

strategic

# Living in an à la carte world: What European policymakers should learn from global public opinion



Presented by

**Timothy Garton Ash, Ivan Krastev,  
and Mark Leonard**

interdependence

## Based on ECFR public opinion polling:

- ✓ 10 countries outside Europe (China, India, Turkey, Russia, US, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Korea, Brazil)
- ✓ 11 countries in Europe (Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, UK).

In this presentation, “Europe” represents a simple average across these 11 countries, unless stated otherwise.

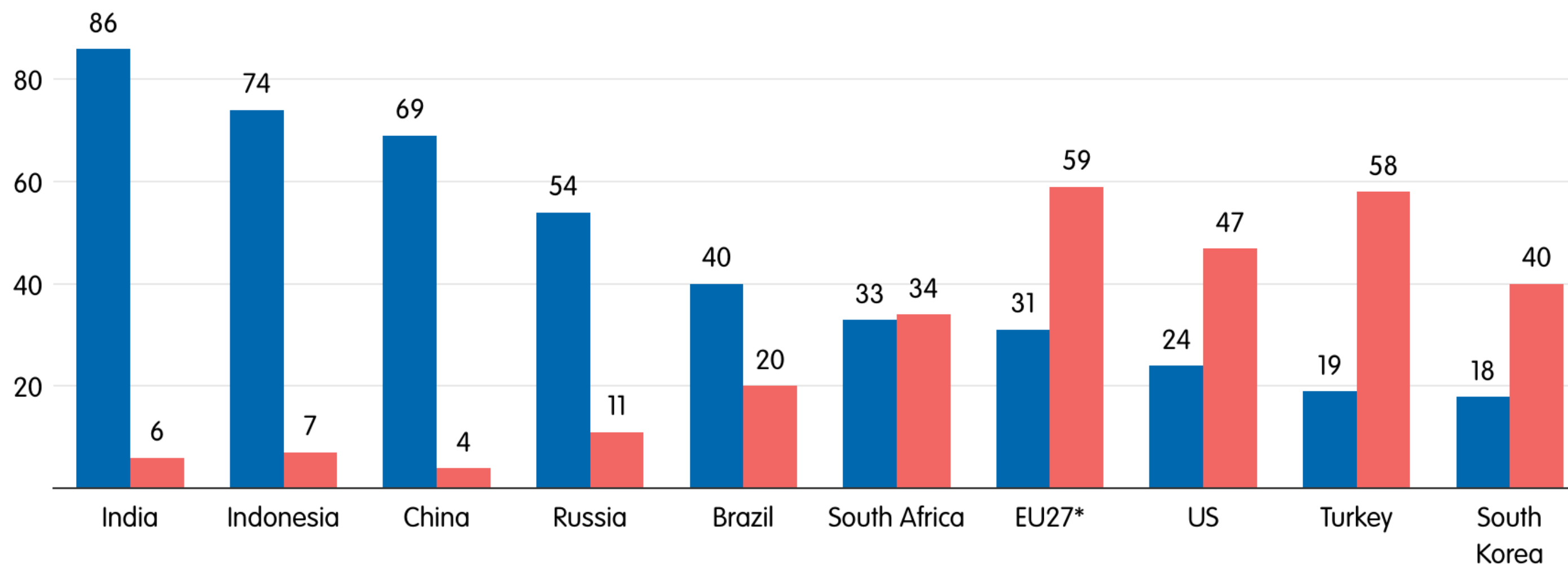
Survey conducted in **September and October 2023** by YouGov, Datapraxis and Norstat in Europe, and by Gallup International Association outside Europe.

Overall sample of **25,266** respondents

# 1. An à la carte world

# Europeans & Americans pessimistic about their future

In general, do you feel **optimistic** or **pessimistic** about your country's future? In per cent

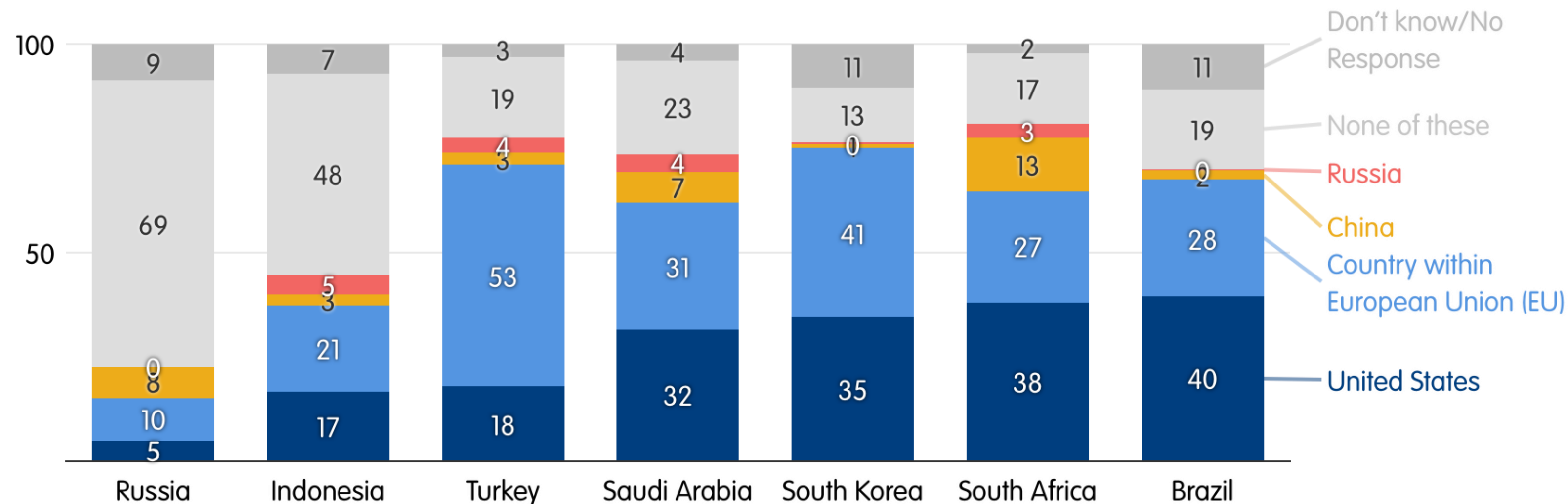


\*European results based on Eurobarometer's question "At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in your country?". Simple average for 27 EU members.



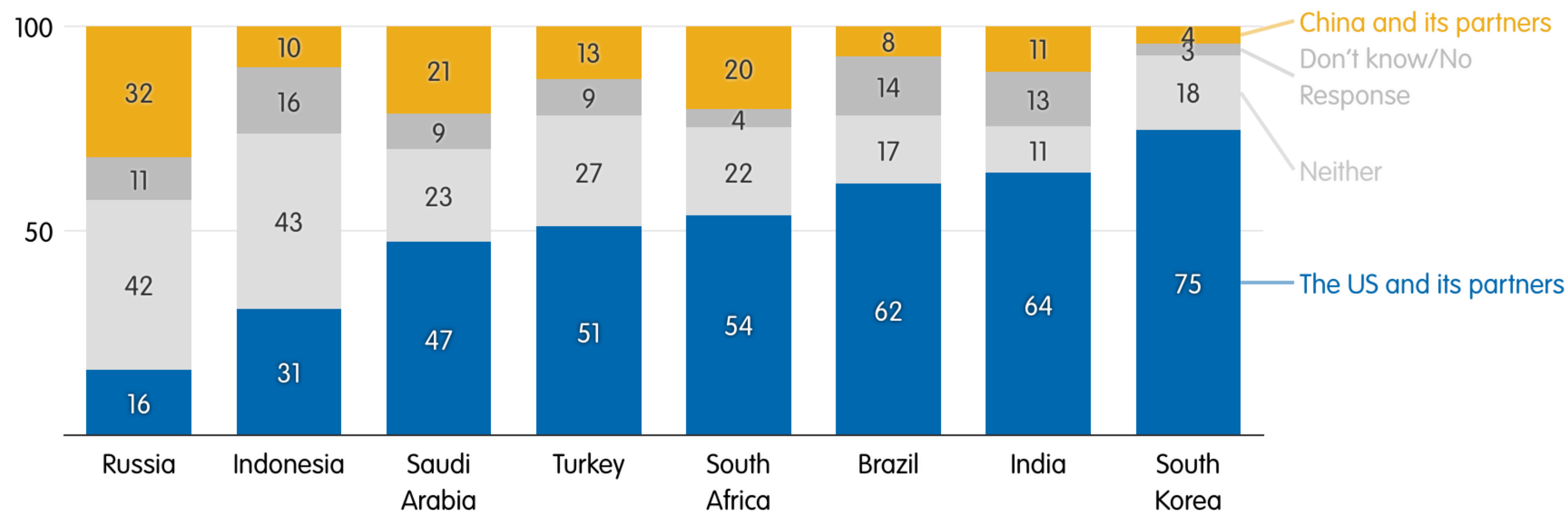
## But their soft power remains strong

If you were to move and start living outside your own country, which of the following countries would you choose? In per cent



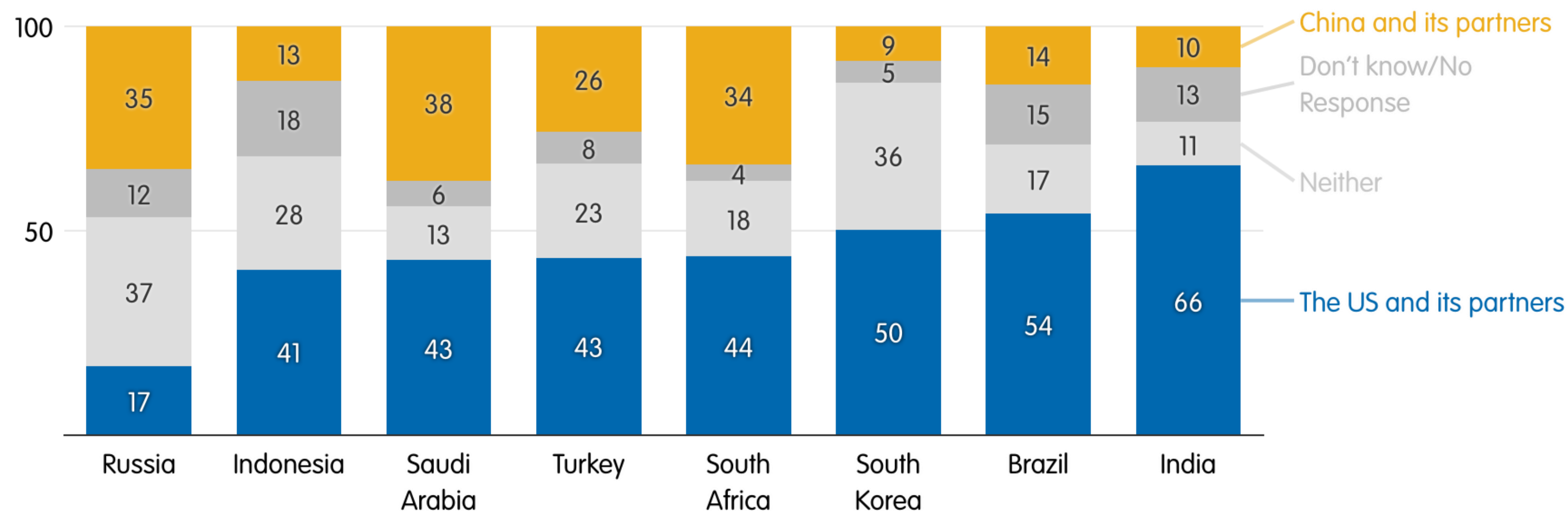
# Also when it comes to the values that they represent

