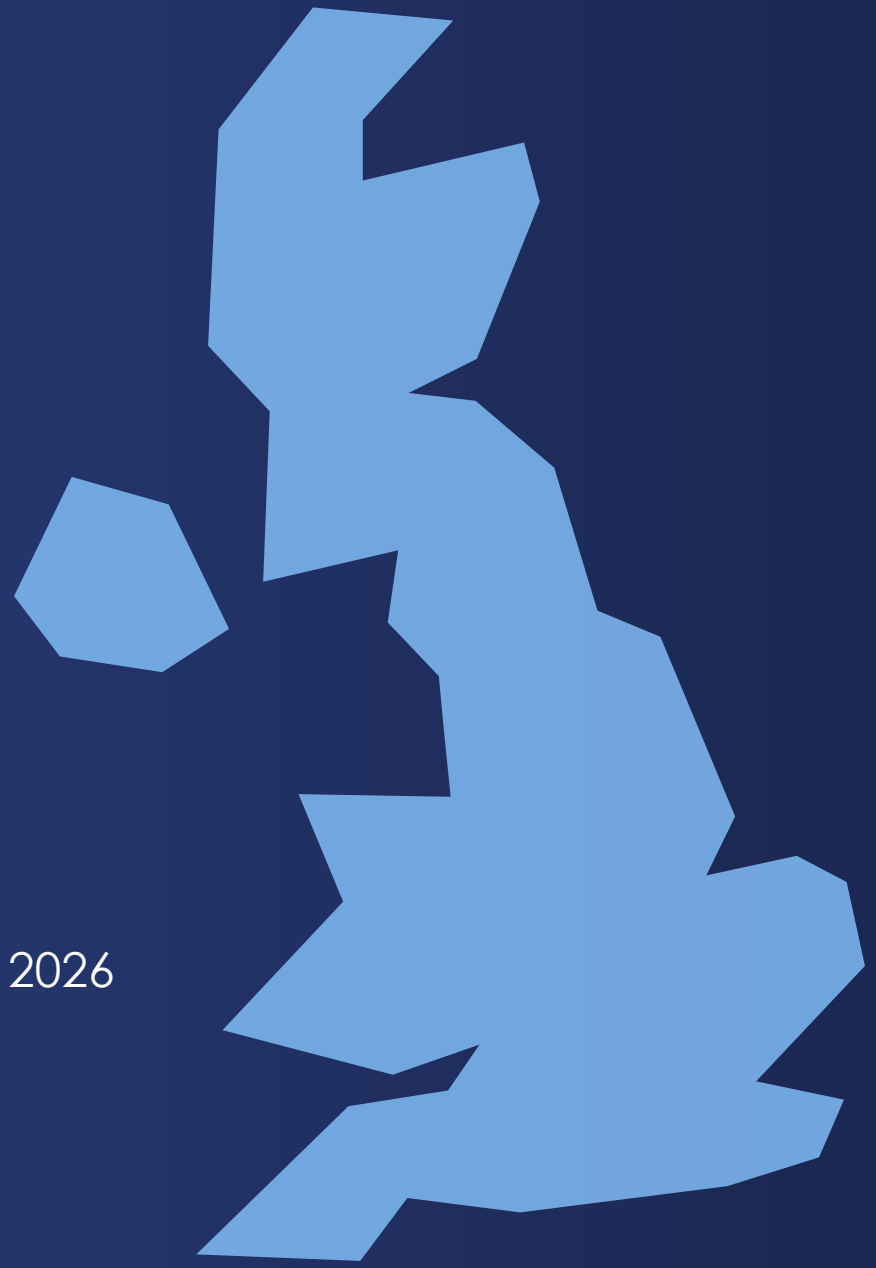
Opinium Insights with impact | BPC

Britain's Place in the World



Lola Hylander | Opinium | BPC Next Gen Pollsters | Nov 2026

Outline

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Key headlines

02

How does Britain see its own place in the world?

03

Britain's influence and international standing

04

Friends, rivals and the special relationship

05

What makes Britain a global player?

01

Key headlines



Britain's international standing is under pressure:
almost half think the UK is viewed negatively by people in other countries



The public think Britain's influence has declined:
over half believe it has decreased in the past decade, whilst 10% think it has increased



The future is less pessimistic, but still bleak:
fewer expect the UK's influence to continue to decrease over the next decade than think it has decreased over the past decade



Britain's future must draw on both material and soft power:
whilst soft power has increased our historical influence, there is a growing sense of the value of traditional, material power



Public supports cooperation, but not at the expense of independence:
a third favour cooperation with other countries, whilst an equal proportion favour balancing cooperation with independence

