

*A survey of the*



# CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

*With Nielsen Scarborough*

**Shibley Telhami, Director**  
**Stella Rouse, Associate Director**

Valuable assistance was provided by Scott Willoth, Tisha Jett, Lauren Morris, and January Lee from Nielsen Scarborough. Brittany Kyser, Connor Kopchick, Tanya Anderson, Molly Schreier, and Anthony Richardson were particularly helpful.

\*The University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll probes domestic and international issues that are central to our policy discourse and is led by Professors Shibley Telhami and Stella Rouse.

To view the questionnaire, please visit: [go.umd.edu/UMCIPMiddleEast](http://go.umd.edu/UMCIPMiddleEast)  
And to view the full PowerPoint, please visit: [go.umd.edu/UMCIPMiddleEastPPT](http://go.umd.edu/UMCIPMiddleEastPPT)

# Survey Methodology (September 2019)

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The survey was carried out September 3-20, 2019 online from a nationally representative sample of Nielsen Scarborough's probability-based panel, originally recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of adults provided by Survey Sampling International. The poll was conducted among a national poll of 3,016 respondents, with a margin of error of +/- 1.78%. Overall, the sample was adjusted to reflect population estimates (Scarborough USA+/Gallup) for Americans. The survey variables balanced through weighting were: age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, level of education, census regional division, and political party affiliation.

# Survey Methodology (October 2019)

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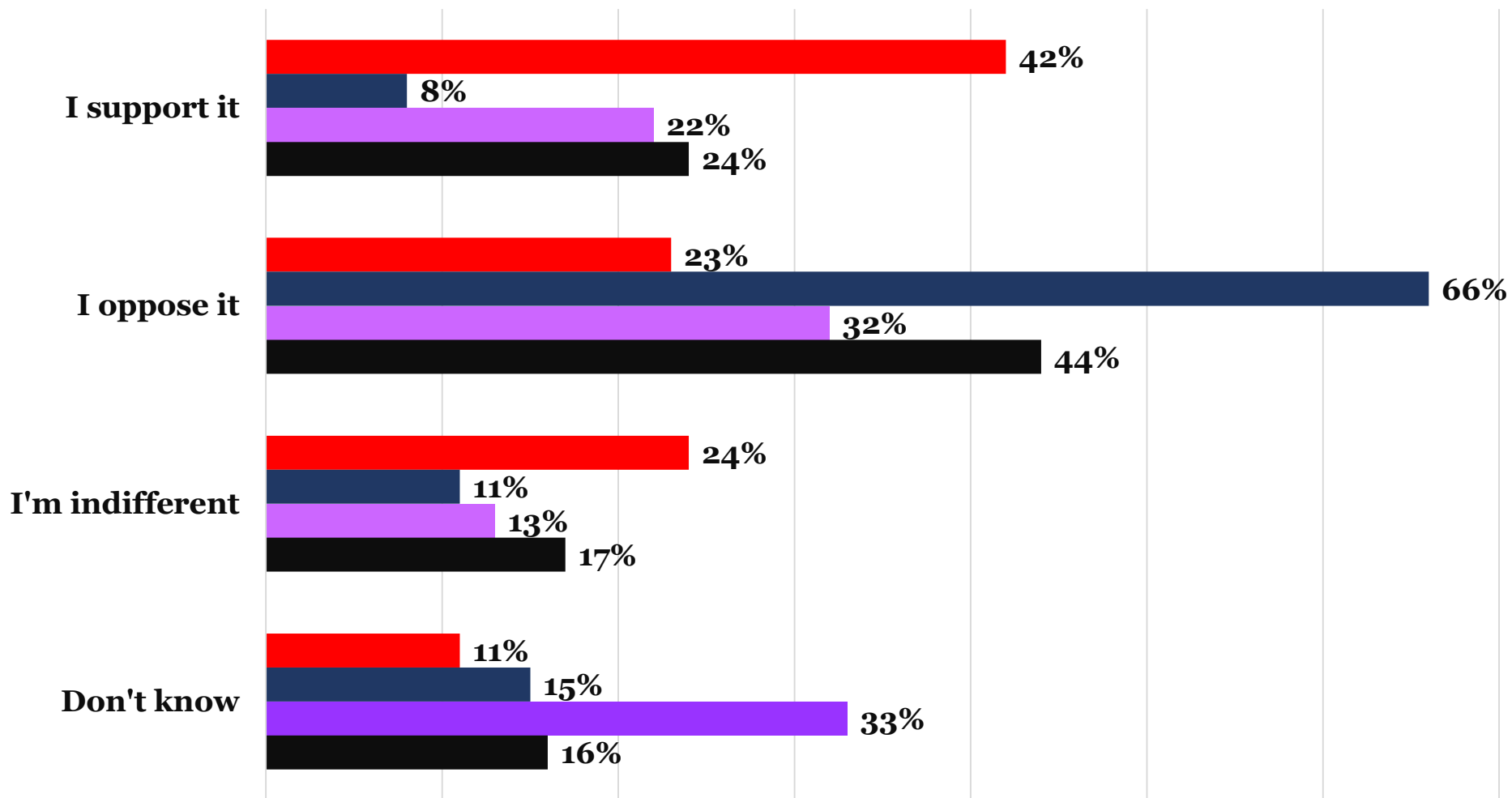
The survey was carried out October 4-10, 2019 online from a nationally representative sample of Nielsen Scarborough's probability-based panel, originally recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of adults provided by Survey Sampling International. The poll was conducted among a national poll of 1,260 respondents (958 for the Syria question), with a margin of error of +/- 2.76%. Overall, the sample was adjusted to reflect population estimates (Scarborough USA+/Gallup) for Americans. The survey variables balanced through weighting were: age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, level of education, census regional division, and political party affiliation.

**American Attitudes  
toward  
Syria and Iran**

As you may know, the United States has recently announced the withdrawal of its forces from northern Syria, ahead of a Turkish military campaign there. President Trump explained the move by saying: "it is time for us to get out of these ridiculous Endless Wars, many of them tribal, and bring our soldiers home." Critics have argued that it was the wrong move because it leaves our Kurdish allies in northern Syria vulnerable and gives the upper hand to Turkey which, although a member of NATO, is considered by some as a foe whose aims have been questioned.

Tell me how you feel about the move to withdraw U.S. forces from northern Syria:

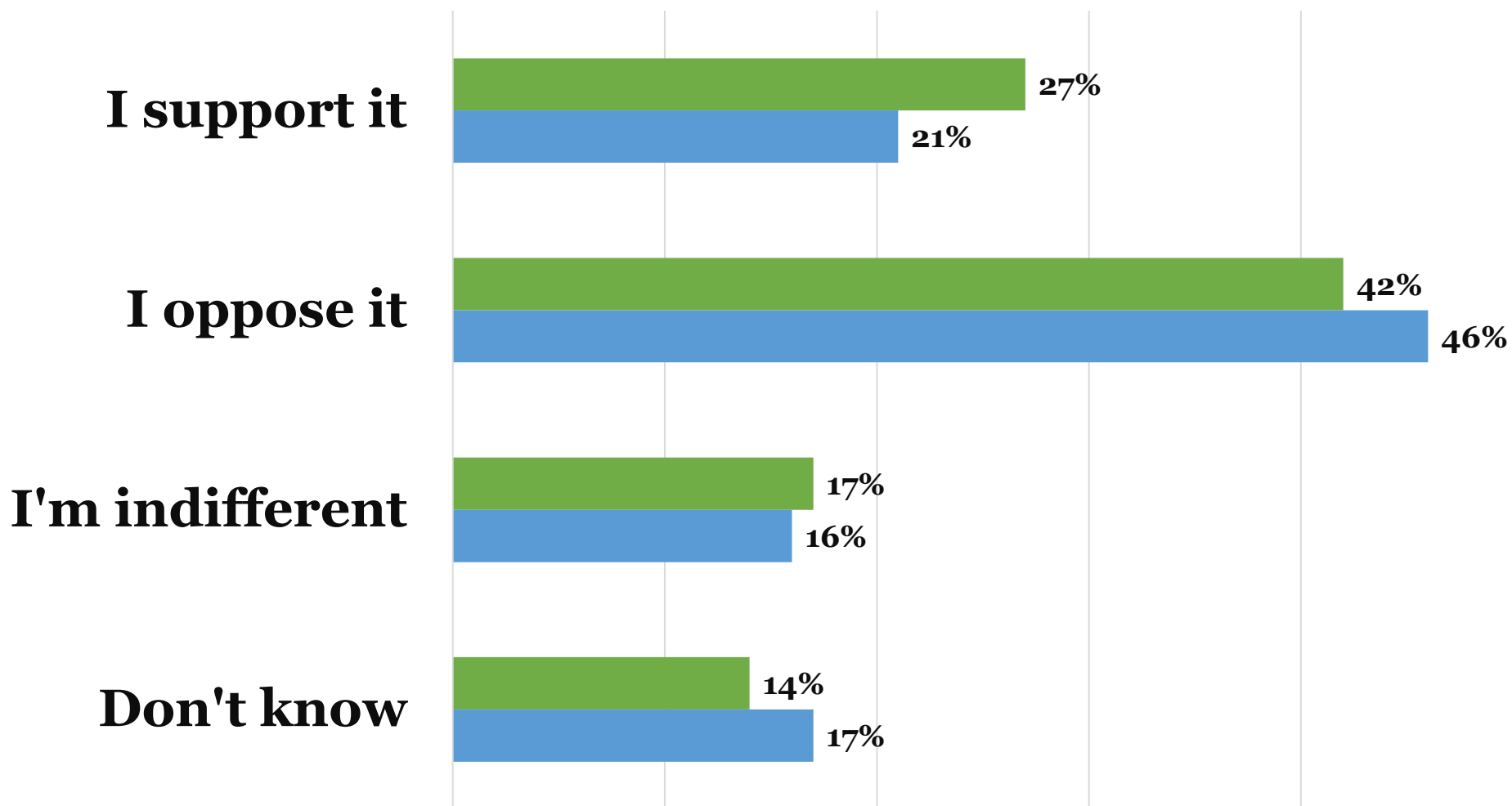
**■ Republicans**   **■ Democrats**   **■ Independents**   **■ Total**



