

## **Stopping the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction Top Foreign Policy and Security Concern for Voters**

Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFF) commissioned a bi-partisan, nationwide survey as part of a multi-year initiative to monitor Americans' attitudes about the role the United States plays in the world and how international issues impact their lives. This new survey, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies, was designed to provide deeper insight into what issues motivated voters on Election Day.

Overall, the war on terrorism was the single greatest issue influencing voter decision. And among the issues topping the list of concerns was the spread of weapons of mass destruction:

- Voters went to the polls on Election Day more concerned about the threat of biological, nuclear and chemical weapons than removing Saddam Hussein from power.
- Both stopping the threat of weapons of mass destruction (35 percent) and disarming Iraq through UN weapons inspections (35 percent) ranked above removing Saddam Hussein from power (25 percent) and nearly as high as improving homeland security (36 percent) as top issues in the war on terrorism influencing voters' decisions.
- Specifically, the proliferation of these weapons, terrorist cells in the United States and unsecured ports and borders were viewed as the most serious threats to voters.
- 59 percent of voters ranked containing the threat from Saddam Hussein and Iraq as one of the top few priorities for the next Congress.
- Democrats were much more likely to favor containment over regime change (56 percent vs. 41 percent). Republicans placed regime change at the very top of their list of priorities for the next Congress (73 percent).

In our post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, the real threat of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons falling into the hands of those who wish to do our nation deadly harm is a clear and present danger in the minds of the American public. They went to the polls to tell our nation's leaders that the time has come for action.

The Nuclear Threat Reduction Campaign (NTRC), a project of VVAFF, calls upon Congress and the Bush Administration to heed the call of the public. There are concrete steps that our nation can take to help stop the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Failure to act jeopardizes all our lives.