On **human rights**, do you prefer your country to be closer to  
**the United States and its partners**, or **China and its partners**? In per cent



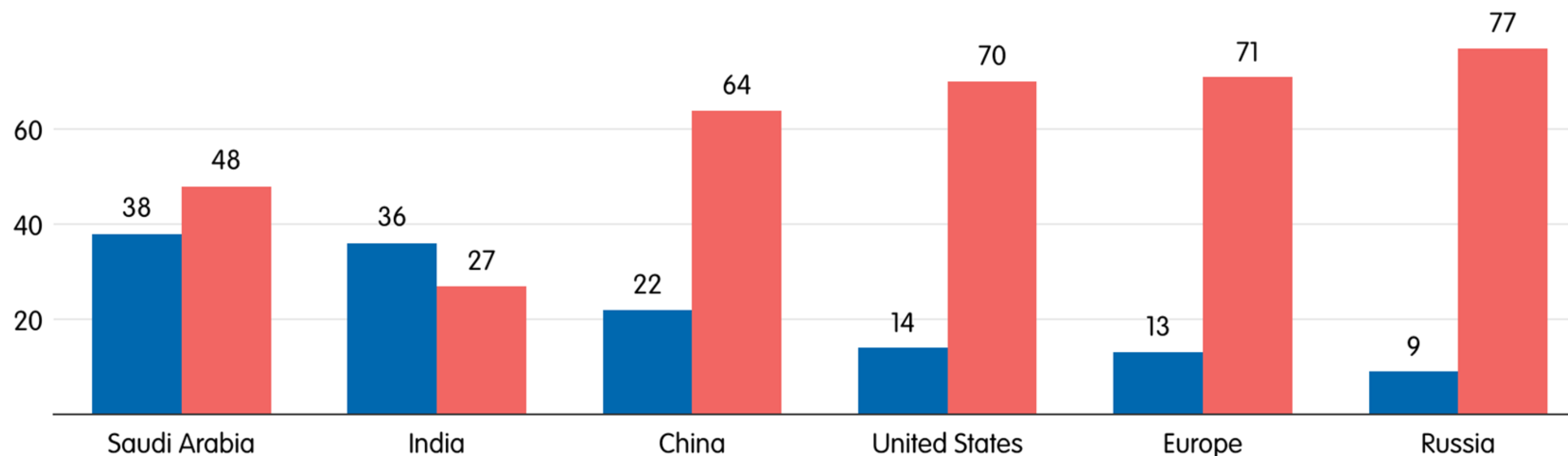
# Also when it comes to the values that they represent

On **control over Internet**, do you prefer your country to be closer to  
**the United States and its partners**, or **China and its partners**? In per cent



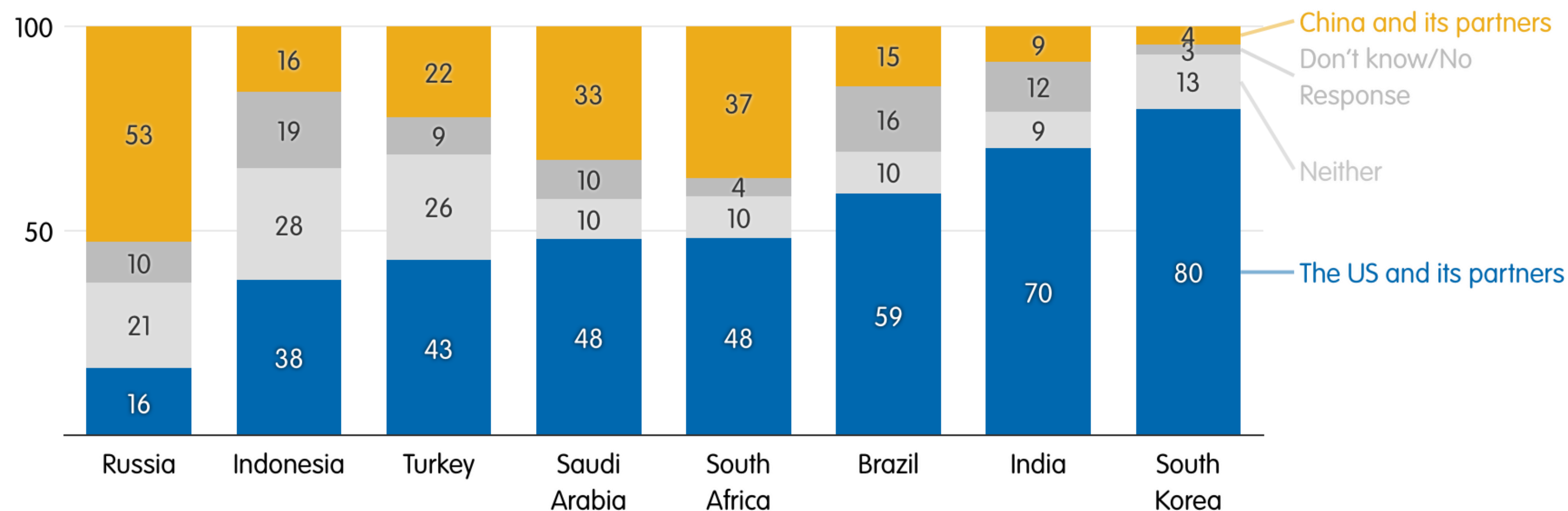
# Europe & Russia seen as representing distinct values

When it comes to its current political values, would you say that **Russia is** or **is not** a part of Europe? In per cent



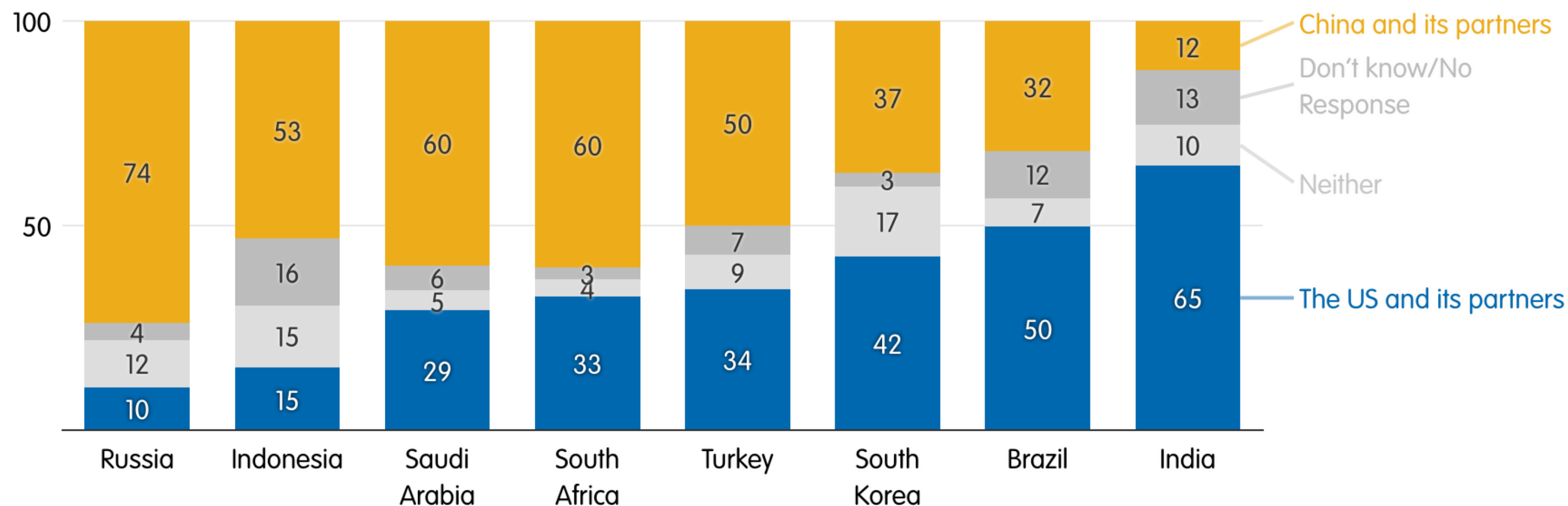
# The US's hard power is still a large draw

On **security cooperation**, do you prefer your country to be closer to  
**the United States and its partners**, or **China and its partners**? In per cent



