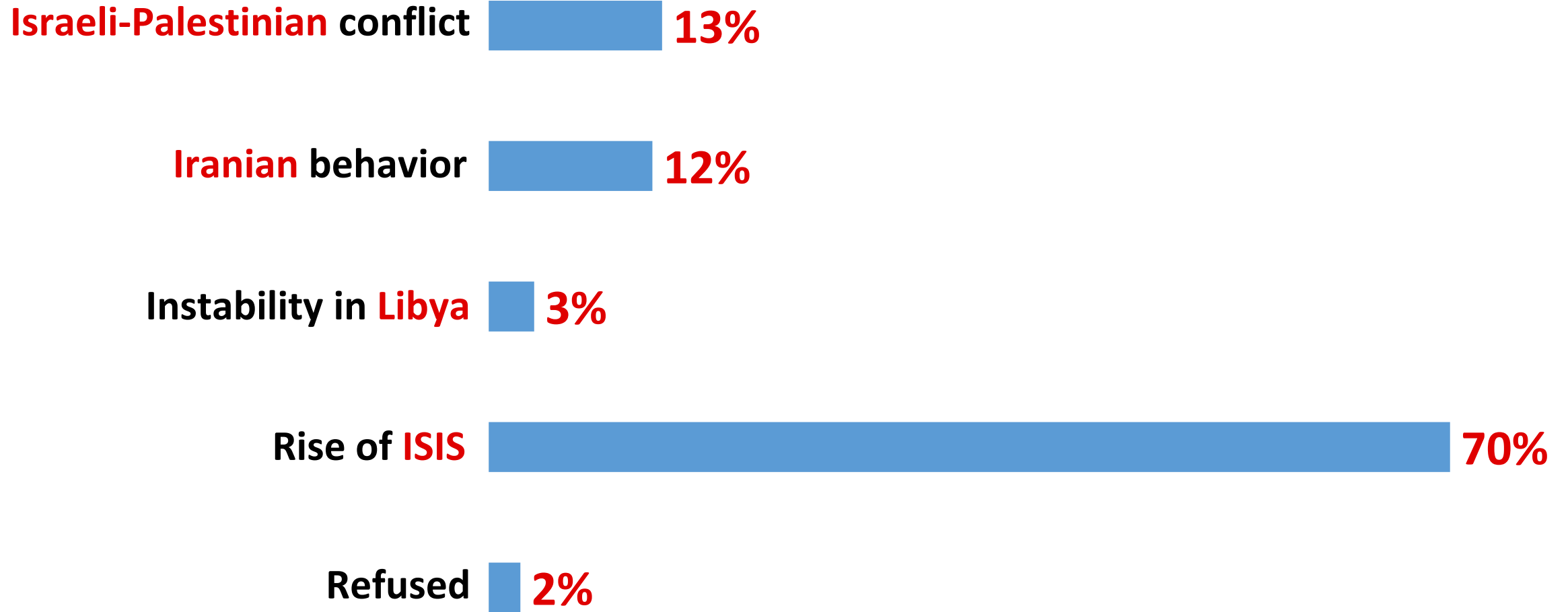
Fielded November 14-19, 2014

1008 American adults in sample

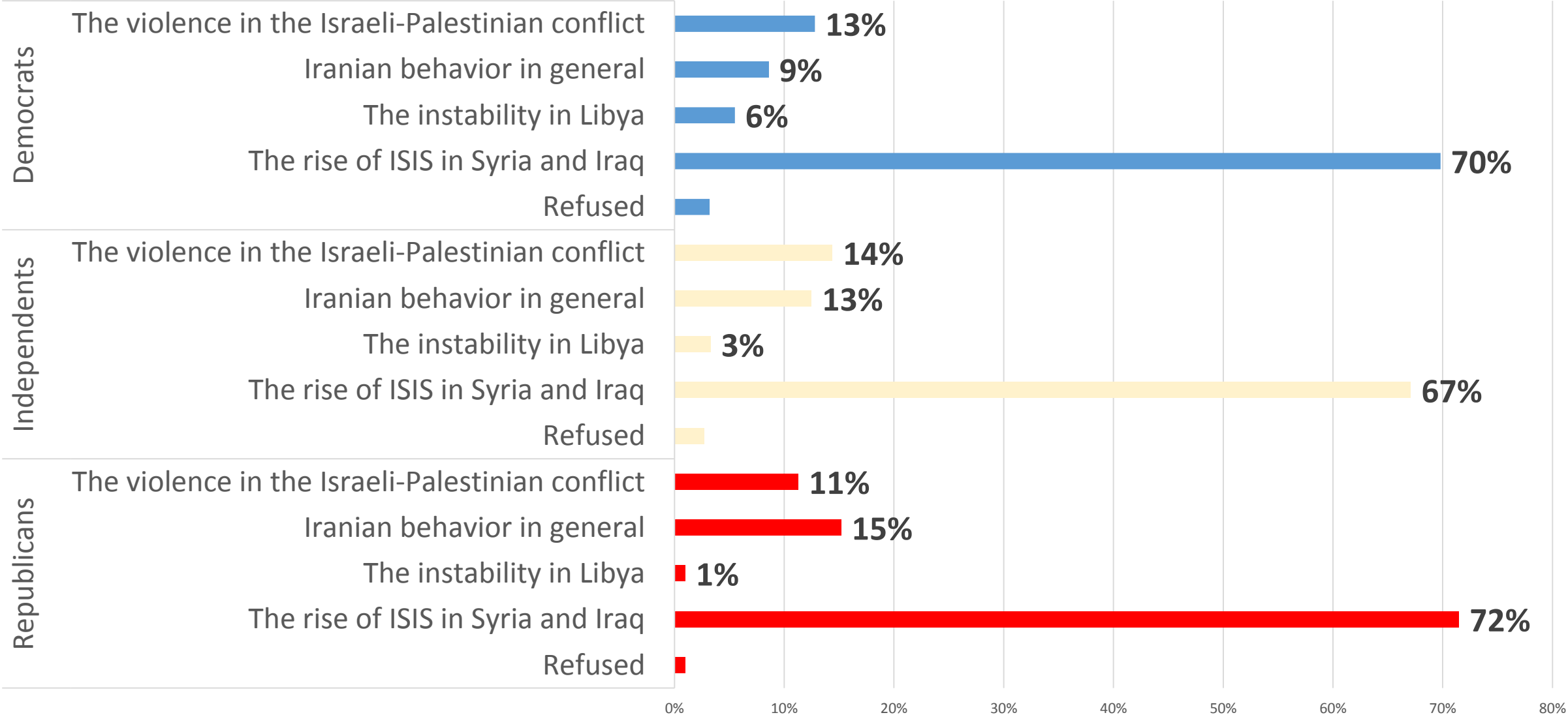
Online survey format

Margin of error is +/- 3.4%

Of the challenges facing the United States in the Middle East, which of the following do you believe threatens American interests the most?



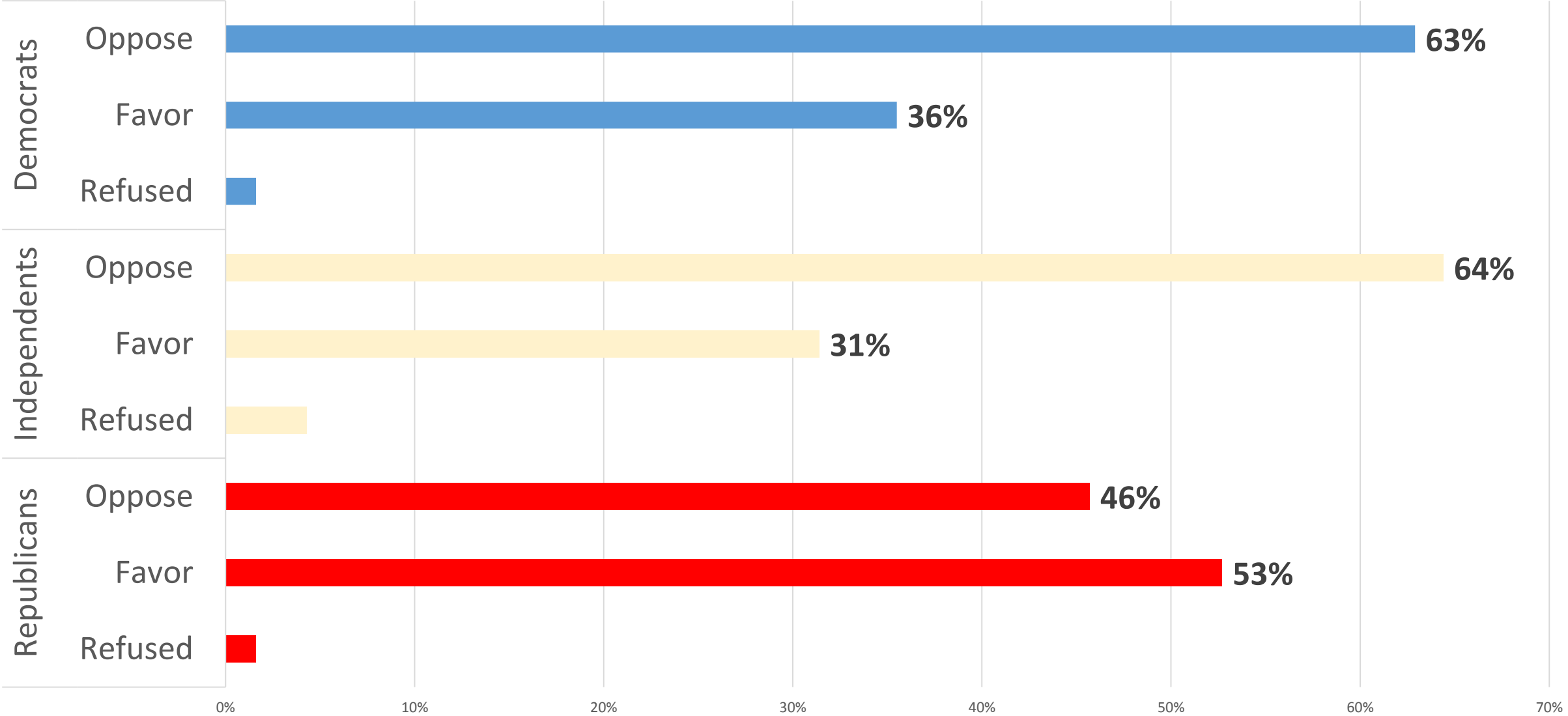
# Q20. Of the challenges facing the United States in the Middle East, which of the following do you believe threatens American interests the most?



