

On Eve of NATO Summit, Majority of Americans Say Alliance Is Essential

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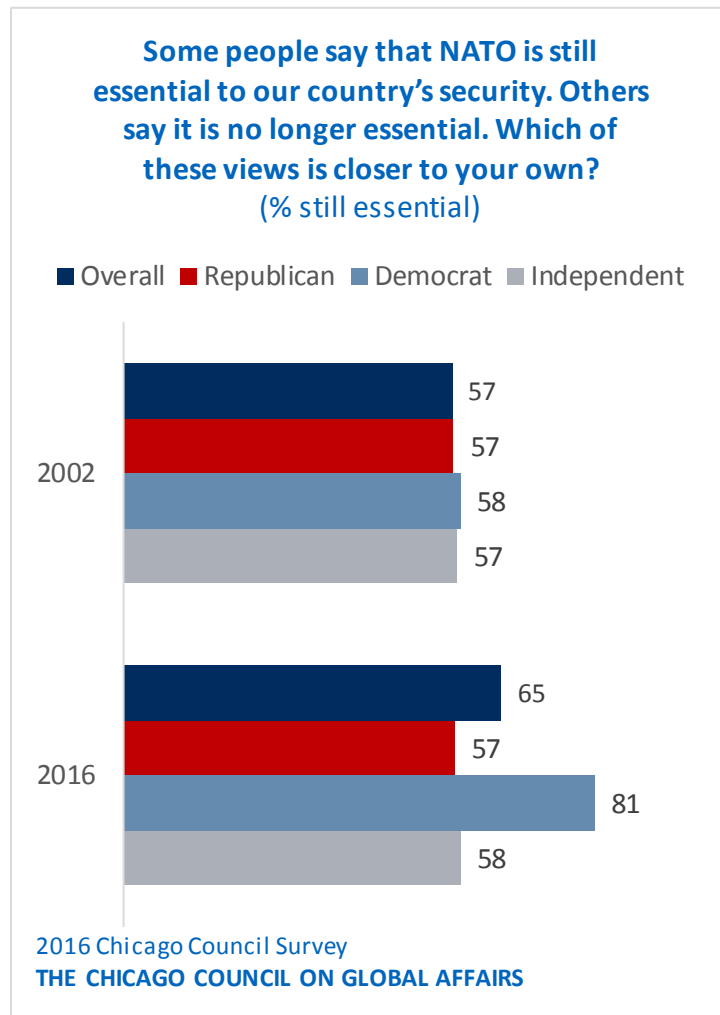
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Americans View NATO as Essential to US Security

Although presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has called the NATO alliance “obsolete,”¹ two-thirds of Americans in the June 10-27 Chicago Council Survey say that NATO is still essential to US security. This includes a majority of Republicans (57%) as well as those who say they are planning to vote for Donald Trump (53%). Further, a combined 75 percent of Americans support either maintaining or increasing the US commitment to NATO.

Support for the 67-year old alliance has increased since this specific question was last included in the Council’s poll. More Americans today (65%) than in 2002 (57%) say that NATO is still essential to US security, driven by increasing support among self-described Democrats. In 2002, 58 percent of Democrats said NATO