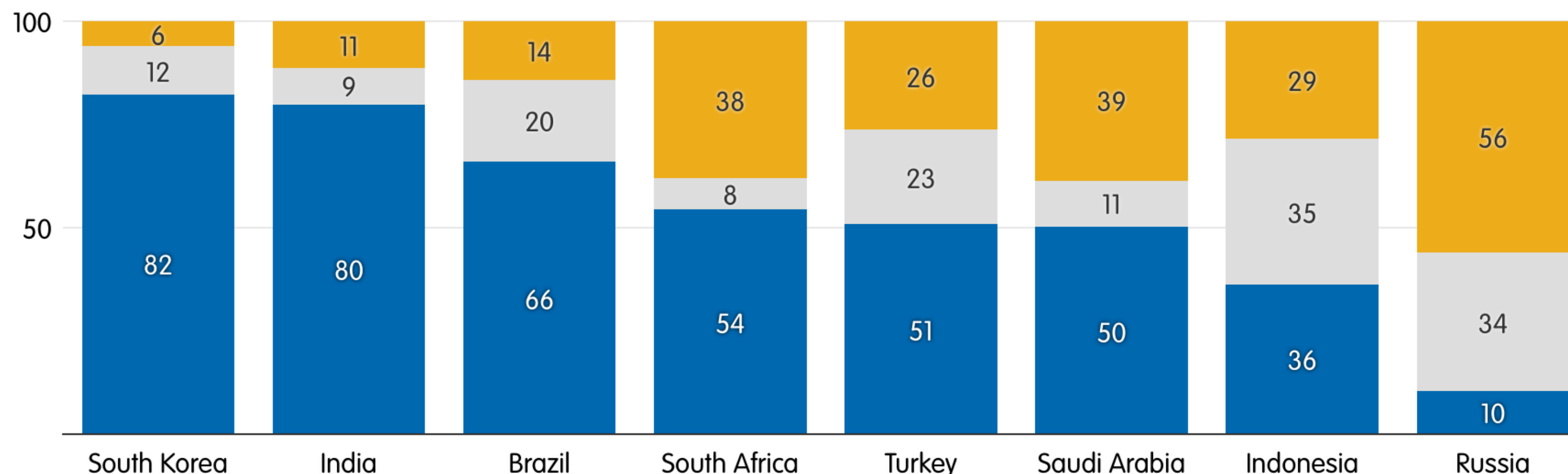
# China only pips the West on trade

On **trade**, do you prefer your country to be closer to  
**the United States and its partners**, or **China and its partners**? In per cent



## But if forced to choose, most would choose the West

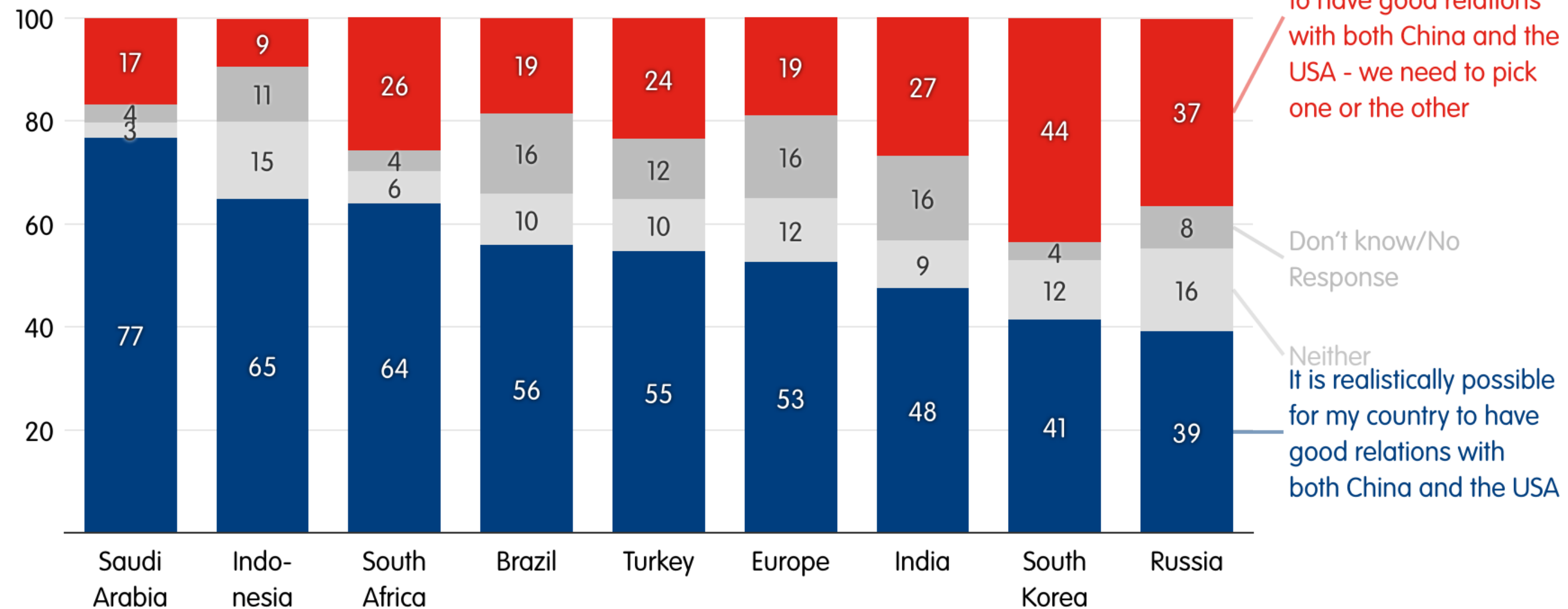
If your country was forced to choose between being part of an **American** or a **Chinese** bloc of countries, which would you prefer it to end up in? In per cent





# Still, most do not feel forced to choose at all

Which of the following best reflects your view? In per cent



It is not realistically possible for my country to have good relations with both China and the USA - we need to pick one or the other

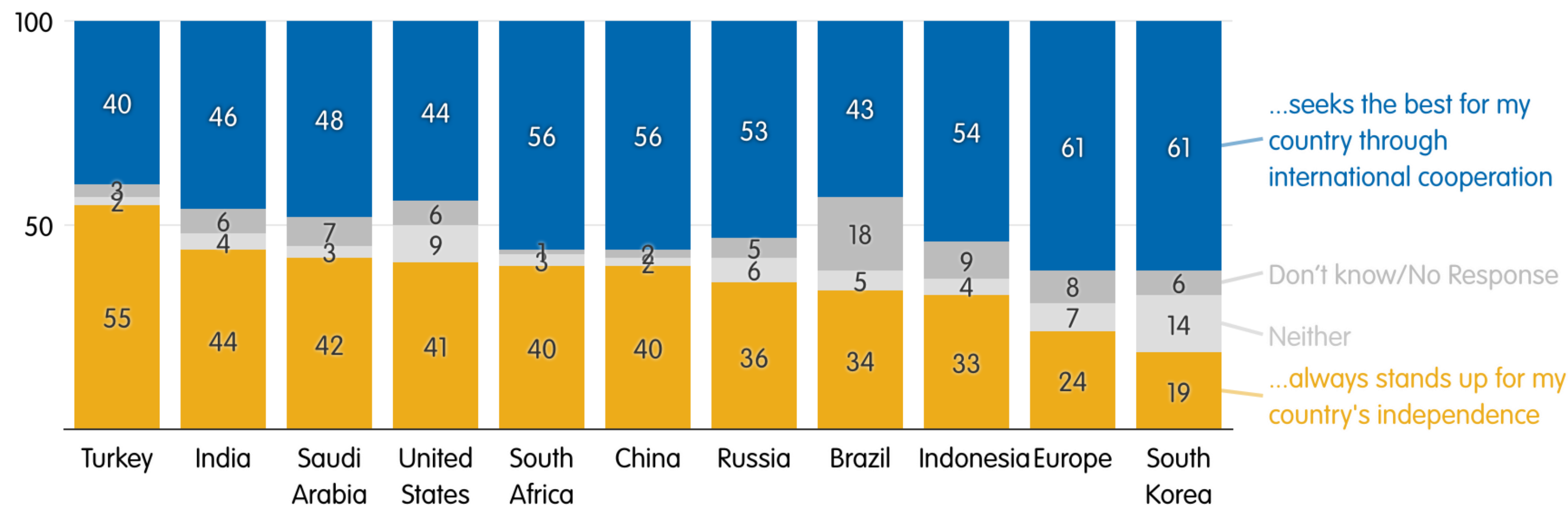
Don't know/No Response

Neither  
It is realistically possible for my country to have good relations with both China and the USA