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**October 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>**

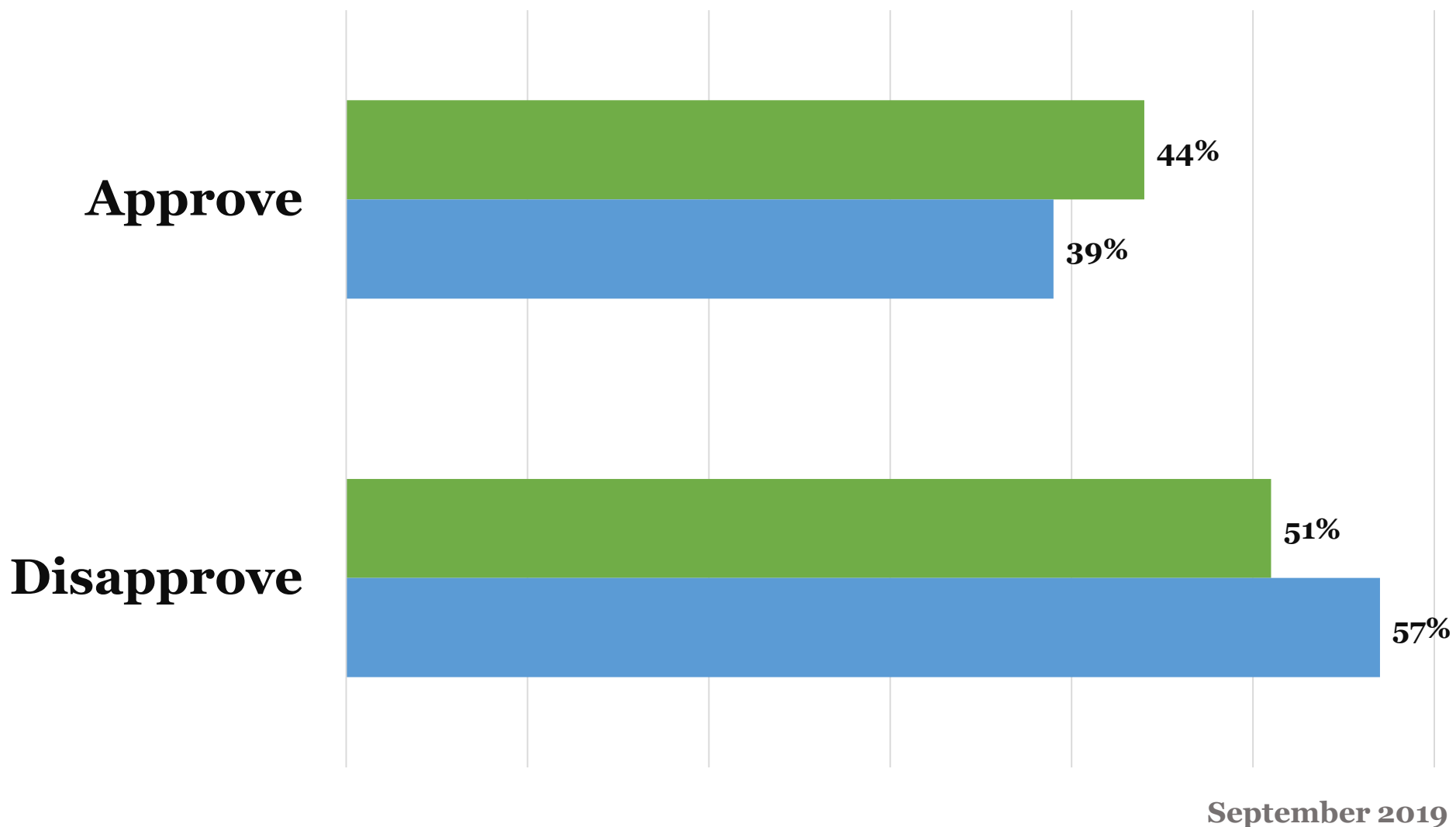
**October 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>**



**Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling Iran?**

# Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling Iran?

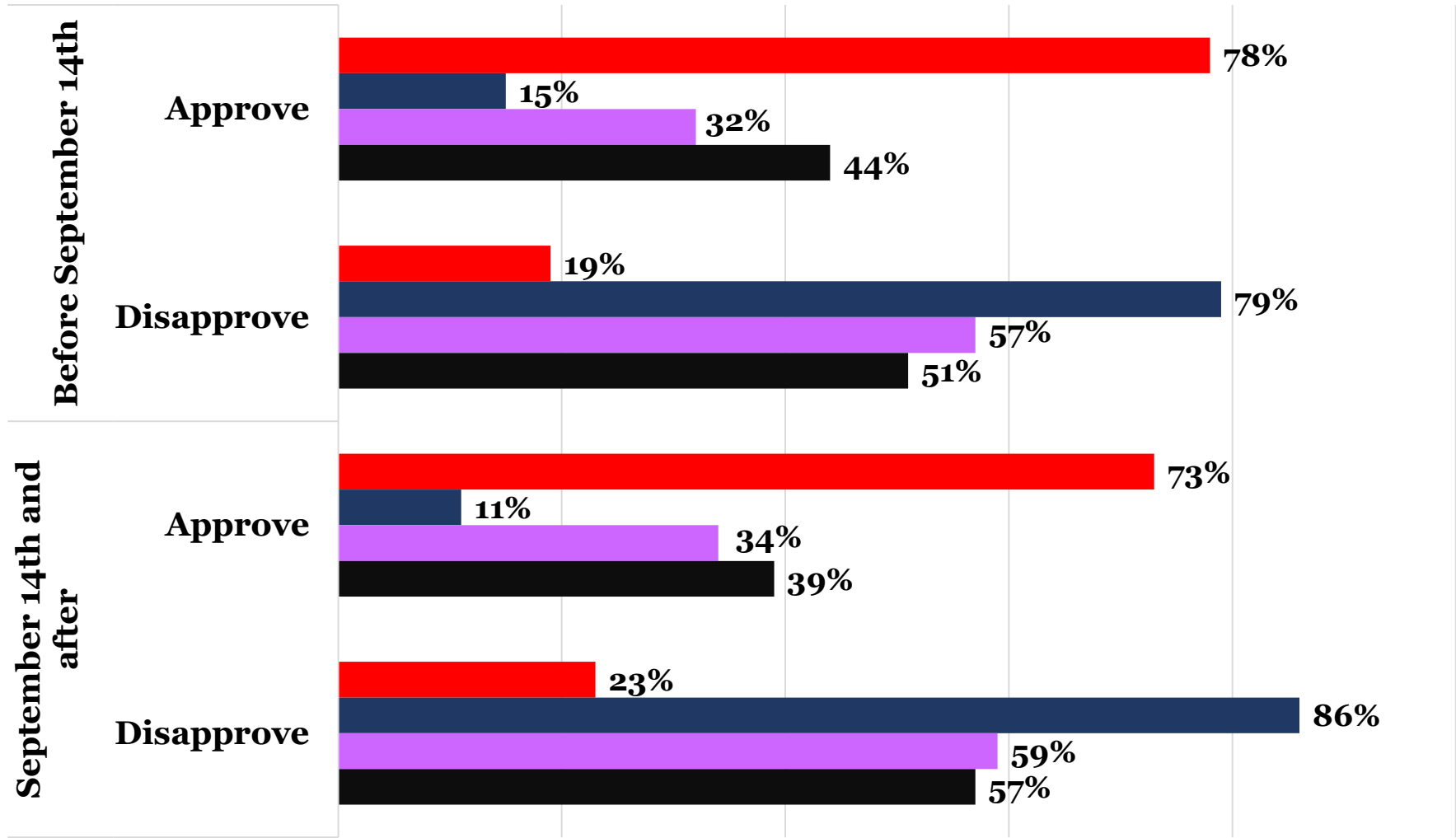
**Before September 14, 2019**      **September 14, 2019 and after**





# Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling Iran?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

