

Majority of Non-Trump Republicans Support Continued Aid to Ukraine

Dina Smeltz, Senior Fellow, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy,
Chicago Council on Global Affairs

January 2023

On foreign policy, Republican Party candidates sharply disagree on US involvement in Ukraine. Front-runner Donald Trump has said that he would cut off the “[endless flow of American treasure to Ukraine](#)” though hasn’t clarified what exact steps he would take otherwise. Meanwhile, Nikki Haley argues that US aid to is aimed at preventing the conflict from spreading more widely and helping a “[pro-American, freedom-loving country](#).”

This stark division is also apparent among Republican Party supporters. A survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in September finds that a majority of “Trump Republicans”—those who express a very favorable view of the former president (47% of all Republicans)—oppose continued aid to Ukraine. On the other hand, a majority “non-Trump Republicans”—those who express a somewhat favorable or unfavorable view of Trump (53% of all Republicans)—favor continued US assistance.

Key Findings

- Trump Republicans are much less likely than non-Trump Republicans to say that the amount of military aid the United States has provided to Ukraine has been worth the cost (29% vs. 46%).
- Only minorities of Trump Republicans favor ongoing economic (33%) and military aid (40%).
- In contrast, majorities of non-Trump Republicans favor ongoing US economic and military aid to Ukraine (59% each).
- Nearly all Republicans—regardless of their opinion of former President Trump—think Russian President Vladimir Putin is to blame for the war. But a slim majority of Trump Republicans think that Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy is also to blame (54% vs. 31% of non-Trump Republicans).

Republicans More Likely to Question Value of US Military Aid

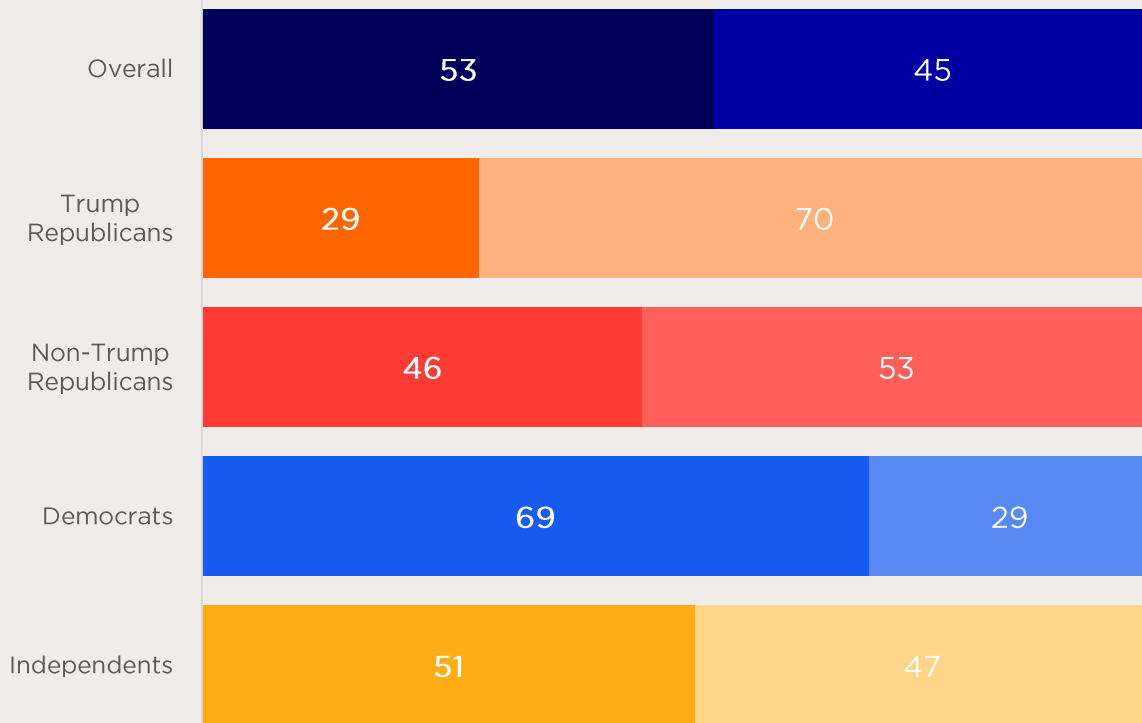
The criticisms of the current US aid policy to Ukraine among Republican lawmakers have likely affected everyday Republican Party supporters' perceptions about the value of continuing assistance to Ukraine, at least on the surface. In the 2023 Chicago Council Survey, conducted September 7-18, 2023, Republicans as a whole were much less likely than other Americans to say that the \$43 billion in weapons, equipment, and training to Ukraine since the Russian invasion has been worth the cost (38% of all Republicans vs. 51% of Independents and 69% of Democrats).

