



Clingendael

Netherlands Institute of International Relations

OCTOBER 2024

Separation Anxiety

How the Dutch see the United States, and the implications for Dutch foreign policy



© Shutterstock | Orhan Cam

Majorities in the Netherlands:

- Think an electoral victory by Donald Trump on November 5 would have a negative impact on the US, the West and US-Dutch relations;
- Are worried about the US elections, the state of US democracy and the impact this will have on relations with the Netherlands;
- Think Europe is too dependent on US military support, and think European countries should cooperate more amongst themselves, particularly on defence industrial issues;
- Believe America's security commitment to Europe is fragile;
- Worry about economic dependencies on the US, but want to work together with Washington to contain Chinese economic power;
- Would support the US in a military conflict with China, either with economic sanctions or military action, or both;
- Expect the US to prevent a military conflict with China over Taiwan, without jeopardizing international trade;

- Do not favour a transatlantic ‘division of labour’ whereby the US focuses on Asia and Europe on its own neighbourhood;
- Think European countries should sustain or increase their aid to Ukraine if the US were to withdraw its support for Kyiv;
- Seek a more sovereign and capable Europe that is able to operate independently from the United States – both in defense and economic terms – but which can cooperate with the US on the basis of a more equal footing on the major geopolitical challenges both states confront.

Introduction¹

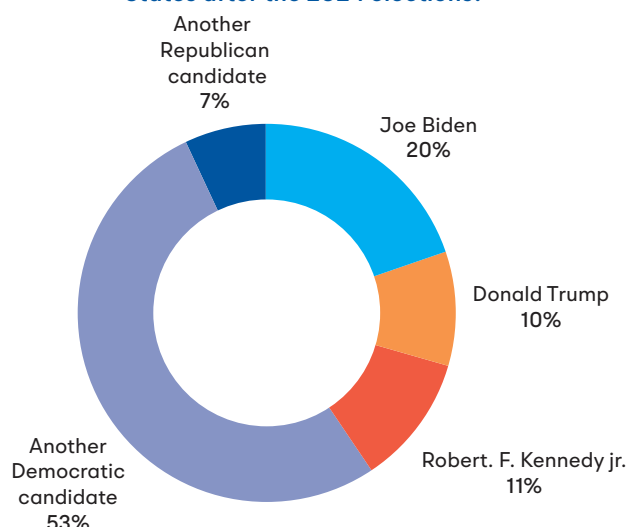
On November 5, the United States will elect a new president. The race between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris remains very tight. This survey looks at Dutch perceptions of US politics in the run-up to the US presidential elections, expectations of US foreign policy, and how the Dutch view the transatlantic security and economic relationship. This representative survey was based on 4427 respondents.² A table with a breakdown of the main findings per political constituency is made available in the Annex.

Who would the Dutch pick?

Obviously, only US citizens can vote in the US elections. But given the pivotal importance of the United States to Dutch foreign policy, and the critical role the US president plays in shaping America’s external affairs, Dutch voters certainly have a preference. Though Kamala Harris was not yet the presumptive candidate of the Democrats when we collected our data, and Robert F. Kennedy was still in the race, we

did give respondents a choice between Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Robert Kennedy, an alternative Democrat, or an alternative Republican: 53% of Dutch respondents indicated they would pick “an alternative Democratic candidate”, 20% would choose Joe Biden, with 10% picking Donald Trump and 11% choosing Robert Kennedy. It shows that the Dutch population is in majority Democrat-leaning. But it also indicates that – regardless of Biden’s record while in office – Dutch respondents would prefer an alternative candidate over him. Support for an alternative Democratic candidate was highest among those that associate themselves with VOLT (73%), GL/PVDA (72%) and other progressive parties. Support for Trump was highest among backers of Forum for Democracy, who were evenly split in picking Trump and Kennedy (both received 46% support). It is striking however, that majorities of PVV voters, whose leader Geert Wilders is known for being a fan of Donald Trump, would prefer an alternative Democratic candidate over Trump (36% and 26% respectively).

Figure 1 If you were allowed to choose, who should become president of the United States after the 2024 elections?



Should Trump win the elections, most Dutch respondents believe that his presidency will have a negative effect on the United States (76%), will weaken the West (70%) and negatively impact the relationship between the US and the Netherlands (74%). There were few

1 We wish to thank Monika Sie Dhian Ho, Mark Elchardus, Peter Haasbroek, Nienke Wessel, Bob Deen, Dick Zandee, Diederick van Wijk, Liam Klein and Saskia Legein for their valuable comments reading previous drafts. Needless to say, all errors remain our own.

2 The data for this survey was collected between 22 and 28 March 2024. The results have been weighted, based on the CBS ‘Gouden Standaard’ on the basis of sex, age, education, ethnicity, Nielsen-region and voting behaviour, making the data representative for the population of the Netherlands.

undecideds on these questions. Almost everyone in the Netherlands seems to have views on Trump, and they are mainly negative. The results suggest that if Trump becomes president, it will require deft diplomacy on the part of the Dutch government and the US embassy to manage those negative perceptions.