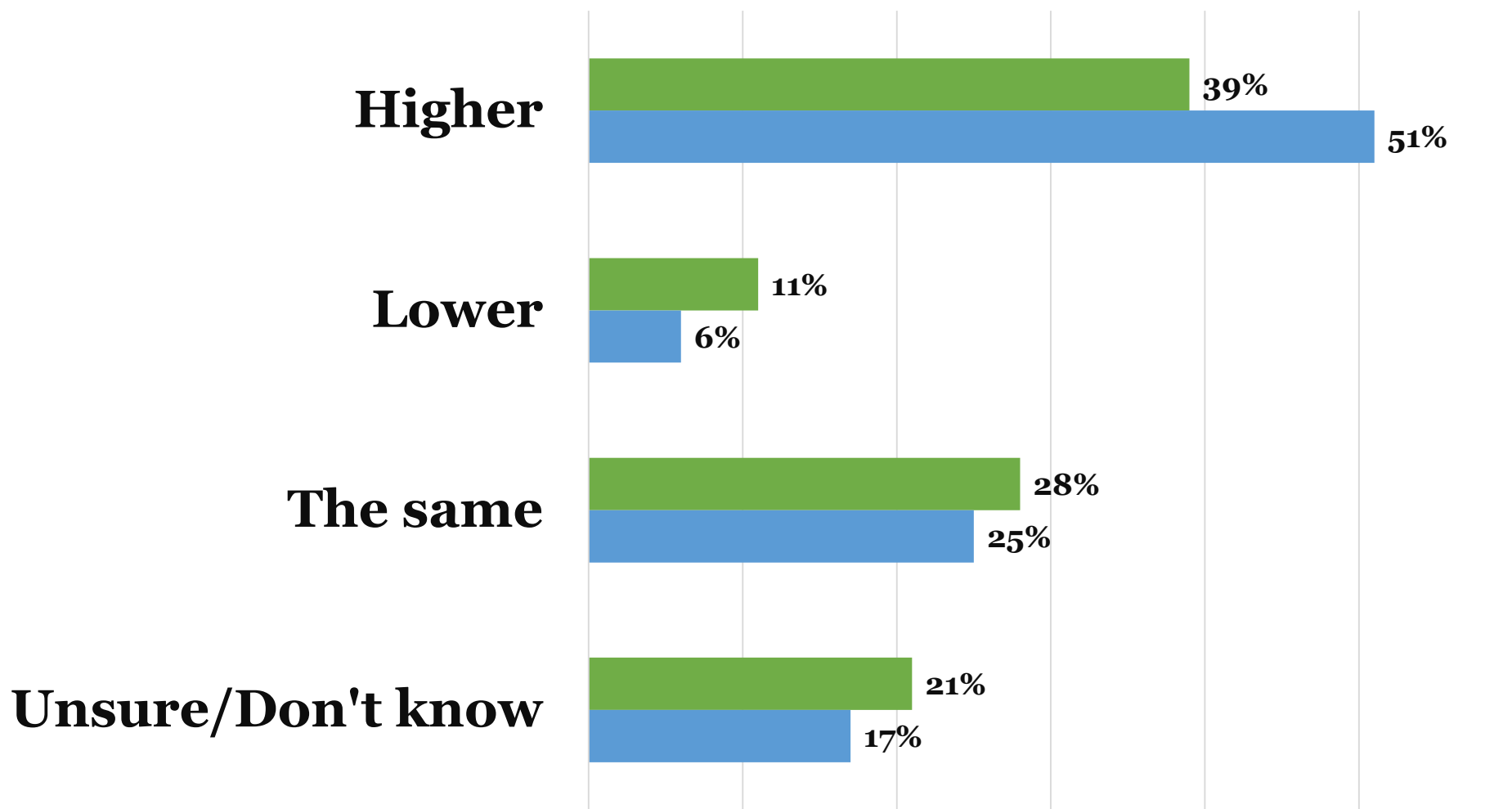


**In comparison to three years ago, do you think the odds of the U.S. going to war with Iran are higher, lower, or the same?**

# In comparison to three years ago, do you think the odds of the U.S. going to war with Iran are higher, lower, or the same?

■ Before September 14, 2019

■ September 14, 2019 and after



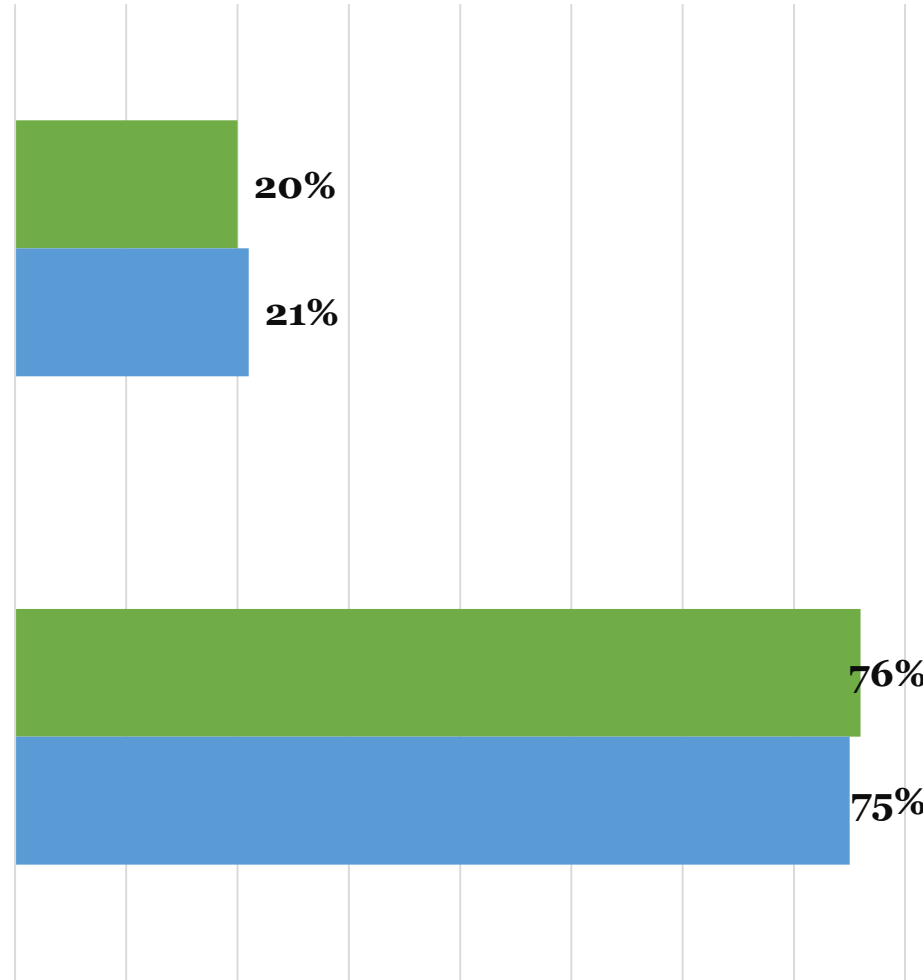
**Which of the following  
is closer to your view?**

# Which of the following is closer to your view?

**■ Before September 14, 2019**

**■ September 14, 2019 and after**

**To achieve its current goal vis-à-vis Iran, the U.S. should be prepared to go to war.**



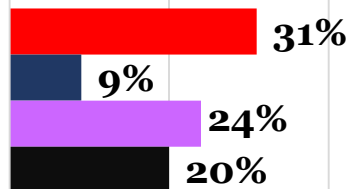
**The current goals of the U.S. policy do not warrant waging war. The U.S. must rely on other means short of war.**

# Which of the following is closer to your view?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

Before September 14th

To achieve its current goal vis-à-vis Iran, the U.S. should be prepared to go to war.

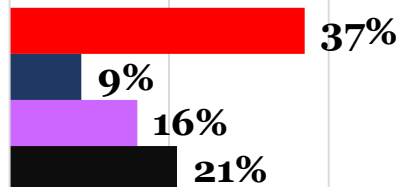


The current goals of U.S. policy do not warrant waging war. The U.S. must rely on other means short of war.



September 14th and after

To achieve its current goal vis-à-vis Iran, the U.S. should be prepared to go to war.



The current goals of U.S. policy do not warrant waging war. The U.S. must rely on other means short of war.