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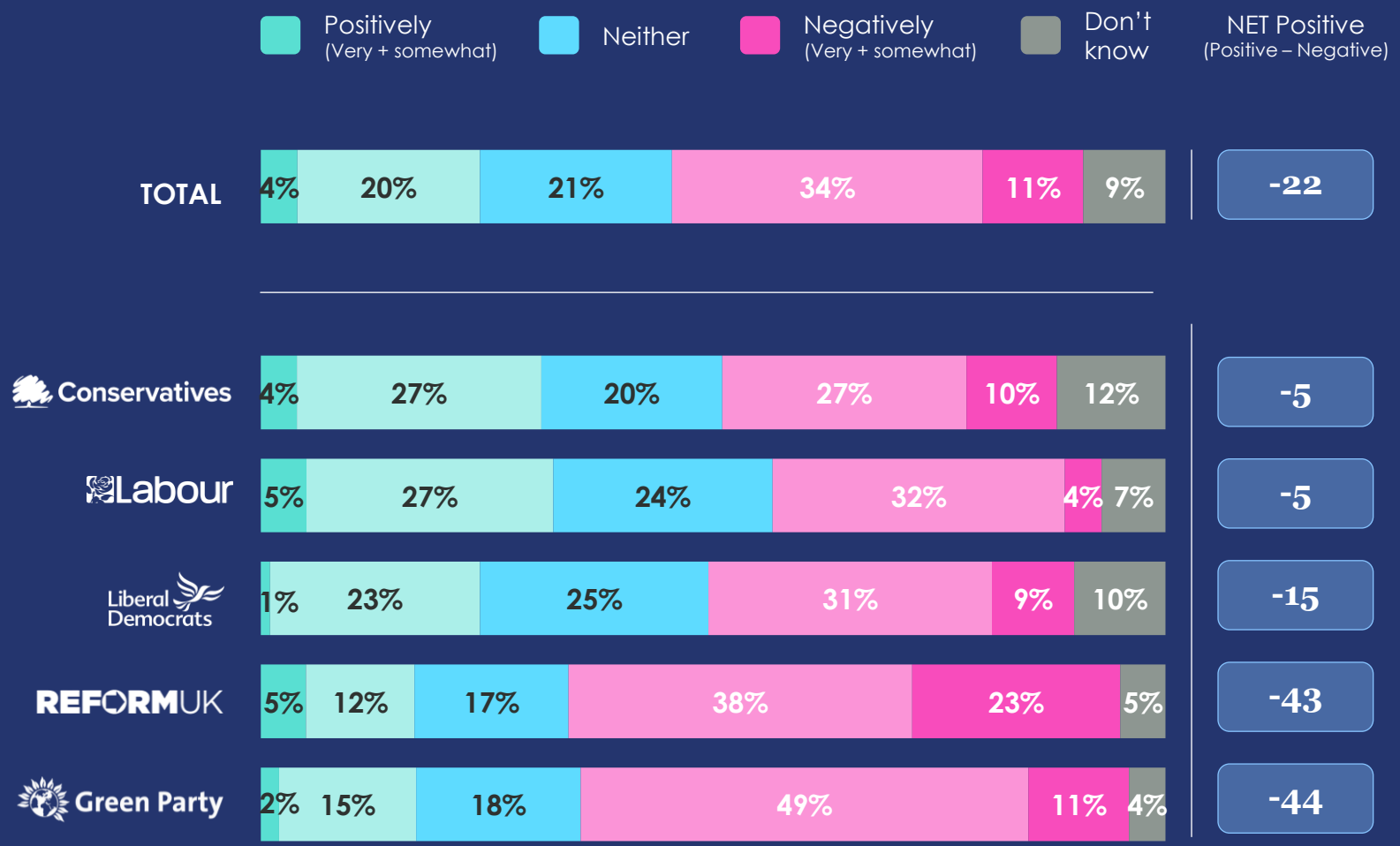
02

How does Britain see its own place in the world?

UK's international reputation is perceived to be more negative than positive

Perceptions of how positively or negatively the UK is viewed by other countries
(by political affiliation)



Q1. Overall, how positively or negatively do you think the UK is viewed by people in other countries? Base: All respondents (2,050)

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03

Britain's influence and international standing

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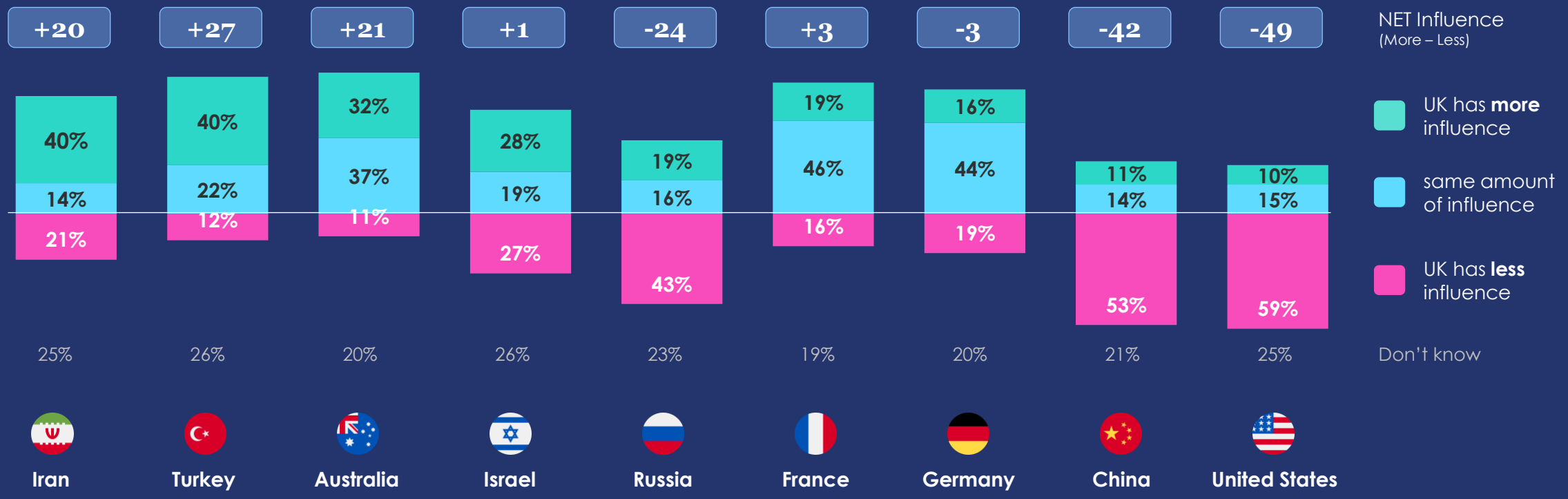
UK seen as holding the same influence as regional powers, but significantly less so than global major superpowers

Perceptions of how much influence the UK has over international affairs and decisions compared with other countries



Q2. Thinking about international affairs and decisions between countries, how much influence do you think the UK currently has compared with the following countries?
Base: All respondents (2,050)