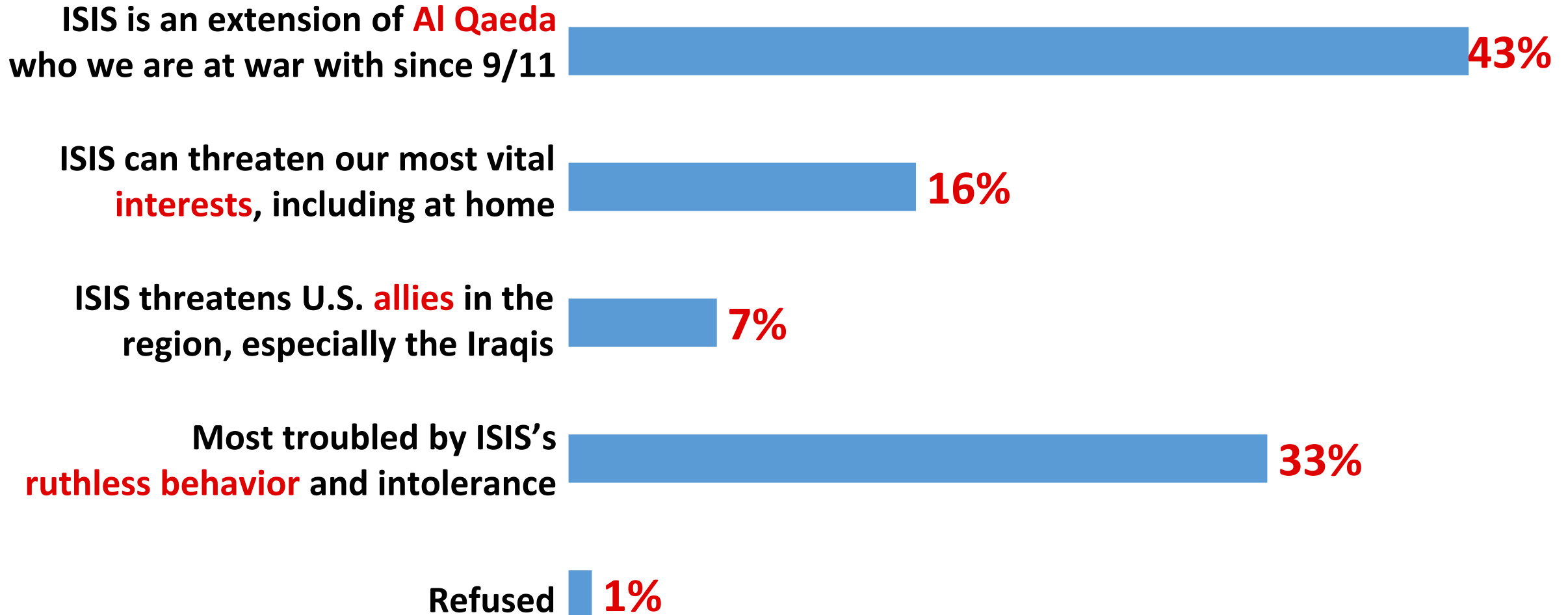
If airstrikes aren't enough to stop ISIS, would you favor or oppose sending US ground troops to Iraq to fight against ISIS?



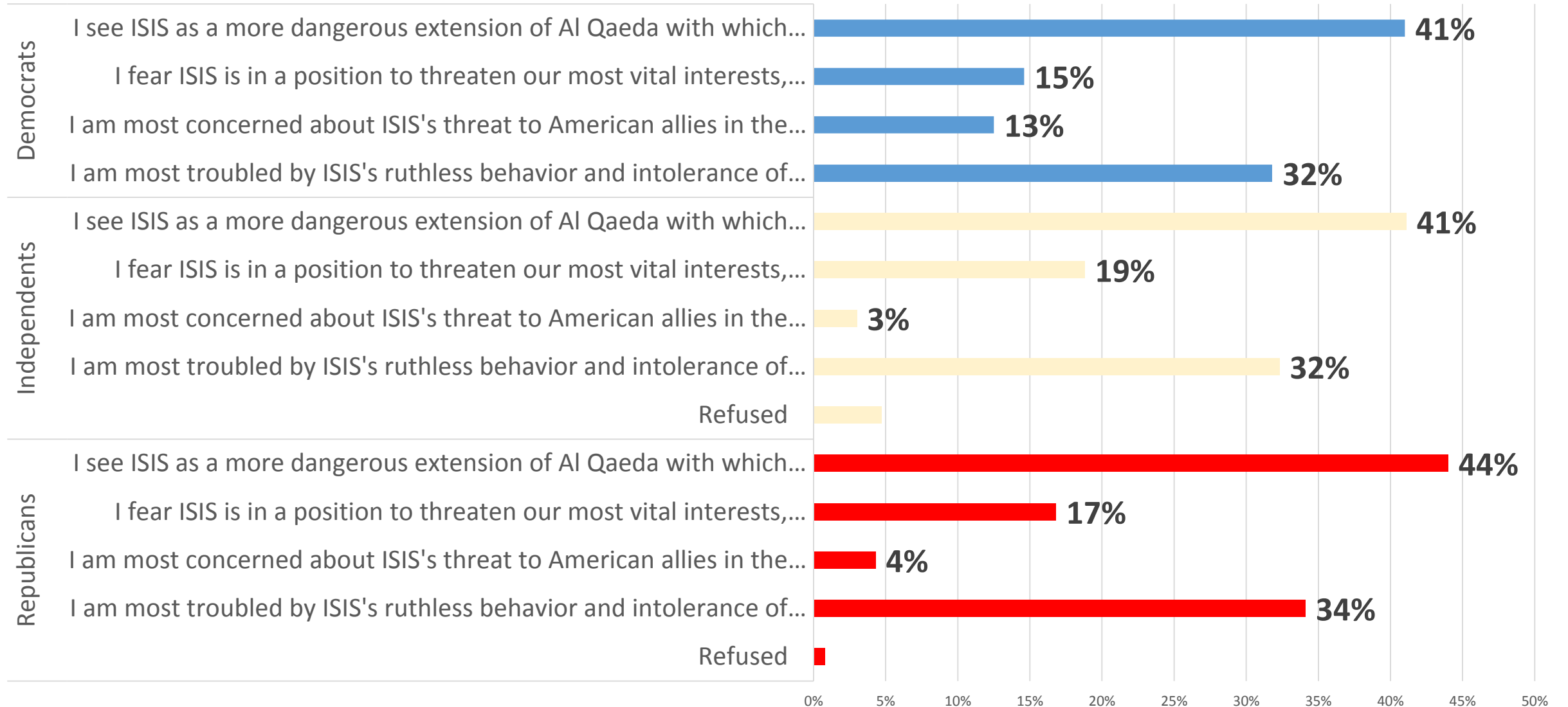
# Q28. If airstrikes aren't enough to stop ISIS, would you favor or oppose sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq to fight against ISIS?



Which of the following is closest to your view in JUSTIFYING the possible use of American ground forces?



## Q29. Which of the following is closest to your view in JUSTIFYING the possible use of American ground forces?





Q.30

## WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?

1. The U.S. should stay out of the conflict with ISIS. The U.S. cannot determine the course of war in Syria and Iraq. Our involvement would be a slippery slope, going from air strikes, to military advisers, and ultimately to combat troops.
1. We must intervene at the level necessary to defeat ISIS. ISIS not only threatens our allies, if it succeeds in expanding and increasing its control of oil resources, it will become a greater threat to our interests.

## Which of the following is closest to your view?

We **must intervene** at the level necessary to defeat ISIS **57%**



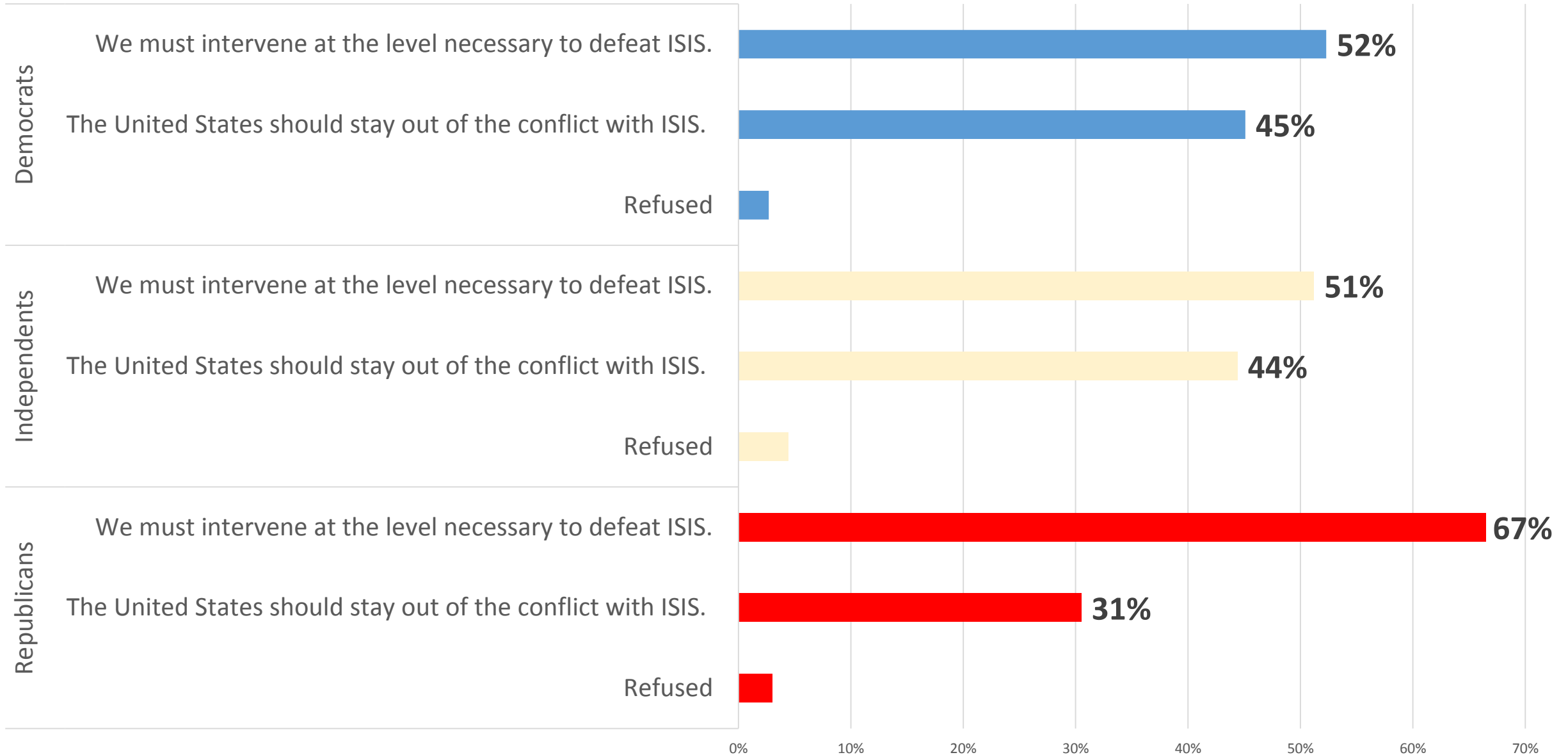
A horizontal bar chart with three bars. The top bar is blue and represents 'We must intervene at the level necessary to defeat ISIS' at 57%. The middle bar is blue and represents 'The U.S. should stay out of the conflict with ISIS' at 39%. The bottom bar is blue and represents 'Refused' at 3%. The bars are arranged vertically from top to bottom.

View	Percentage
We must intervene at the level necessary to defeat ISIS	57%
The U.S. should stay out of the conflict with ISIS	39%
Refused	3%