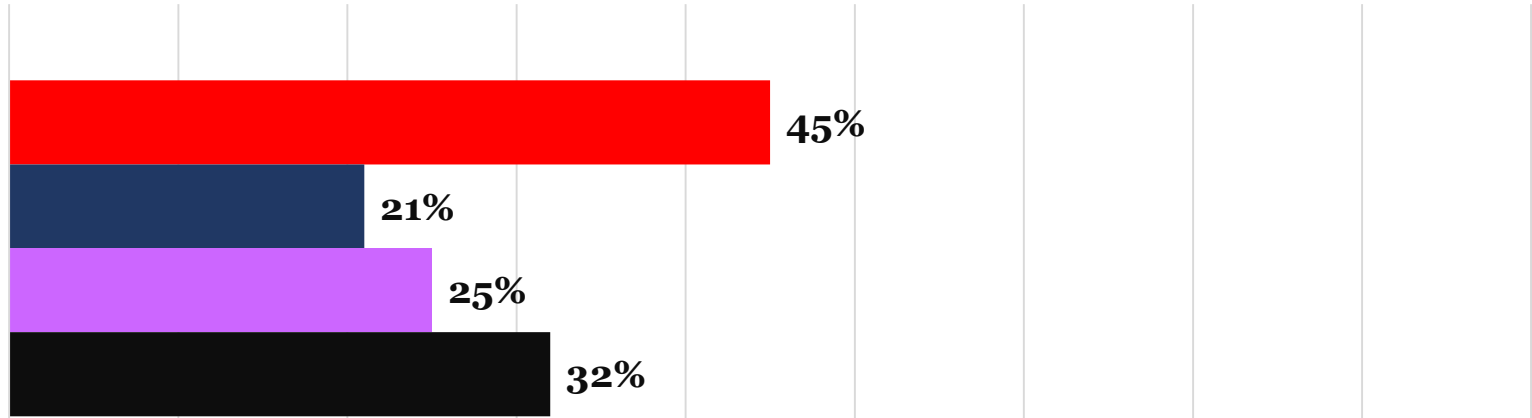


**If sufficient evidence emerges that Iran is responsible, should the U.S. consider a military action in response?**

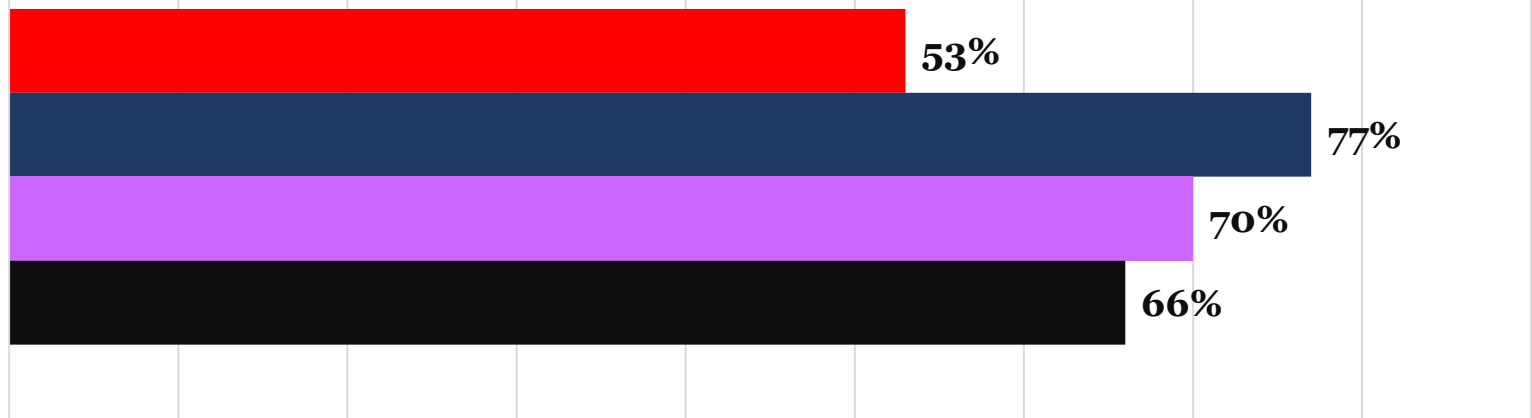
# If sufficient evidence emerges that Iran is responsible, should the U.S. consider a military action in response?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

**Yes**



**No**

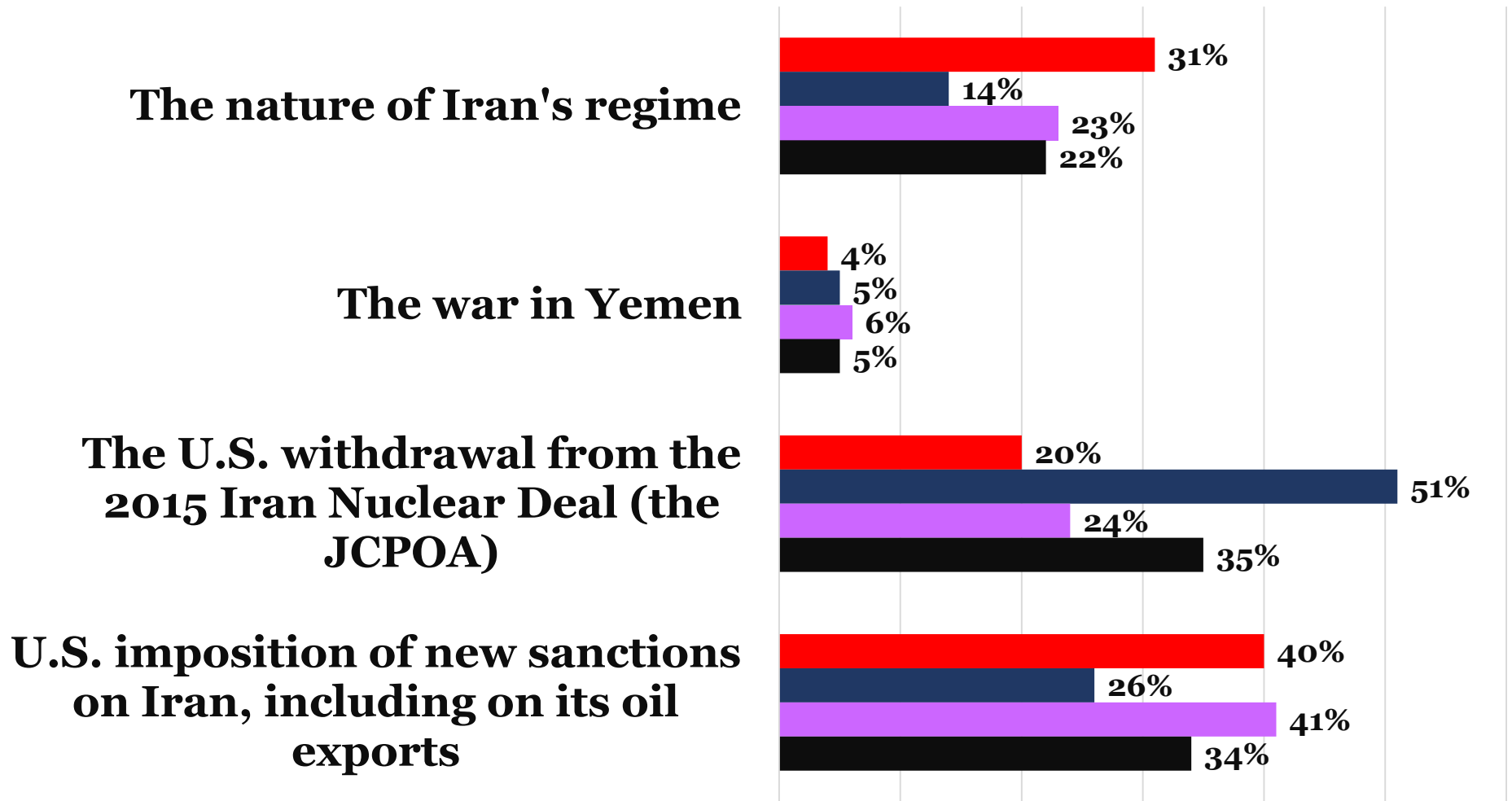




**Now tell me, which  
one do you think is  
most important  
in explaining the  
escalation in the Gulf?**

# Now tell me, which one of the above do you think is most important?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total