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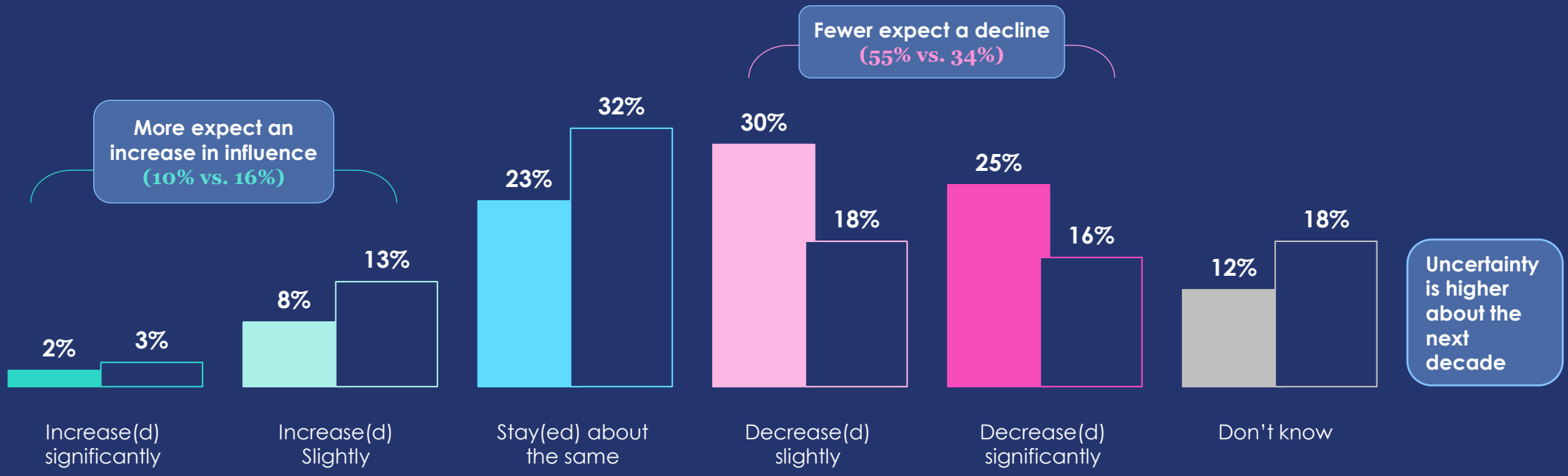
The public sees a decade of decline, but is less pessimistic about the decade ahead

Views on change in the UK's influence over the past 10 years

Views on change in the UK's influence over the next 10 years



Q3. Compared with 10 years ago, do you think the UK's influence on international affairs and decisions between countries has…?
Q4. And looking ahead to the next 10 years, do you think the UK's influence on international affairs and decisions between countries will…? Base: All respondents (2,050)

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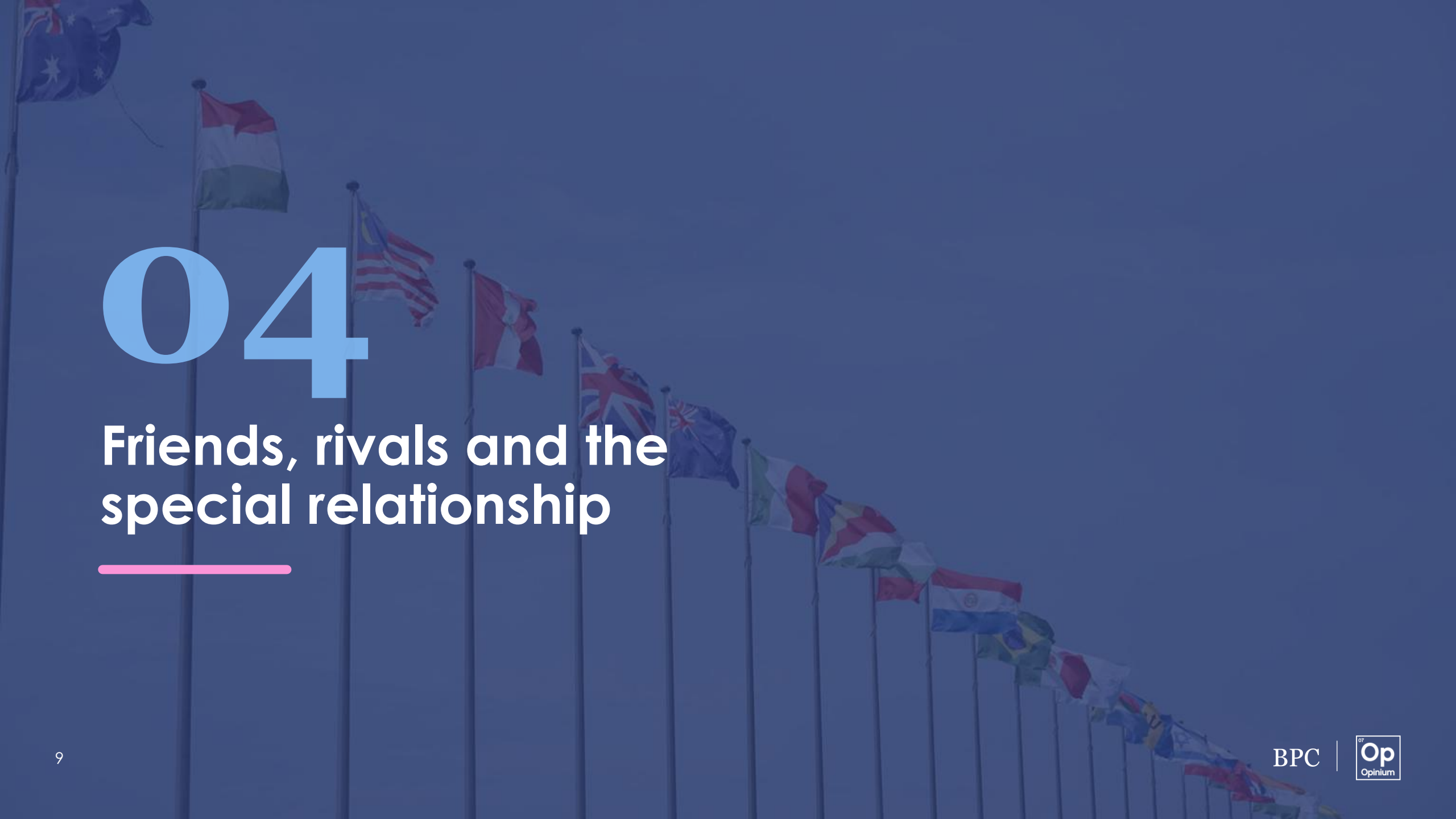