# **Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation**

## **Voter Attitudes on Foreign Policy**

**December 19, 2002**



# Research Program

**Survey conducted November 5-11, 2002**

**884 Voters**

**116 Non-voters**

**234 Opinion formers**

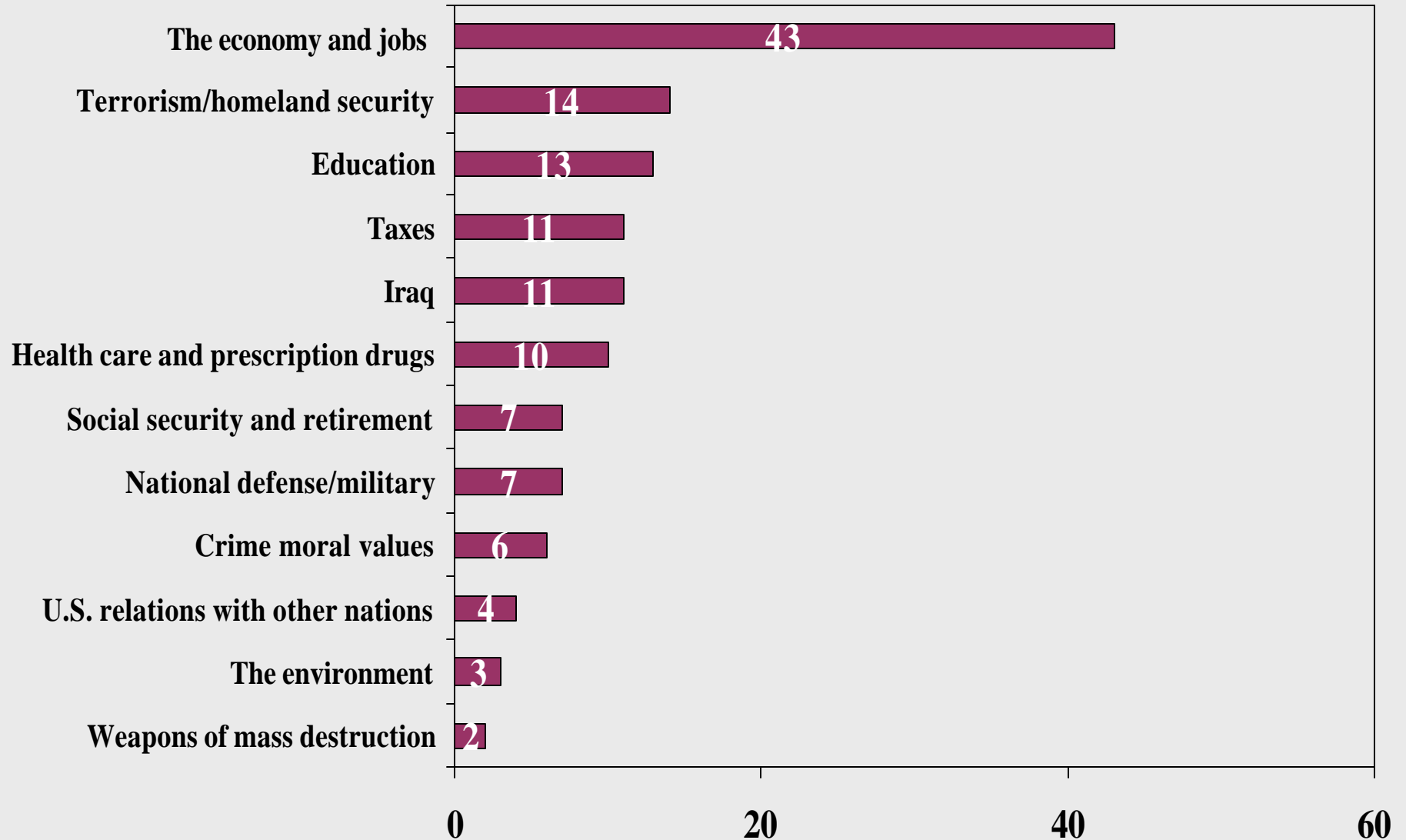
**College or post-graduate education**

**Regular reader/view of national newspaper, news magazine or network cable news (2 of 3)**

**Follow foreign affairs in the news very or somewhat closely**

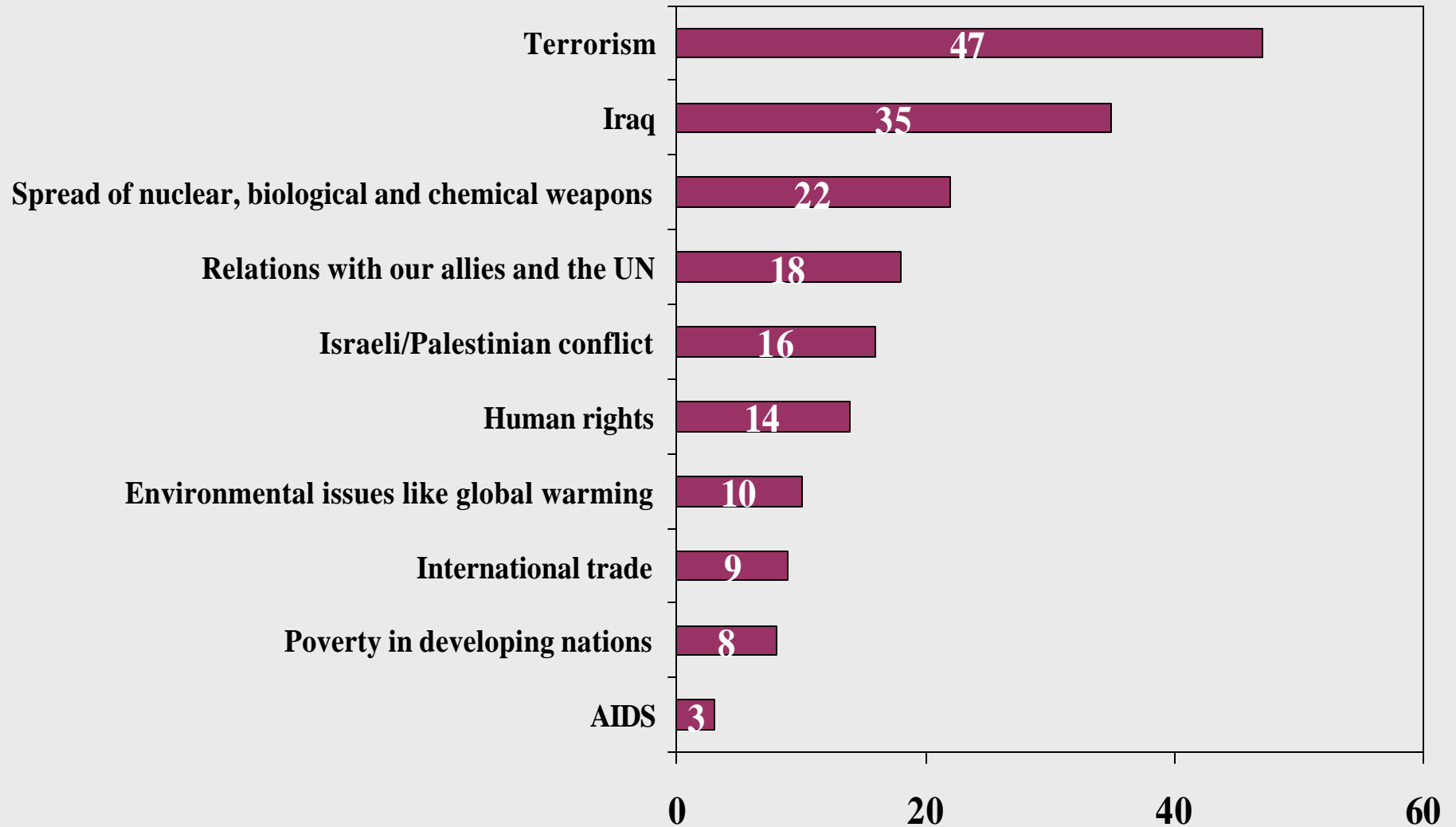


# Concerns





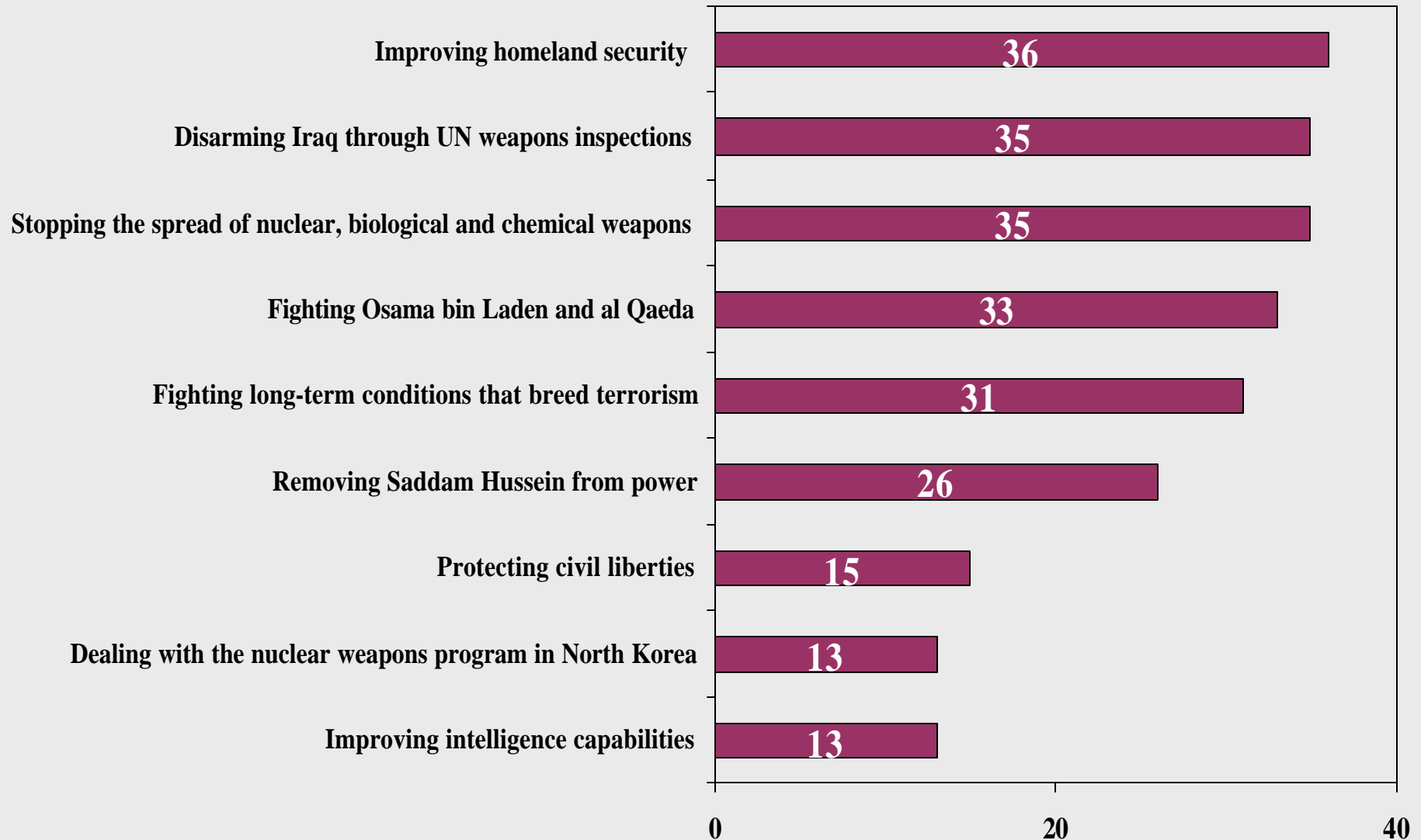
# Foreign Policy Concerns



*“Thinking specifically about world affairs and U.S. foreign policy, which TWO of the following issues were most important to you in deciding how to vote for Congress this year?”*