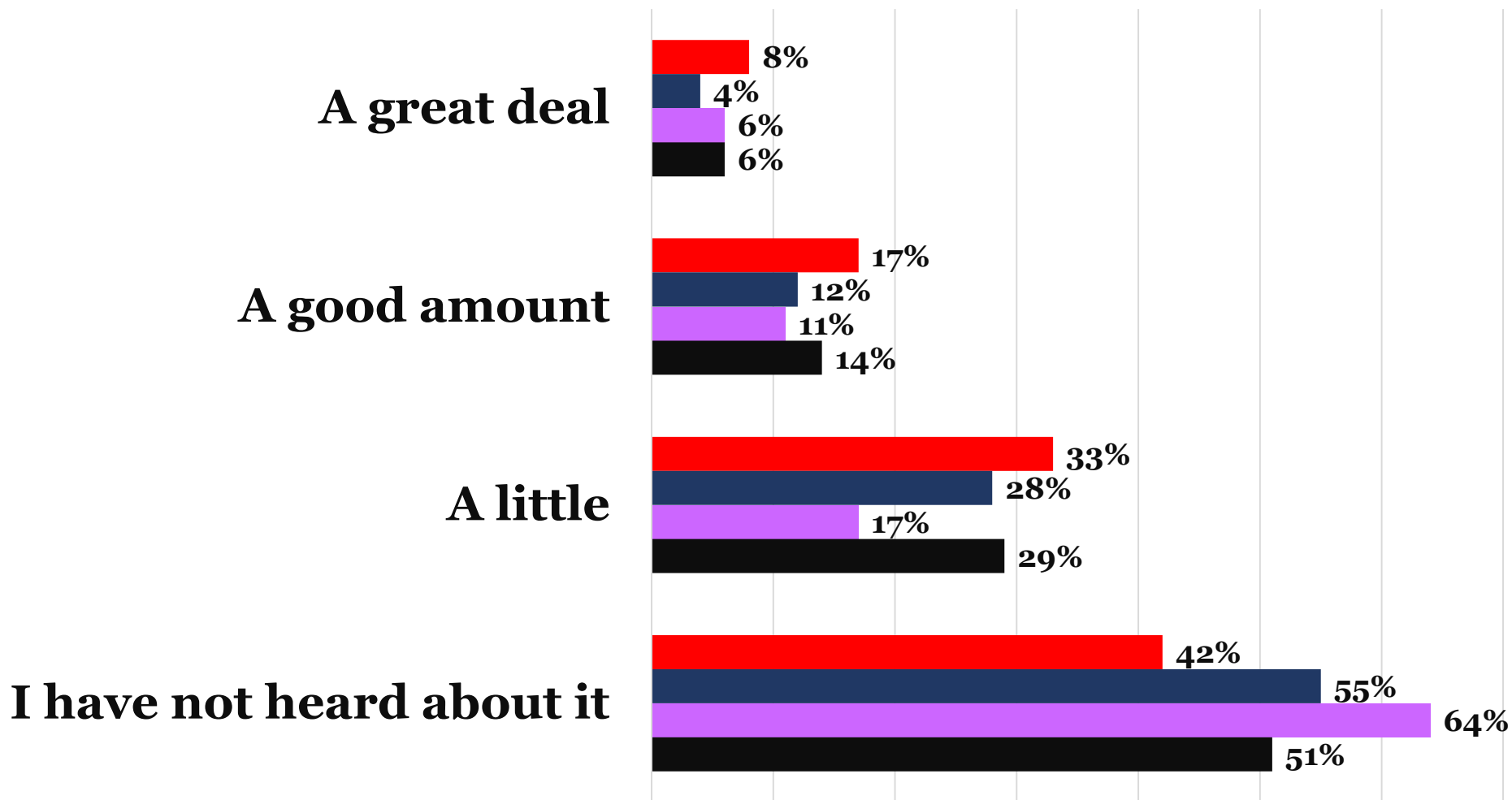
October 2019

# American Attitudes toward BDS

**How much have you heard about BDS, or the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement aimed at Israel?**

# How much have you heard about BDS, or the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement aimed at Israel?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total



October 2019

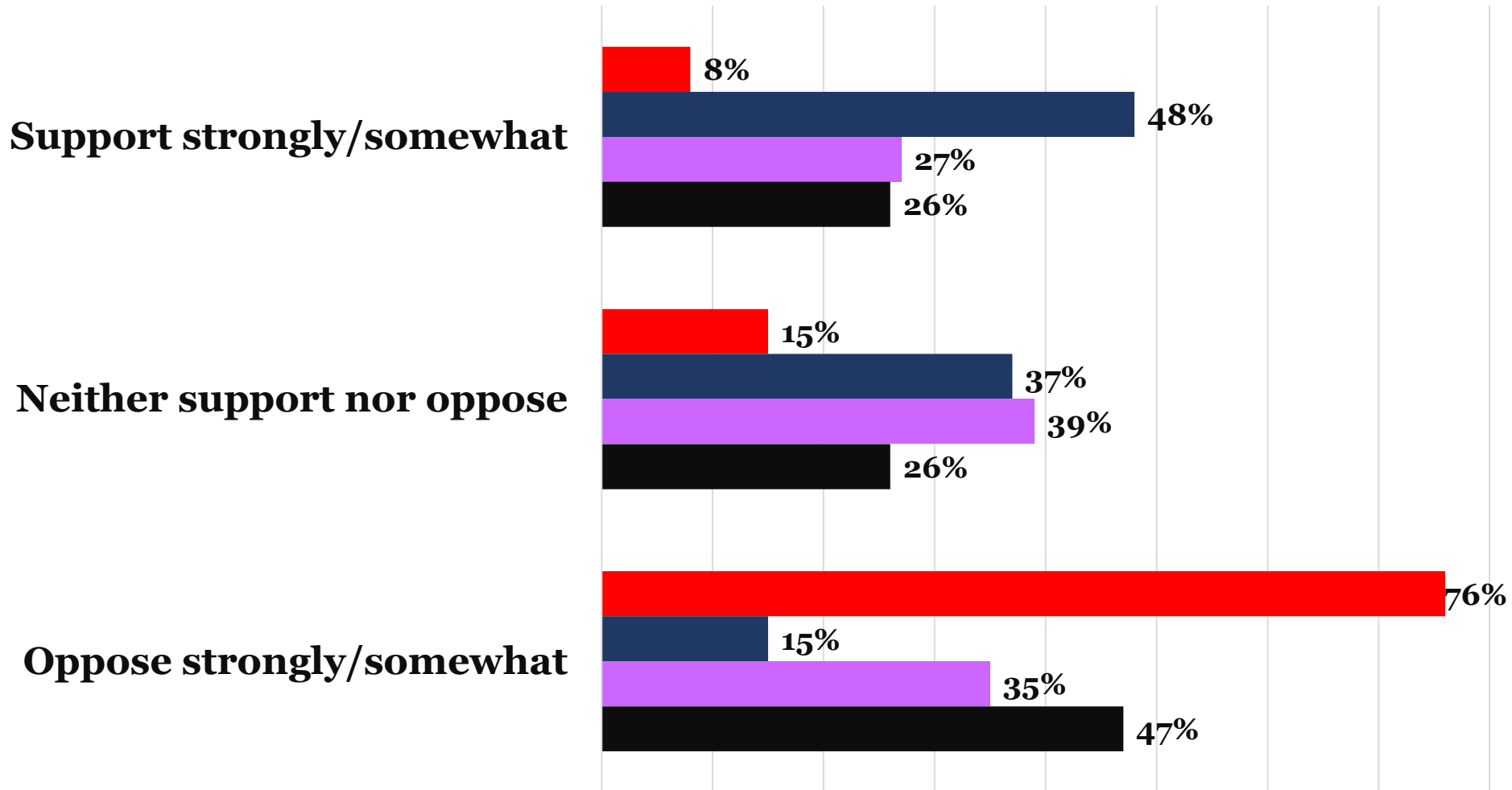
**[Among those who have  
heard of BDS]**

**Based on what you have  
heard, do you support or  
oppose BDS, or the Boycott,  
Divestment, and Sanctions  
movement?**

[Among those who have heard of BDS]

Based on what you have heard, do you support or oppose BDS, or the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total



October 2019

**[Among those who have heard of BDS]**

**Tell me how much you agree or disagree with  
the following statement:**

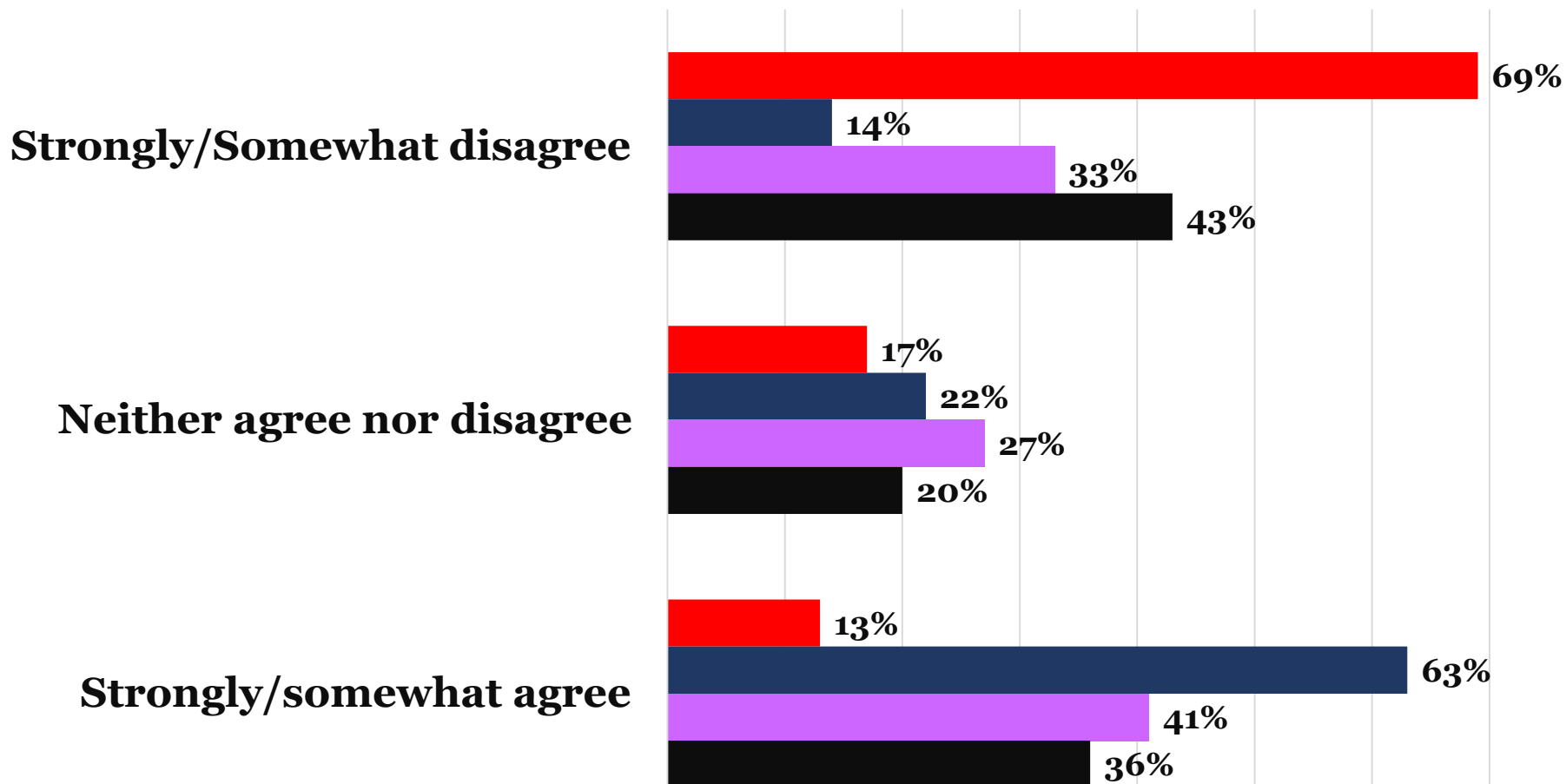
**BDS is a legitimate, peaceful way of opposing  
Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.  
Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid  
movement, BDS urges action to pressure Israel  
to comply with international law. Opposing  
Israeli policy does not equal anti-Semitism.**