But not all Republicans think alike. Those with a very favorable opinion of Trump ("Trump Republicans") are much less likely to say the effort has been worth the cost (29%) than those with a somewhat favorable or unfavorable opinion of the former president ("non-Trump Republicans" at 46%).

Value of US Military Aid to Ukraine

The United States has provided about \$43 billion in weapons, equipment, and training to Ukraine since Russia invaded the country last year, which is about 4 percent of the \$1.77 trillion included in the Department of Defense annual budget. Do you think US military support has been... (%)

Worth the cost | Not worth the cost



September 7 - 18, 2023 | n = 3,242
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Non-Trump Republicans Support Continued Economic and Military Assistance

When asked about specific ways the United States can assist Ukraine, about half of Republicans overall support continued economic assistance to Kyiv (47%) and the provision of additional arms and military supplies to the Ukrainian government (50%).

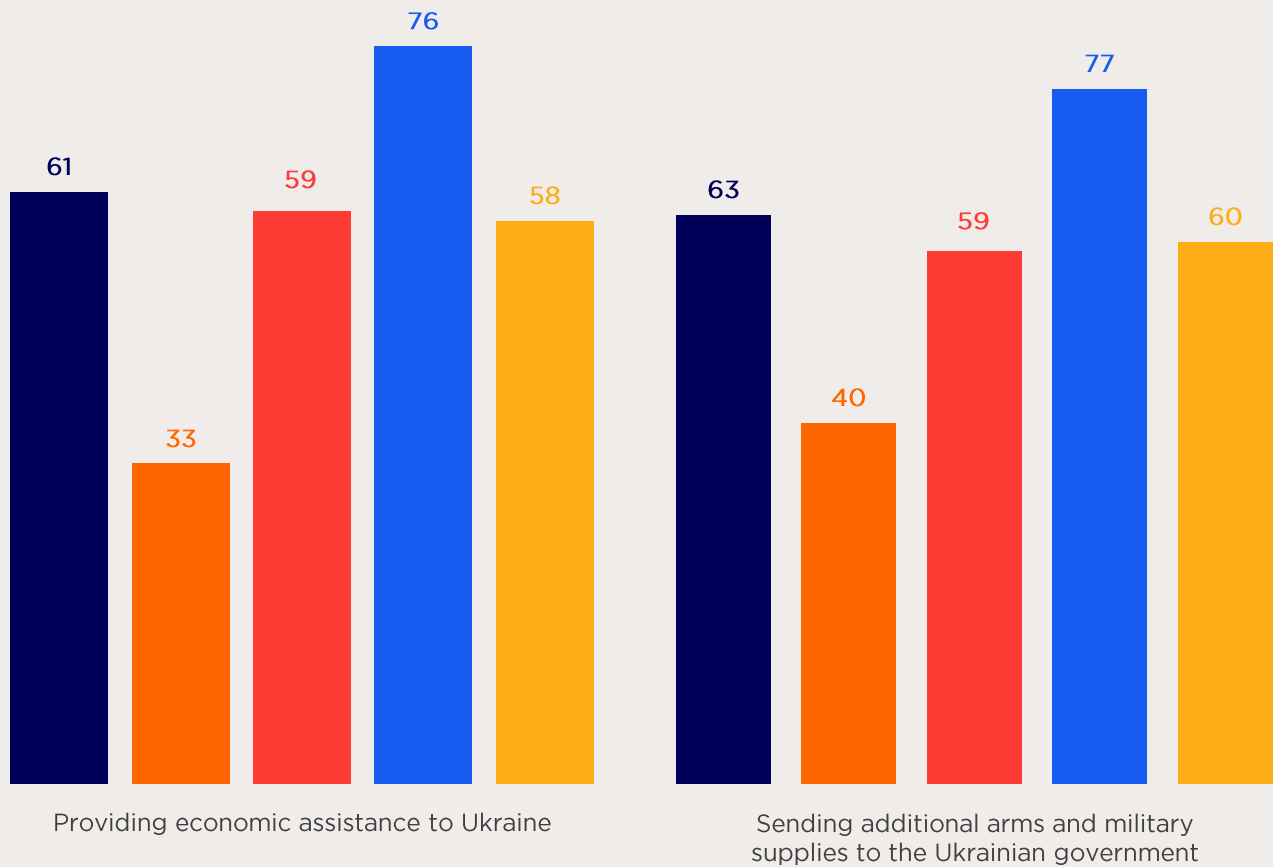
There are large differences between Trump and non-Trump Republicans on this question. Only a third of Trump Republicans favor continued economic aid (33%) in contrast to six in 10 non-Trump Republicans (59%). In a similar pattern, four in 10 Trump Republicans favor sending additional arms and