# Concerns Regarding the War on Terrorism

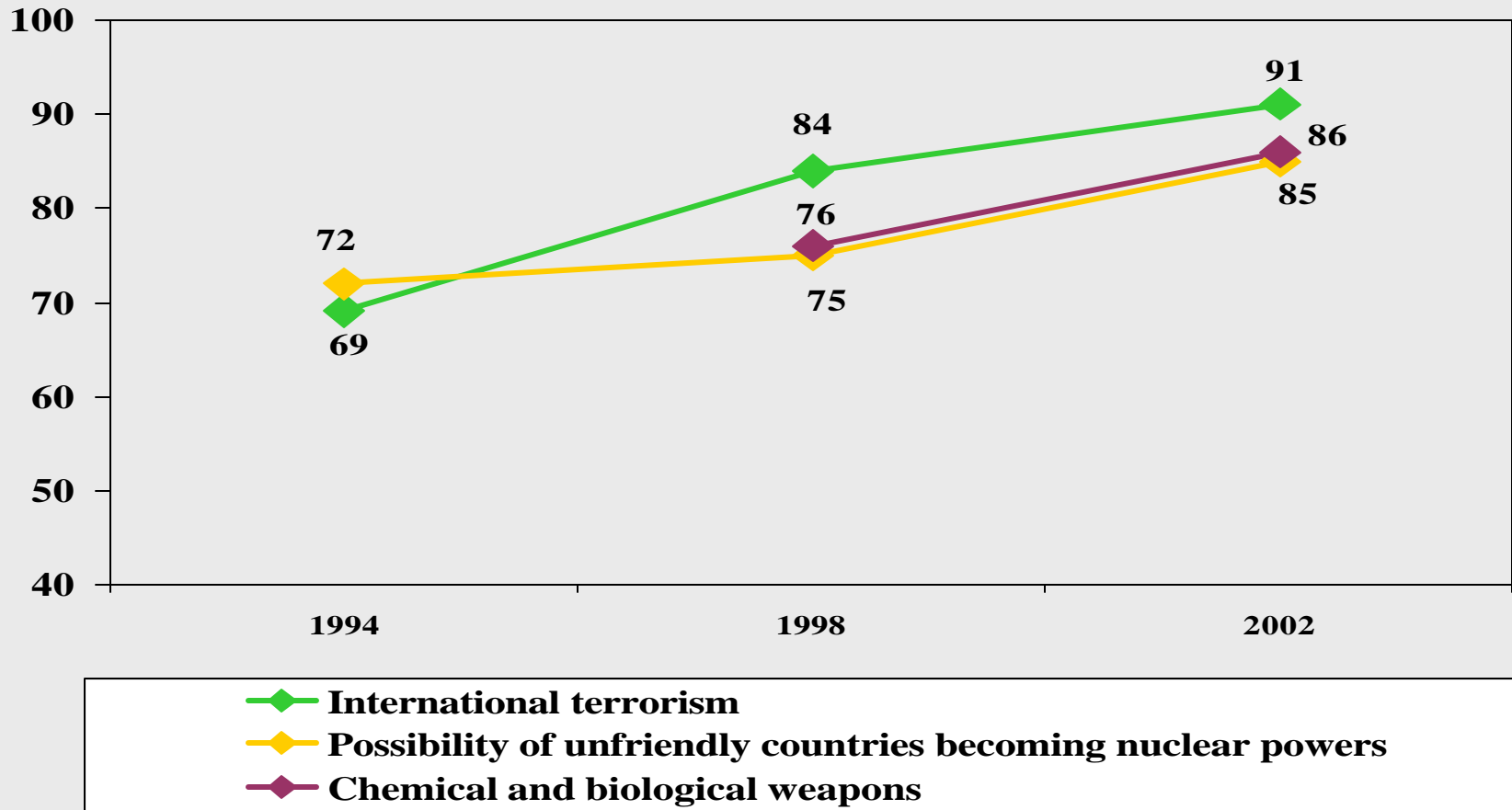


*“Thinking specifically about the war on terrorism, which TWO of the following issues were most important to you in deciding how to vote for Congress this year?”*



# Severity of Threats

## Critical threat: 1994-2002

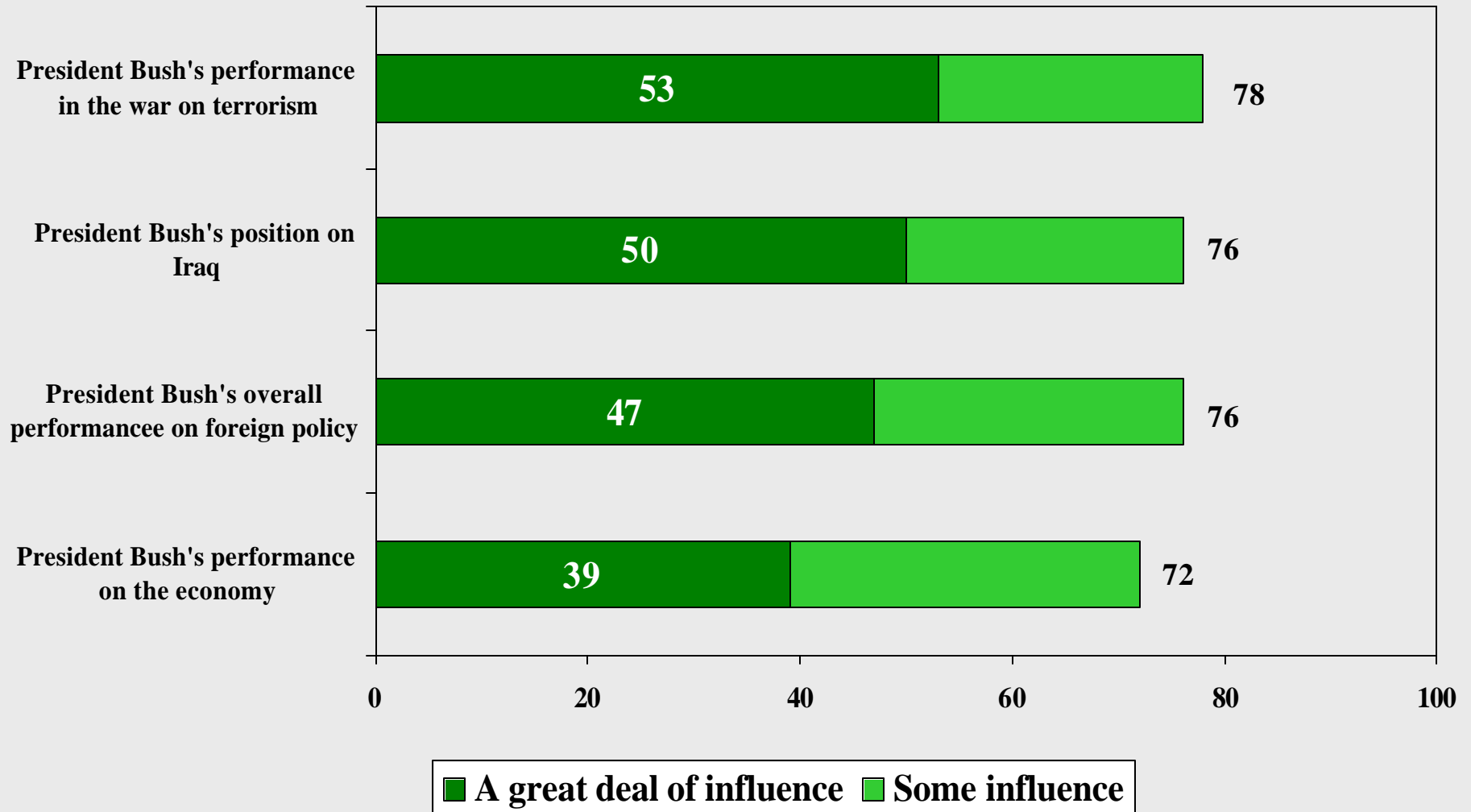


*“I am going to read you a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please tell me if you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.”*

*2002 data from The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund poll conducted by Harris Interactive of 3,262 adults from June 1-30. 1994 and 1998 surveys were conducted by Gallup and used the same criteria.*