# The problem is not an unwillingness to cooperate

A good leader... In per cent



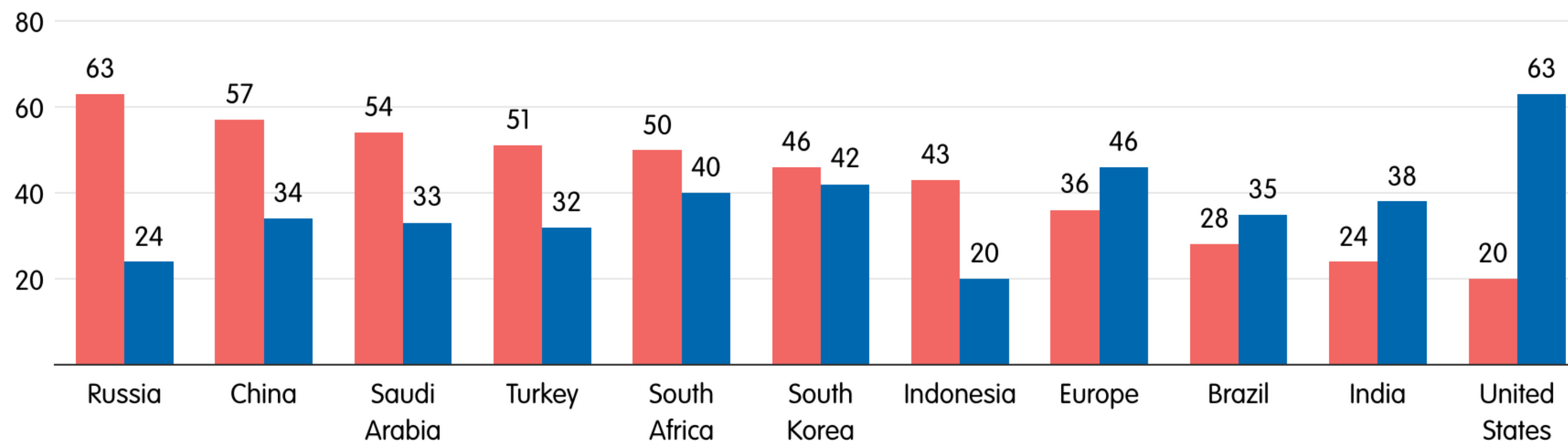
interdependence

# 2. *Multiple partnerships, multiple wars*

# War in Ukraine as a proxy war

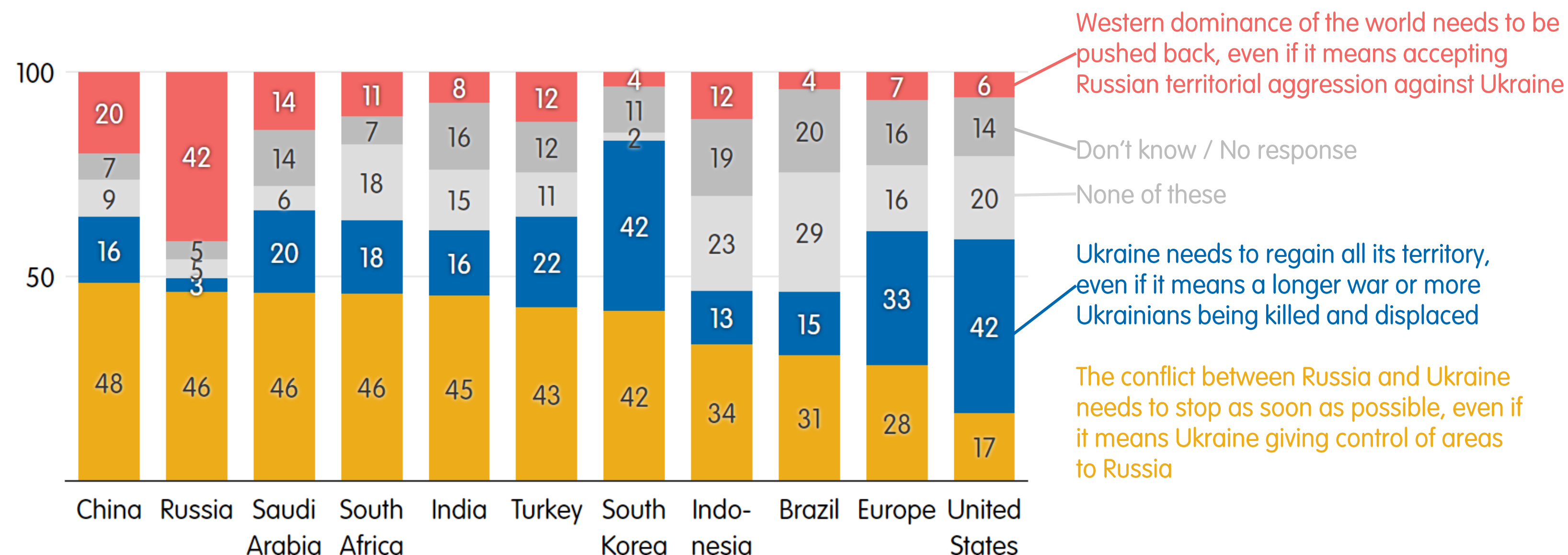
Are the United States **at war with Russia?** In per cent

■ Are at war with Russia ■ Are not at war with Russia



# World: disagreement on how this war should end

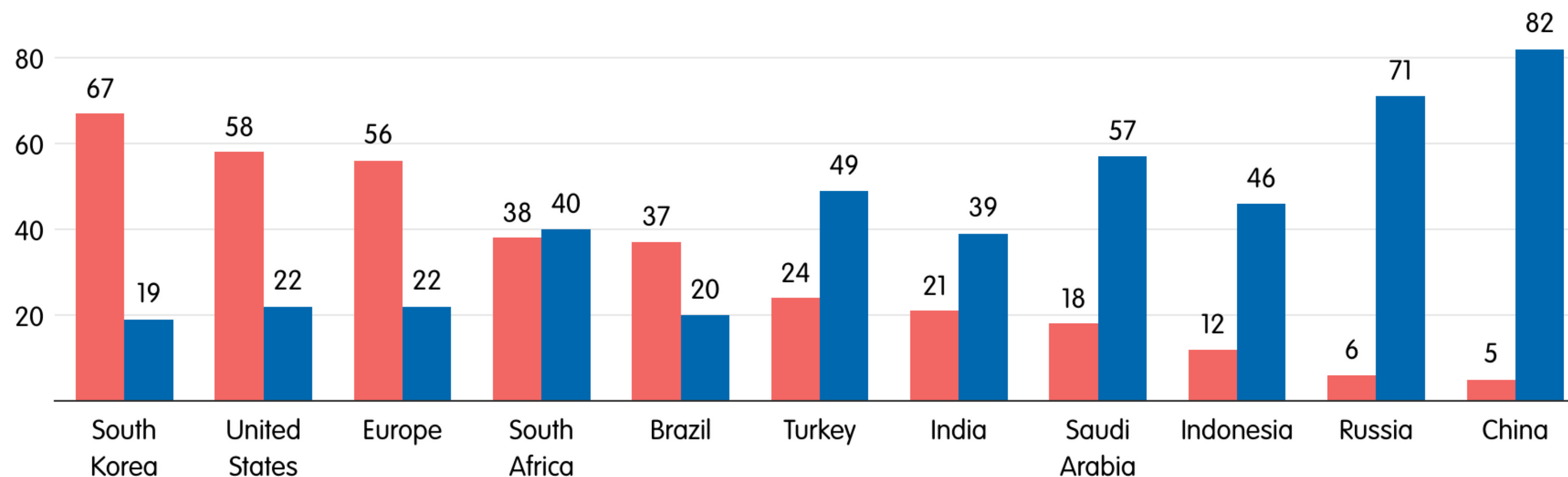
Which of the following best reflects your view? In per cent



# Disagreement on who is the main obstacle to peace

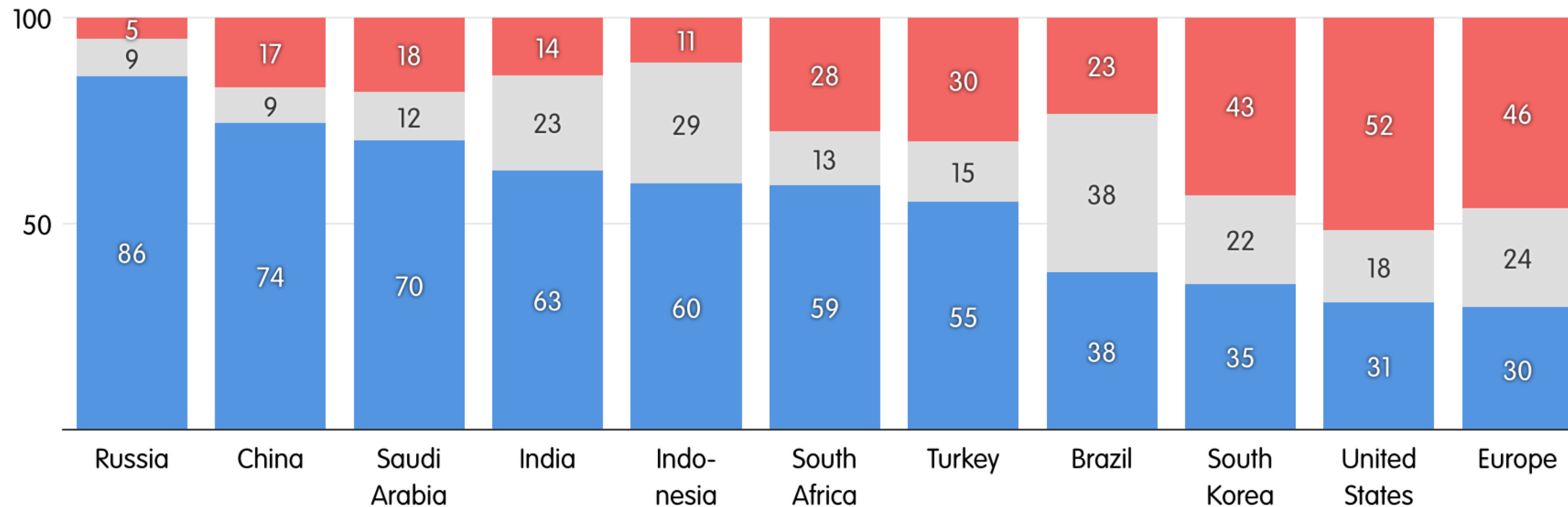
Which of the following is the biggest obstacle to peace between Russia and Ukraine? In per cent

■ Russia ■ Ukraine, EU or the US



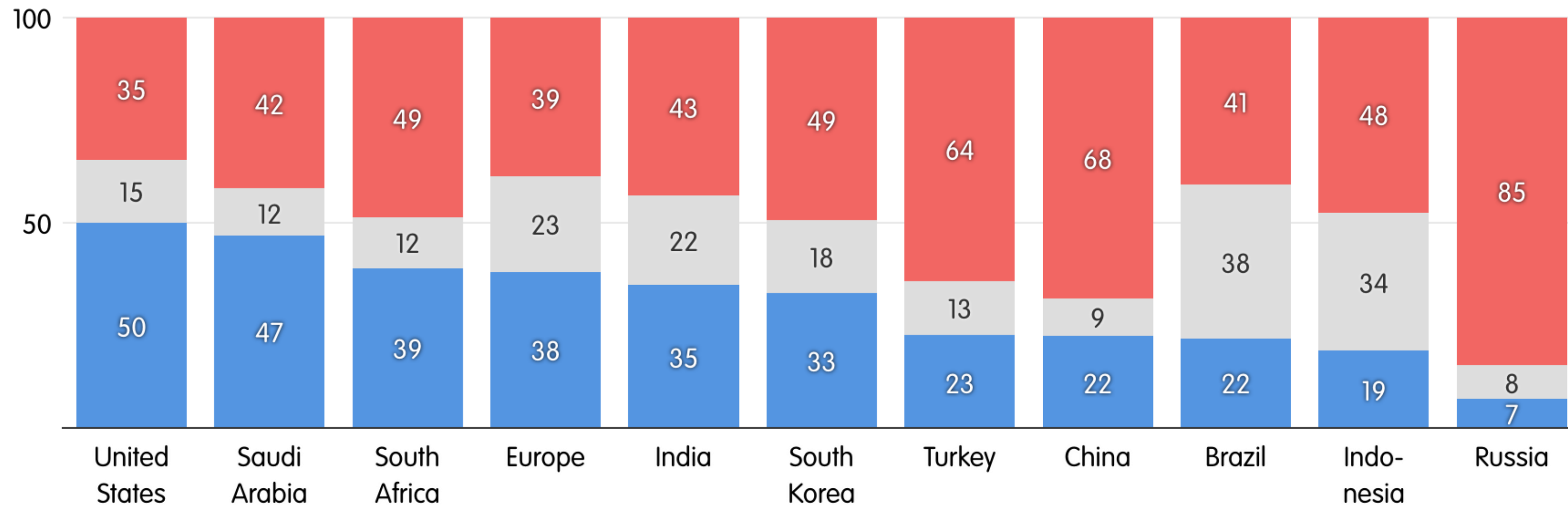
# Much of the world seeing Russia as a likely winner