Although Kamala Harris was not yet the nominee during our survey, Dutch respondents think that “an alternative Democratic candidate” – whoever that would be – would have a positive impact on both the US (63%) as well as on the US relationship with the Netherlands (56%). These

ratings are higher than if Joe Biden would have been re-elected (36% and 54% respectively). Even so, a large group of respondents is undecided or neutral about the impact of an alternative Democrat (29% and 40% respectively). In short, the Dutch population favours an alternative Democratic candidate over Donald Trump, even though there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding the policy positions of that candidate. Since our polling, Kamala Harris has made clear that she would continue most of the foreign policies of Joe Biden’s administration. One can imagine that generally, this will be viewed favourably by a majority of Dutch respondents.

Figure 2 Suppose one of the following people becomes president. How do you think that would impact the United States?

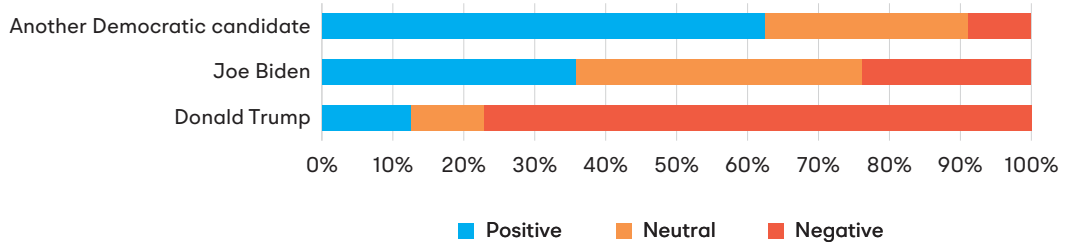


Figure 3 If one of the following people becomes president, the West will become ...

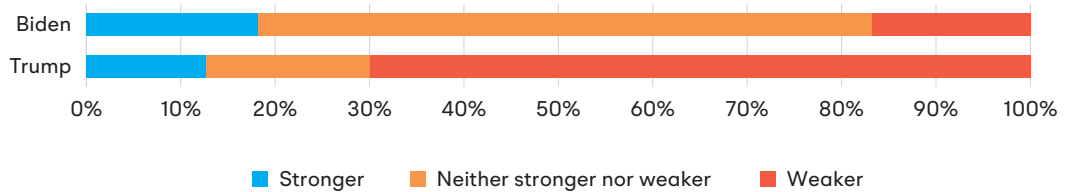
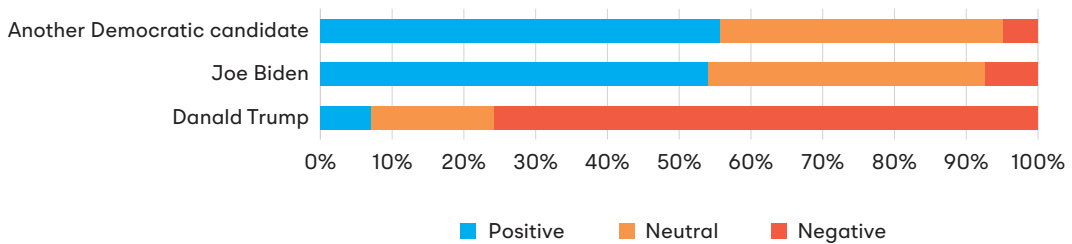


Figure 4 How will winning the presidency by the following candidate impact the relationship between the United States and the Netherlands?



Pessimism about the US, particularly among the young

Respondents draw clear links between the state of the US political system and Washington's relations with Europe. **Nearly nine out of ten respondents (88%) believe that the state of the US democracy is an important factor for America's relationship with Europe.** Furthermore, almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents disagree with the statement that it does not matter what happens in the US democracy, as long as America remains prepared to protect Europe. In other words, events inside the US are seen to matter to Dutch foreign policy. Interestingly, PVV voters are split on this question: 40% think as long as Washington's security commitment to Europe remains credible it does not matter what happens inside the US, but an equally large group (40%) think it does. Among those most concerned about developments inside the US are supporters of progressive parties.

Dutch respondents display a general sense of pessimism about the US. **Three-quarters (74%) said they are somewhat or very pessimistic about US democracy.** This is a view shared by progressive and conservative voters alike: among the different political groups, 89% of D66 voters, 87% of those that support Forum for Democracy and 86% of GL/PVDA voters were pessimistic about the state of US democracy. Our data offers no conclusive answer why this was the case. But one may presume it is informed by the January 6 insurrection, the divisive political rhetoric, the ongoing 'culture war' or the overall hardening of the US political landscape.

As a commentary on the state of US society, nearly two-thirds of Dutch respondents (65%) said it will be more difficult for the next generation of Americans to achieve the 'American Dream.' This is a view shared by all age groups. But **nearly a quarter of 18-34 year olds (24%) said that the 'American Dream does not exist'**, as opposed to 9% of those 65-years and older.

Figure 5 The health of US democracy is important for a good relationship between the United States and Europe

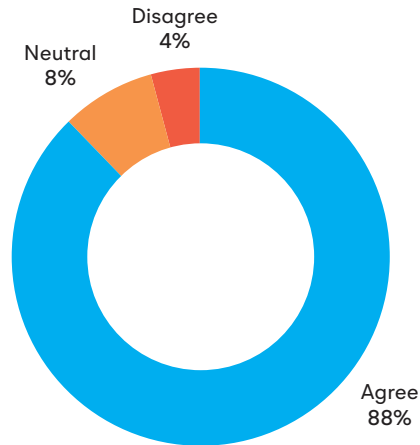


Figure 6 I don't care what happens in American democracy as long as the United States remains willing to protect Europe