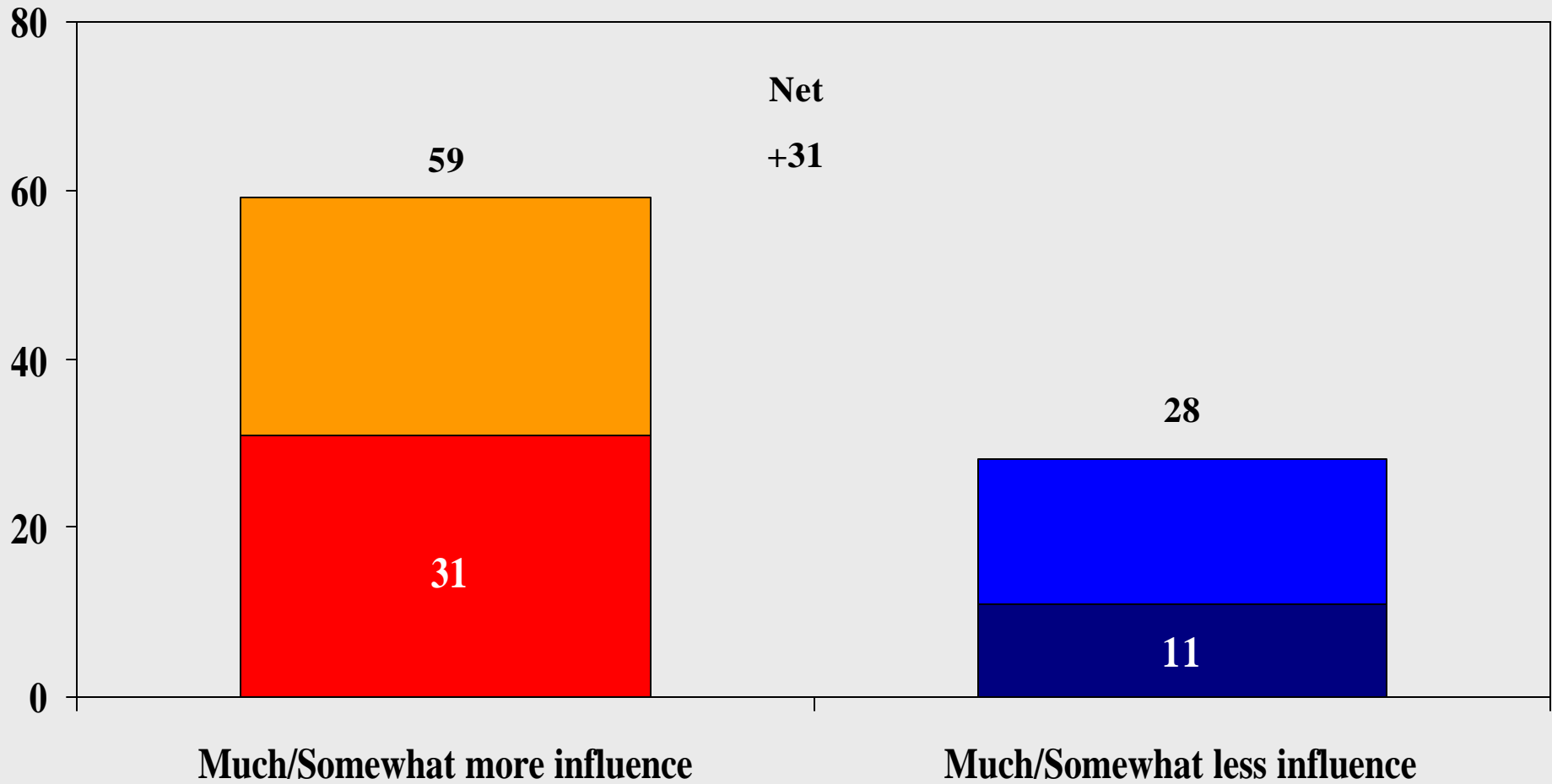
# Influence on Vote: President Bush's Performance



*“Now I'm going to read you a list of things that you might have considered in casting your vote for Congress this year. For each one, please tell me whether the issue had a great deal of influence on your vote, some influence, not that much influence, or no influence at all on your vote for Congress.”*



# President Bush's Job Performance

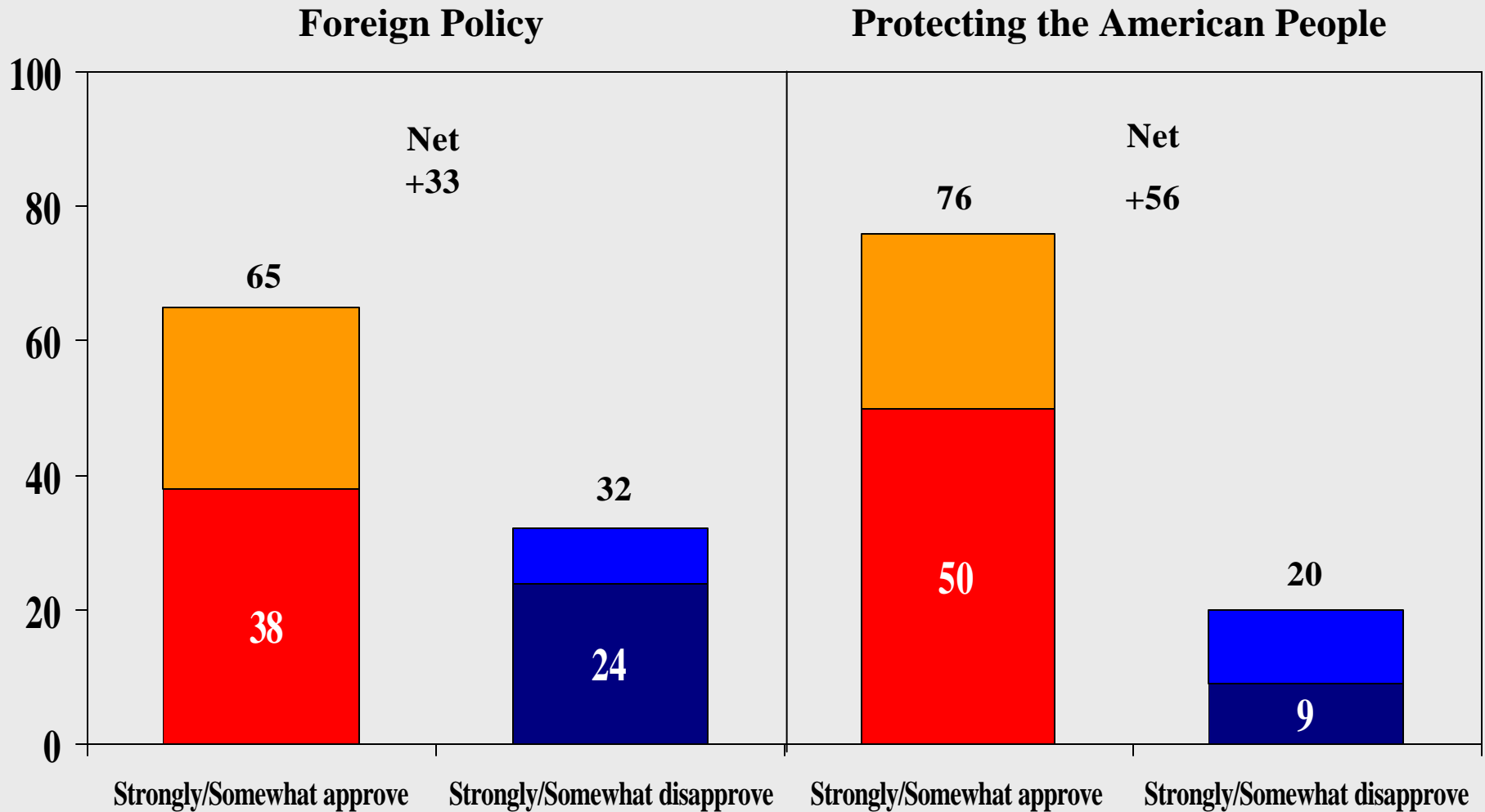


*“Thinking about how you voted this year, would you say that President Bush's performance on foreign affairs and international issues had MORE or LESS influence on your vote than his performance on domestic issues like the economy, tax cuts, and corporate corruption prescription drugs, education, and the environment ”*