military equipment to Kyiv (40%) compared to six in 10 non-Trump Republicans (59%).

Support for US Policies Toward Ukraine

In response to the situation involving Russia and Ukraine, would you support or oppose the United States: (% support)

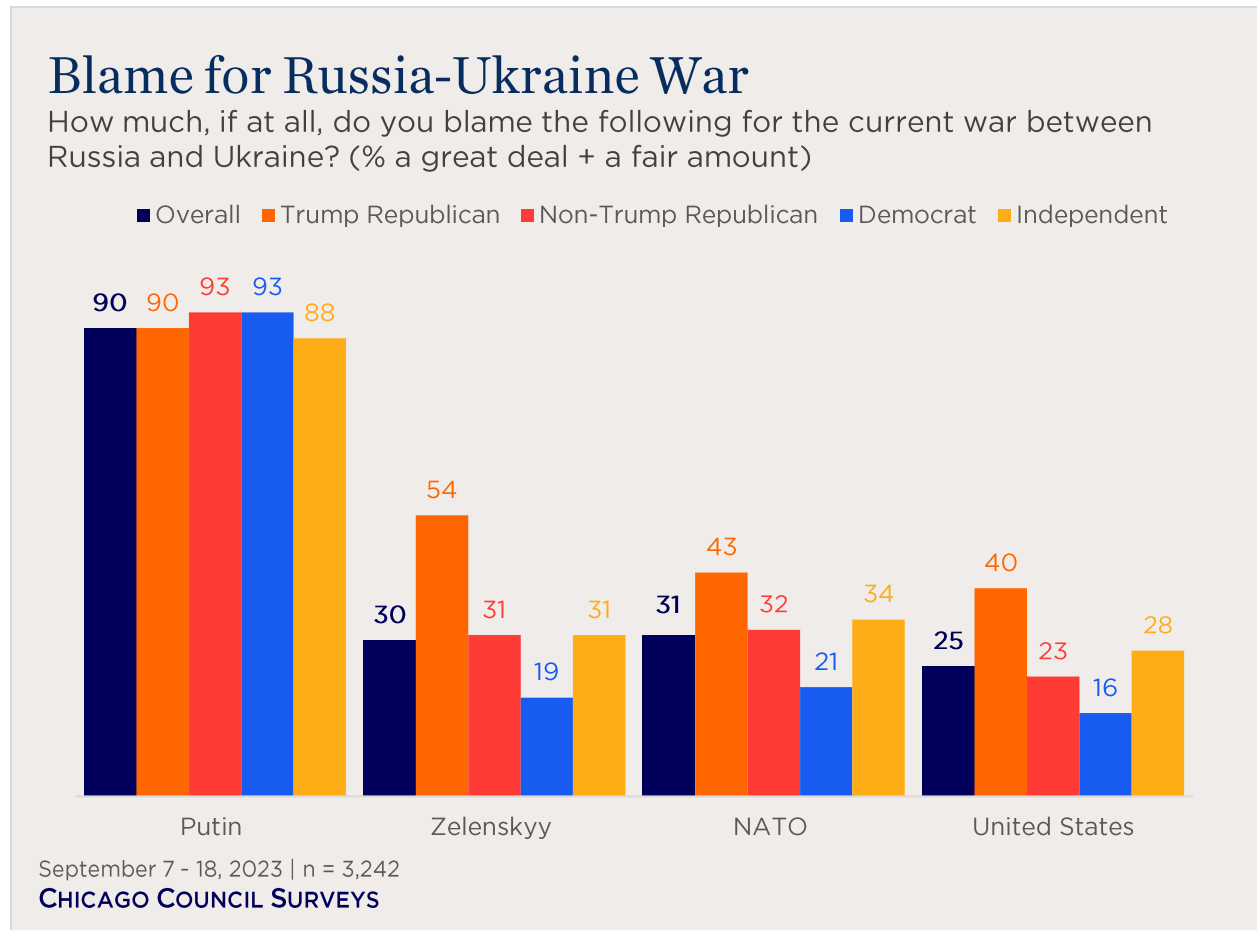
■ Overall ■ Trump Republican ■ Non-Trump Republican ■ Democrat ■ Independent