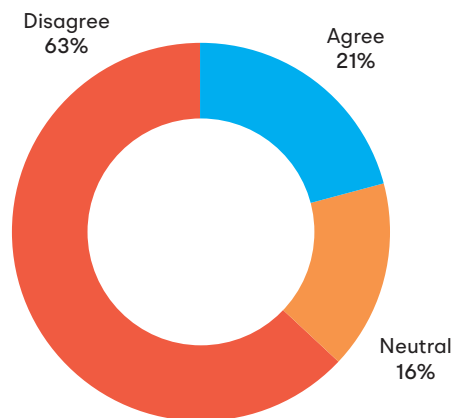
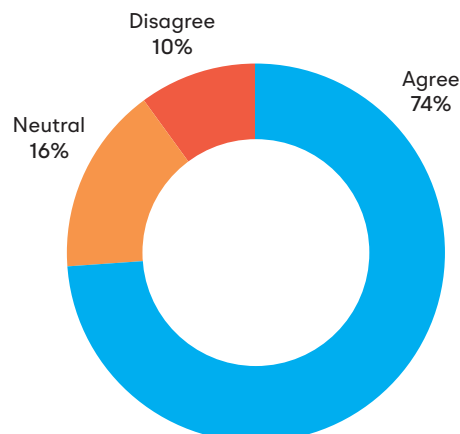


Figure 7 I am pessimistic about the state of American democracy



The Dutch worry about the upcoming elections, and the impact it will have on stability inside the US. Only a small majority of Dutch respondents (51%) believe the US elections will be fair, and 22% think they will not be. These results are surprising and seem to suggest that on the whole, people in the Netherlands are losing confidence in the functioning of US democracy. A large majority expect the US elections to lead to societal unrest (72%). This view is particularly strong among younger respondents: 79% of 18-34 year olds, compared to 67% of those 65-years and older believe there will be societal unrest.

Figure 8 US presidential elections in 2024 will be fair

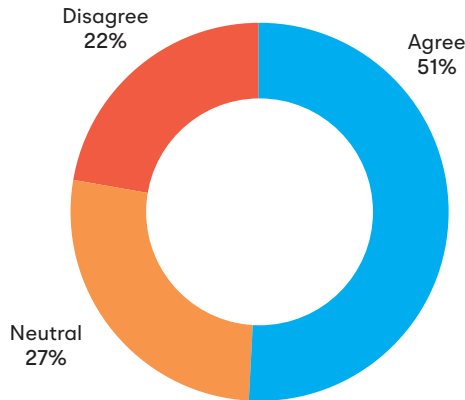
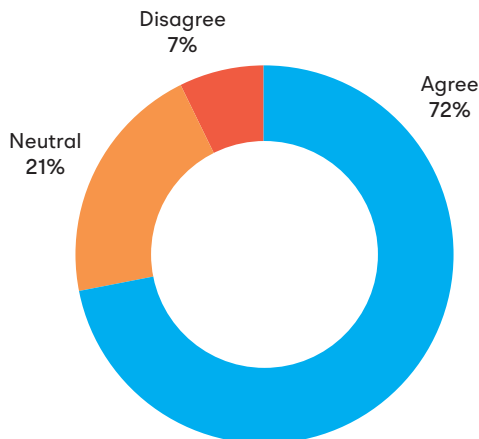


Figure 9 US elections in 2024 will lead to societal unrest in the US



Concern about the Transatlantic Relationship

At the same time, Dutch respondents still see the US as the 'leader of the West' (40%), followed by the EU (26%), while 14% said they do not believe in the existence of a 'West'. Of the larger parties, belief in US leadership is strongest among the VVD. Small majorities of VOLT, the Socialist Party and the Christian Union opted for the EU over the US. Though majorities in all age groups see the US as the 'leader of the West', a significantly larger group of 18-34 year olds (33%) picked the EU, than other demographic cohorts (25% of 35-49 year olds, 23% of 50-64 year olds and 21% of those older than 65).

Figure 10 Who do you see as the leader of the Western world?