# President Bush Job Approval

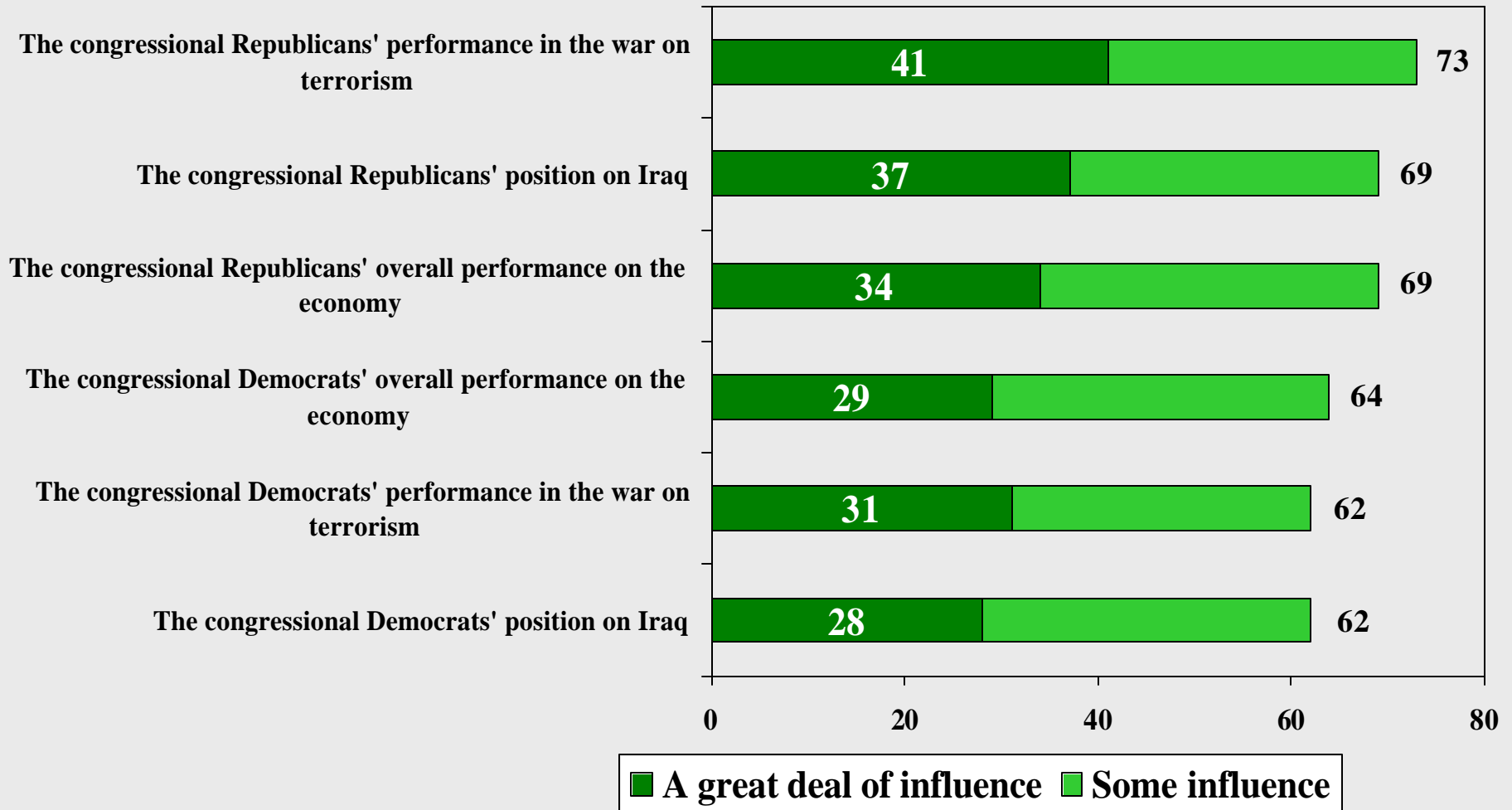
## Foreign Policy vs. Protecting the American People



*“Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling foreign policy as president?  
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling efforts to protect the American  
people as president?”*



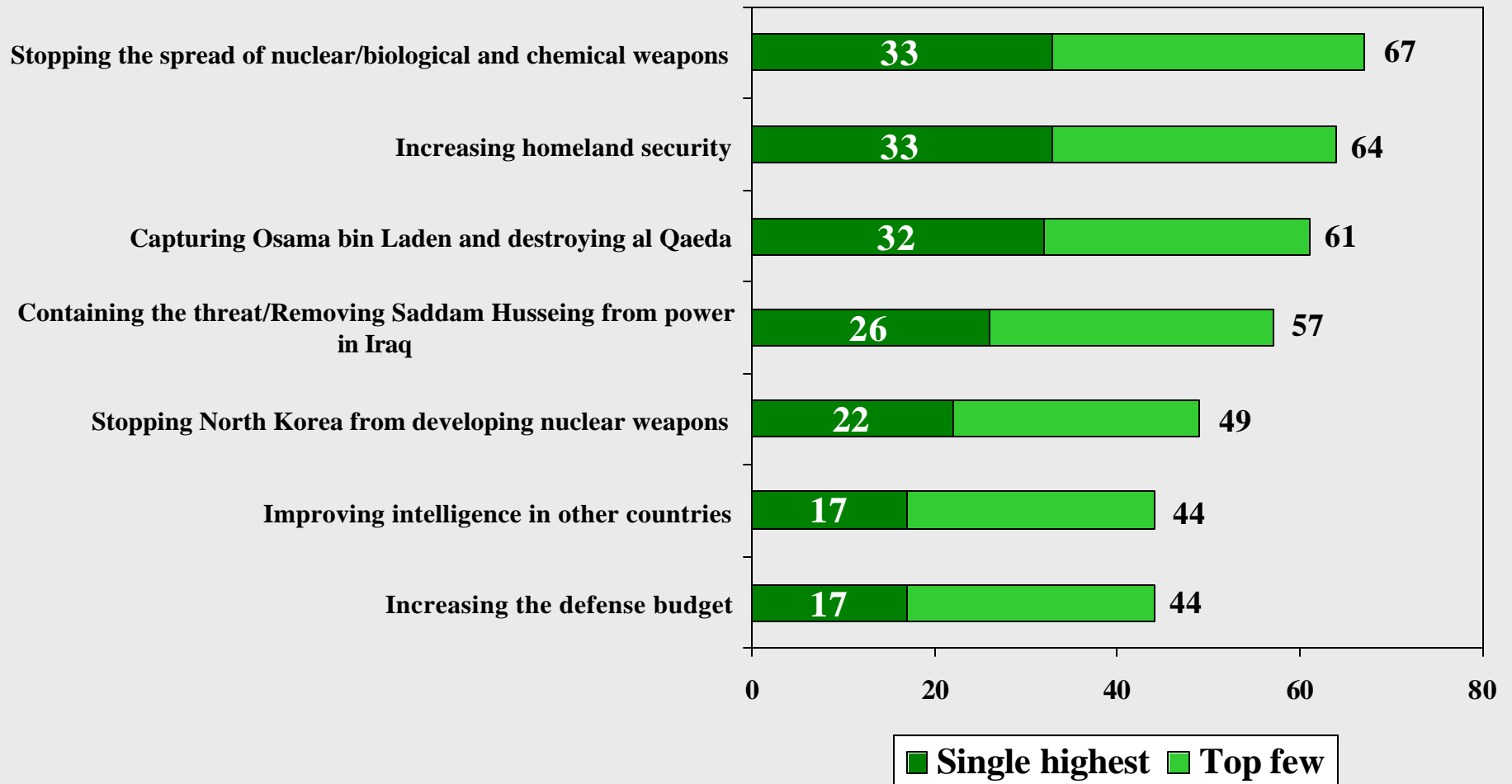
# Influence on Vote: Performance of Congress