September 7 - 18, 2023 | n = 3,242
CHICAGO COUNCIL SURVEYS

Many Trump Republicans Think Zelenskyy Partly to Blame for the War

While nine in 10 Trump (91%) and non-Trump Republicans (93%) place the blame for the war on Putin, a slim majority of Trump Republicans also place part of the blame on Zelenskyy (54% of Trump Republicans vs. 31% of non-Trump Republicans). Trump Republicans are also slightly more likely than non-Trump Republicans to say that NATO and the United States are to blame.



Conclusion

In mid-December, Zelenskyy traveled to Washington, DC, to convince Republican leaders to continue funding Ukraine's war effort. However, so far his efforts seem to have been in vain, as Republicans remain unwilling to concede additional aid to Kyiv, unless it is [paired with changes to US immigration policy](#)—which would put President Joe Biden in a bind with the progressive wing of his own party.

These results show that since about half of Republicans among the US public are, in fact, Trump Republicans, the opposition to continued aid to Ukraine of many “MAGA” GOP leaders reflects the preferences of their core constituency. But if the Biden administration is able to compromise on a deal which addresses border enforcement, perhaps even Trump supporters would support it since immigration rates as their top foreign policy concern.

Methodology

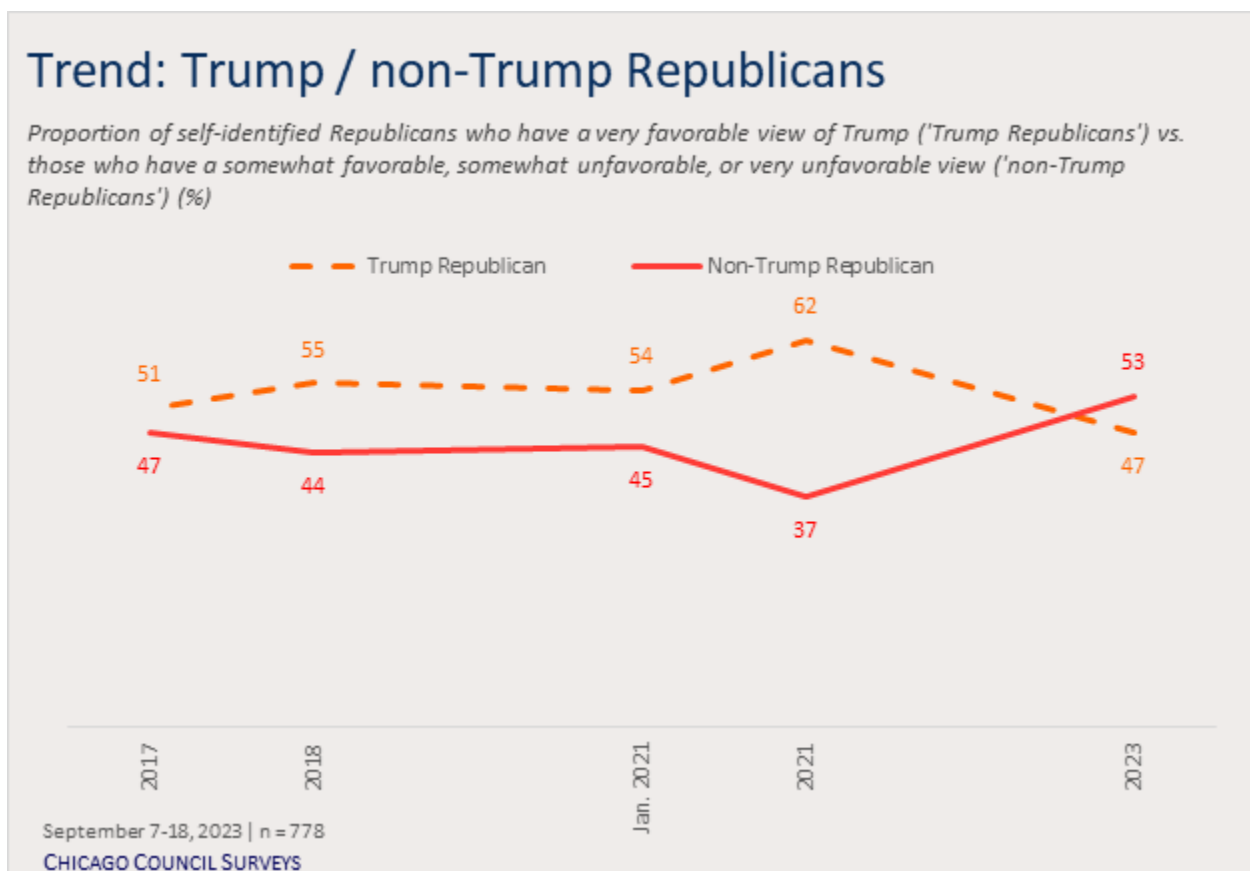
This analysis is based on data from the 2023 Chicago Council Survey of the American public on foreign policy, a project of the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy. The 2023 Chicago Council Survey was conducted September 7-18, 2023 by Ipsos using its large-scale nationwide online research panel, KnowledgePanel, in both English and Spanish among a weighted national sample of 3,242 adults aged 18 or older living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is ± 1.7 percentage points. The margin of error is higher for partisan subgroups or for partial-sample items.