The U.S. should **stay out** of the conflict with ISIS **39%**

Refused **3%**

## Q30. Which of the following is closest to your view?

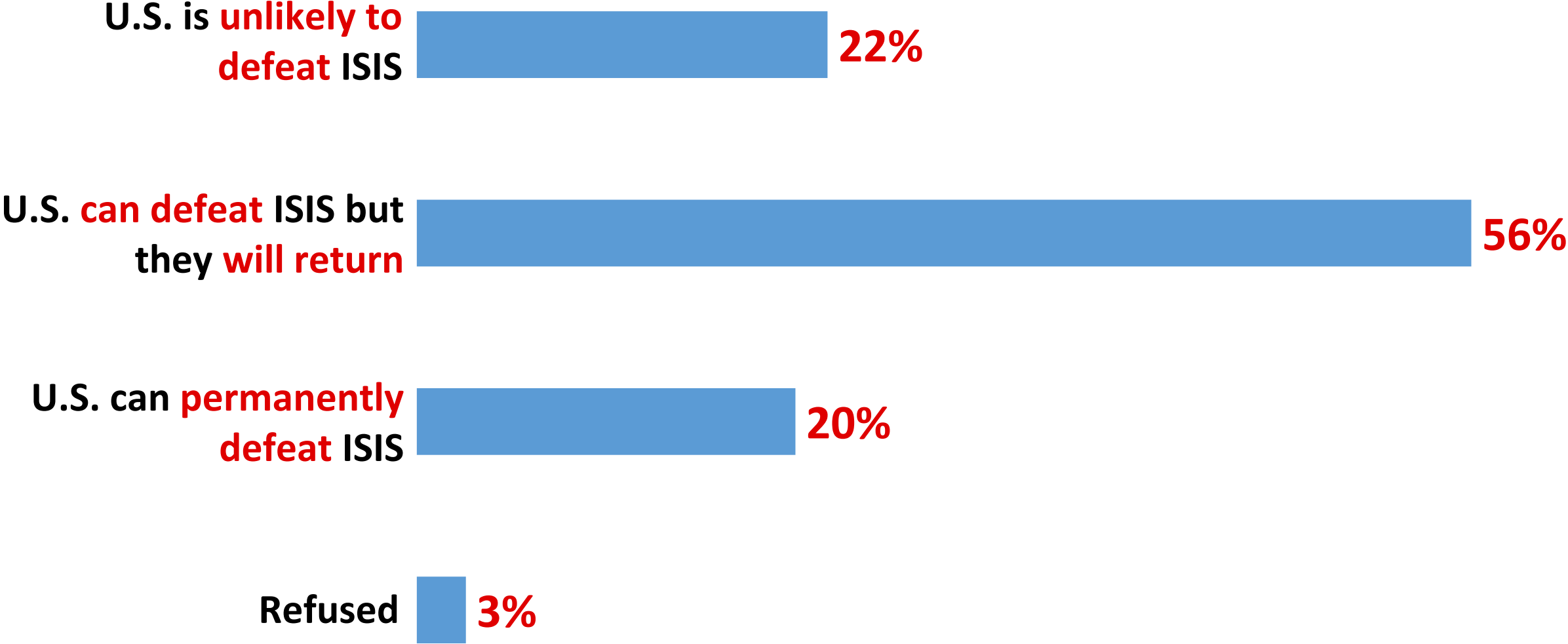


Q.31

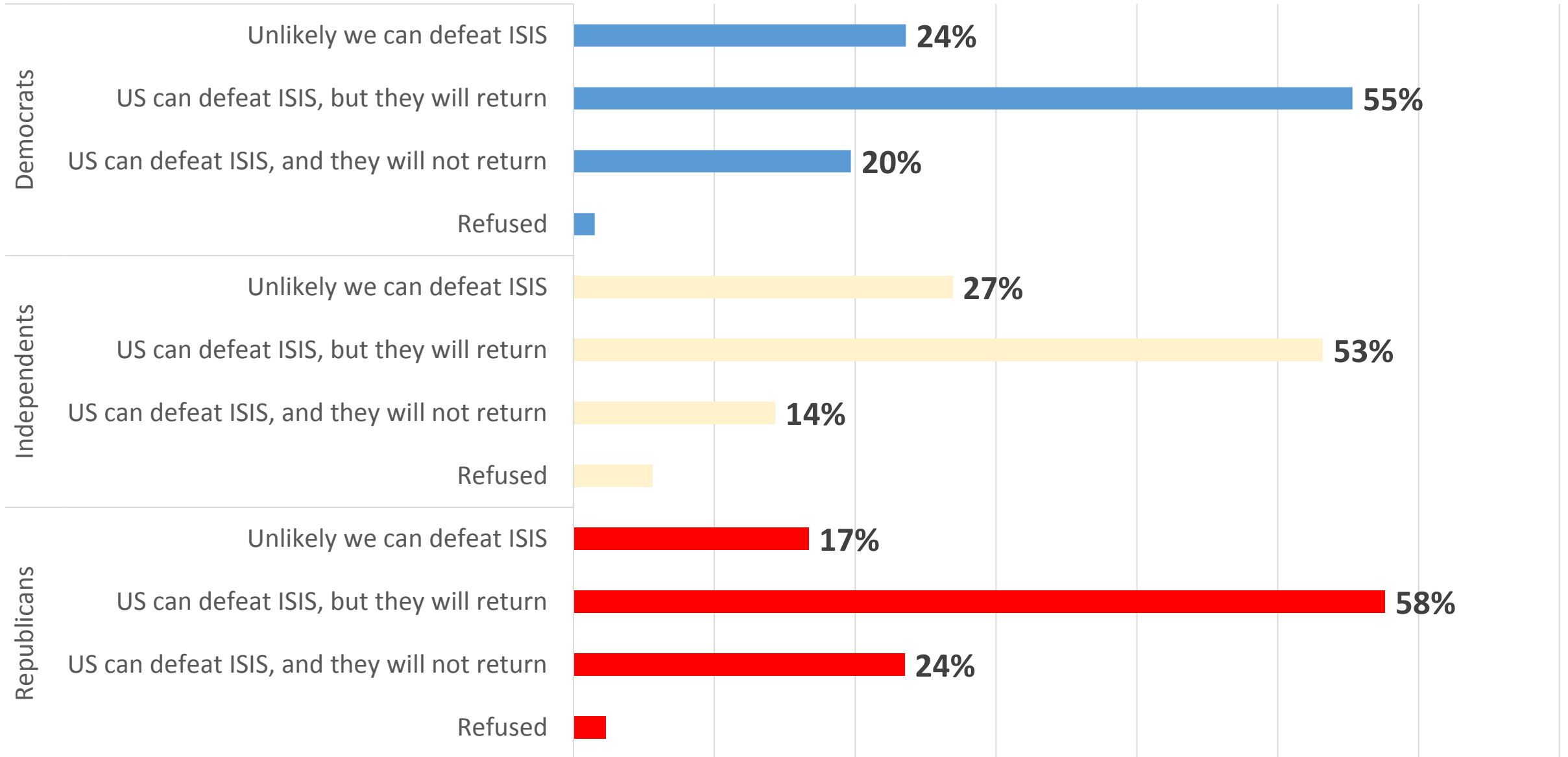
## WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?

1. Even if we commit a significant number of ground troops, it is unlikely that we can defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq
1. If we commit a large number of ground troops, we can defeat ISIS, but as soon as we withdraw, they, or something like them, will likely return
1. If we commit a large number of ground troops, we can defeat ISIS well enough so that it is unlikely they or something like them will not return soon after we withdraw

Which of the following is closer to your view?