*“Now I'm going to read you a list of things that you might have considered in casting your vote for Congress this year. For each one, please tell me whether the issue had a great deal of influence on your vote, some influence, not that much influence, or no influence at all on your vote for Congress.”*



# Top Foreign Policy and Security Priorities

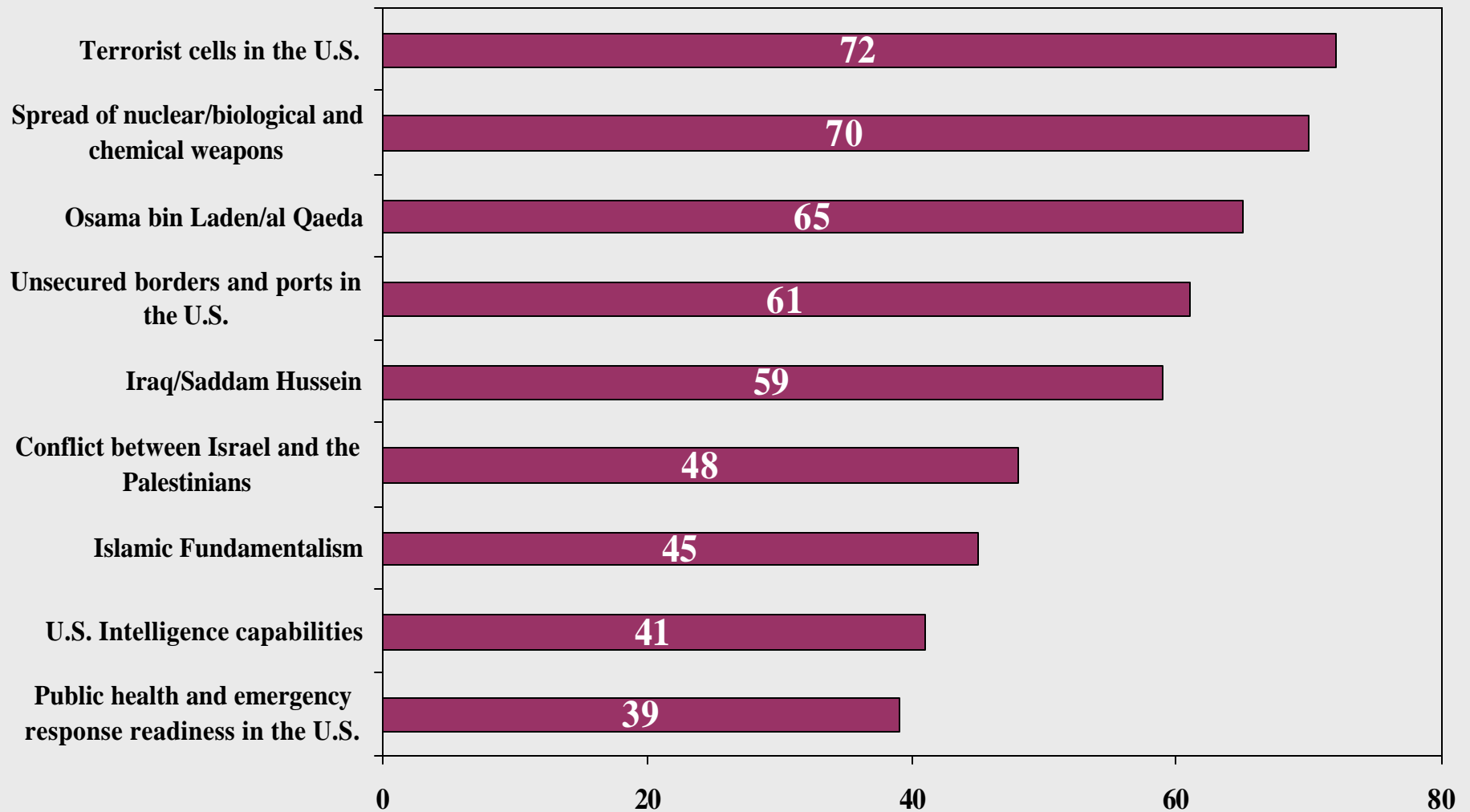


*“Next, I am going to read you a list of possible foreign policy and security priorities for the next U.S. Congress. For each one, tell me if you think it should be the SINGLE highest priority, one of the TOP FEW priorities, but not the highest, NEAR THE TOP of the list, in the MIDDLE OF THE LIST, or TOWARD THE BOTTOM of the list of possible foreign policy and security priorities for the new Congress.”*