04

Friends, rivals and the special relationship

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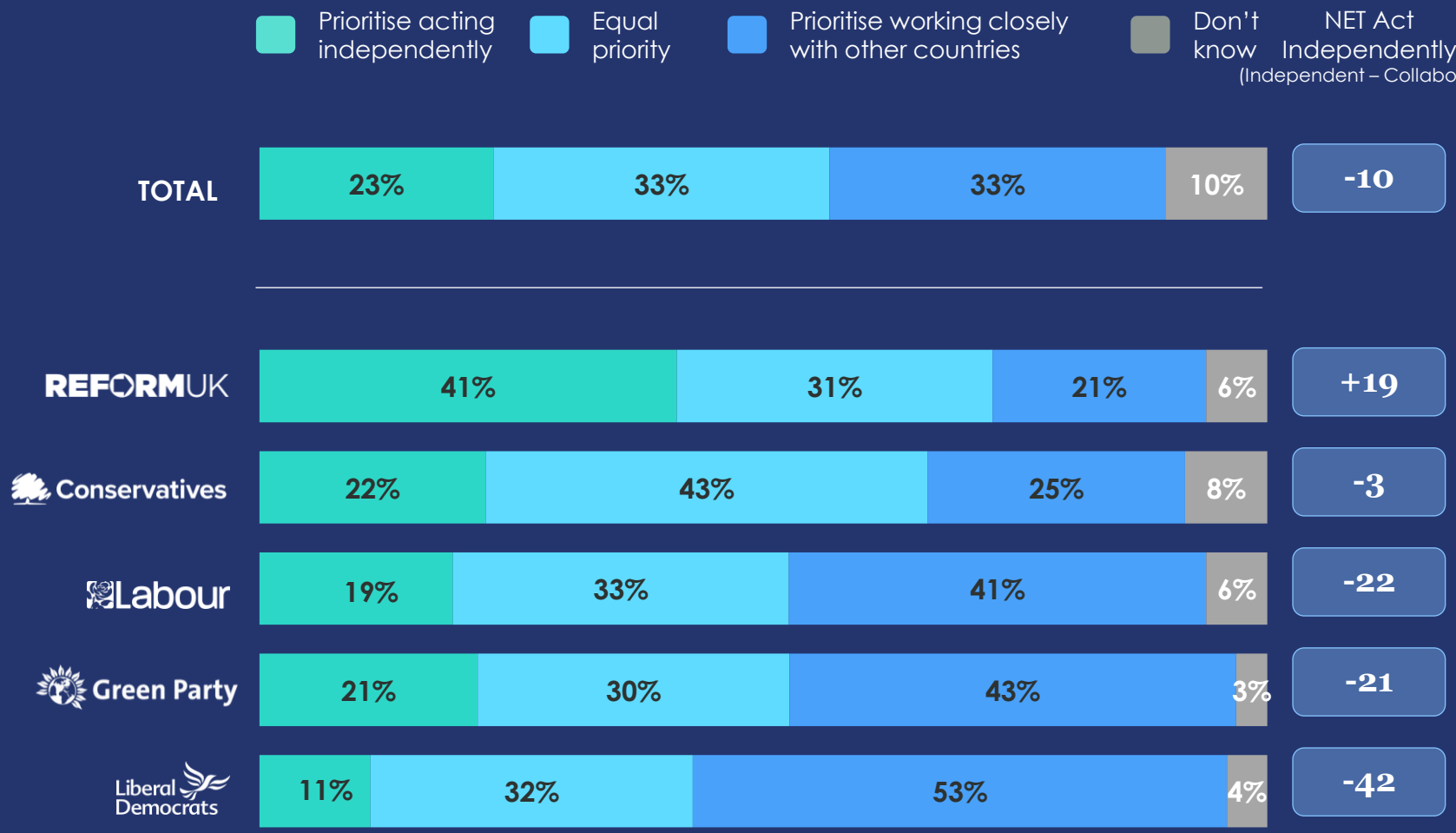
Public is divided between cooperation and independence

Views on how the UK should approach relationships with other countries
(by political affiliation)



Q5. Which of the following comes closest to your view of how the UK should approach its relationships with other countries? Base: All respondents (2,050)