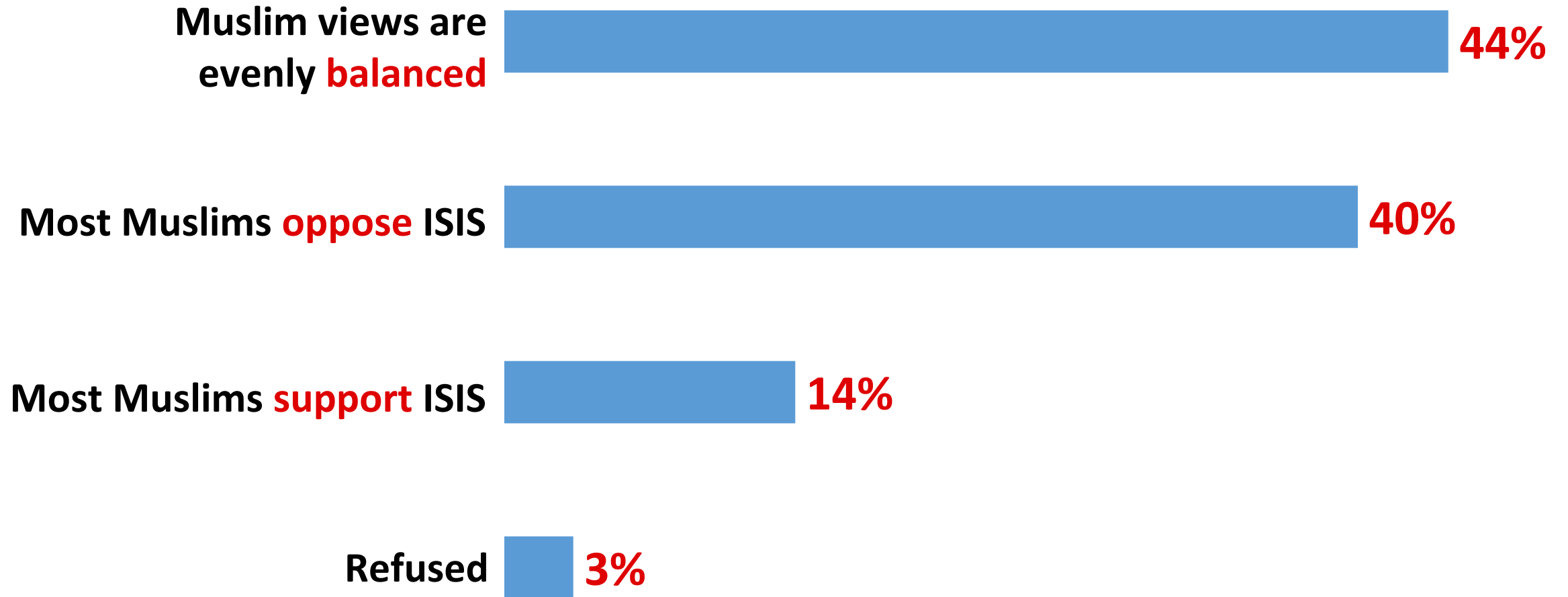


## Q31. Which of the following is closer to your view?



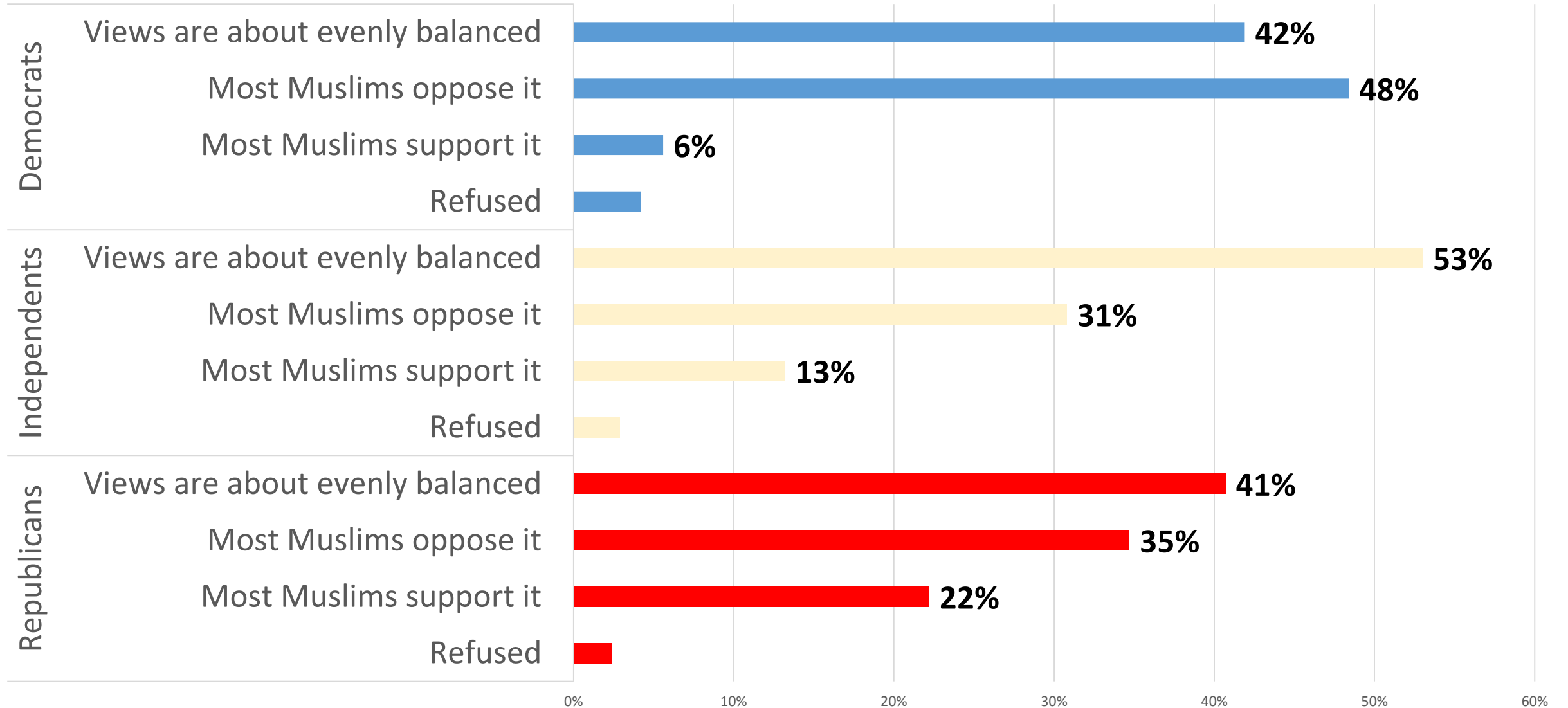
# Assessing Support for ISIS

## What is your impression of how Muslims around the world feel about ISIS?

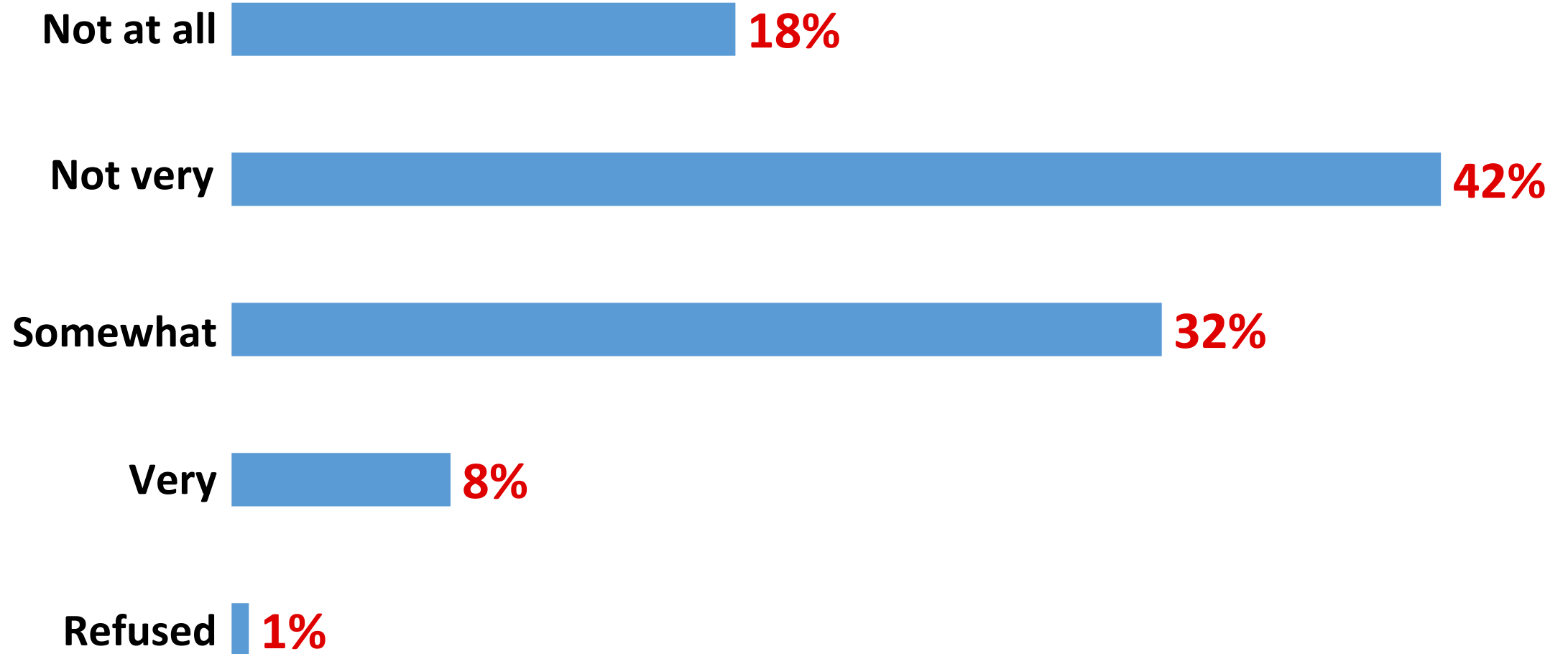




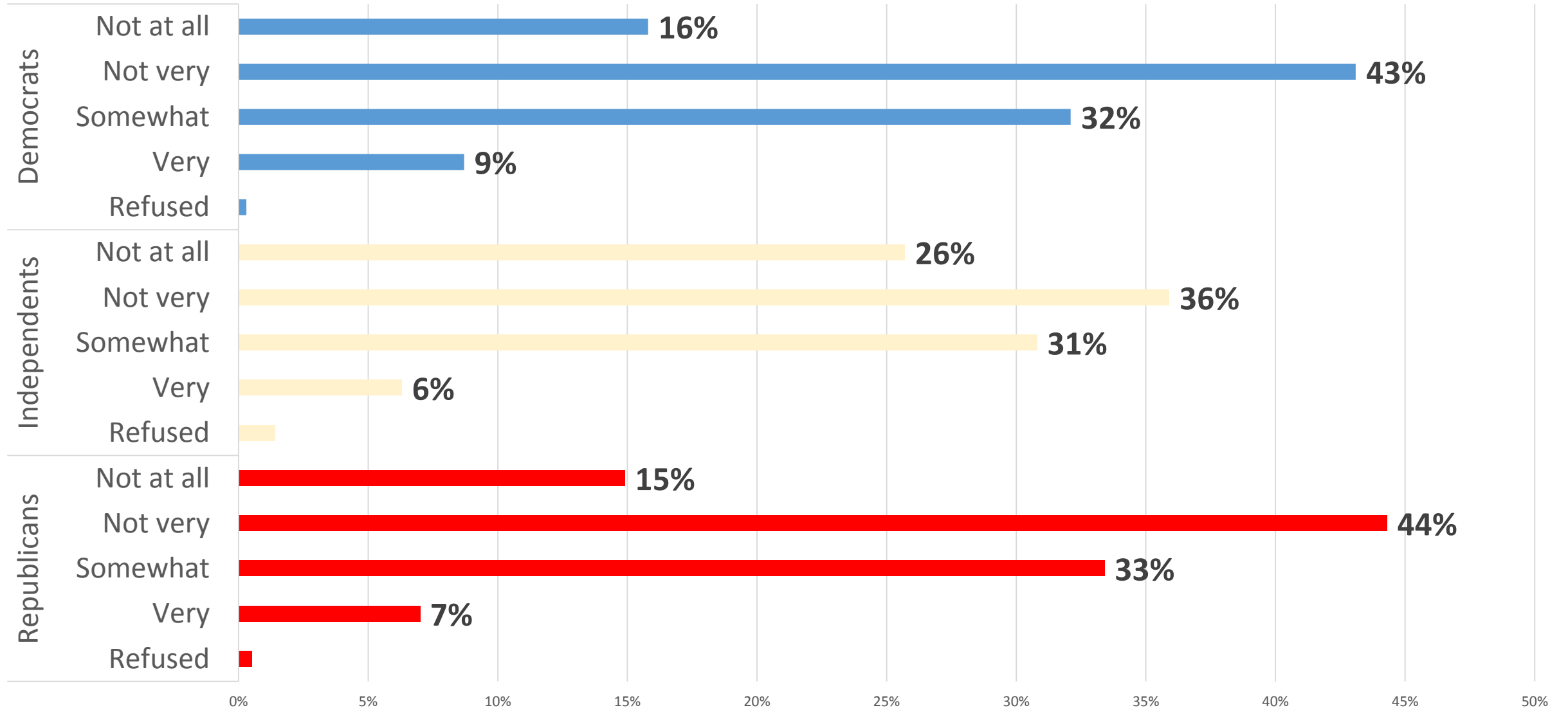
## Q27. What is your impression of how Muslims around the world feel about ISIS?



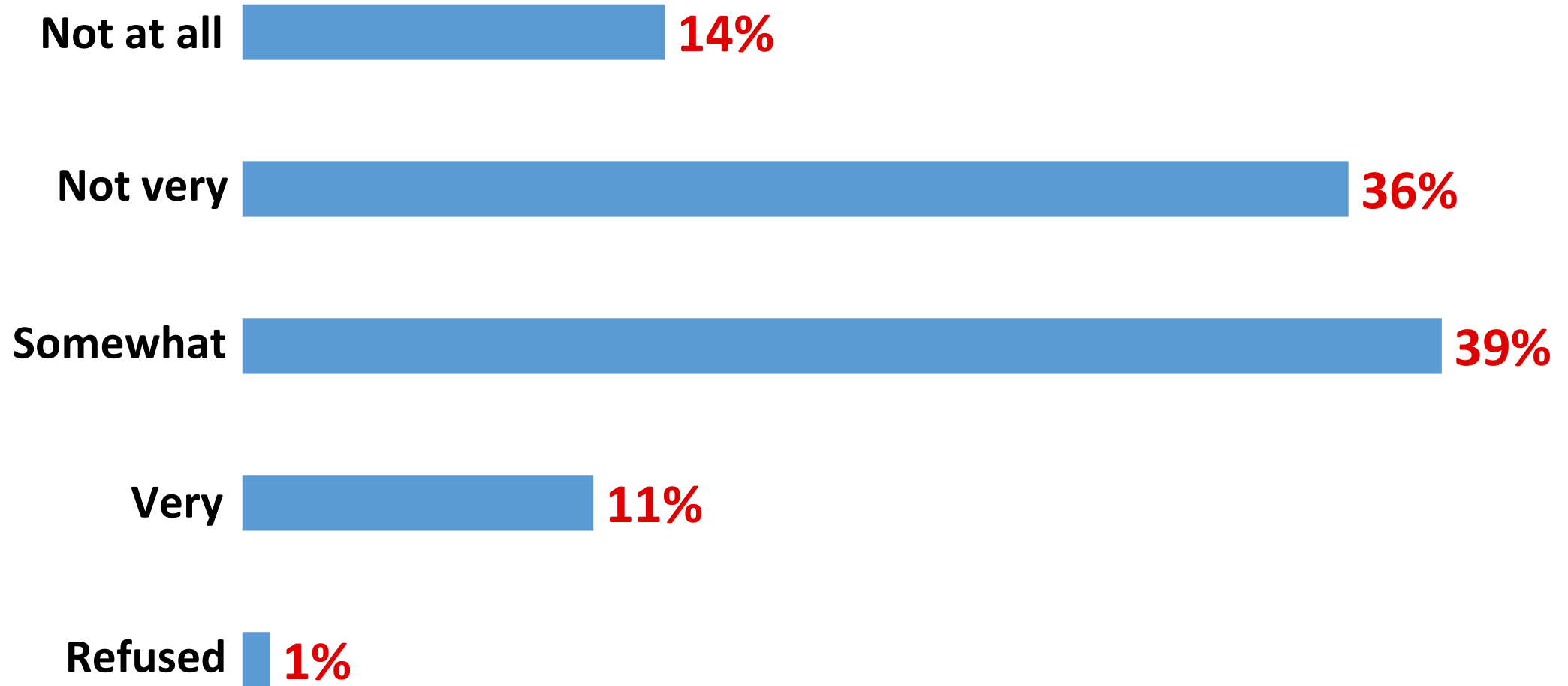
How worried are you that a significant number of Americans will join ISIS in the Middle East?