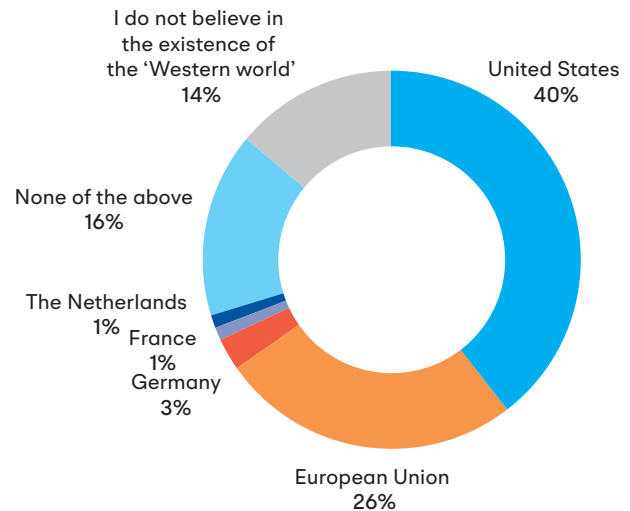
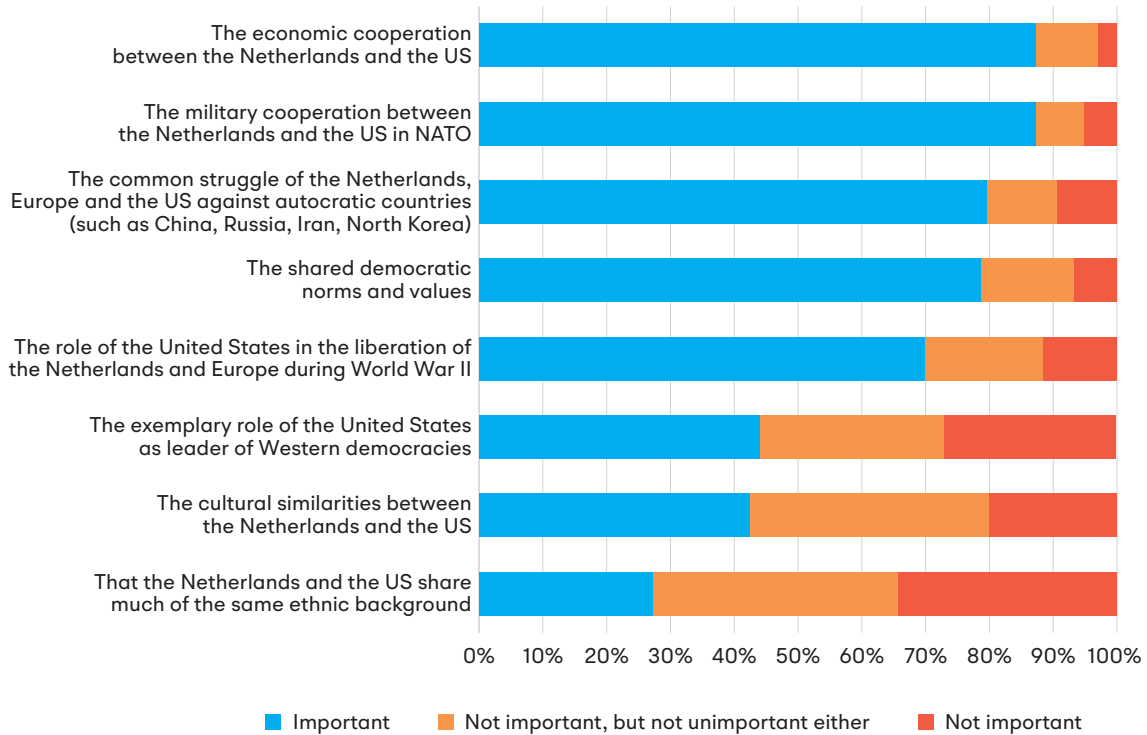


Figure 11 How important are the following elements for the relationship between the Netherlands and the United States?



The chart below highlights what Dutch respondents see as the most important aspects of the bilateral relationship with Washington.

Economic and security links ranked highest, while the importance of ethnic and cultural affinities ranked at the bottom. There is a high degree of commonality in the views of the different political groups. **All governing parties – PVV, VVD, NSC and BBB – rank economic and military cooperation with the US as the two most important dimensions of the Dutch-American relationship**, and this view is more or less shared by all other parties. The only outliers are two small parties on the political fringe, Forum for Democracy and DENK.

The Dutch public’s general sense of concern about the state of US politics is supplemented by a degree of pessimism about the future of the transatlantic relationship. **53% of respondents believe the partnership between Europe and the US will weaken in the years to come, and 50% of respondents agree that US and European interests are diverging.** Younger respondents are also more inclined to see a growing transatlantic

divergence than other age groups (56% of 18-34 year olds, 49% of 35-49 year olds, 50% of 50-64 year olds and 43% of those 65 and older). There is no absolute majority in any political constituency that disagrees that US and European interests are diverging, and every political constituency thinks in majority that the partnership between Europe and the US will weaken in the years to come.

Figure 12 The partnership between the United States and Europe will weaken in the coming years

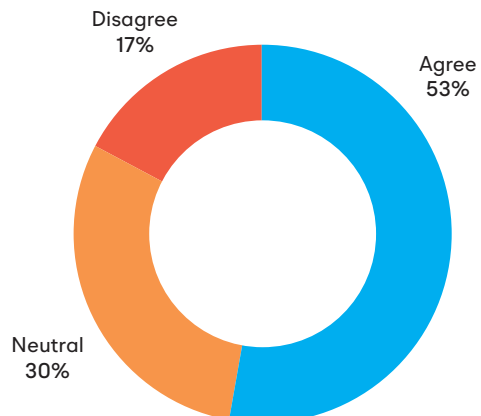


Figure 13 The international interests of the United States and its European allies are increasingly divergent

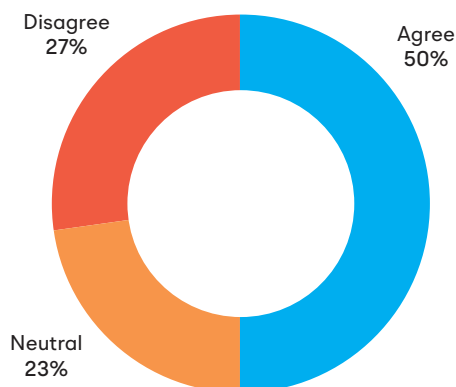
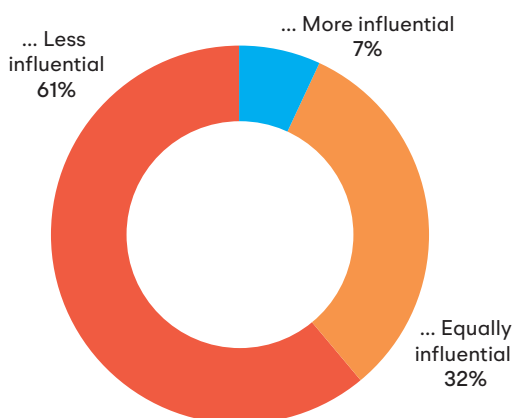


Figure 14 In 20 years, on the world stage the US will be ...