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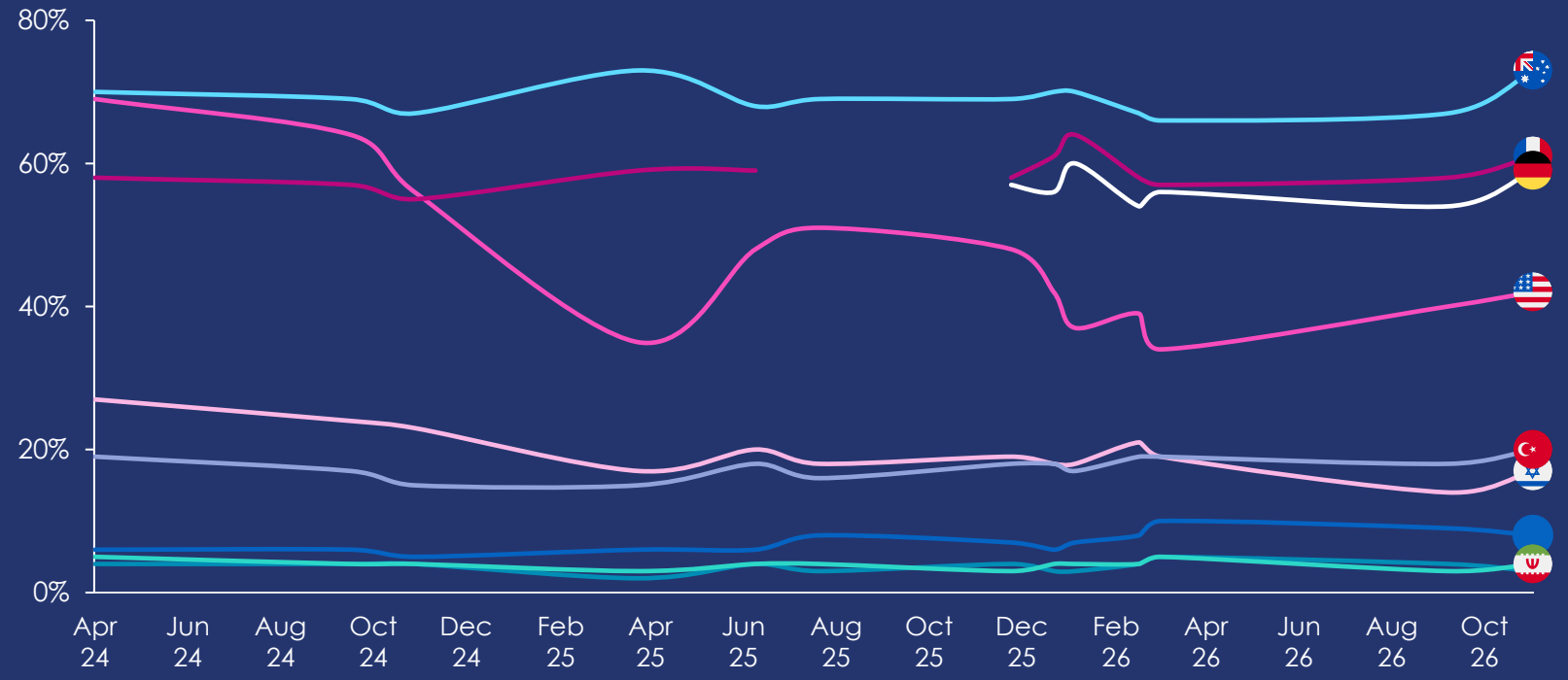
The perception of the US as an ally has been erratic over the past year

% saying each country is an ally to the UK



Australia	72%
France	59%
Germany	59%
USA	42%
Turkey	20%
Israel	17%
China	8%
Iran	4%
Russia	3%

A volatile view of the US

Perceptions of the US as an ally fell sharply in early 2025, before partially recovering in recent months

V301. To what extent, if at all, do you think the following countries are allies, or threats, to the UK? Base: All respondents (2,050)

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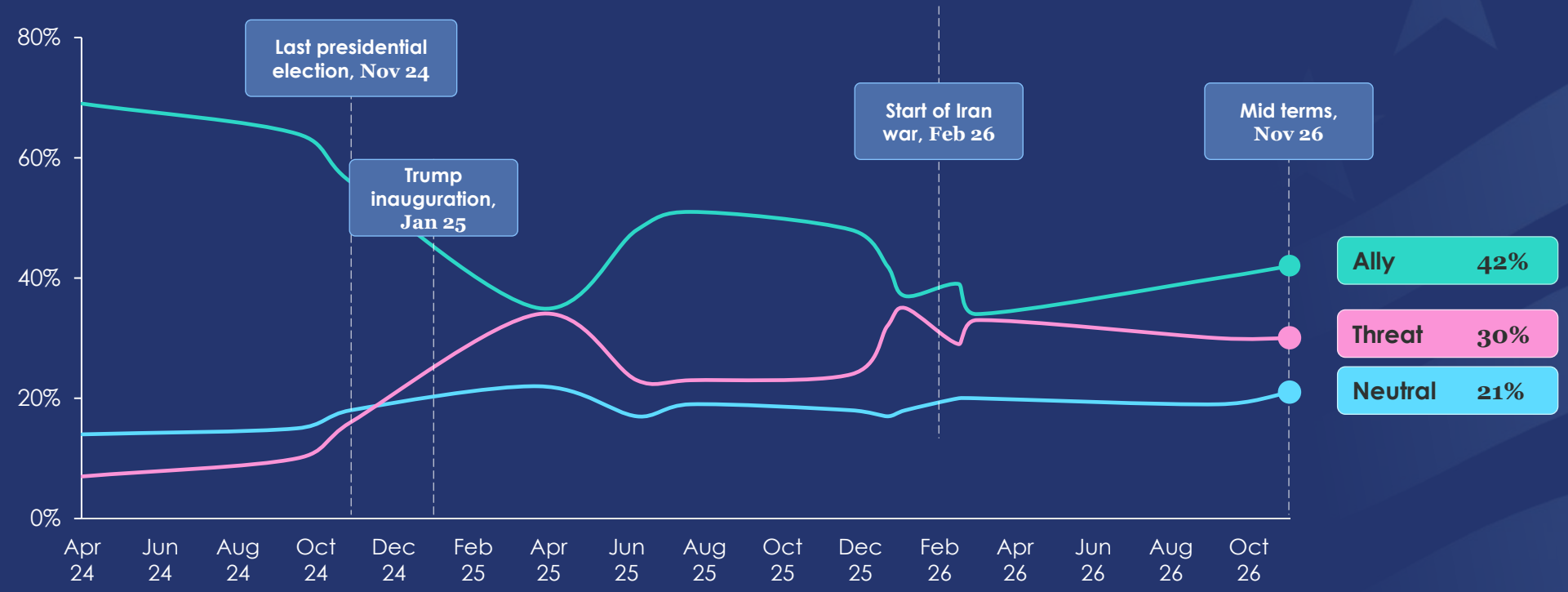
Since 2024, the perception of the US as a threat has more than tripled