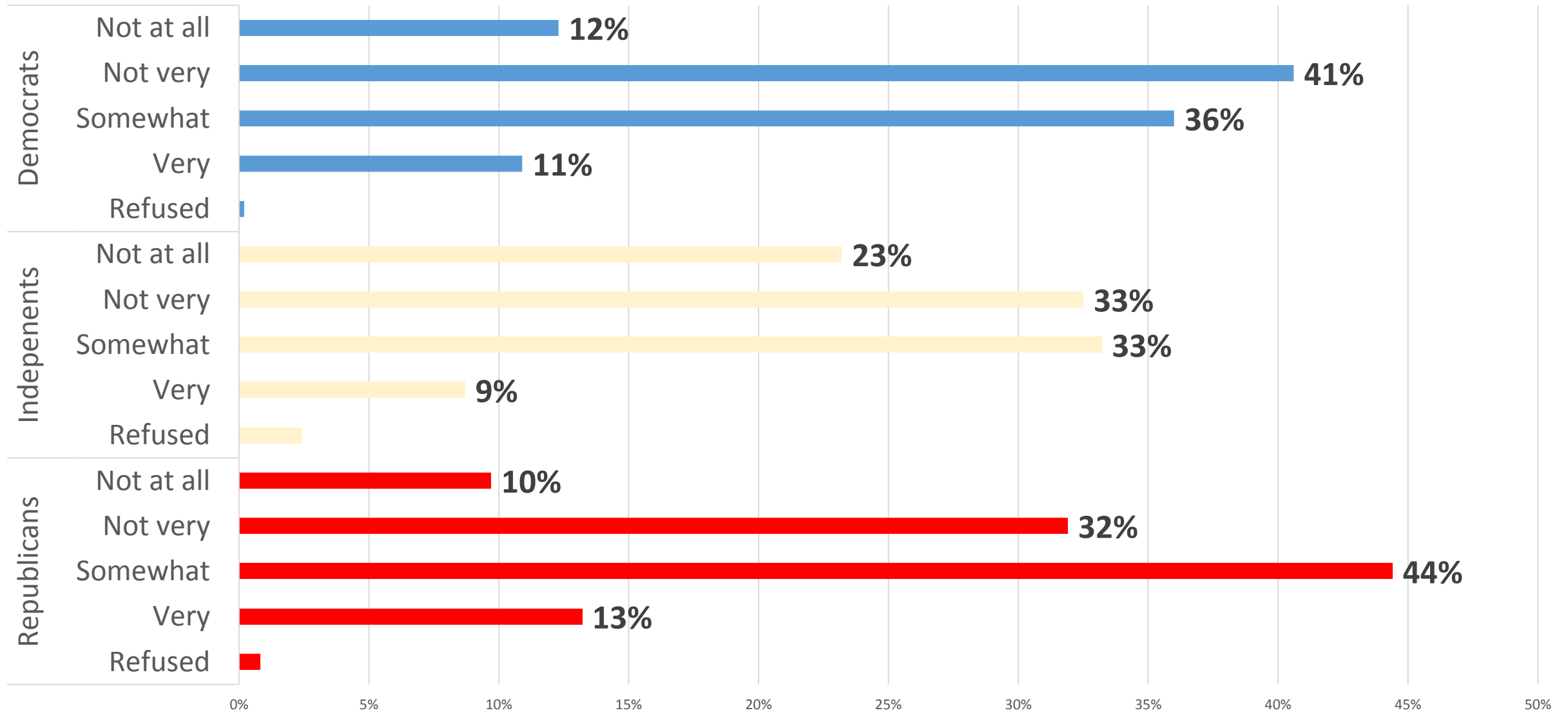
## Q32. How worried are you that a significant number of Americans will join ISIS in the Middle East?



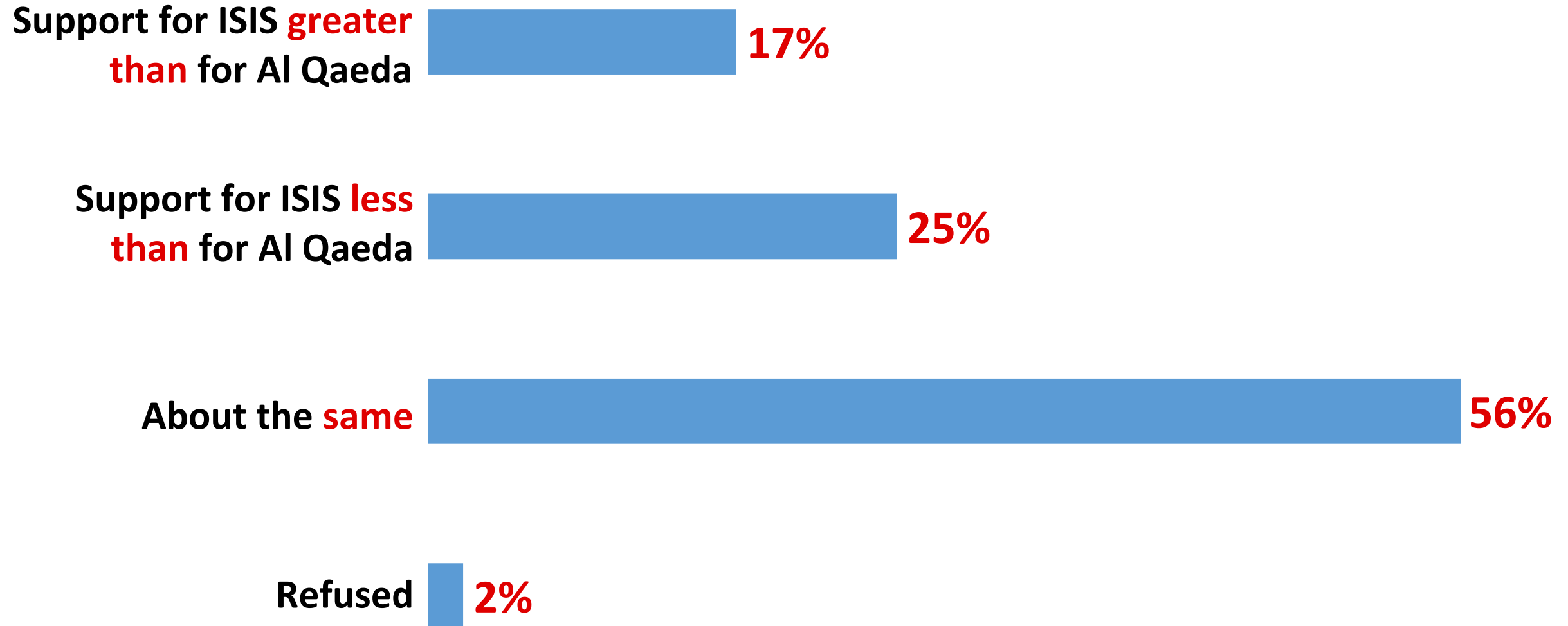
How worried are you that a significant number of Americans will join ISIS and carry out attacks in the U.S.?



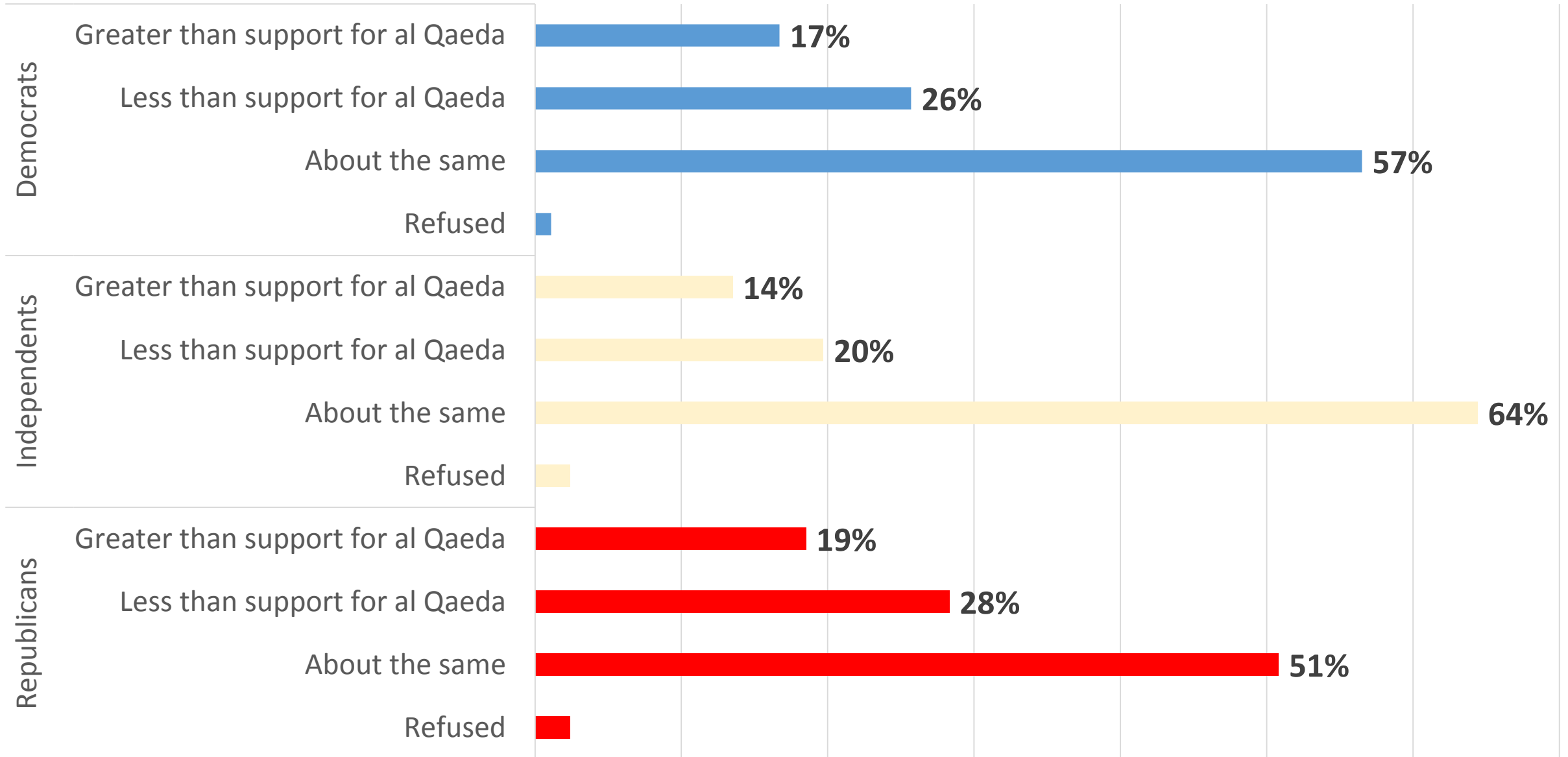
### Q33. How worried are you that a significant number of Americans will join ISIS and carry out attacks in the US?



## Do you think support among Americans for ISIS is likely to be:



### Q34. Do you think support among Americans for ISIS is likely to be:



# Syria and ISIS



Q.35

## WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?

1. If we expend enough resources to train and arm the moderate Syrian opposition, it could stand up to both ISIS and the Assad regime.
1. The Syrian opposition is too weak and divided. Even if we give it significantly more resources it cannot effectively stand up to both ISIS and the current regime of Bashar al-Assad.

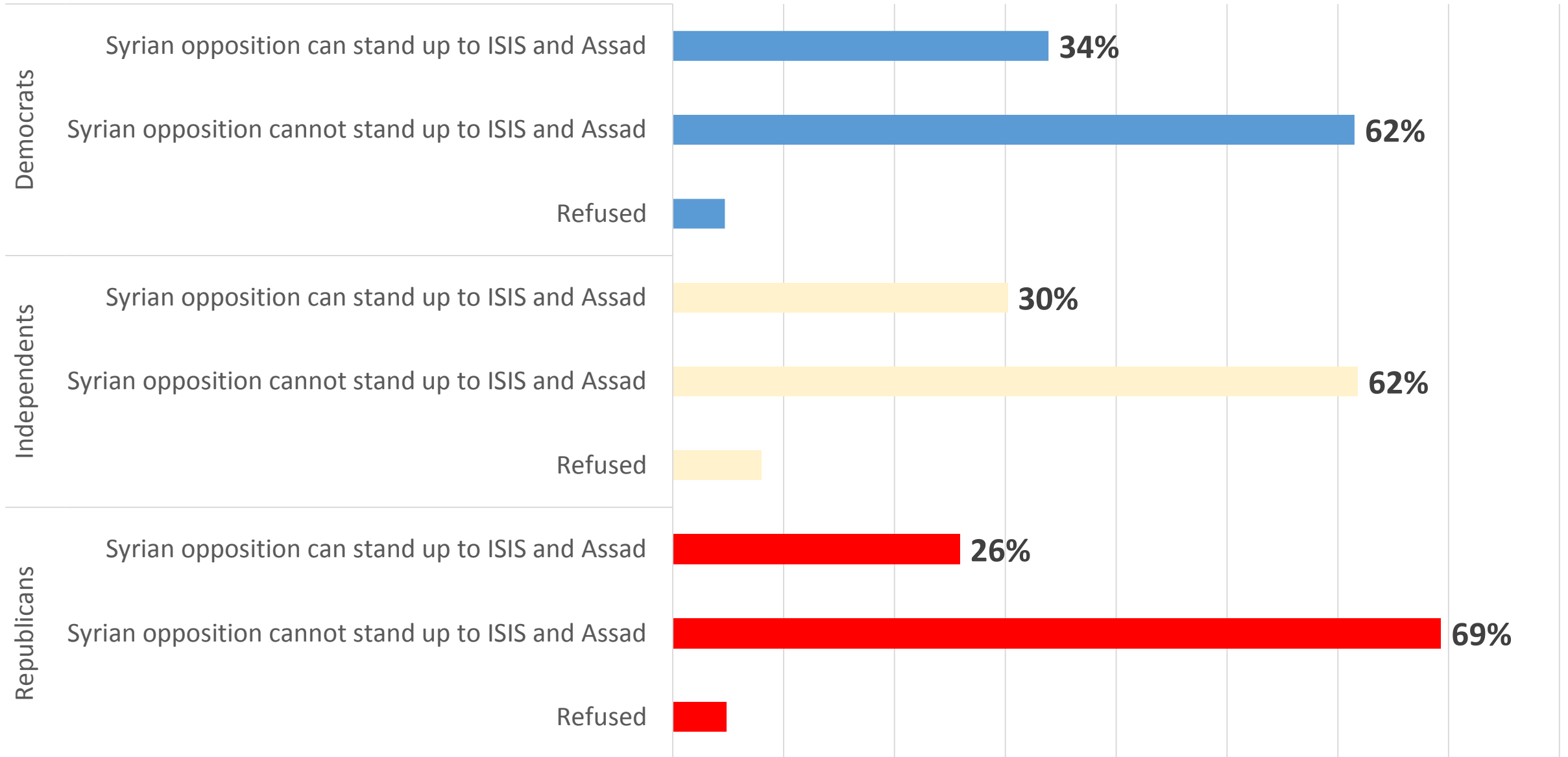
Which of the following is closer to your view?