There is also a general perception that the US is in a state of gradual decline: **61% believe that the US will be less influential on the international stage in twenty years' time.** This is a view shared by both progressives and conservatives: three-quarters of GL/PVDA and D66 voters, 83% of Forum for Democracy voters and 97% of DENK voters believe the US will be less influential on the international stage in twenty years' time. Among those least inclined to believe this are PVV voters (47%) and BBB voters (50%).

A strong European industrial policy, but cooperation against China

Trade and investment are a crucial part of the relationship between the US and the Netherlands, but respondents think the Netherlands is overly dependent on the US. In a survey earlier this year, we found that the population in the Netherlands is worried about unwanted economic dependencies, would like to see policies that strengthen the domestic manufacturing base – particularly in the high-tech sector – and is not concerned about the costs of increased economic protectionism.³ Our current survey reinforces those results. There is widespread support for a muscular European industrial policy to offset a growing dependence on the US:

- 76% think Dutch companies are too dependent on American Big Tech;
- 72% support giving European subsidies to companies that may otherwise be persuaded to move to the US. Among the governing parties, this includes 81% of VVD voters, 78% of BBB voters, 76% of NSC voters and 74% of PVV voters;
- 69% support policies to make the Euro a more important international currency and to make Europe less dependent on the US dollar. This includes 69% of PVV voters, a party that has historically been very critical of the introduction of the Euro.

But when it comes to pushing back against Chinese economic influence, the Dutch want to work together with the US. This is a position that has wide cross-party support:

- 66% agree with the statement that the US and Europe should form an economic bloc against China, even if it leads to higher prices. Significant majorities in each political group support this policy, with DENK being the only exception;
- 65% think the Netherlands should not buy semiconductors from China, while 83%

³ “Clingendael Barometer: From Russia shock to Hamas shock”, February 2024, <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/clingendael-barometer-russia-shock-hamas-shock>.

support buying chips from Taiwan or the US. But an even larger percentage (91%) think the EU should boost semiconductor production at home;

- The Dutch population is divided on the question whether the EU should avoid an “economic war” with China because it may jeopardise the supply of critical resources: 33% disagree, 35% agree and 32% are neutral. Yet this question did not factor in the possibility of transatlantic cooperation to promote the supply of critical materials.

It seems **the Dutch population favours the development of a more economically sovereign Europe, which is less dependent on the United States, but it wants to work together with the United States to contain China’s economic rise.** It remains to be seen however, how this hawkish view aligns with the approach of the new European Commission, which emphasises ‘de-risking’ and is more reluctant to follow America’s tough line on China.

Concerns about military dependence on the United States & NATO

In July 2024, the NATO alliance celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. NATO is the oldest and strongest military alliance in modern history and a clear expression of the close relationship between the United States and Europe. But the military relationship between the United States and Europe is not evenly balanced. The strength of the alliance is based primarily on US military power and capability. Adversaries are deterred by the NATO alliance, in large part because of the strength of the US military, its nuclear capabilities and Washington’s commitment to NATO’s security guarantee. In the Netherlands, people appear to acknowledge this imbalance and feel that Europe and the Netherlands are overly dependent on the US for their security. Increasingly, they believe Europe should strengthen its own military capabilities. **A large majority of respondents (88%) say that Europe is dependent on the United States for its security and 79% indicate the reliance on US military resources is a problem for the Netherlands.** Majorities in each political group hold these views.

Figure 15 How (in)dependent is Europe on the United States for its defence?

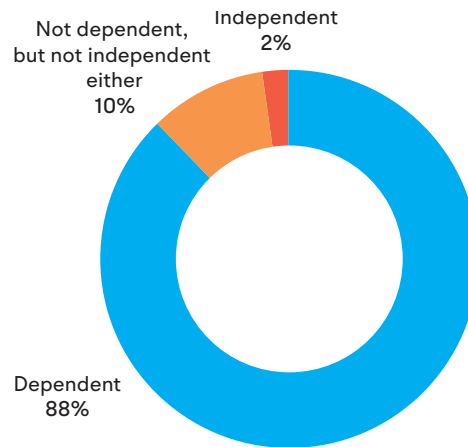
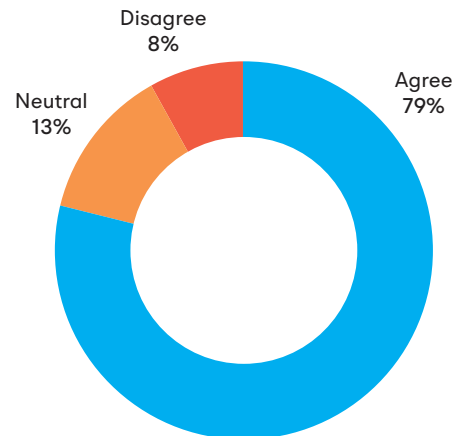


