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Americans Broadly Disapprove of U.S. Military Action in Iran

Wide partisan gap in expectations for how long the conflict will last

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About this research

This Pew Research Center analysis examines Americans' views of the U.S. military action against Iran, which began in February 2026.

Why did we do this?

Pew Research Center conducts research to help the public, media and decision-makers understand important topics. We have studied Americans' views of politics and major policy issues, including the use of U.S. military force, for decades.

[Learn more](#) about Pew Research Center.

How did we do this?

We surveyed 3,524 U.S. adults from March 16 to 22, 2026. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel. The survey represents the views of the full U.S. adult population.

Here are the [survey questions used for this analysis](#), the [detailed responses](#) and the [survey methodology](#).

Americans Broadly Disapprove of U.S. Military Action in Iran

Wide partisan gap in expectations for how long the conflict will last

Weeks into the U.S. military campaign against Iran, majorities of Americans say striking that country was the wrong decision and disapprove of President Donald Trump's handling of the conflict.

About six-in-ten Americans (61%) disapprove of Trump's handling of the conflict, while 37% approve.

The new Pew Research Center survey of 3,524 U.S. adults, conducted March 16-22, also finds a similar balance of opinion on whether the initial decision to use military force was right (38%) or wrong (59%).

And by nearly two-to-one, more say the military action is not going well (45%) than say it is going extremely or very well (25%).

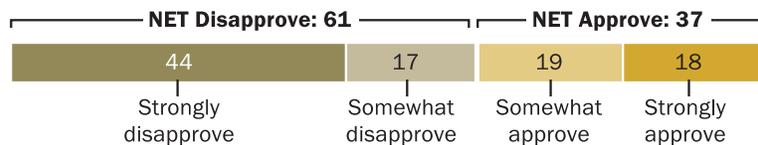
But there are stark partisan differences in these views:

Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents overwhelmingly disapprove of Trump's handling of the conflict (90%) and say the U.S. made the wrong decision in striking Iran (88%).

In contrast, about seven-in-ten Republicans and Republican leaners approve of how Trump is handling the conflict (69%) and think the U.S. made the right decision (71%).

About 6 in 10 disapprove of Trump's handling of Iran conflict; as many say decision to use force was wrong

% who ___ of how Donald Trump is handling the U.S. military action against Iran



% who say the U.S. made the ___ decision in using military force in Iran



% who say the U.S. military action against Iran is going ...



Note: No answer responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

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Still, sizable shares of Republicans take the opposing views.

Republican-leaning independents, in particular, are divided. For instance, roughly half (52%) approve of Trump's handling of the conflict, while 45% disapprove.

How long do Americans think the war with Iran will last?

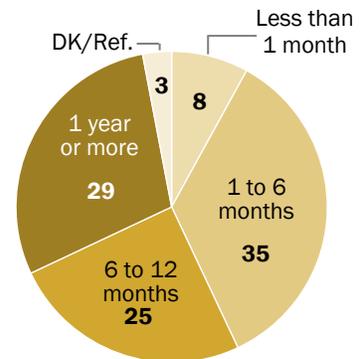
A narrow majority of Americans (54%) believe the U.S. military action against Iran will continue for at least six more months, including 29% who think it will last a year or more.

Roughly a third (35%) expect the war to last another one to six months, while 8% say it will end in less than a month.

Most Republicans (58%) expect the war to end within the next six months. In contrast, 68% of Democrats think the war will continue for six months or more, including 40% who say it will still be going on a year from now.

About 3 in 10 Americans expect the war in Iran to last a year or more

How much longer do you think the U.S. military action against Iran will last? (%)



Note: No answer responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

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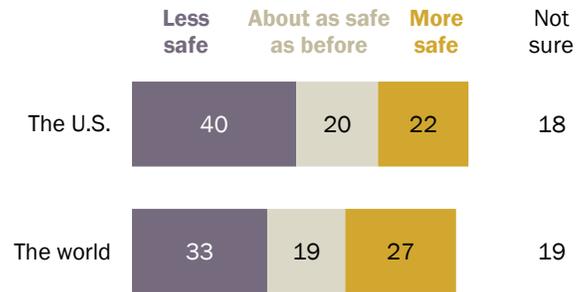
Will the war with Iran make the U.S. and the world safer or less safe?

By nearly two-to-one, more Americans say the military action against Iran will make the U.S. less safe in the long run (40%) than say it will make the country safer (22%). Two-in-ten say the military action will leave the U.S. about as safe as before, while 18% say they are not sure.

Americans are more evenly divided over the impact on safety around the world: 33% say the U.S. military action will make the world less safe, while 27% say it will make the world safer. About two-in-ten (19%) say it will make no difference, and an identical share are not sure (19%).

On balance, more Americans say U.S. action against Iran make the country, and the world, less safe

% who say U.S. military action against Iran will make ...