Syrian opposition **can** stand up to ISIS and Assad **30%**

Syrian opposition **cannot** stand up to ISIS and Assad **65%**

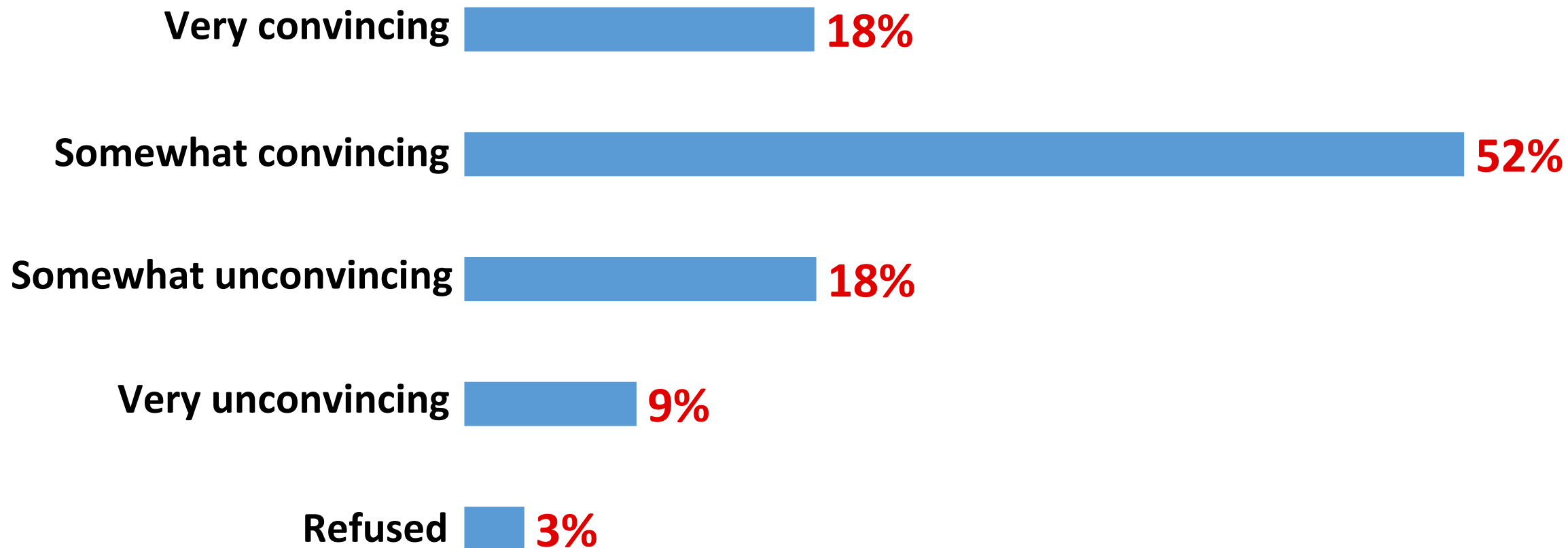
Refused **5%**

## Q35. Which of the following is closer to your view?

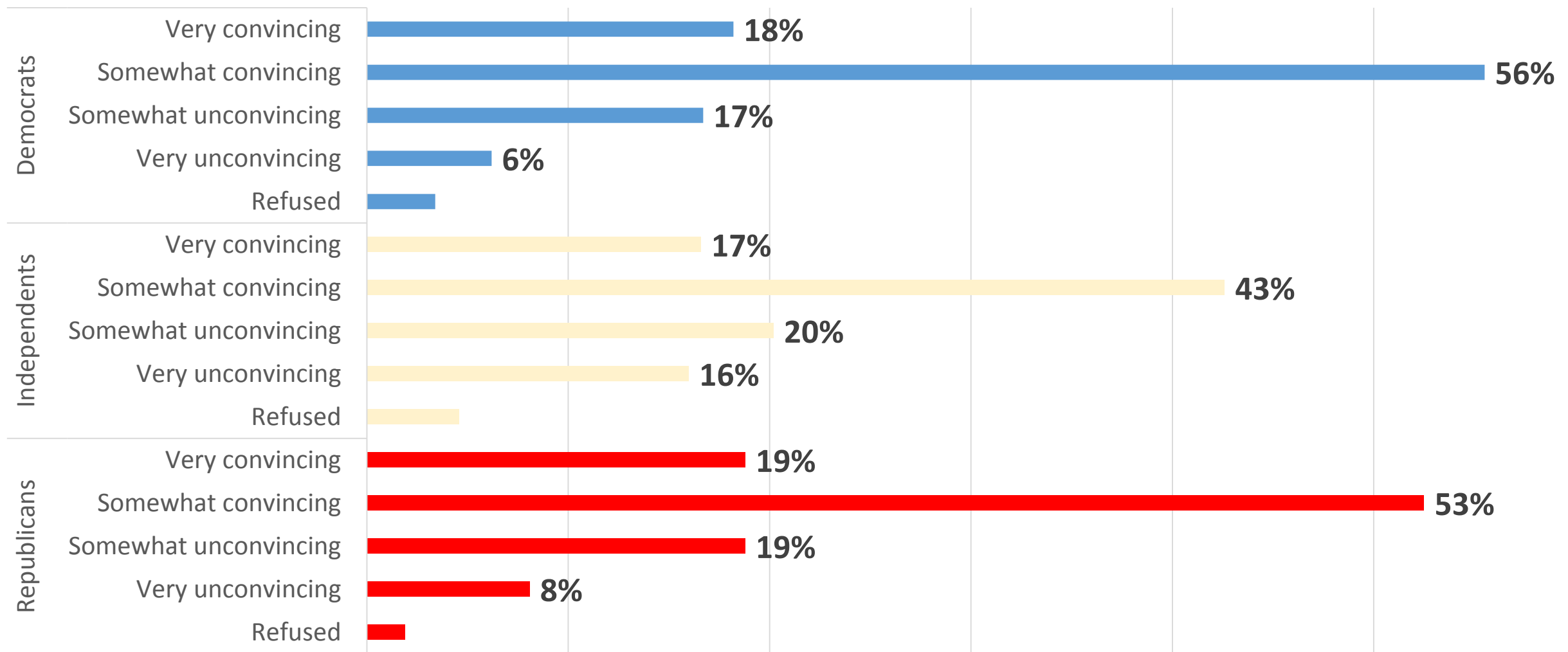


Assad has killed his own people with chemical weapons and is as bad as ISIS.  
There is no way to resolve the war in Syria without removing the Assad regime.

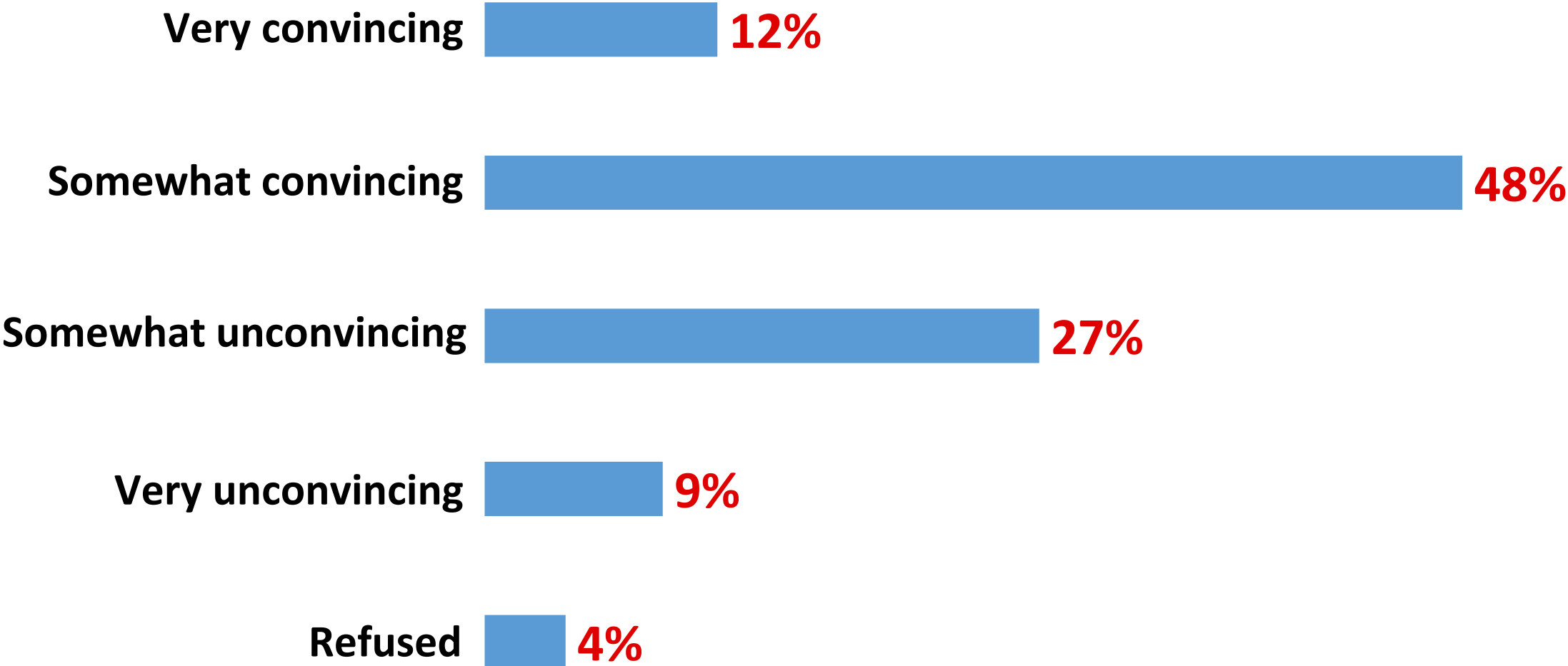
Do you find this convincing or unconvincing?