[Among those who have heard of BDS]  
Tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

BDS is a legitimate, peaceful way of opposing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS urges action to pressure Israel to comply with international law. Opposing Israeli policy does not equal anti-Semitism

■ **Republicans** ■ **Democrats** ■ **Independents** ■ **Total**



October 2019

**[Among those who have heard of BDS]**

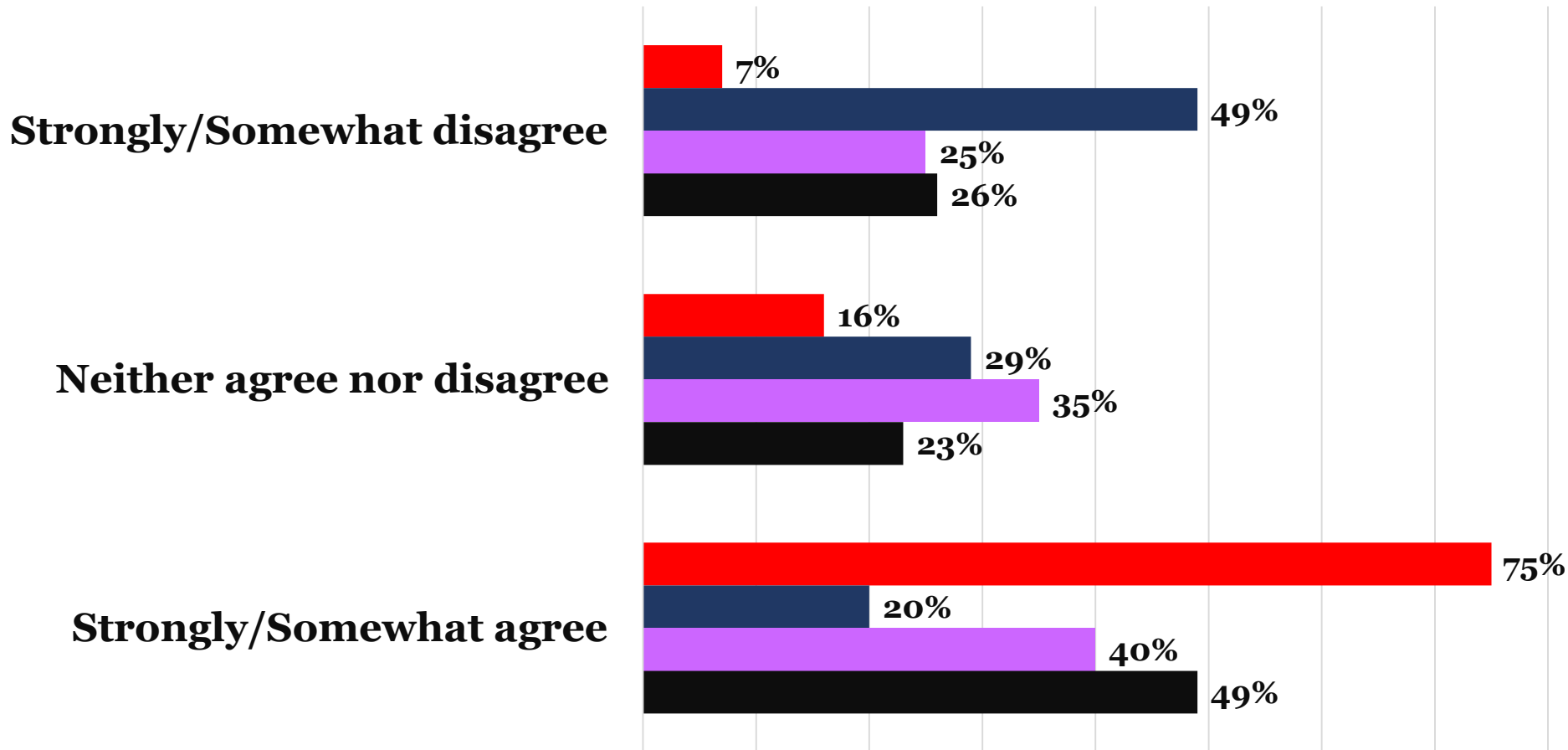
**Tell me how much you agree or disagree with  
the following statement:**

**Regardless of how BDS defines itself, it is an  
anti-Israel organization attempting to weaken  
Israel and to undermine its legitimacy. Some of  
its supporters are opponents of Israel's very  
existence and may even be anti-Semitic.**

[Among those who have heard of BDS]  
Tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Regardless of how BDS defines itself, it is an anti-Israel organization attempting to weaken Israel and to undermine its legitimacy. Some of its supporters are opponents of Israel's very existence and may even be anti-Semitic.

■ **Republicans** ■ **Democrats** ■ **Independents** ■ **Total**



October 2019

**[Among those who have  
heard of BDS]**

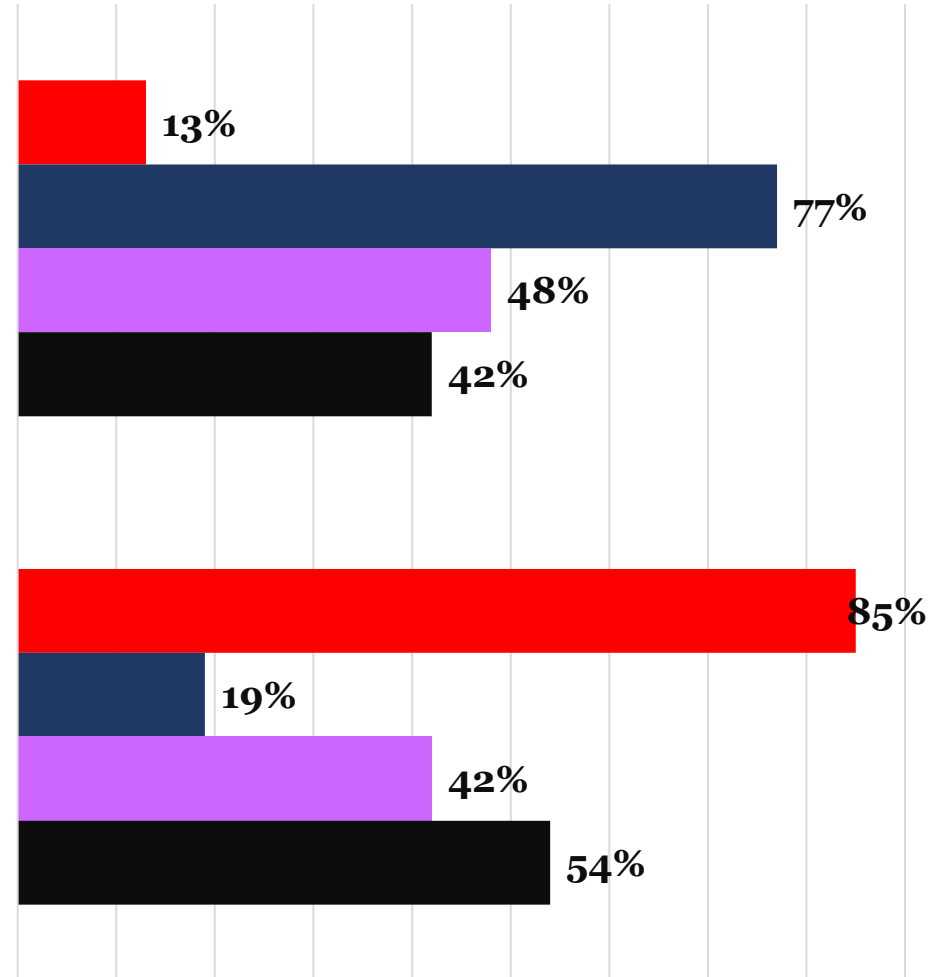
**Now tell me, which of the  
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view?**