How **likely** or **unlikely** it is that, within the next 5 years, **Russia** wins the war with Ukraine? In per cent



# Fewer seeing Ukraine as a likely winner

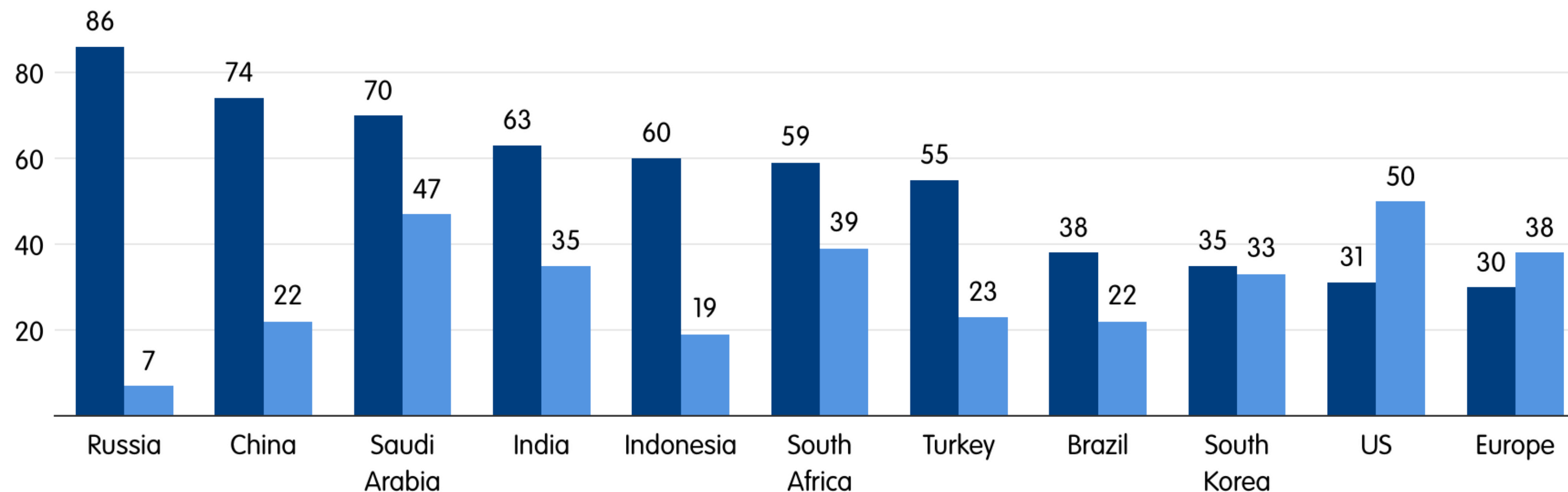
How **likely** or **unlikely** it is that, within the next 5 years, **Ukraine** wins the war with Russia? In per cent





# Fewer seeing Ukraine as a likely winner

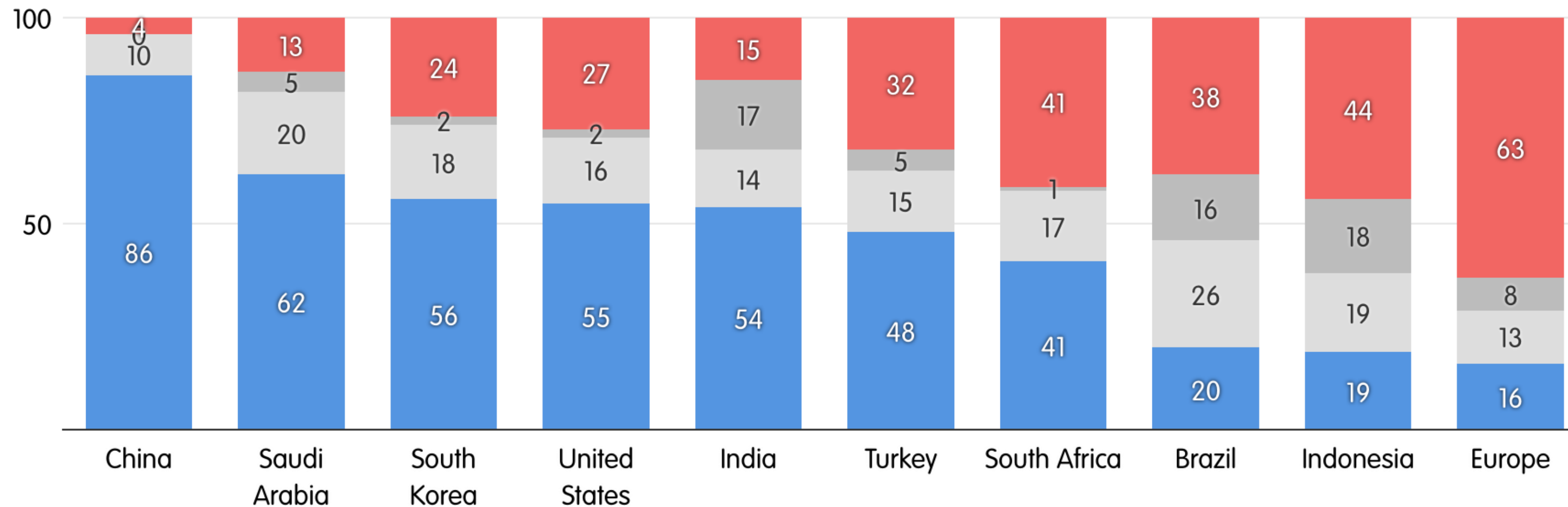
Is it likely that, within the next 5 years, **Russia** / **Ukraine** wins the war? In per cent





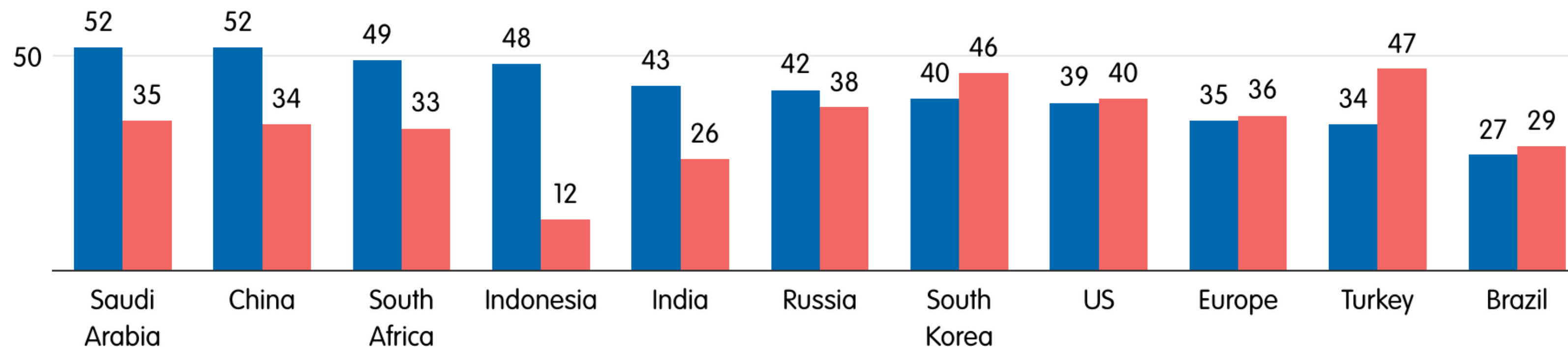
# Nuclear lessons from this war

To what extent do you **support** or **oppose** your country having access to nuclear weapons? In per cent



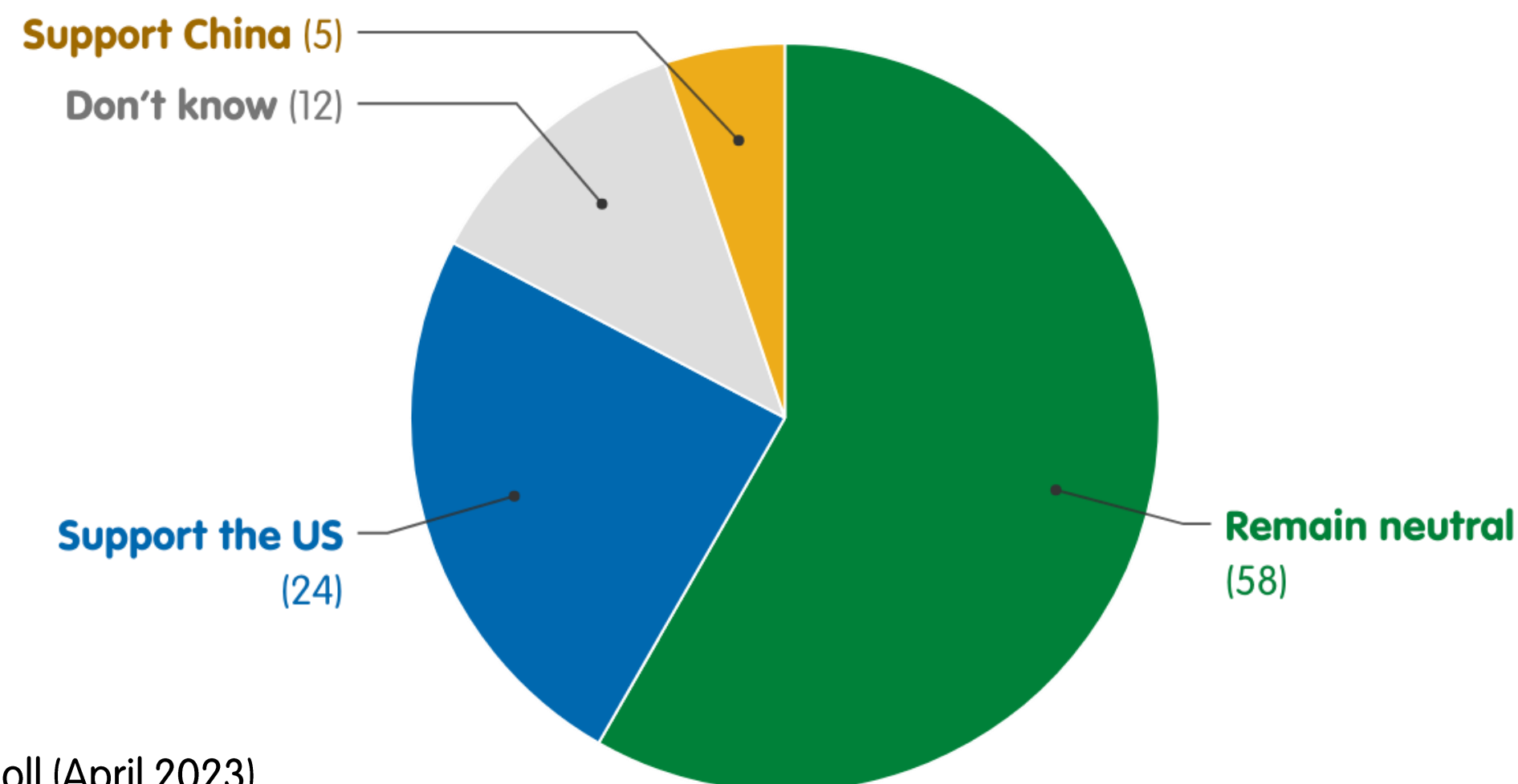
# Meanwhile, third war on the doorstep

How **likely** or **unlikely** it is that, within the next 5 years, the United States and China enter into a direct military confrontation over **Taiwan**? In per cent