Note: No answer responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

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Trump's handling of the conflict with Iran

In addition to the overall wide partisan divide over Trump's handling of the conflict, there are sizable gaps *inside* the Republican coalition.

Republican identifiers vs. leaners

Among those who consider themselves Republicans, 79% say they approve of how Trump is handling the conflict.

In contrast, about half of Republican-leaning independents (52%) say the same.

Younger vs. older Republicans

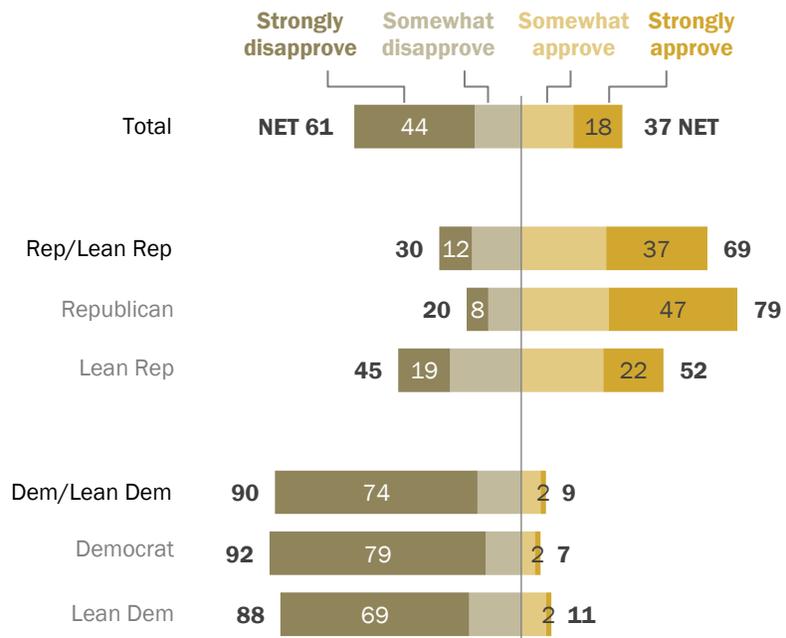
There are also wide age gaps among Republicans:

- 84% of Republicans 65 and older and 79% of those 50 to 64 approve of how Trump is handling the conflict.
- Smaller shares of younger Republicans – 49% of those 18 to 29 and 60% of those 30 to 49 – say the same.

By comparison, 90% of Democrats and Democratic leaners *disapprove* of Trump's handling of the conflict. These views are largely consistent across both leaners and partisans, as well as across age groups.

Majority of Americans disapprove of how Trump is handling Iran conflict

% who say they ___ of how Donald Trump is handling the U.S. military action against Iran



Note: No answer responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

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Partisan views of the decision to use military force in Iran – and how the conflict is going

The decision to use force in Iran

Similar to approval of Trump’s handling of the conflict, Democrats overwhelmingly say the U.S. made the wrong decision to use military force in Iran (88%), while a narrower majority of Republicans (71%) say the decision was the correct one.

Among Republicans ages 50 and older, 85% say the U.S. made the right decision in striking Iran. By comparison, a smaller majority (58%) of Republicans 18 to 49 say this.

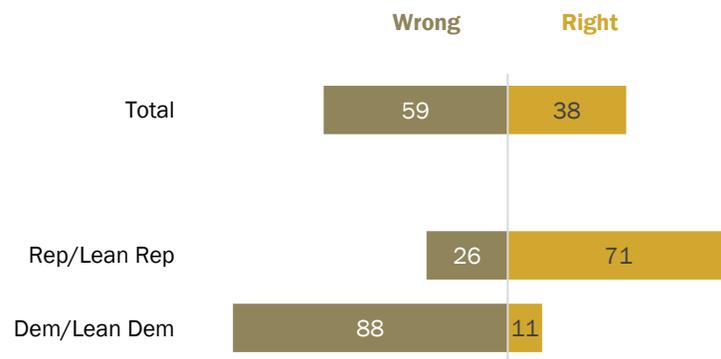
How the conflict is going

Entering the conflict’s fourth week, Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to say it is going well:

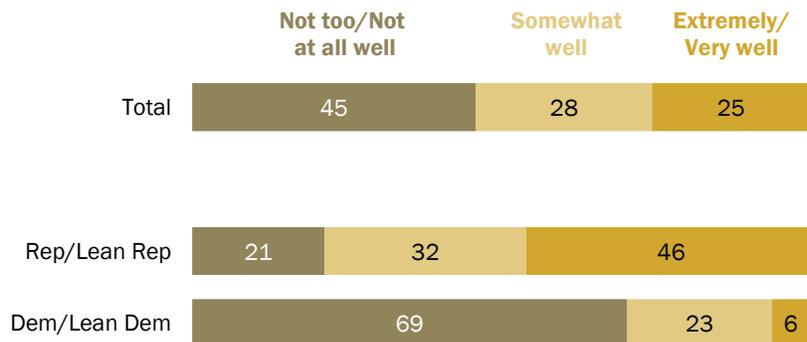
- 46% of Republicans and Republican leaners say it is going extremely or very well, compared with just 6% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.
- 69% of Democrats say the conflict is not going too well or not going well at all, and 21% of Republicans say the same.