[Among those who have heard of BDS]  
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■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

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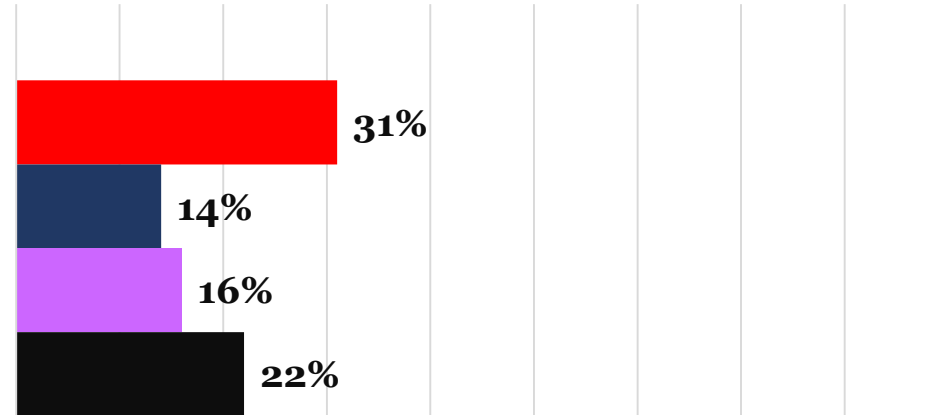


**Which of the following is  
closer to your view?**

# Which of the following is closer to your view?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

**We should SUPPORT laws that penalize people who boycott Israel because these laws help protect Israel.**



**We should OPPOSE laws that penalize people who boycott Israel because these laws infringe on the Constitutional right to free speech and peaceful protest.**



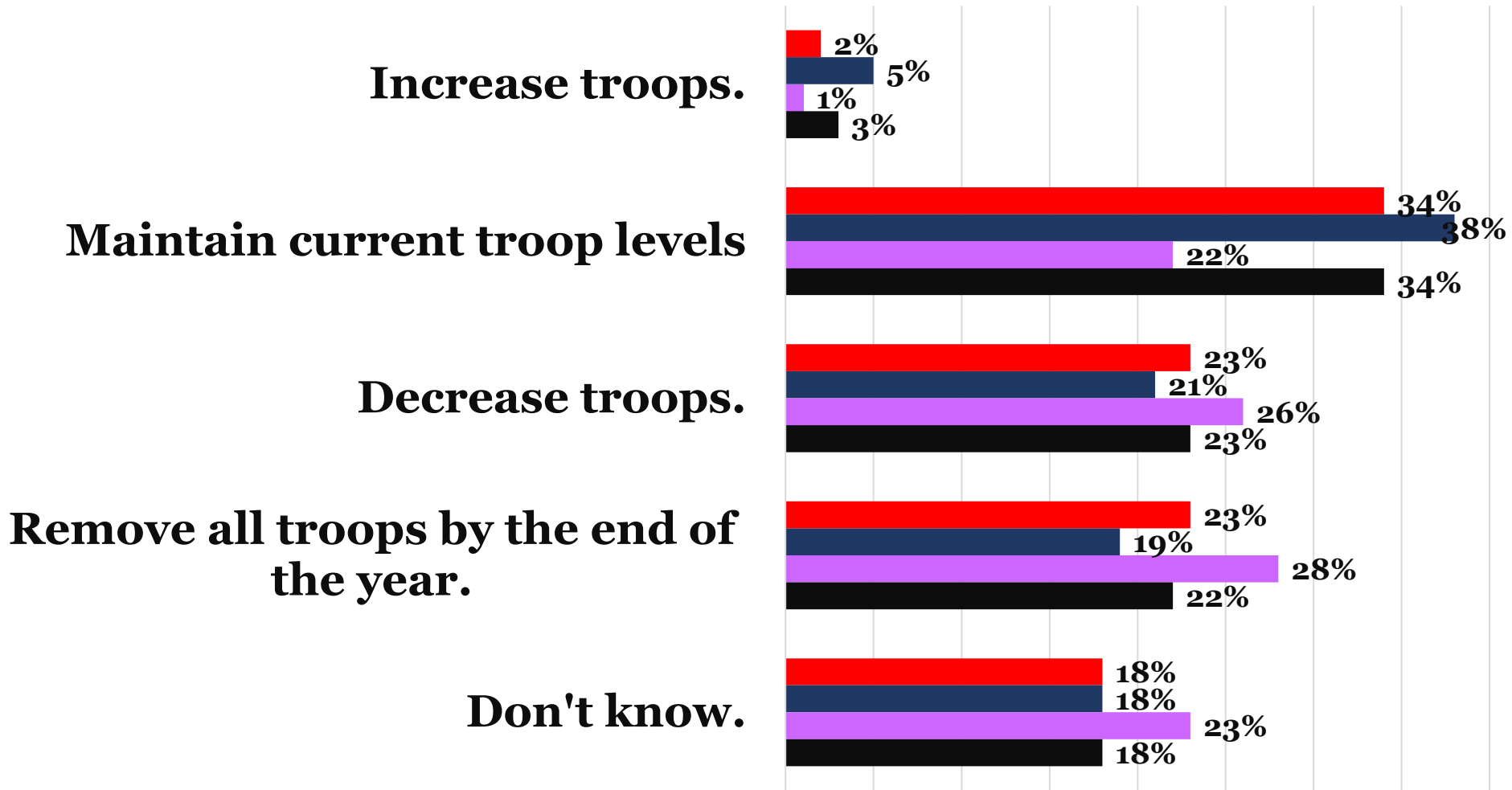
# American Attitudes toward Afghanistan



**Do you think the U.S. should  
increase troops, maintain  
current troop levels, decrease  
troops, or remove all troops  
from Afghanistan in the next  
year?**

# Do you think the U.S. should increase troops, maintain current troop levels, decrease troops, or remove all troops from Afghanistan in the next year?

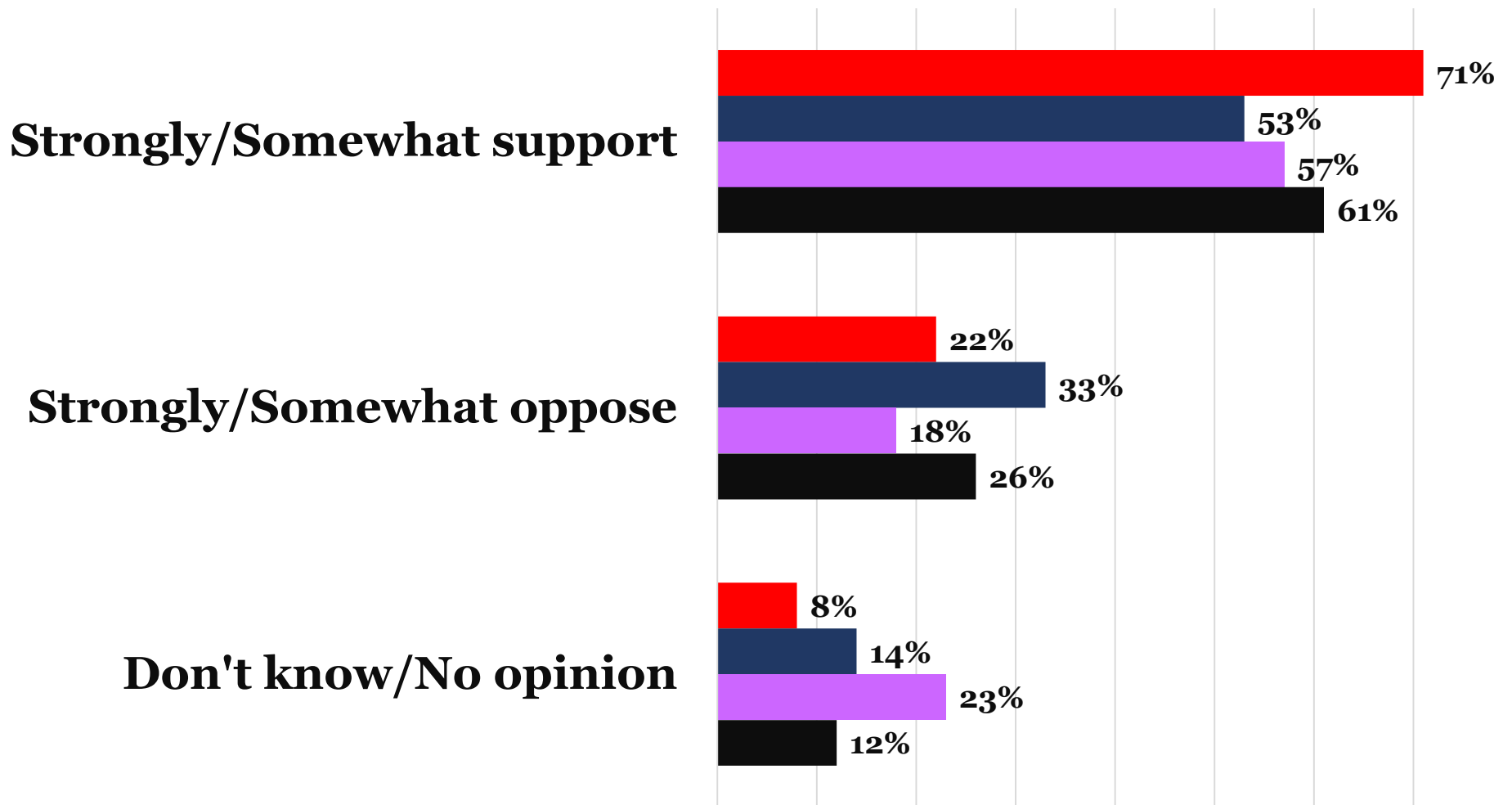
■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total