% viewing the US as an ally, neutral or a threat to the UK



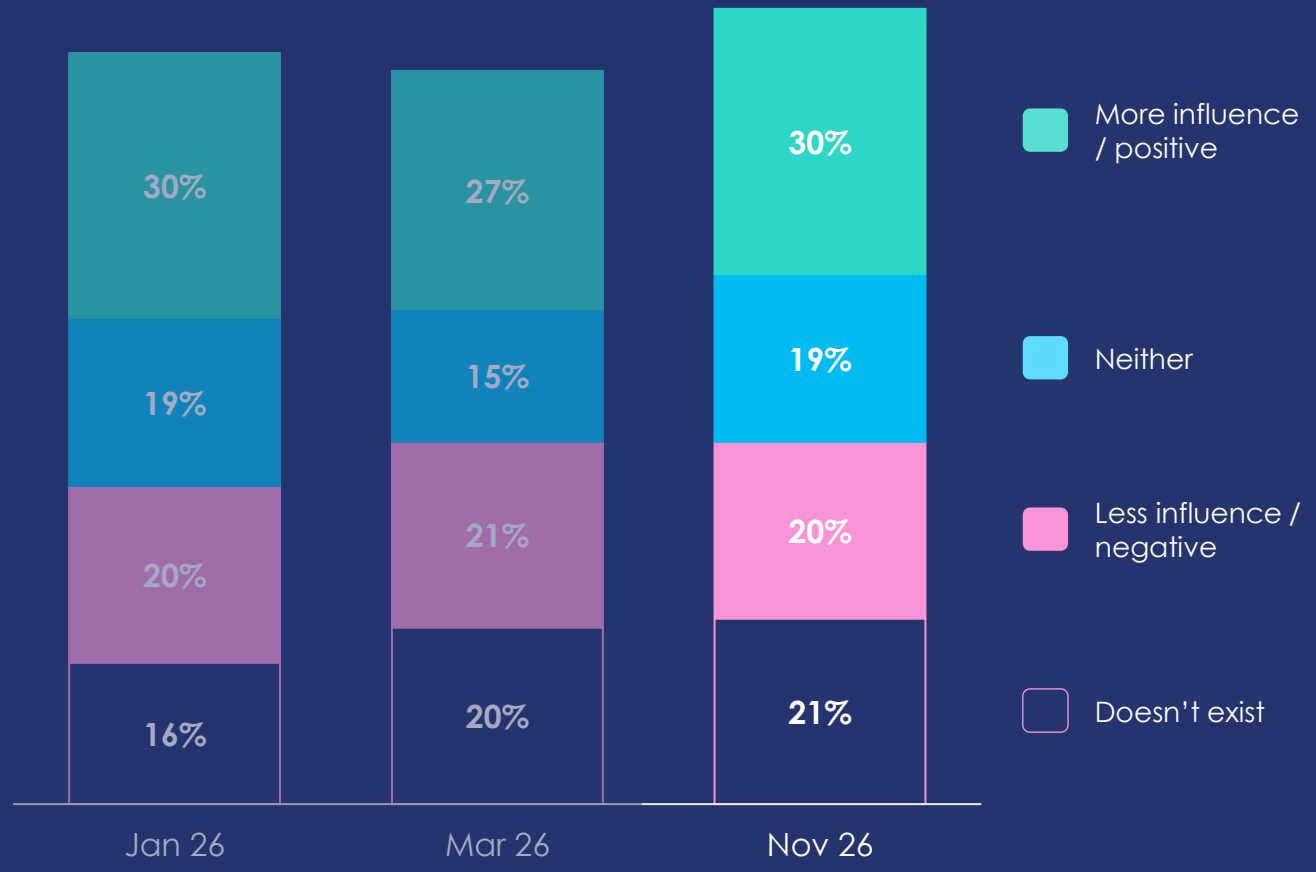
V301. To what extent, if at all, do you think the following countries are allies, or threats, to the UK? Base: All respondents (2,050)

Public remains broadly positive about the special relationship, but significant minority question its existence

The special relationship

The UK–US "special relationship" is often used to describe the close political, military and intelligence ties between the United Kingdom and the United States

Views on whether the 'Special Relationship' gives the UK more or less influence



SR1. The UK–US "special relationship" is often used to describe the close political, military and intelligence ties between the United Kingdom and the United States. Overall, which of the following statements best reflects your view of the "special relationship"? Base: All respondents (2,050)