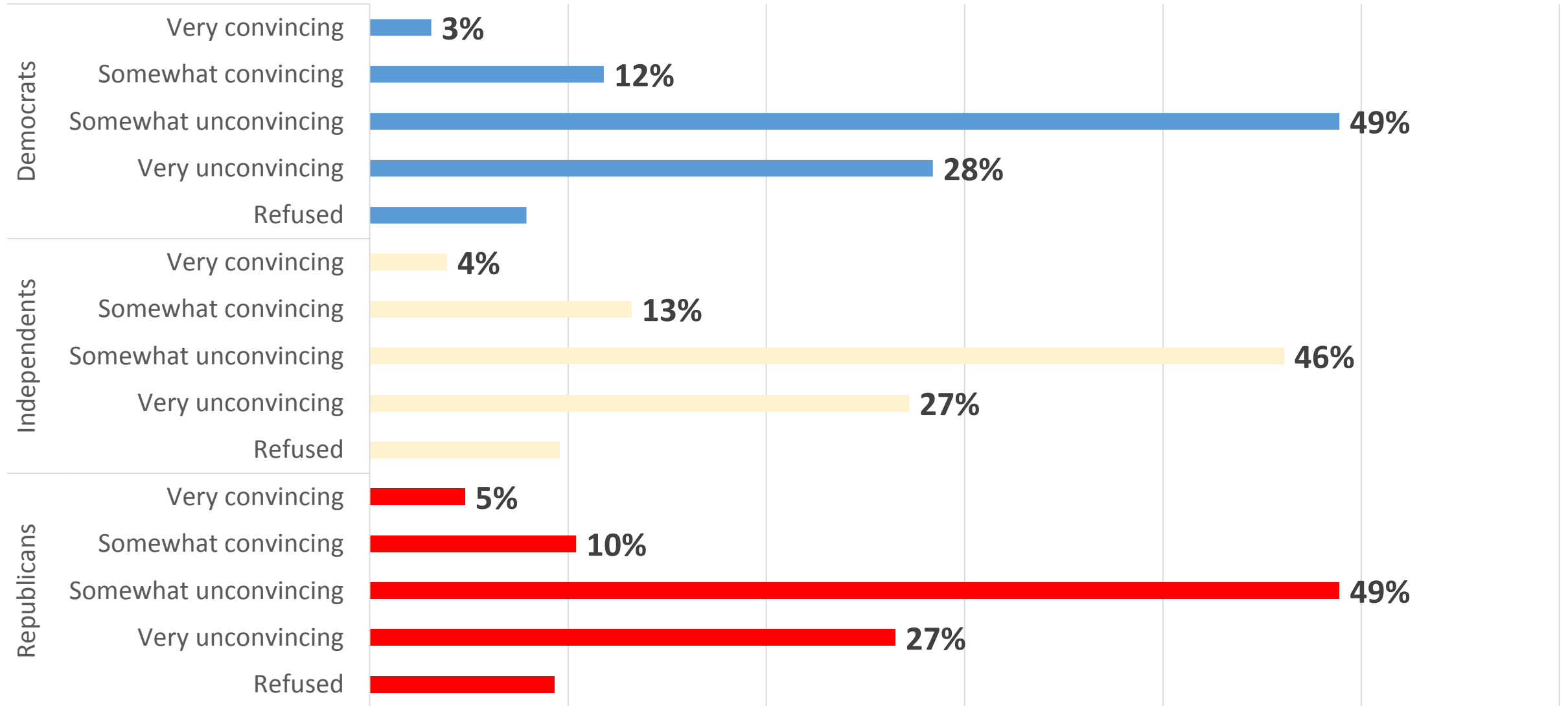
**Q36. Assad has killed his own people with chemical weapons and is as bad as ISIS.  
There is no way to resolve the war in Syria without removing the Assad regime.  
Do you find this convincing or unconvincing?**



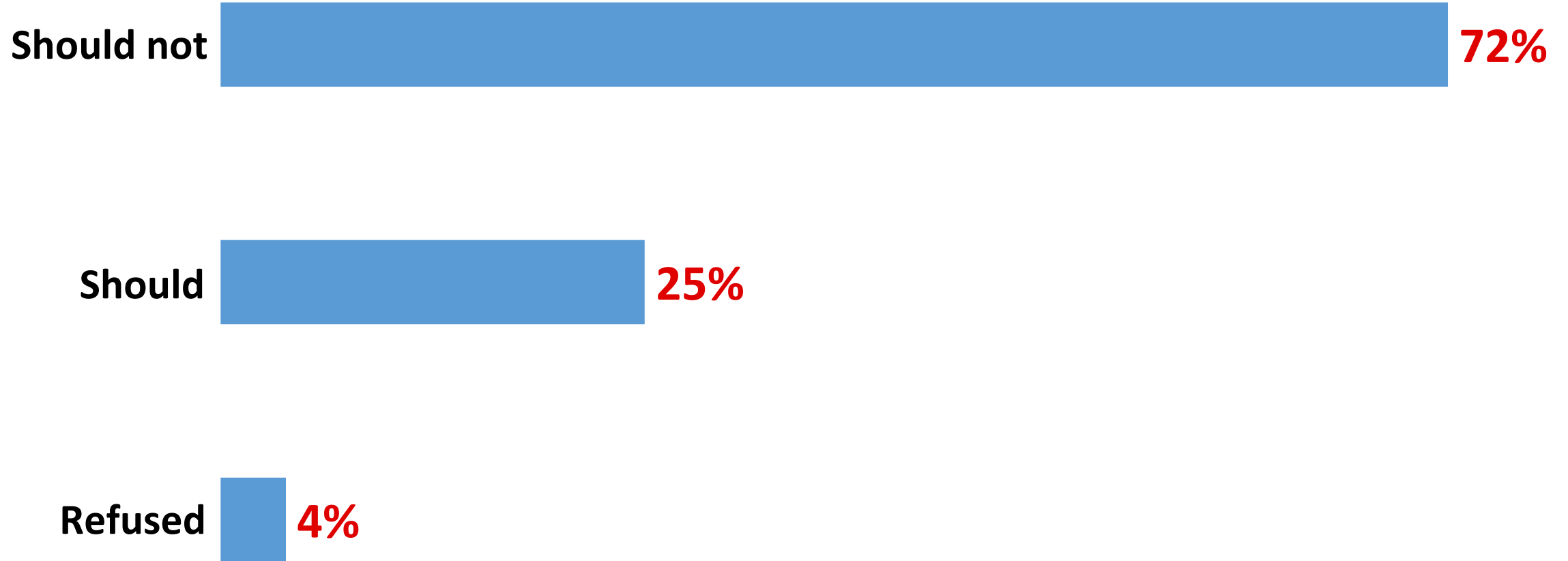
**We should not fight the Assad army and let it fight ISIS.  
Do you find this convincing or unconvincing?**



### Q37. We should not fight the Assad army and let it fight ISIS. Please select whether you find it convincing or unconvincing.

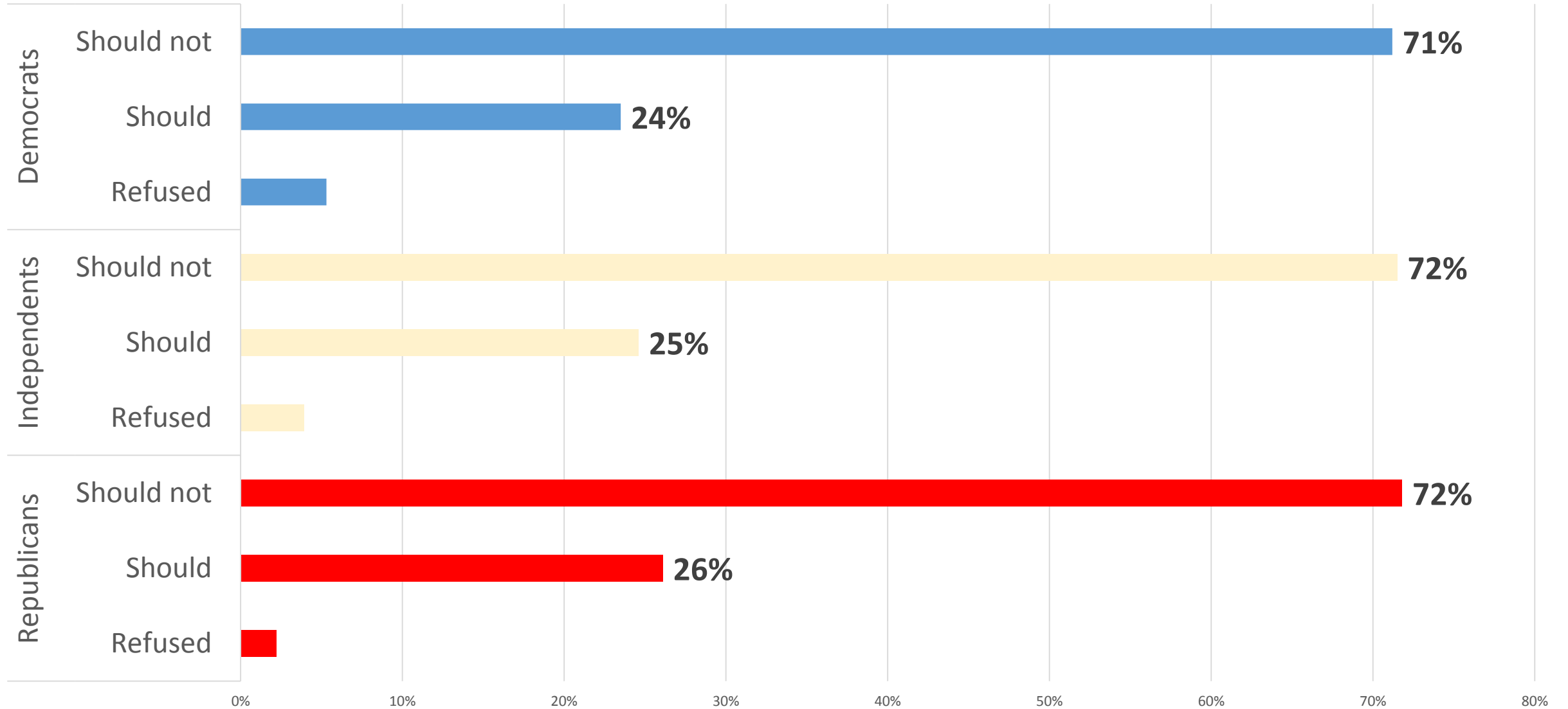


So now do you think the US military should  
or should not fight Assad's army in Syria?