Figure 16 The Netherlands’ reliance on US military resources is problematic



Over the past few years, there has been growing concern about the future of America’s military commitment to European security. In 2018, President Trump called the US security guarantee into question at a NATO meeting. In 2019, French president Emmanuel Macron called the NATO alliance “brain dead”. Trump’s vice-presidential candidate JD Vance wrote earlier this year that “the United States has provided a blanket of security to Europe for far too long” and that America’s security guarantees for Europe have allowed Europe to “neglect its own security”, hinting that America’s security role in Europe may be reduced.⁴ The argument that Europe should

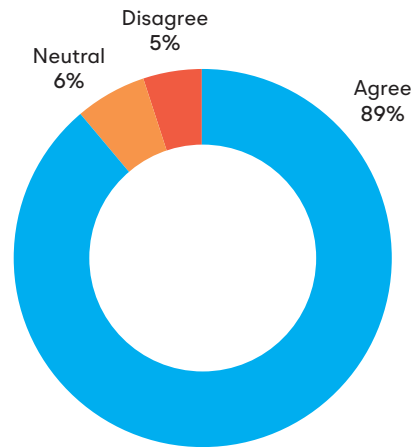
⁴ “JD Vance: Europe must stand on its own two feet on defence”, Financial Times, 19 February 2024.

step up and play a larger role in its own security is often connected to a broader trend in US foreign policy thinking. Known as the ‘Asia pivot’, it holds that the US will increasingly prioritise security challenges in the Asia-Pacific and reorient military and financial resources towards Asia and away from Europe. In the first months of 2024, President Biden struggled to convince a sceptical US Congress to continue funding Ukraine’s military effort against Russia. It became a reality check for European governments, who experienced a first taste of what it might be like if the US indeed stopped caring as much about European security.

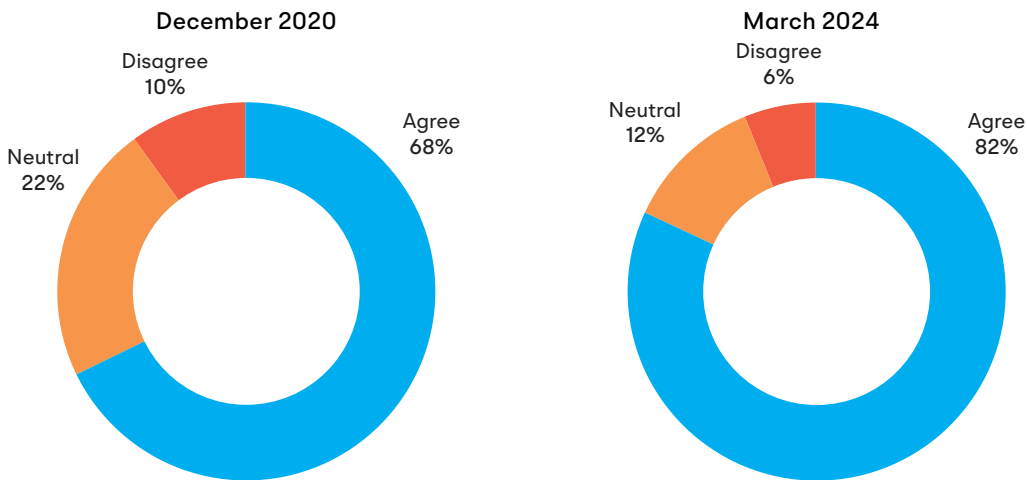
For decades, US officials have called for more ‘burden-sharing’ and higher defence spending among European allies. In 2014, NATO allies agreed the Wales spending pledge, whereby allies committed themselves to reach a defence spending level of at least 2% of GDP by 2024. Russia’s war against Ukraine created a renewed sense of urgency among European countries to invest more in defence. It also led the alliance to admit two new members – Sweden and Finland. This year 23 of 32 NATO allies, including the Netherlands, achieved the 2% spending target, though NATO discussions are now focused on the question how to increase that target. Parallel to the conversation on defence spending levels is the issue of reducing the level of fragmentation of European defence industries and European procurement policies.

In this context, it should perhaps come as no surprise that **89% of Dutch respondents believe that European militaries should cooperate much more, including by strengthening the European military industry.** In 2020, we asked this same question. We found a 14%-point increase in support for strengthening European defense industrial cooperation in 2024 (up from 68%). Much of this increase can probably be attributed to the deterioration of Europe’s geopolitical circumstances and the war in Ukraine, but concern about over-dependence on the United States inevitably plays a role. Only Forum for Democracy voters feel that European countries should not cooperate more on defence (even though Forum’s supporters also see European military dependence on the US as a problem).

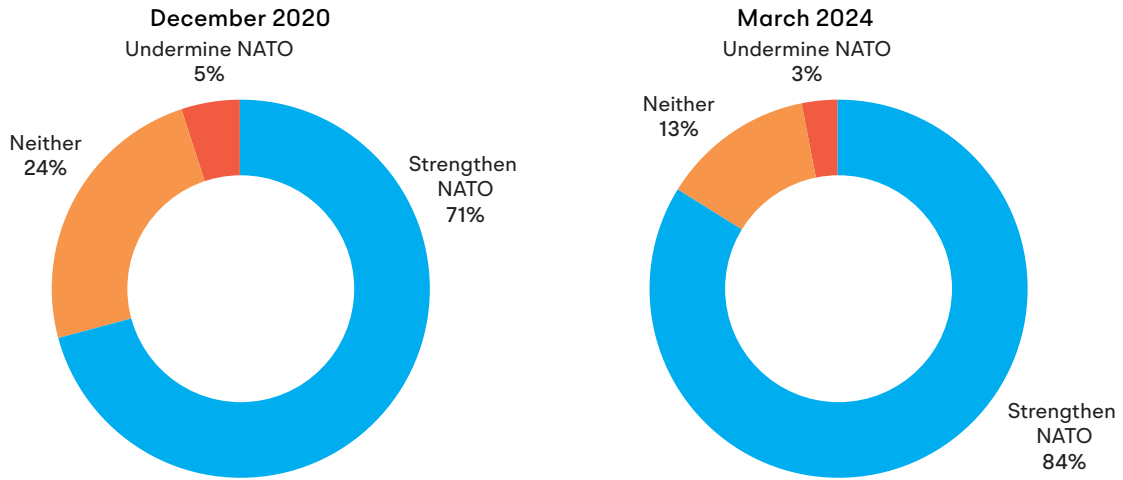
Figure 17 European countries need much more defence cooperation