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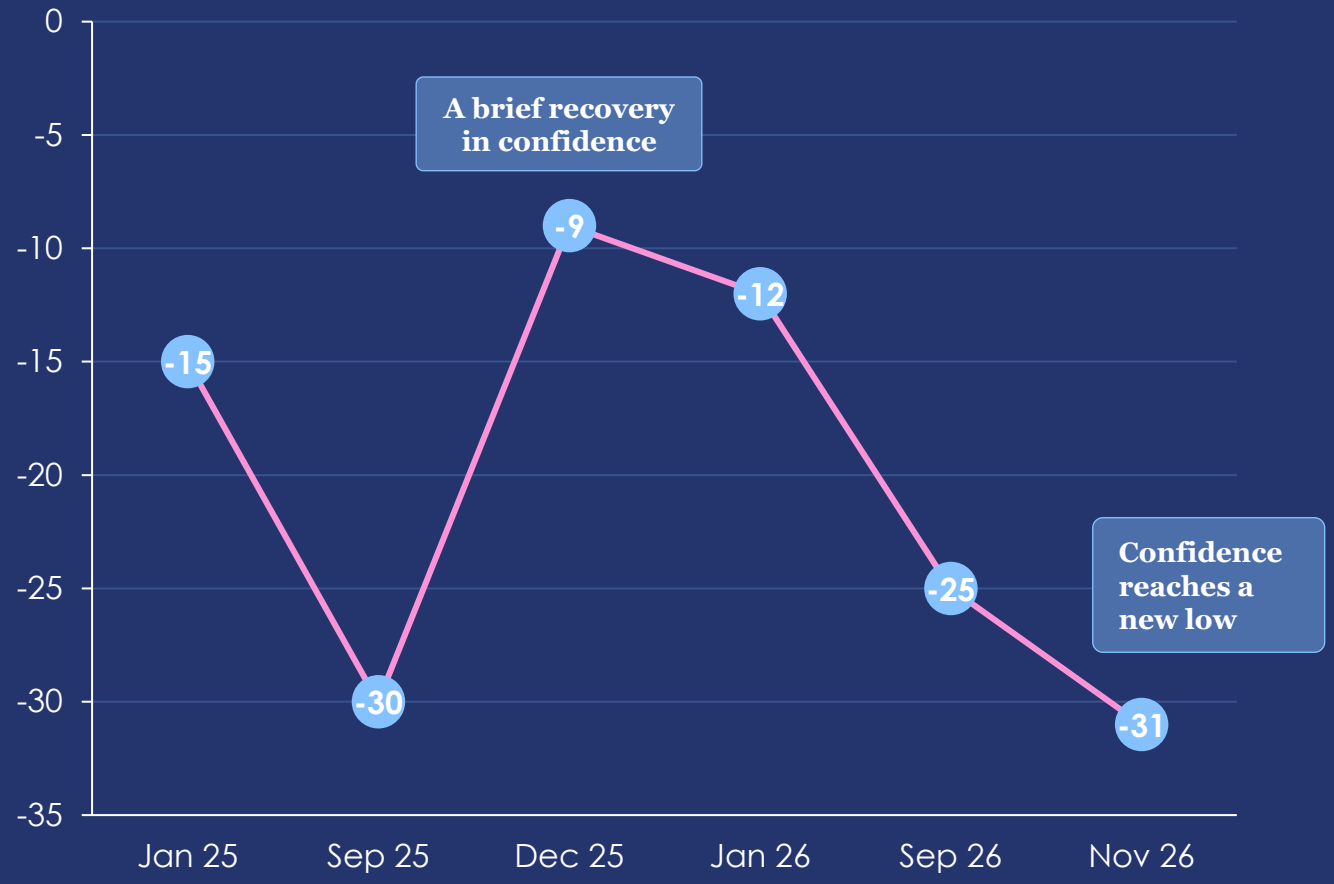
Confidence in Trump as a friend of Britain falls to its lowest point



Views on whether Donald Trump is a friend of Britain (NET agreement)



TR1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Donald Trump is a friend of Britain? Base: All respondents (2,050)

05

What makes Britain a global player?

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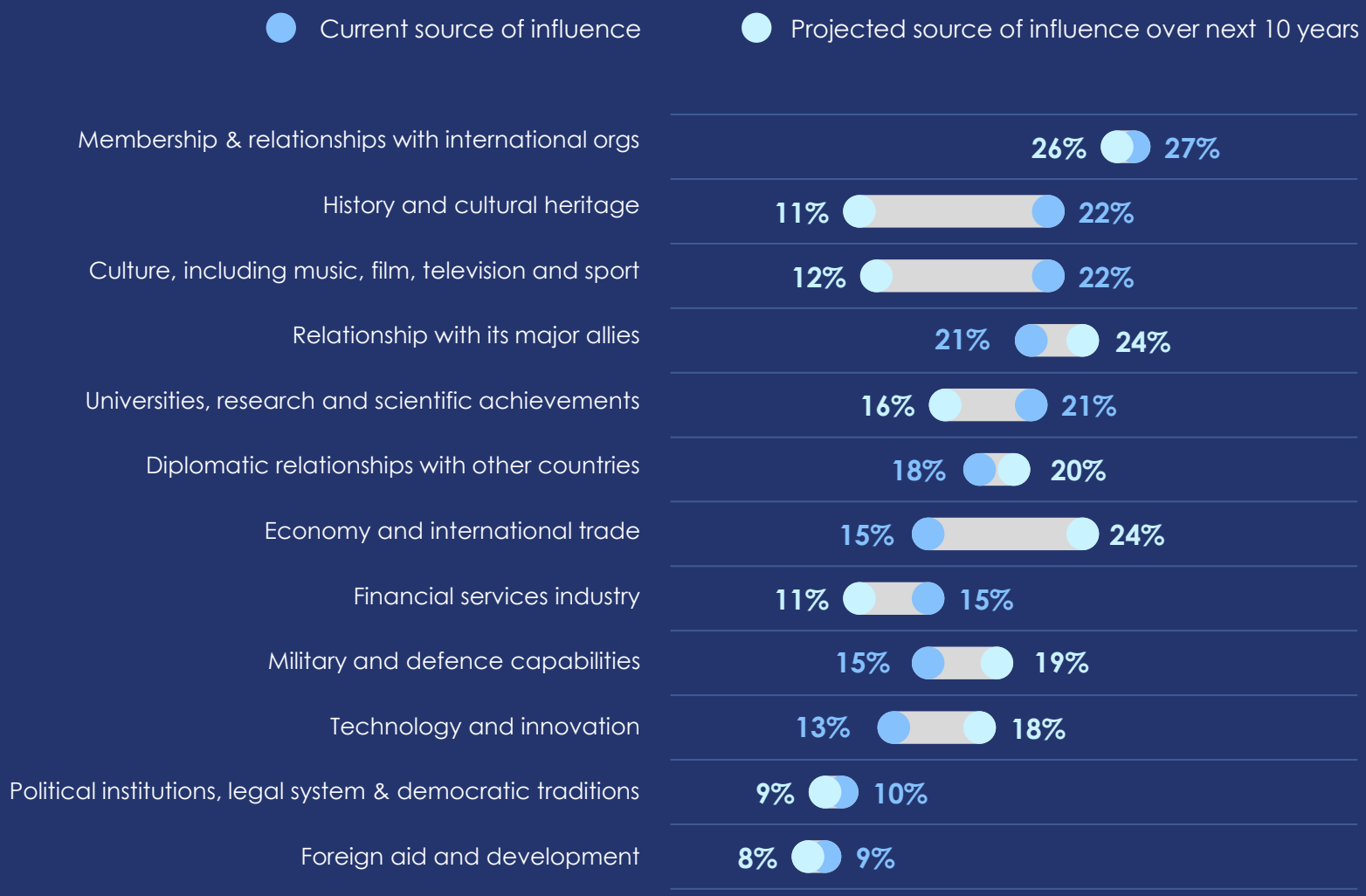
Britain's influence rests on relationships, culture and heritage, but economy, military and tech predicted to increase