# Q38. So now do you think the US military should or should not fight Assad's army in Syria?



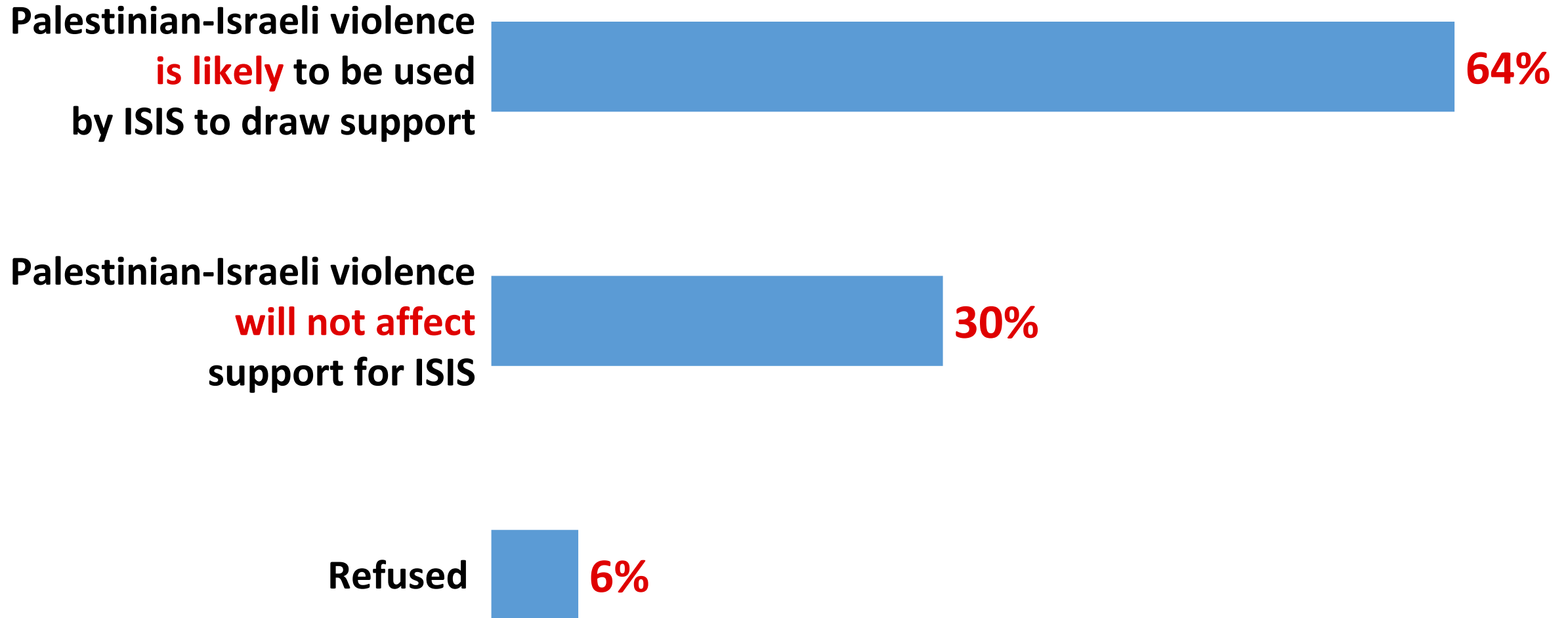
# Issue Linkage

Q.19

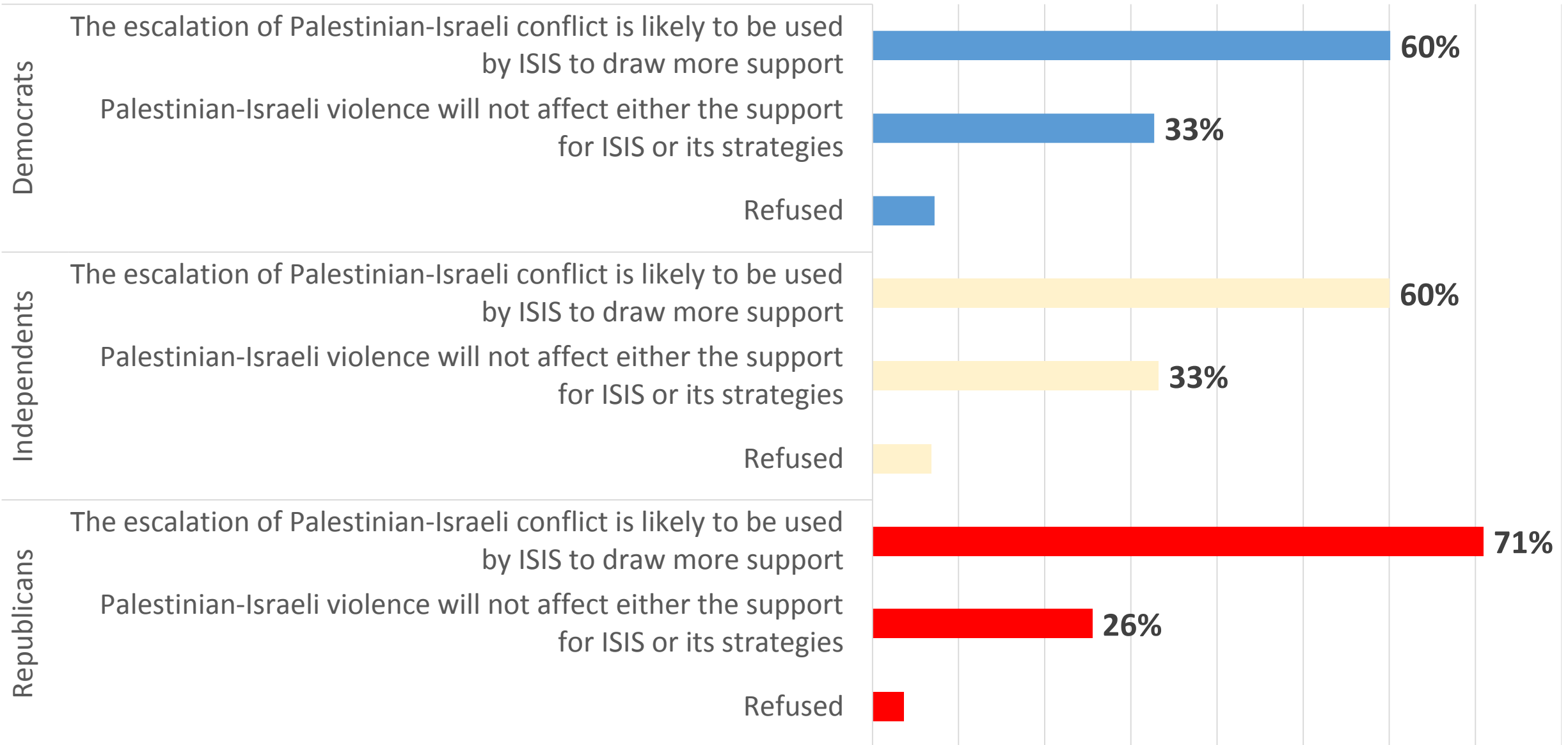
## WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?

1. The escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is likely to be used by ISIS to draw more support among Muslims worldwide and to focus more attention on confronting Israel and the U.S.
1. Palestinian-Israeli violence will not affect either the support for ISIS or its strategies. Its aims are independent of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and it's unlikely to draw more supporters because of it.

Which one of the following statements is closest to your view?



## Q19. Which one of the following statements is closest to your view?



## Q19. Which one of the following statements is closest to your view?

- **Palestinian-Israeli conflict is likely to be used by ISIS to draw support**
- **Palestinian-Israeli violence will not affect support for ISIS**
- **Refused**

**In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**

**Lean toward Israel**



**Lean toward neither side**



**Q20. Of the challenges facing the United States in the Middle East, which of the following do you believe threatens American interests the most?**

- The rise of ISIS
- Iranian behavior

- Instability in Libya
- Israeli-Palestinian conflict

**In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**

**Lean toward Israel**



**Lean toward neither side**



## Q27. What is your impression of how Muslims around the world feel about ISIS?

■ Most Muslims oppose ISIS

■ Muslim views are evenly balanced

■ Most Muslims support ISIS

■ Refused

In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Lean toward Israel

33%

42%

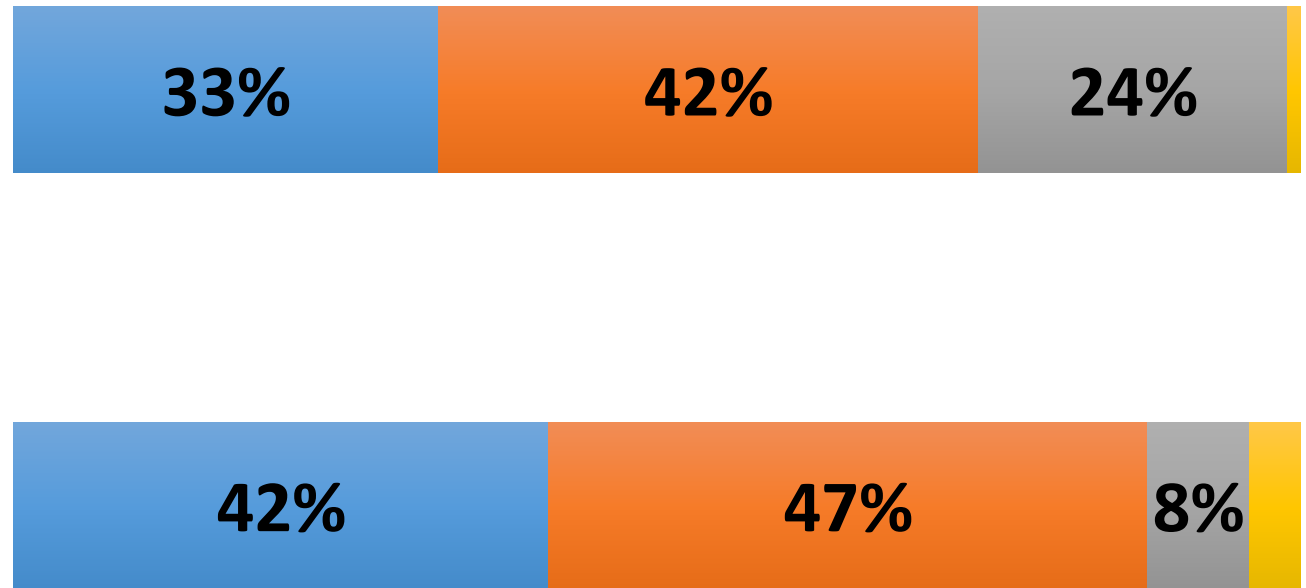
24%

Lean toward neither side

42%

47%

8%





**Q28. If airstrikes aren't enough to stop ISIS, would you favor or oppose sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq to fight against ISIS?**

**Favor**

**Oppose**

**Refused**

**Lean toward  
Israel**

**61%**

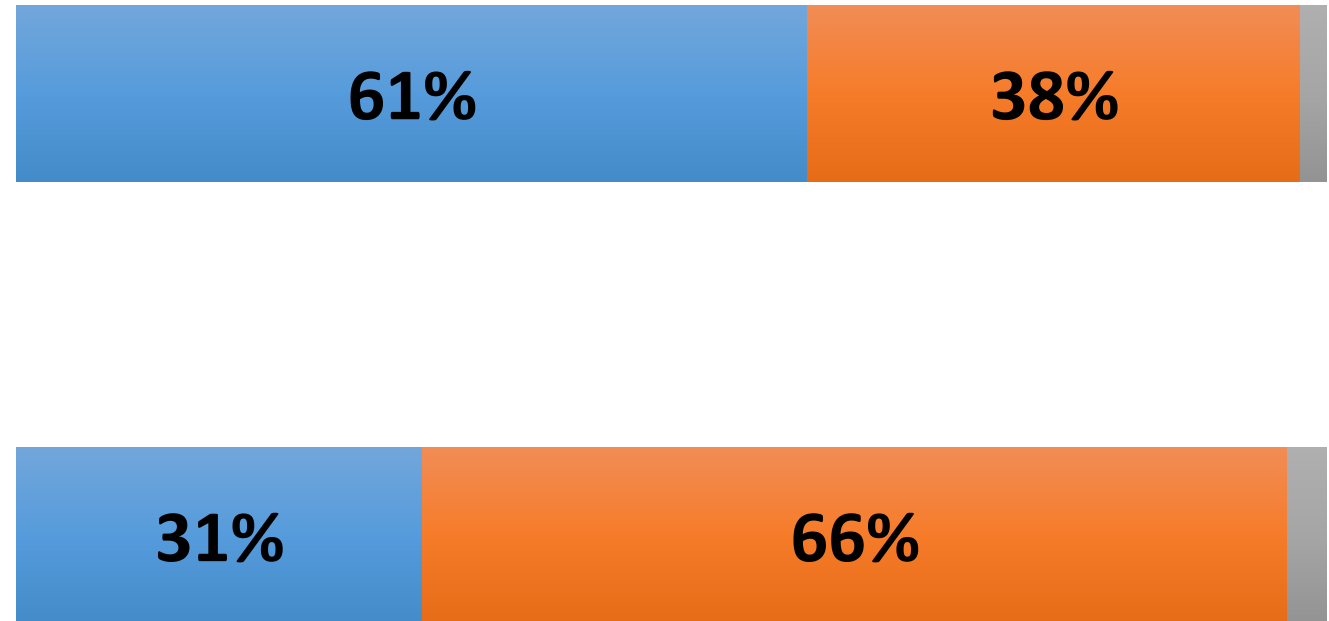
**38%**

**Lean toward  
neither side**

**31%**

**66%**

**In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**



## Q30. Which of the following is closest to your view?

- The U.S. must intervene at the level necessary to defeat ISIS
- The U.S. should stay out of the conflict with ISIS
- Refused

In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Lean toward Israel



Lean toward neither side



Q33. How worried are you that a significant number of Americans will join ISIS and carry out attacks in the US?

■ Very    ■ Somewhat    ■ Not very    ■ Not at all    ■ Refused

In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Lean toward Israel



Lean toward neither side