Figures 18 & 19 It is important to strengthen Europe’s defence industry to produce more of its own military equipment



Figures 20 & 21 A more militarily autonomous Europe will...



To say that European countries should do more on defence industrial cooperation is not the same as saying that the Dutch no longer support NATO. They do, and the Dutch are also optimistic that a more militarily independent Europe will benefit NATO. 84% say that greater European military independence would strengthen NATO. Since 2020, support for this statement has increased 13 percentage points (up from 71% in 2020). **No political constituency in the Netherlands thinks that a militarily more independent Europe will undermine NATO.** A majority also believe that NATO is beneficial to both the US and to Europe (57%).

But there are growing concerns about the US security guarantee. **A majority (52%) think that it is not a given the US will continue to protect Europe and that it depends on the election result.** Two-thirds of progressive voters – 69% of GL/PVDA respondents, 67% of VOLT respondents, 67% of Partij voor de Dieren respondents – think this is the case. As do more than half of the voters of VVD (52%), NSC (53%) and CDA (53%). Should Dutch concerns materialise, however, and should the US withdraw from the alliance, 70% continue to see value in the alliance.

Figure 22 The United States and Europe have a strong security alliance, thanks in part to close cooperation in NATO. This security alliance is...

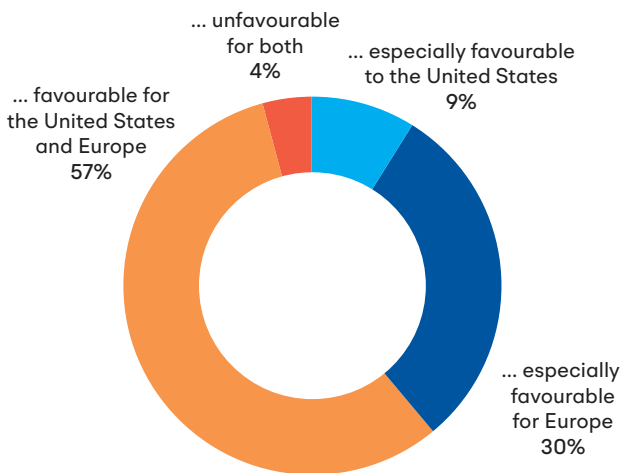
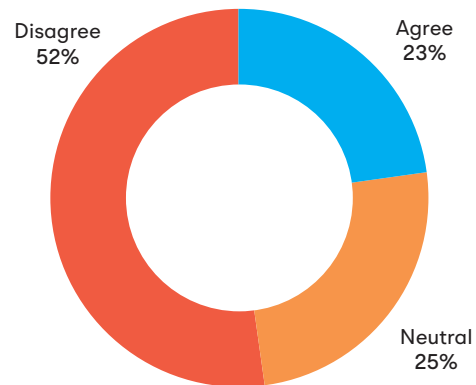


Figure 23 Whichever candidate wins the election, the US will remain prepared to protect Europe



Continued support for Ukraine, regardless

One area where US isolationism or a withdrawal from European security would be felt most keenly is in US support for Ukraine. In early 2024 it was unclear whether the US would continue its large-scale military and financial aid for Ukraine. Members of US Congress refused to agree to more support for Ukraine if president Biden did not support stronger measures to prevent illegal migration on the border. For several weeks, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson did not put a military aid package for Ukraine to a vote. It fueled concern across Europe that US aid to Ukraine might end.

There remains widespread support among the Dutch population to continue its military and financial aid for Ukraine. 63% say more European support for Ukraine will increase European security. If the United States withdraws its support for Kyiv, 32% think Europe should continue with the current level of support to compensate for American losses; and 49% think Europe should increase its support. **Nearly one-fifth (19%) think that if the US withdraws support for Ukraine, Europe should follow its lead and do the same.** Among the different political groupings, nearly all Forum for Democracy voters (96%) would withdraw support, and so would two-thirds of DENK supporters. The constituencies that are most willing for Europe to step in to compensate for an end of US support to Kyiv are D66 (72%), GL/PVDA (71%), ChristenUnie (67%), Volt (66%), CDA (65%) and VVD (62%). The political groups that make up the other members of the coalition government were less outspoken: BBB voters are split between giving more support to Ukraine or sustaining current levels of aid. Most notably however, the PVV is undecided. Geert Wilders has previously questioned the benefit of continued financial and military support for Ukraine. But if the US withdraws its financial and military aid for Ukraine, his voters are torn between sustaining current levels of support (36%), doing more (29%) or stopping aid altogether (36%). Indeed, since leading his party into government, Geert Wilders has become softer on this issue.