Wide partisan divides over initial decision to use military force in Iran, and how the U.S. action is going

% who say the U.S. made the ___ decision in using military force in Iran



% who say the U.S. military action against Iran is going ...



Note: No answer responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 189 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center’s nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted from March 16 to March 22, 2026. A total of 3,524 panelists responded out of 4,053 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 87%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,524 respondents is plus or minus 1.8 percentage points.

The survey includes an [oversample](#) of non-Hispanic Asian adults in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of this smaller demographic subgroup. Oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population.

SSRS conducted the survey for Pew Research Center via online (n=3,383) and live telephone (n=141) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read “[About the American Trends Panel](#).”

Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.¹ Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.² Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an “oversample”)

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

² Email pewsurveys@pewresearch.org.

to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which non-Hispanic Asian adults were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$15 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was March 16 to March 22, 2026. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

For panelists who take surveys online:³ Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on March 16.⁴ Survey invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on

³ The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys.

⁴ Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

March 16. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on March 17.

**Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents,
ATP Wave 189**

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	March 16, 2026	March 17, 2026
First reminder	March 19, 2026	March 19, 2026
Final reminder	March 21, 2026	March 21, 2026

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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer: Prenotification postcards were mailed on March 13. Soft launch took place on March 16 and involved dialing until a total of nine interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, eight ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2024 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Race/Ethnicity x Gender	
Race/Ethnicity x Age	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2023 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Frequency of internet use	2025 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	
Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity	
Party affiliation x Age	
Validated 2024 presidential election turnout and vote choice	Candidate vote share is based on official results from the Federal Election Commission. Turnout is based on estimates from the Election Lab at the University of Florida. The size of the voting-eligible population is based on the 2023 ACS.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. For weighting to the 2024 presidential election results, panelists are considered validated voters if their self-report of having voted was confirmed after matching to a national voter registry.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 189

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	3,524		1.8 percentage points
Half form	At least 1,753		2.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,567	46%	2.7 percentage points
Half form	At least 767		3.8 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,800	48%	2.6 percentage points
Half form	At least 877		3.7 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Asian adults. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 189

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	3,524
Logged in (web) / Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	88
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	23
Never logged on (web) / Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	410
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other non-interview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	8
Total panelists sampled for the survey		4,053
Completed interviews	I	3,524
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	111
Non-contact	NC	410
Other	O	8
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		4,053
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		87%

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Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 189

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	74%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 189	40%
Response rate to Wave 189 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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**2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 189 MARCH SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
March 16-22, 2026
N=3,524**

Note: This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

* "No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say that they don't know how to answer. In cases where "not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "no answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

MIL_IRAN_FOLL

How closely have you been following news about the U.S. military action against Iran?
**[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 IN SAME ORDER AS ROTATION_GEN,
HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,
2026

15	Extremely closely
21	Very closely
35	Somewhat closely
20	Not too closely
8	Not at all closely
*	No answer*

ASK ALL:

MIL_IRAN_APP

Do you approve or disapprove of how Donald Trump is handling the U.S. military action against Iran? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1, HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,
2026

18	Strongly approve
19	Somewhat approve
17	Somewhat disapprove
44	Strongly disapprove
2	No answer*

ASK FORM 1 [N=1,771]:

MIL_IRAN_RGHTWRNG Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force in Iran? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,

2026

38	Right decision
59	Wrong decision
3	No answer*

ASK FORM 2 [N=1,753]:

MIL_IRAN_WELL How well do you think the U.S. military action against Iran is going? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 IN SAME ORDER AS ROTATION_GEN, HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,

2026

11	Extremely well
14	Very well
28	Somewhat well
27	Not too well
18	Not at all well
2	No answer*

ASK ALL:

MIL_IRAN_LAST Just your best guess, how much longer do you think the U.S. military action against Iran will last? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1, HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,

2026

8	Less than a month
35	More than a month, but no more than six months
25	More than six months, but no more than a year
29	More than a year
3	No answer*

ASK FORM 1 [N=1,771]:

IRAN_SAFE_WRLD In the long run, do you think U.S. military action against Iran will make the world... **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 4, AND 99 LAST]**

Mar 16-22,

2026

27	More safe
33	Less safe
19	About as safe as before
19	Not sure
1	No answer*

ASK FORM 2 [N=1,753]:

IRAN_SAFE_US In the long run, do you think U.S. military action against Iran will make the U.S...
[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 4, AND 99 LAST]

Mar 16-22,
2026
 22 More safe
 40 Less safe
 20 About as safe as before

 18 Not sure
 1 No answer*

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3,4 OR REFUSED):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...⁵

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else	No answer*	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
	28	27	29	15	1	18	22

⁵ PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.