# Terrorism Threats

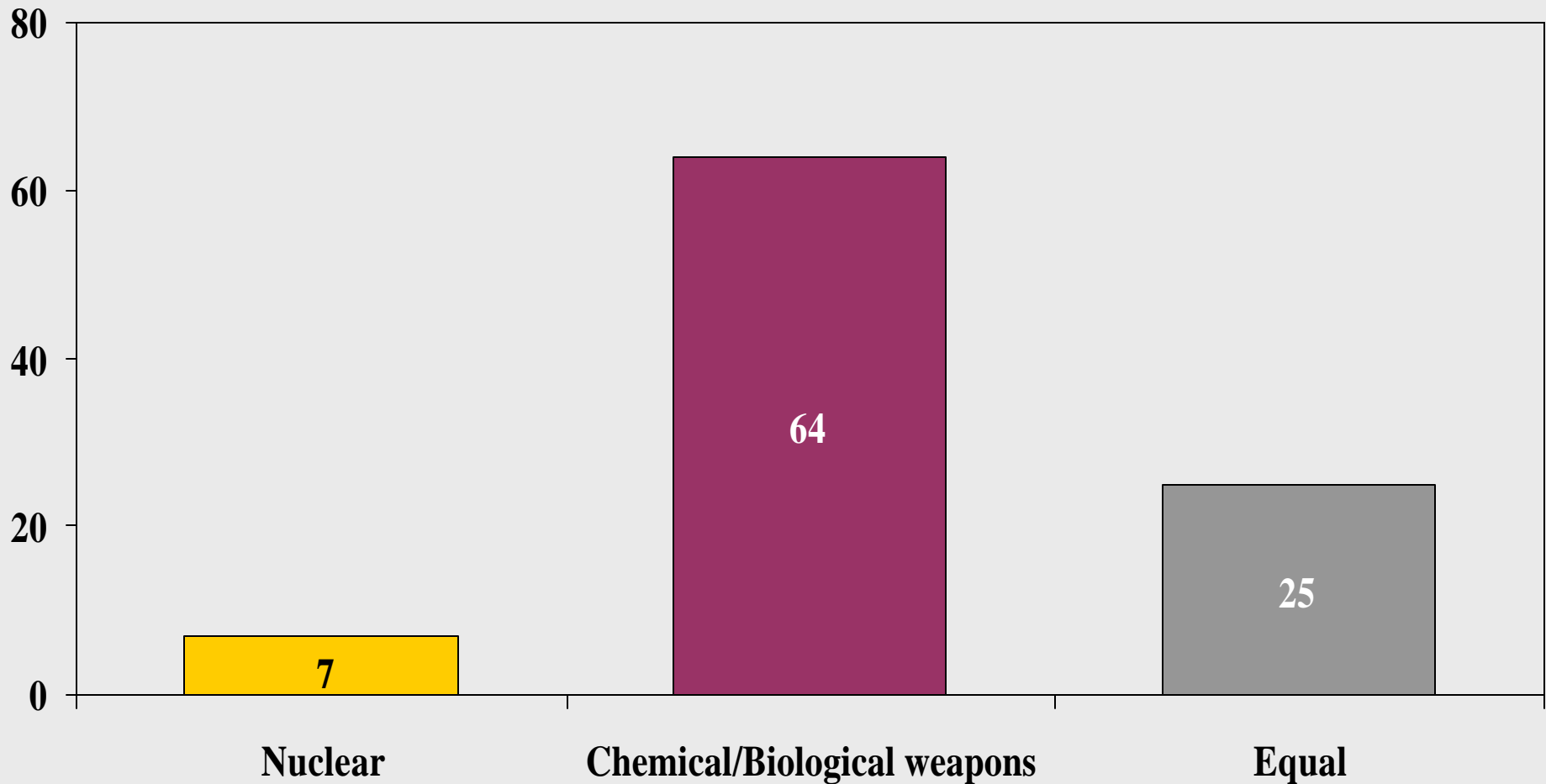
## Serious Threat



*“Now, I am going to read you a list of potential threats to the people of the United States. For each one, please tell me whether it poses a serious threat, a moderate threat, a minor threat, or no threat at all to the people of the United States.”*



# Nuclear vs. Chemical and Biological Weapons



*“Which do you think presents more of a real danger right now? Nuclear weapons or chemical and biological weapons?”*