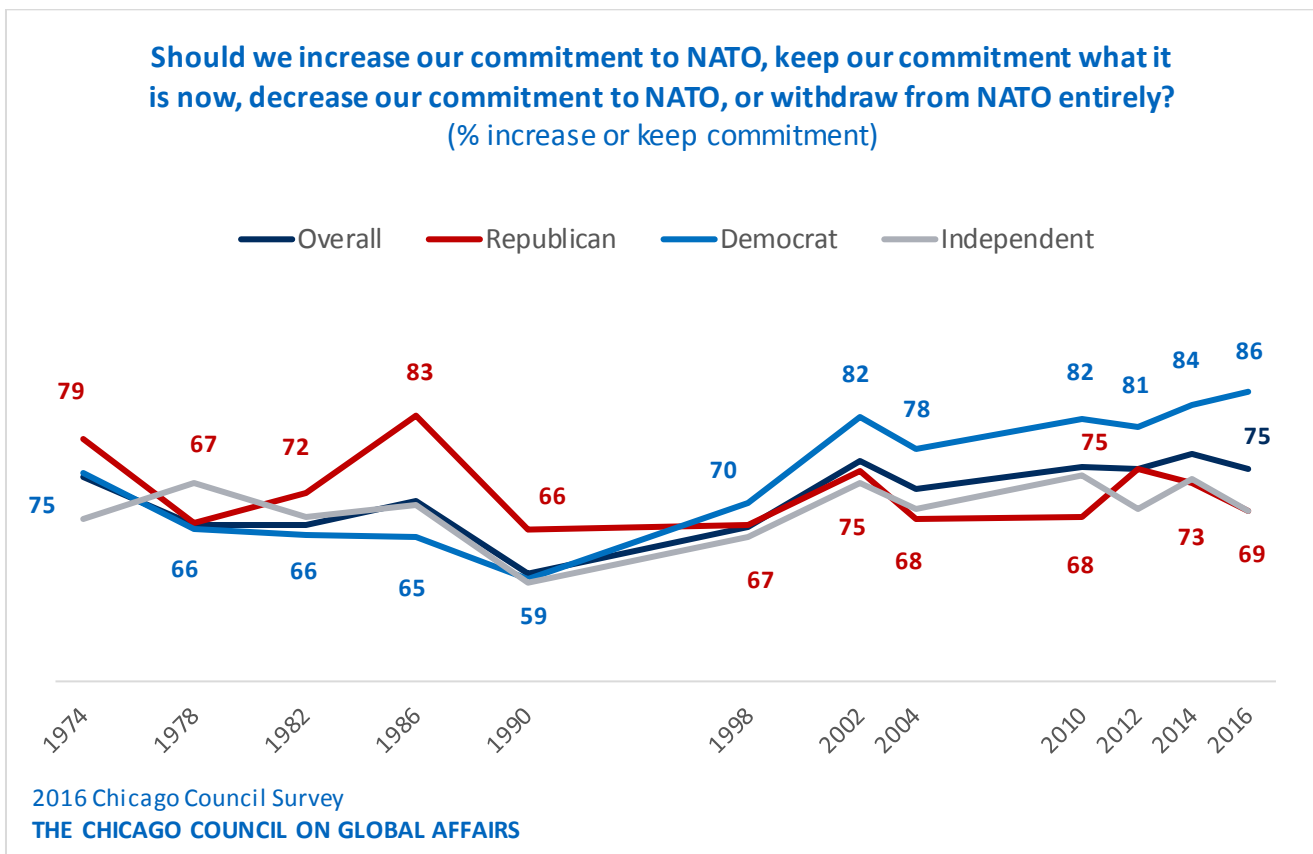
¹ “Donald Trump Says NATO is ‘Obsolete,’ UN is ‘Political Game’.” The New York Times. April 2, 2016.

was still essential compared to 81 percent today. Seventy-seven percent of those supporting presumptive Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton agree, reflecting her view that the alliance is “one of the best investments America has ever made.”² Over the same period, views among Republicans and Independents remained stable.

Americans Support Maintaining US Commitment to NATO

Overall, a majority of Americans favor maintaining the US commitment to NATO (63%), with an additional one in ten who favor increasing the US commitment (12%). One in seven (14%) say they favor decreasing the US commitment to NATO, and even fewer (7%) favor withdrawing entirely. Combined, 75 percent of Americans support maintaining or increasing the US commitment to NATO, versus 21 percent who prefer to decrease the US commitment or withdraw entirely.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to favor increasing or maintaining the US commitment to NATO (86% vs. 69%), as has been the case since 1998. By contrast, Republicans are more likely to favor decreasing the US commitment to NATO or withdrawing entirely (27% vs. 11%). That difference also carries over to supporters of the two parties’ presumptive nominees, as Clinton supporters (84%) are more likely than Trump supporters (66%) to favor increasing or maintaining the US commitment to NATO.



² “ ‘It will be like Christmas in the Kremlin’: Hillary Clinton blasts Donald Trump over NATO comments.” Business Insider, March 23, 2016.

There are no significant differences between Republicans and self-identified Trump voters on this question, nor are there significant differences between Democrats and Clinton voters. Surprisingly, age is not a differentiating factor, and there are only minor differences among educational groupings and between men and women.

Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on data from the 2016 Chicago Council Survey of the American public on foreign policy. The 2016 Chicago Council Survey was conducted by GfK Custom Research using their large-scale, nationwide online research panel between June 10-27, 2016 among a national sample of 2,061 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of error ranges ± 2.2 to ± 3.5 percentage points, depending on the specific question, with higher margins of error for partisan subgroups.

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