**As you may know, the U.S. has started the reduction of military presence in Afghanistan, with about half of the approximately 14,000 U.S. troops there set to begin returning home in the near future. Based on what you know, do you support or oppose this action?**

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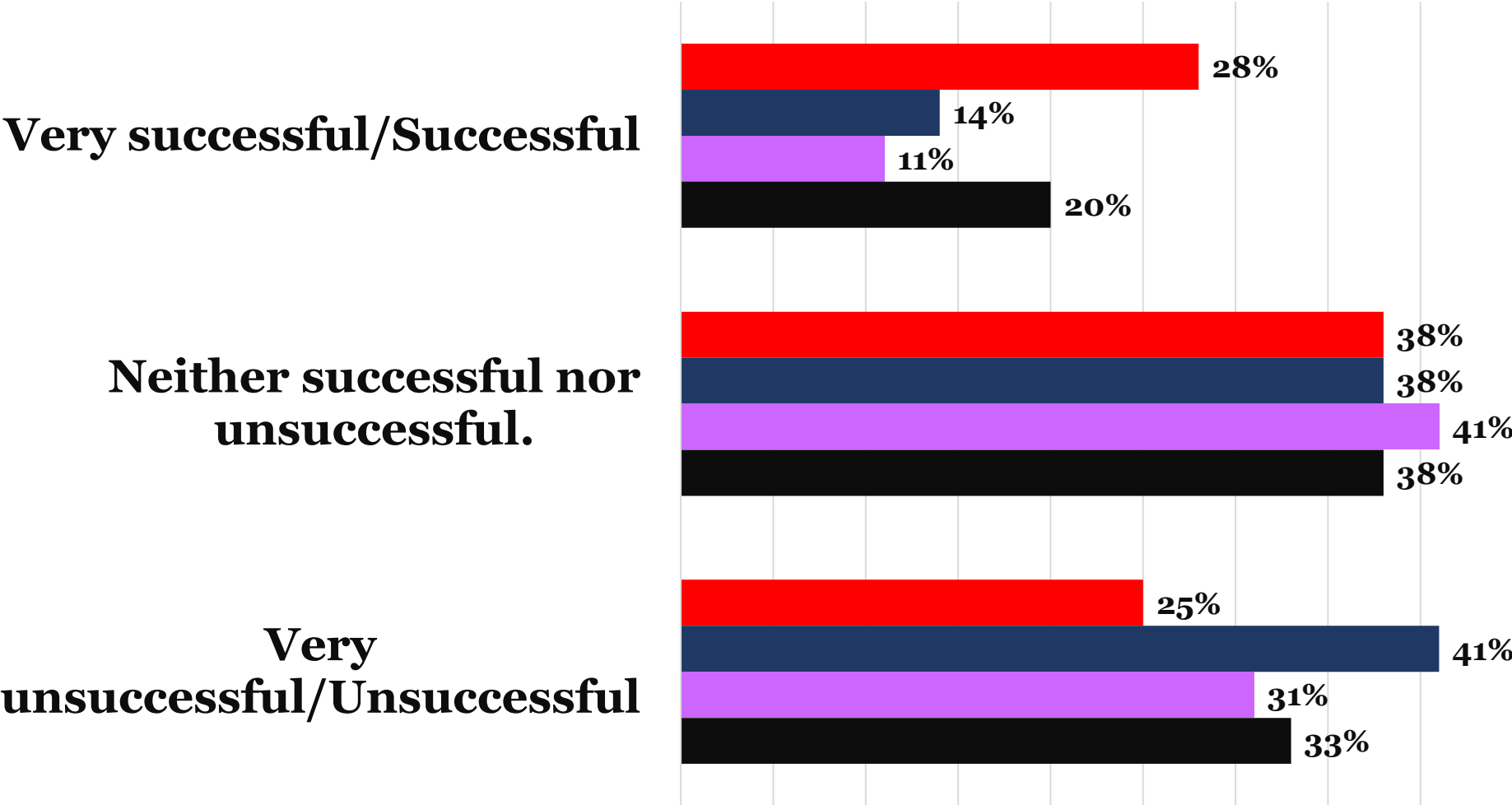
**■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total**



**Do you think America's military involvement in Afghanistan has been successful or unsuccessful in obtaining America's strategic objectives?**

# Do you think America's military involvement in Afghanistan has been successful or unsuccessful in obtaining America's strategic objectives?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

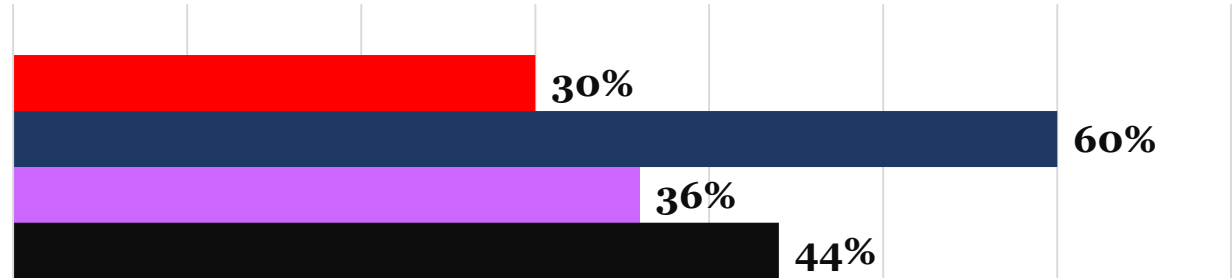


**Regardless of whether our intervention in Afghanistan was justified or not, do you believe that the U.S. has an obligation towards the Afghan government and the many segments of society who were impacted by that intervention?**

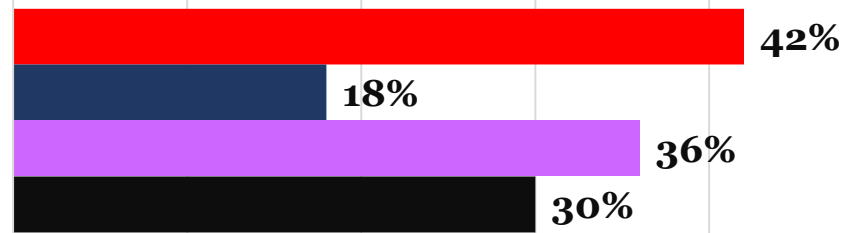
Regardless of whether our intervention in Afghanistan was justified or not, do you believe that the U.S. has an obligation towards the Afghan government and the many segments of society who were impacted by that intervention?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

Yes



No



Not sure





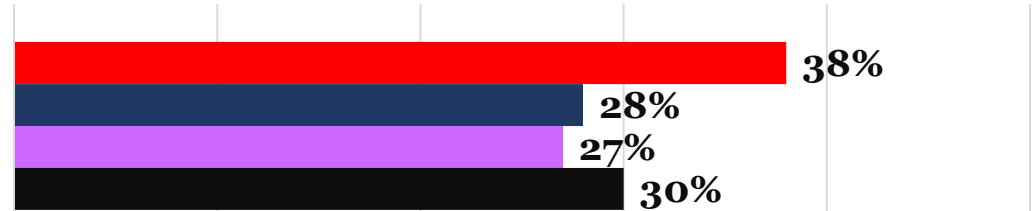
**[Among those who believe the U.S. has  
an obligation towards the Afghan  
government]**

**What form should  
our responsibility  
take?**

[Among those who believe the U.S. has an obligation towards the Afghan government]  
What form should our responsibility take?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

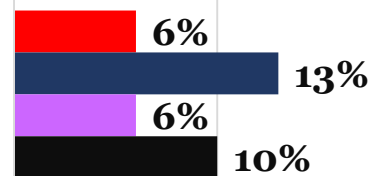
A limited military role



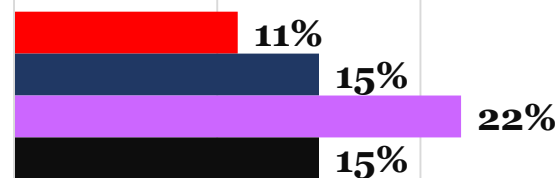
Using our leverage in the negotiations to protect the interests of affected parties in Afghanistan



Continued financial support



Other/don't know



**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the U.S. should negotiate with the Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan?**

# How strongly do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the U.S. should negotiate with the Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan?

■ Republicans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Total