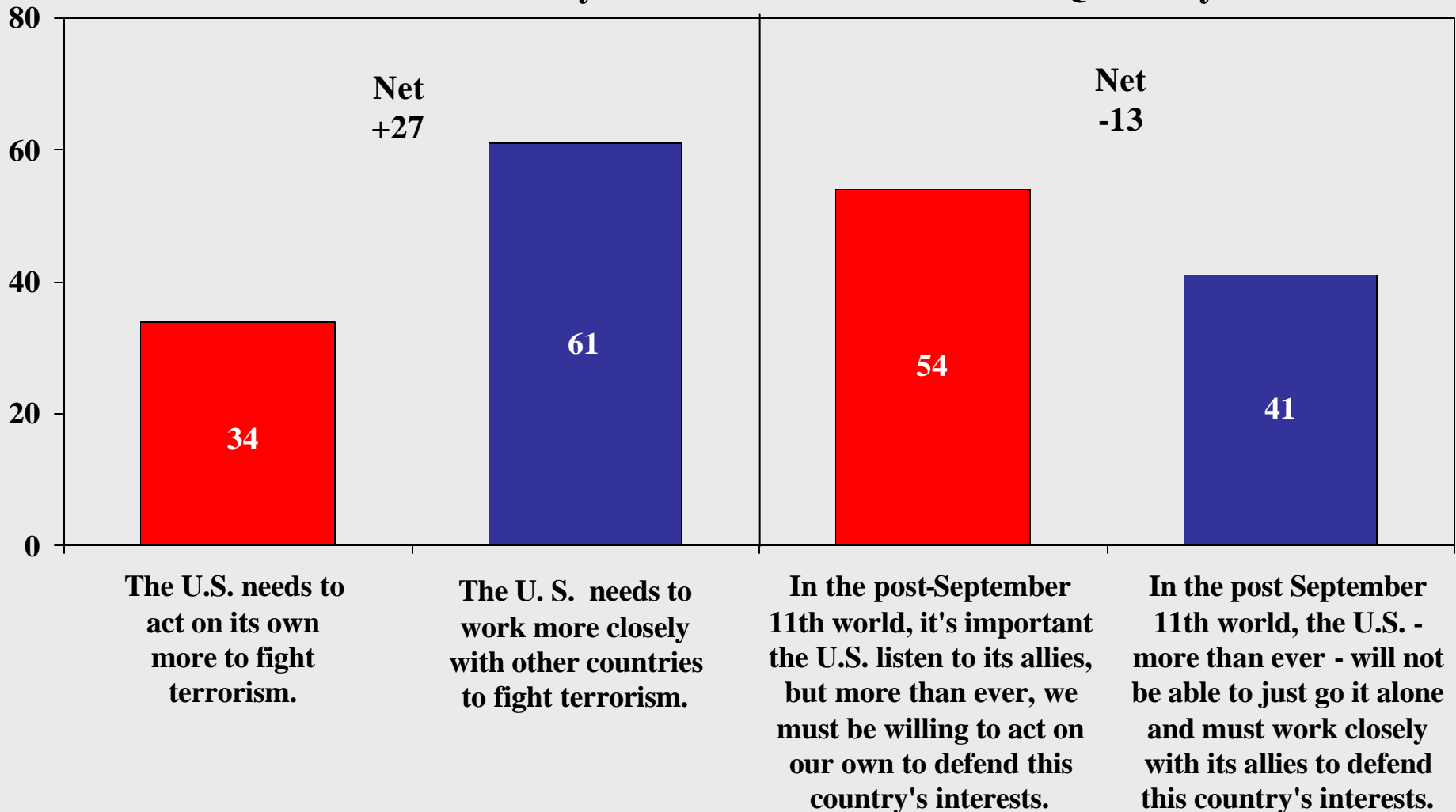


# Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism

The importance of appearing open to multilateralism

CCR and GMF Study\*

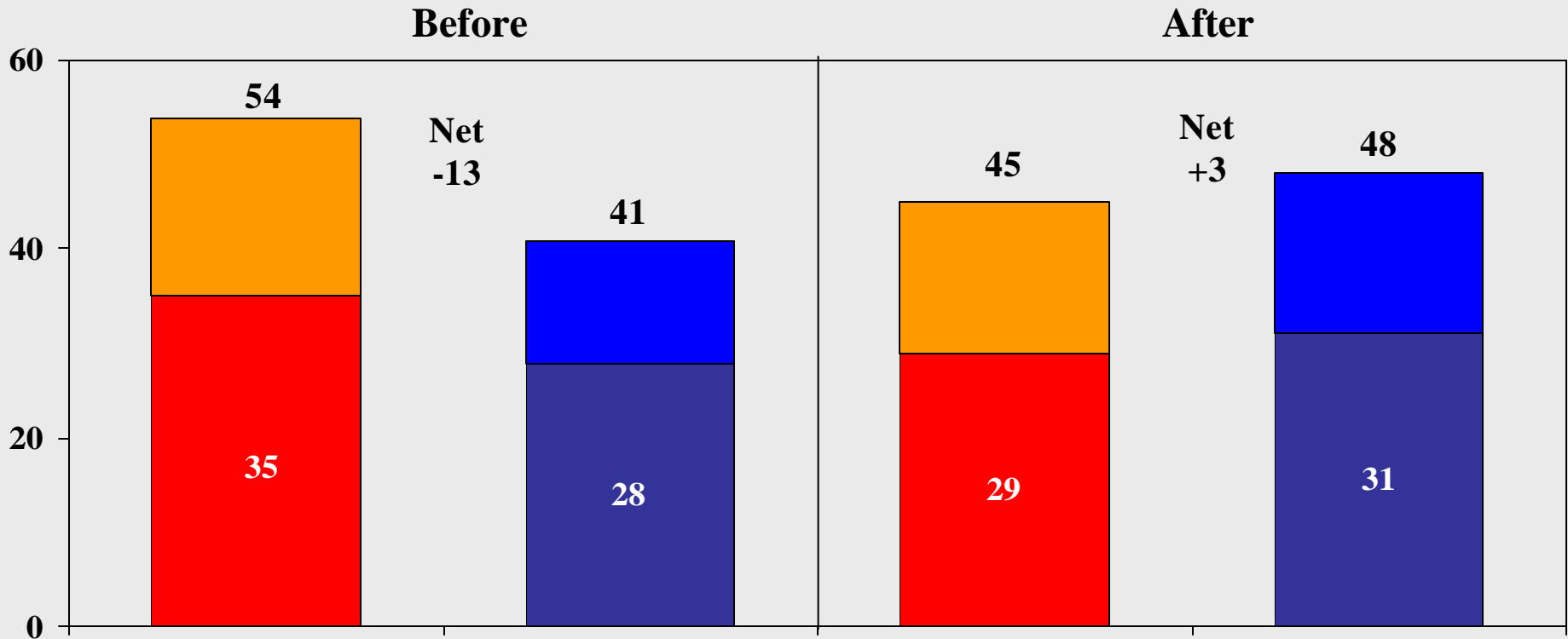
GQR Study





# Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism

## Potential for progress

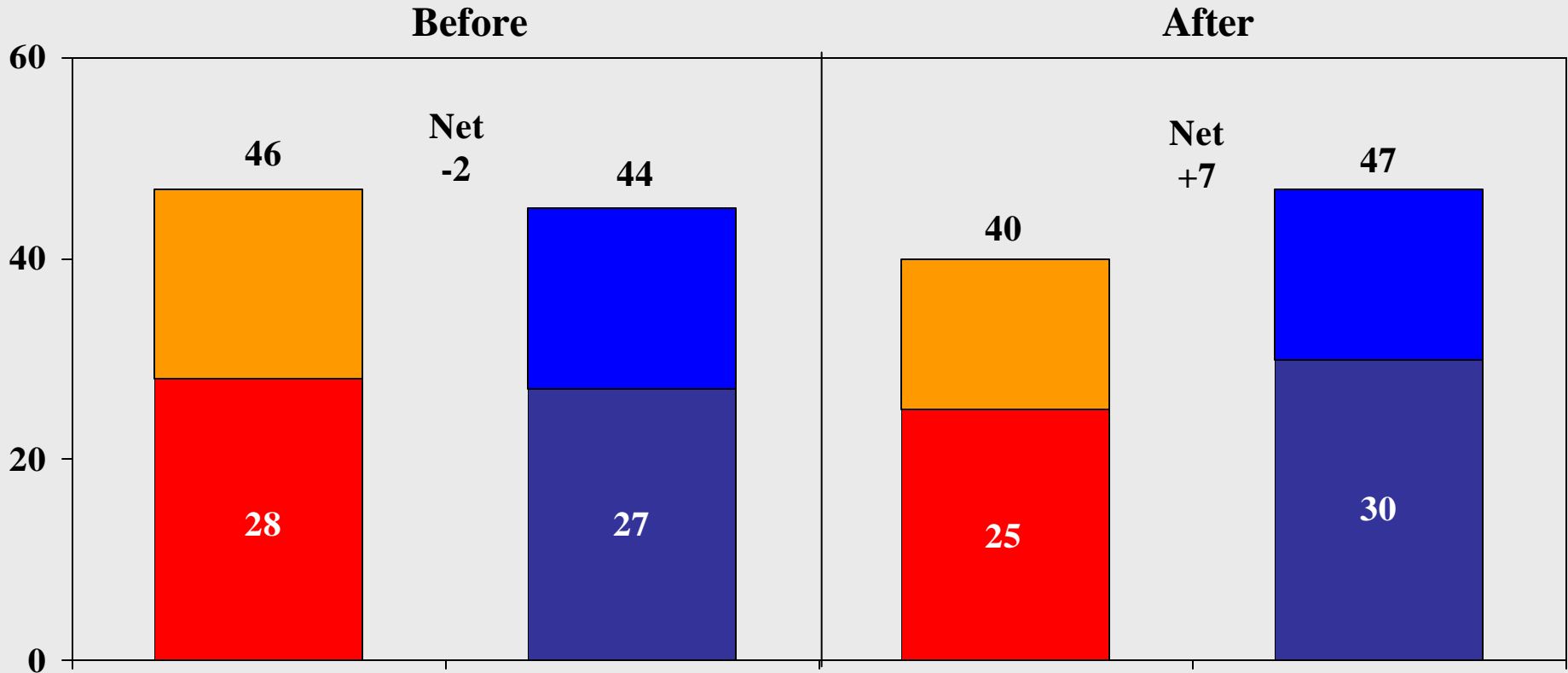


- In the post September 11th world, the U.S. - more than ever - will not be able to just go it alone and must work closely with its allies to defend this country's interests.
- In the post-September 11th world, it's important the U.S. listen to its allies, but more than ever, we must be willing to act on our own to defend this country's interests.

*“Now let me read you some short statements about U.S. foreign policy and security issues.  
Please tell me which statement comes closer to your own view.”*



# Pre-Emptive Strikes



- For the U.S. to strike first at other nations is a dangerous concept that will only lead to greater instability in the world and more attacks against the U.S.
- It is important for the U.S. to strike first at hostile nations before they strike us.



# Where Do We Go From Here?

- *Coalitions' issues at the top of priorities*
  - See them as part of global war on terrorism
- *However, numerous obstacles exist*
  - Iraq
  - Resistance to treaties
  - Lack of public resistance against Bush
- *About actions, not values*
  - It's about making Americans more secure.
- *Go broad, not narrow*
  - Both on the front line and on homeland security
  - Chemical/biological in addition to nuclear
  - Don't get mired in Cold War-era framing
- *Keep it clear and concise*
- *Make sure your goals are evident*