# Limited European readiness to support Taiwan

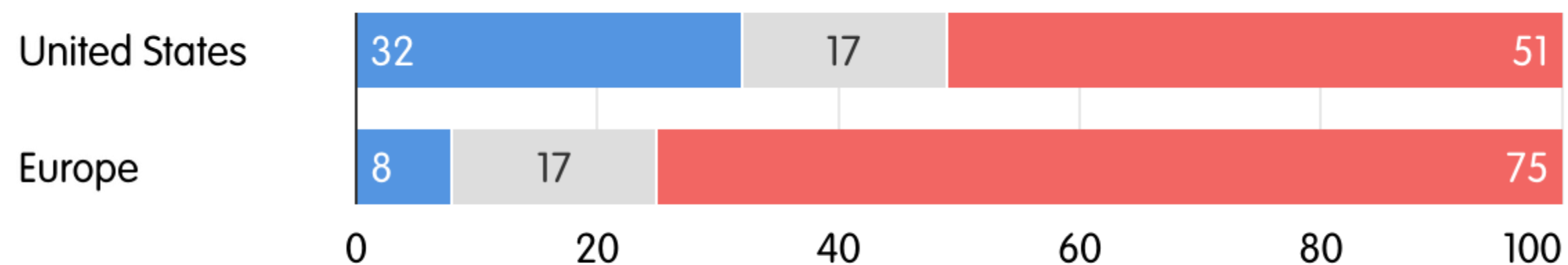
Europeans' views\* on how Europe should respond to a potential conflict between the US and China over Taiwan. In per cent



\*Based on previous ECFR poll (April 2023)

# Limited European readiness to support Taiwan

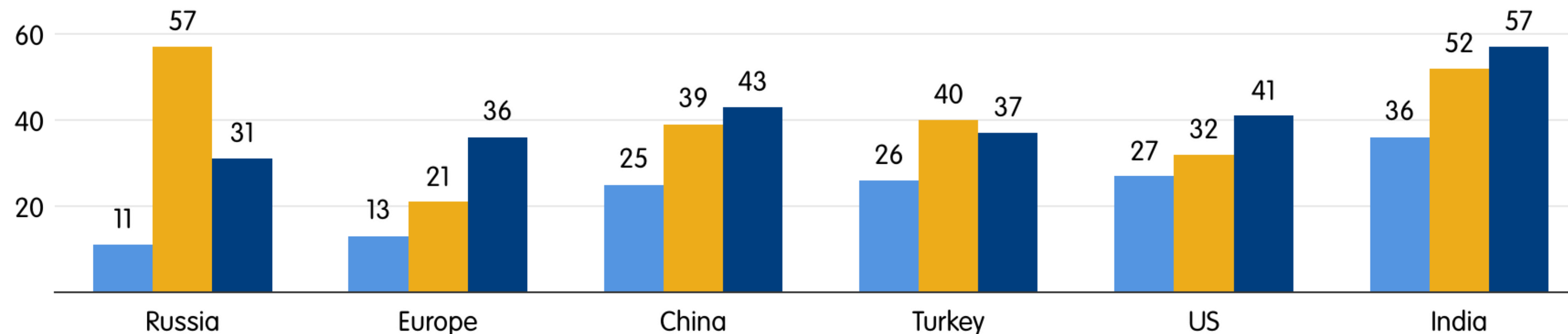
To what extent, if at all, would you **support** or **oppose** troops from your country fighting in a future war over Taiwan? In per cent



# 3. When soft power is not enough

# The EU's is rarely seen as "strong"

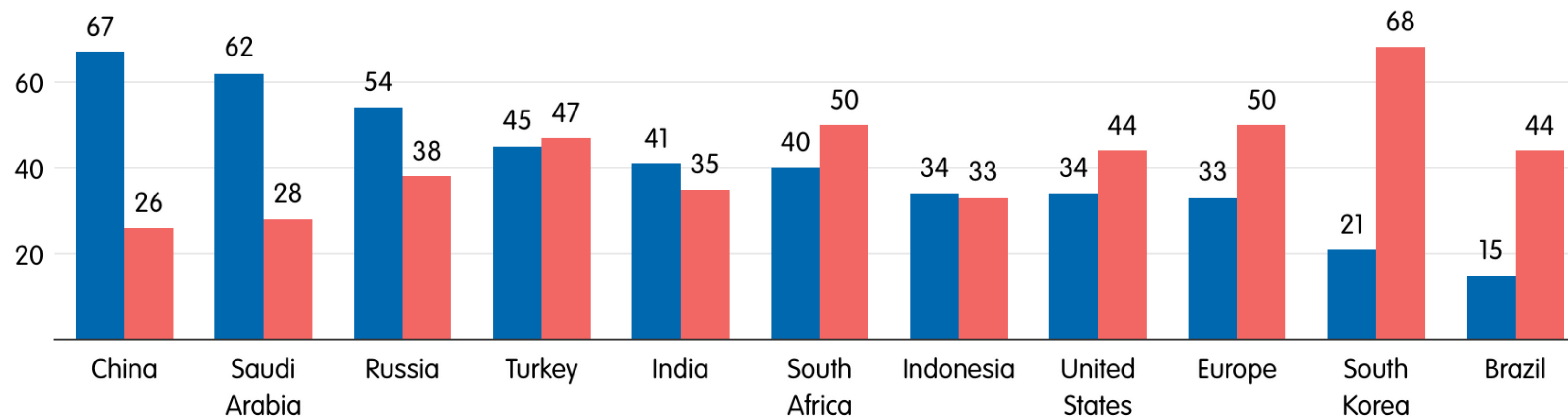
Which of the following words do you think best describe **the EU**, **China**, and **United States**?  
"Strong", in per cent\*



\* As one of 2 indications out of 11 available options. Based on previous ECFR poll (December 2022 / January 2023).

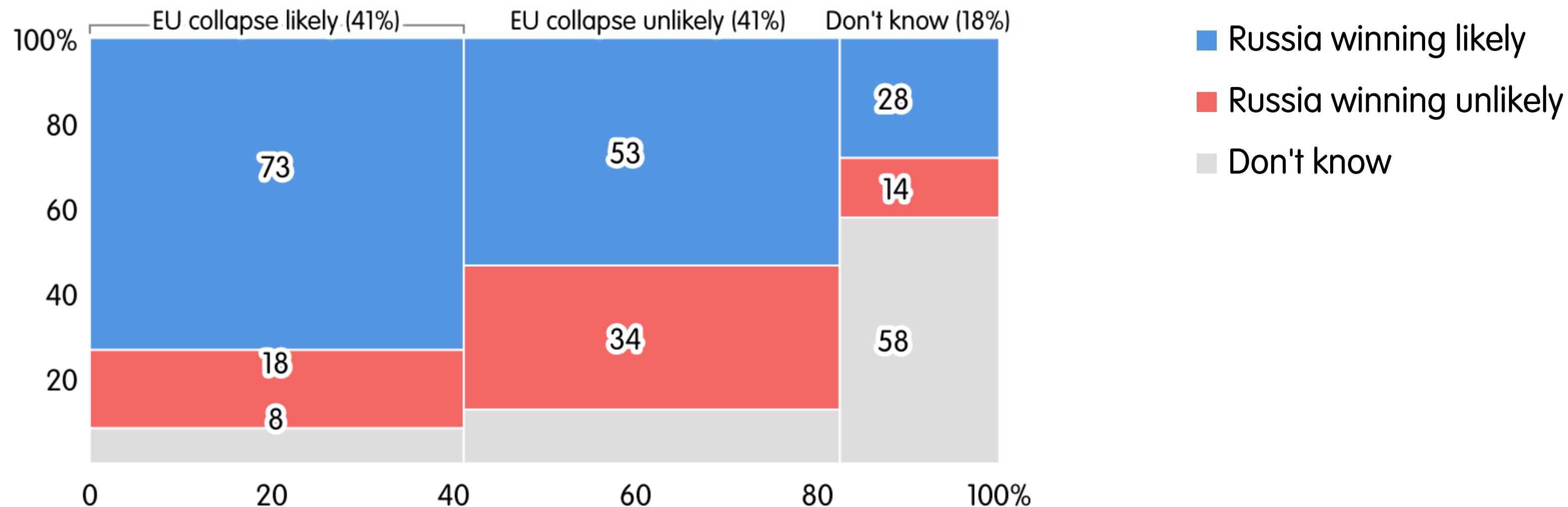
# The EU is seen as vulnerable to falling apart

Looking ahead, how **likely** or **unlikely** do you think it is that in the next twenty years **the European Union** will fall apart? In per cent