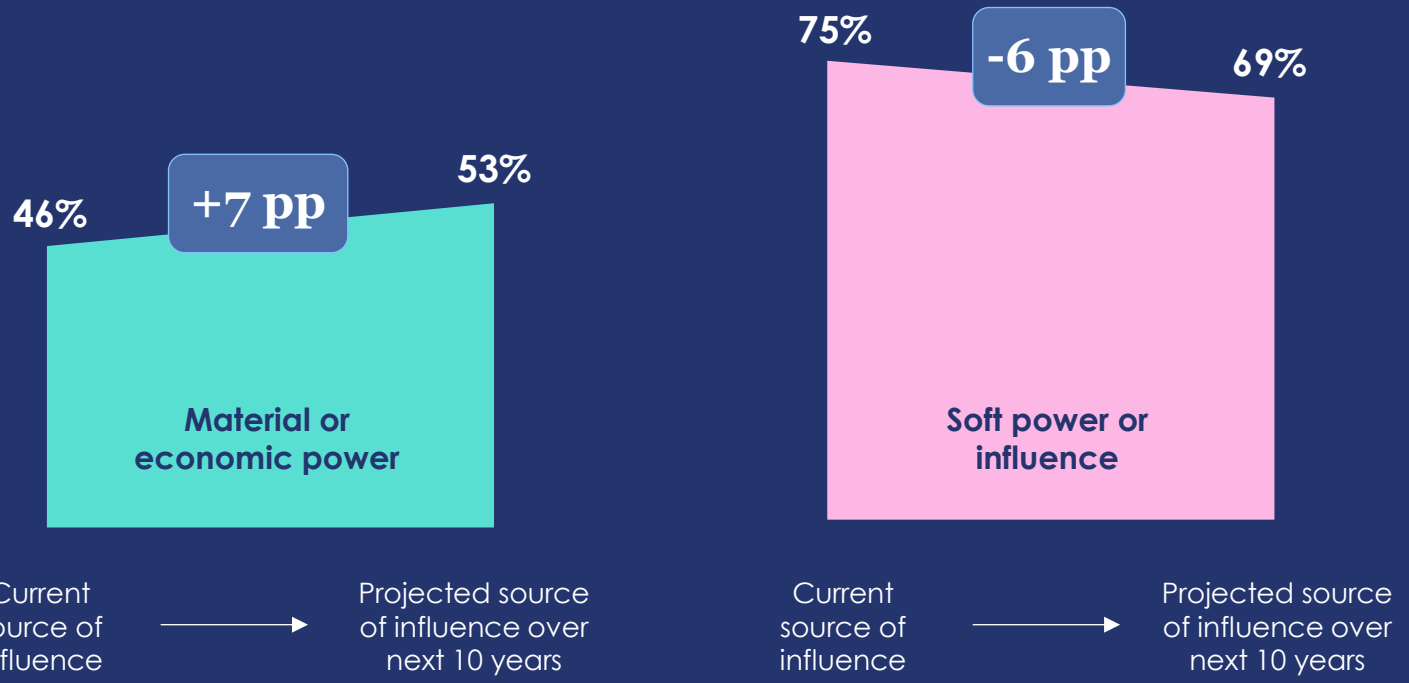
Views on current and future sources of UK's global influence



Q6. Which, if any, of the following do you think are currently the most important sources of the UK's influence around the world?
Q7. And looking ahead to the next 10 years, which of the following do you think should be the most important sources of the UK's influence around the world?
Base: All respondents (2,050). N.B. Respondents could select up to three options.

Global influence is rooted in soft power, with growing attention on material and economic power

Views on current and future sources of UK's global influence



THE BIGGER PICUTURE

The opportunity isn't to replace soft power, but to complement it with **greater economic and strategic capability**

Q6. Which, if any, of the following do you think are currently the most important sources of the UK's influence around the world?
Q7. And looking ahead to the next 10 years, which of the following do you think should be the most important sources of the UK's influence around the world?
Base: All respondents (2,050) N.B. Respondents could select up to three options.

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Britain's place in the world: the public verdict

01 | REPUTATION

Britain's international standing is viewed negatively

46%

think the UK is viewed negatively by other countries, compared with 24% who think it is viewed positively.

02 | INFLUENCE

The public sees a decade of decline

59%

say the US has more influence internationally than the UK, as do 53% for China

55%

think the UK's influence has decreased over the past decade, while 10% think it has increased.

34%

expect the UK's influence to decrease over the next decade, 16% expect it to increase and 32% think it will stay the same.

03 | THE FUTURE

Britain needs a broader range of strengths

27%

Select international organisations as the most frequent current source of influence

24%

Select relationships with major allies and the economy and international trade as future priorities

Thank you!

Insights with impact

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