Partisan identification is based on how respondents answered a standard partisan self-identification question: “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”

The 2023 Chicago Council Survey is made possible by the generous support of the Crown family, the Korea Foundation, and the United States-Japan Foundation.

About “Trump Republicans” and “Non-Trump Republicans”

Among the overall US public, 27 percent self-identify as Republican party supporters. For the purposes of this analysis, “Trump Republicans” refer to those Republican party supporters who express a very favorable opinion of Donald Trump (47% of overall Republicans, 13% of the general public). Non-Trump Republicans are those who express only a somewhat favorable or unfavorable view of the former president (53% of overall Republicans, 14% of the general public). The proportion of Republicans who hold a very favorable view of the former President has varied over time, with generally just over half of self-identified Republicans holding a very favorable view of Trump (see below figure).



Demographically, Trump and non-Trump Republicans look similar aside from education. Trump Republicans are notably more likely to have a high school education or less, while non-Trump Republicans are more likely to have a bachelor’s degree (or a more advanced degree).

	Trump Republican	Non-Trump Republican
Gender		
Male	50	49
Female	50	51
Age		
18-29	17	16
30-44	22	22
45-59	24	28
60+	38	34
Education		
Less than High School	9	6
High School	41	27
Some college	31	28
Bachelors degree or higher	19	39
Race/Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	82	78
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	2	2
Other, Non-Hispanic	5	8
Hispanic	11	12

About the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization that provides insight—and influences the public discourse—on critical global issues. We convene leading global voices, conduct independent research, and engage the public to explore ideas that will shape our global future. The Council is committed to bringing clarity and offering solutions to issues that transcend borders and transform how people, business, and governments engage the world. Learn more at thechicagocouncil.org and follow [@ChicagoCouncil](https://twitter.com/ChicagoCouncil).

About the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy

Established in 2018 with a transformative gift from the Crown Family, the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy is driven by the belief that the public plays a critical role in determining the direction of US foreign policy and that an informed and engaged public is critical for effective policymaking. The centerpiece of the Lester Crown Center is its annual survey of American public opinion and US foreign policy, the Chicago Council Survey, which has been conducted since 1974. For the latest research from the Crown Center, follow [@ChiCouncilFP](https://twitter.com/ChiCouncilFP).