# The EU's credibility is at stake in Ukraine

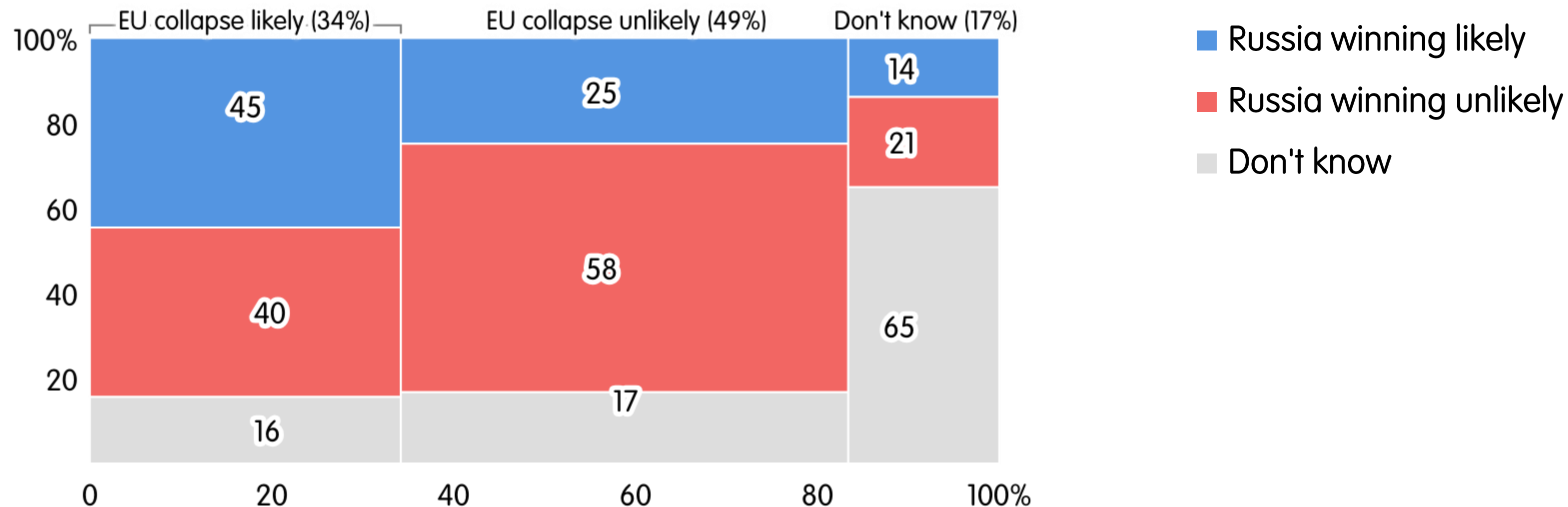
**Outside Europe:** perceived likelihood of Russia winning based on whether EU collapse seen as likely or not within the next two decades. In per cent





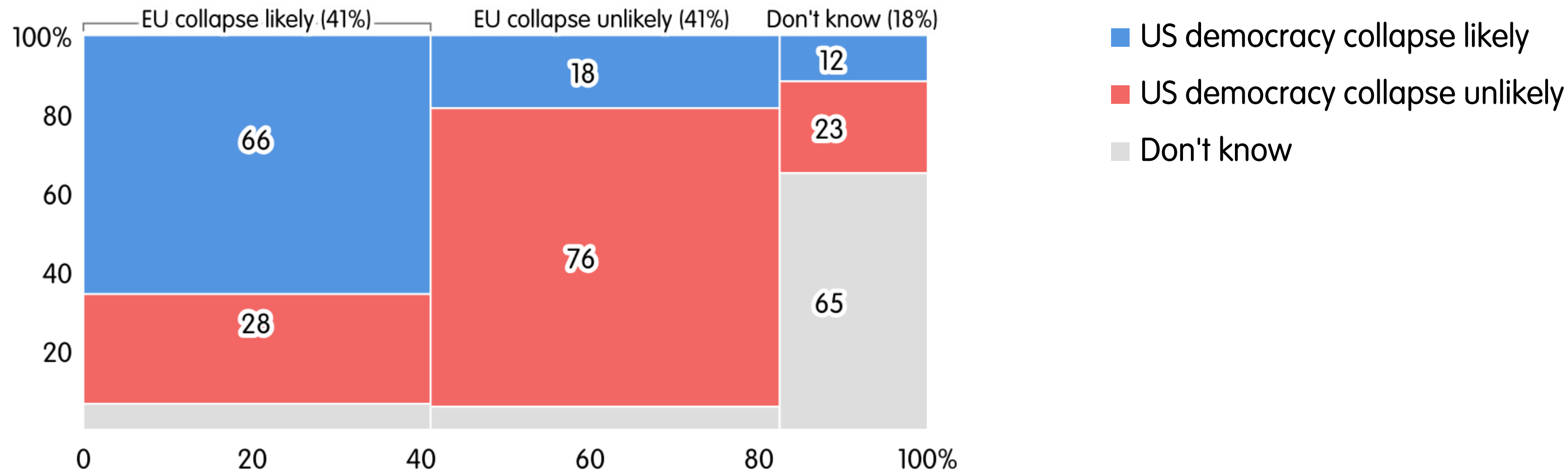
# The EU's credibility is at stake in Ukraine

**Inside Europe:** perceived likelihood of Russia winning based on whether EU collapse seen as likely or not within the next two decades. In per cent



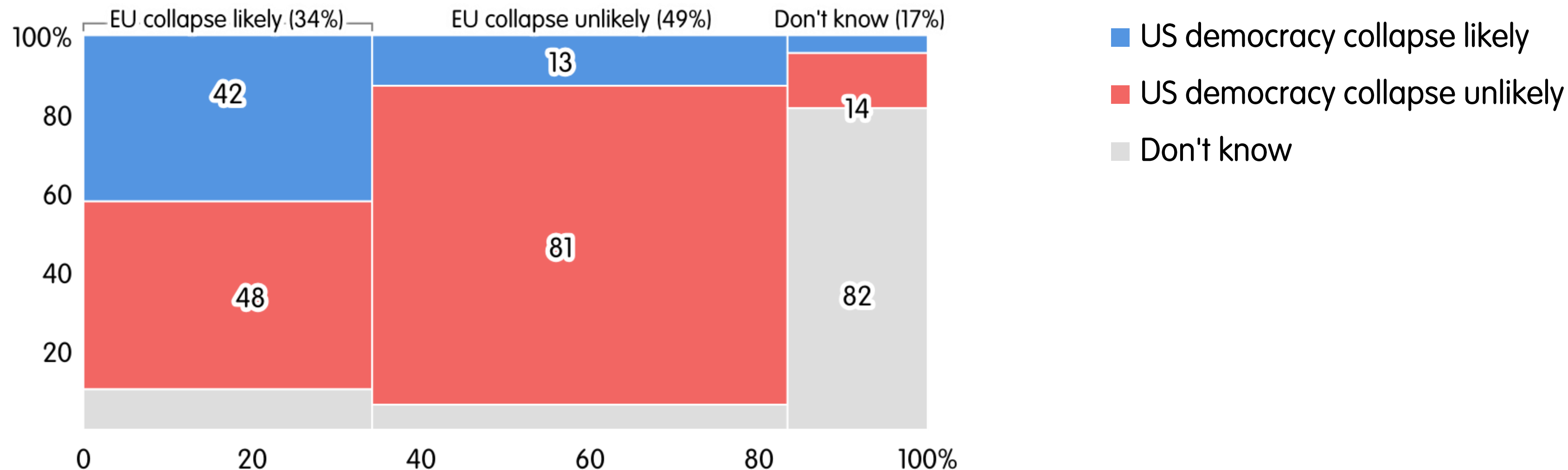
# Credibility of Europe and America are tied

**Outside Europe:** perceived likelihood of US democracy collapsing within the next two decades based on whether EU falling apart seen as likely. In per cent



# Credibility of Europe and America are tied

**Inside Europe:** perceived likelihood of US democracy collapsing within the next two decades based on whether EU falling apart seen as likely. In per cent



# Conclusions

Europe is caught between two rival strategies: aligning itself closely with the US vs. seeking “strategic autonomy”. Instead, it should :

- ✓ pursue a policy of “strategic interdependence”
- ✓ invest in military/security dimensions of Europe’s hard power
- ✓ seek a successful eastward enlargement, even before the war in Ukraine has reached a final conclusion.

Rather than clinging to an old set menu of alignments, Europe should seek new partners on crucial issues in this a la carte world.

# Europe as a partner for the world of tomorrow

- ✓ Taking on board the [principles of strategic interdependence](#) – the EU and member states should:
  - ✓ **Internationally:** participate in multilateral formats or bilateral regional initiatives led by the Global South on areas of mutual interest.
  - ✓ **Asia:** join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, expand security partnerships via defence dialogues.
  - ✓ **Latin America:** expand formats such as the EU Digital Alliance and tools like the Global Gateway.
  - ✓ **Africa:** build cooperative relations on collective challenges such as climate change, infrastructure, health, and international finance.
  - ✓ **India:** work on converging interests, for example the India Middle East European economic corridor, but with a firm awareness of India's transactional approach.

strategic

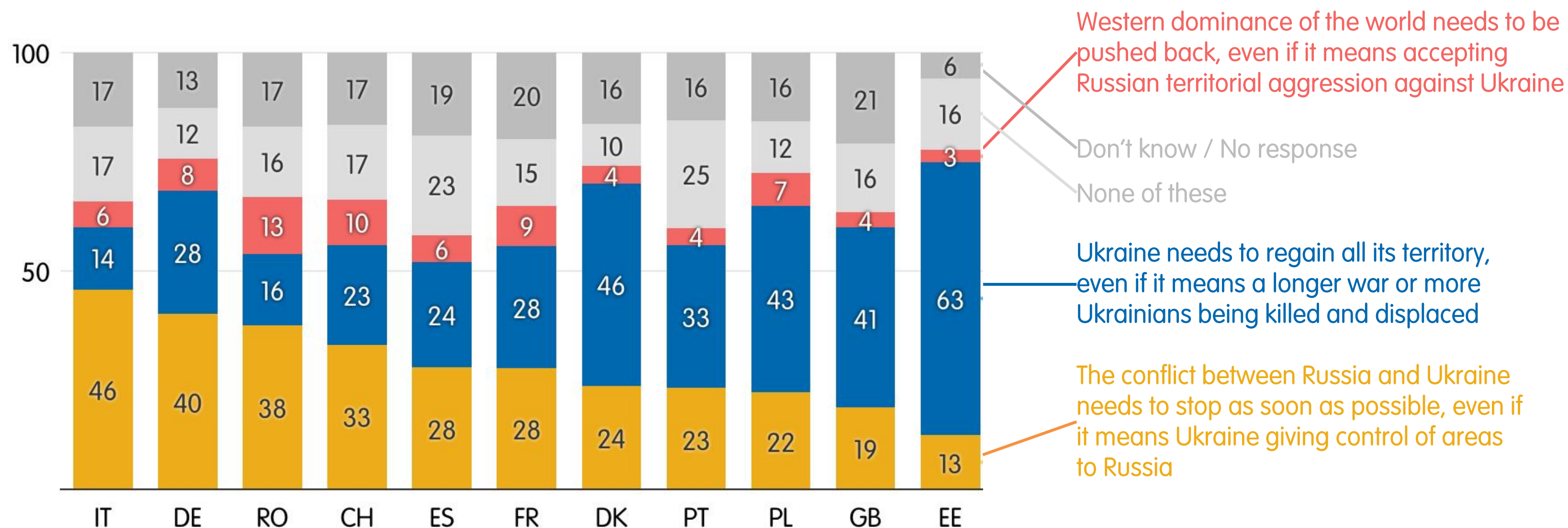


# Inside Europe

interdependence

# Europe: disagreement on how this war should end

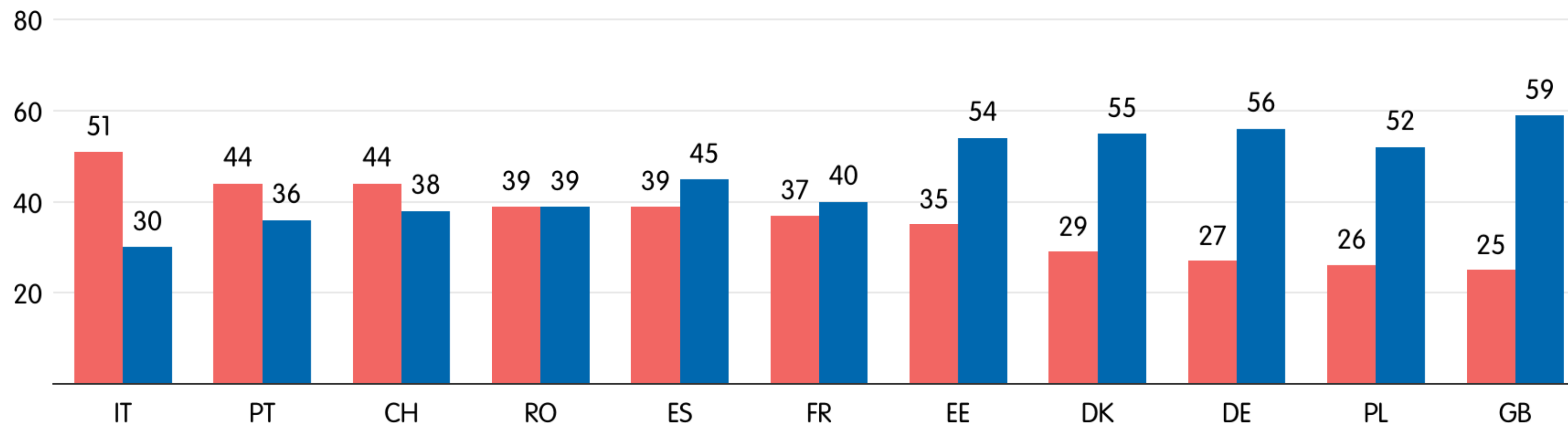
Which of the following best reflects your view? In per cent



# War in Ukraine as a proxy war (also for some Europeans)

Are the United States **at war with Russia?** In per cent

■ Are at war with Russia ■ Are not at war with Russia

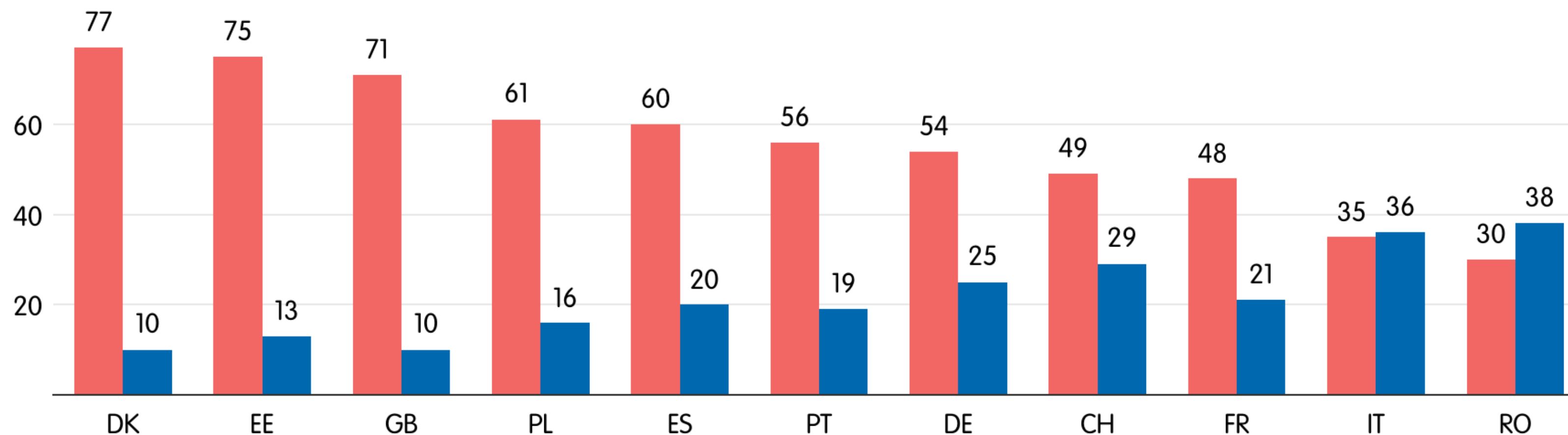




# Although Europeans remain quite united

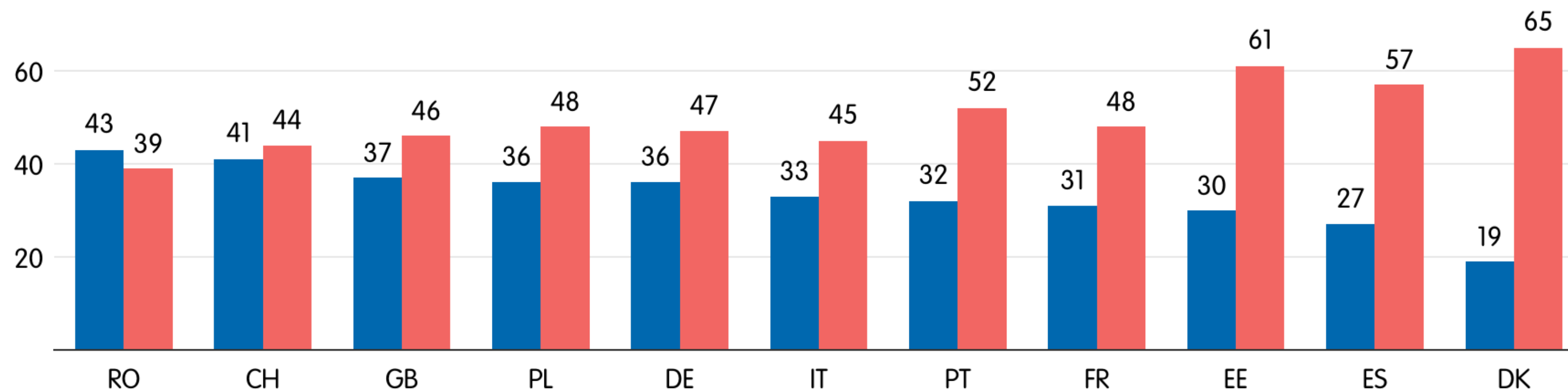
Which of the following is the biggest obstacle to peace between Russia and Ukraine? In per cent

■ Russia ■ Ukraine, EU or the US



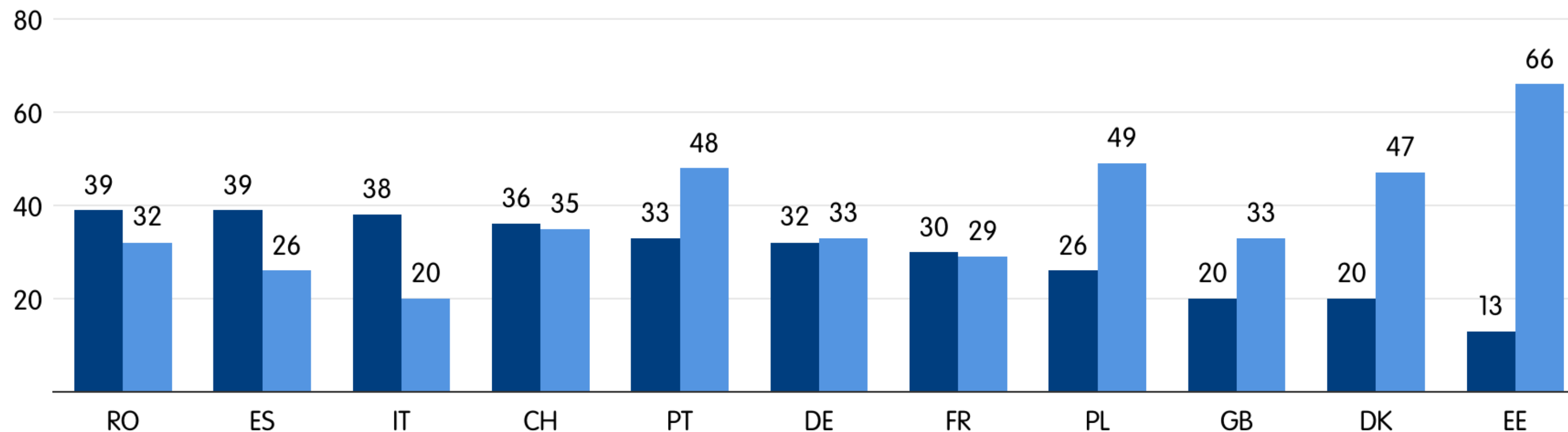
## Also in the eyes of many Europeans

Looking ahead, how **likely** or **unlikely** do you think it is that in the next twenty years **the European Union** will fall apart? In per cent



# Bracing for a frozen conflict?

Is it likely that, within the next 5 years, **Russia** / **Ukraine** wins the war? In per cent



strategic

15 November 2023 | 12:00 – 13:00 | Berlin

**Living in an à la carte world:  
What European policymakers  
should learn from global public  
opinion**

# Thank you.



Presented by

**Timothy Garton Ash, Ivan Krastev,  
and Mark Leonard**

interdependence