Figure 24 More European support for Ukraine will ...

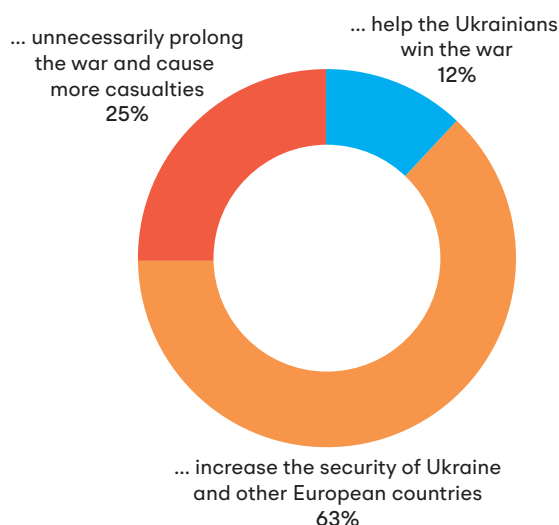
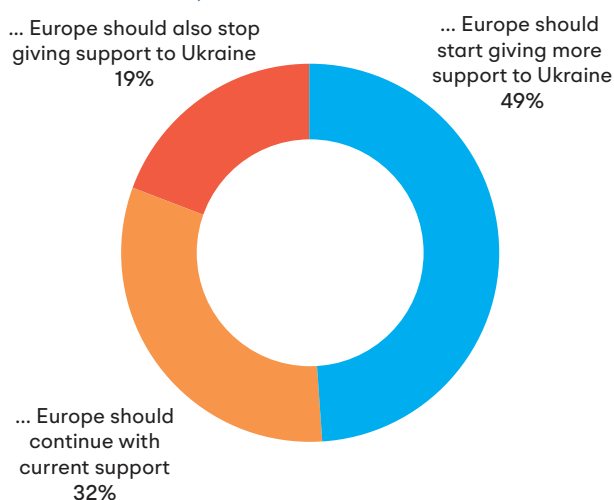


Figure 25 If the United States stops supporting Ukraine, ...



Of course, calling for more aid for Ukraine is one thing, actually delivering it another. But it is not surprising perhaps, that many of the constituencies that want more support for Ukraine, also want stronger European military cooperation as well as stronger European defense-industrial cooperation (see Annex).

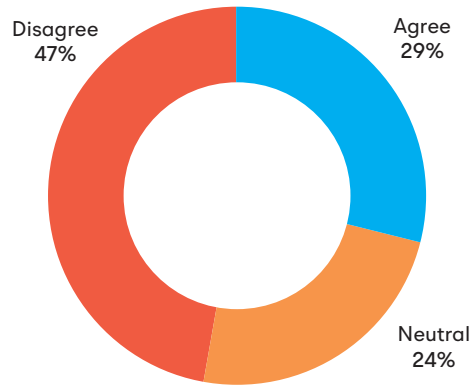
No support for a geographic division of labour

As tensions between the US and China increase and given practical limitations on US military resources, there is an ongoing transatlantic discussion whether Europe should focus more on its own region, thereby enabling Washington to ‘pivot to Asia’. This would lead to European countries taking more responsibility, in terms of military capabilities and resources, for security in its own neighbourhood – certainly to support Ukraine, and possibly in the Middle East as well – so that the US can free up its military to focus on the Asia-Pacific. At the 2024 Munich Security Conference, Republican vice-presidential candidate JD Vance said that “yes, I think that we should pivot [to Asia]. The United States has to focus more on East Asia. That is going to be the future of US foreign policy for the next 40 years and Europe has to wake up to that fact.”

We found, however, **no majority support for a ‘geographic division of labour’ among the Dutch population whereby the US would prioritise security challenges in Asia, and Europeans would take the lead for European security.**

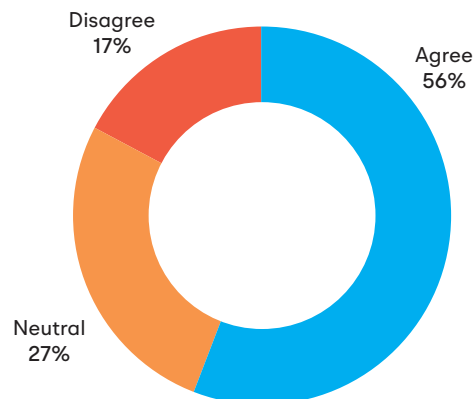
Only 29% agree with the statement that Europe should primarily focus on security in its own neighbourhood and the US should focus on China and Asia, while 47% disagree and 23% don’t know. Particularly young and progressive voters disagree with the idea of a geographic division of labour. In general, there is no political constituency in favour of this. There are absolute majorities against it: this includes supporters of D66, GL/PVDA, VVD, DENK, Volt, ChristenUnie and Partij voor de Dieren. The constituencies of PVV and BBB are split on the question, while a plurality of Forum for Democracy voters would agree to a division of labour.

Figure 26 Europe should focus on security in its own region (North Africa, Middle East, Eurasia) and the US should focus on China and the rest of Asia



Similarly, 56% of Dutch respondents think EU countries, including the Netherlands, should be active militarily in the Indo-Pacific to protect their (commercial) interests. The political constituencies of JA21, PVV, VVD, Volt and D66 feel this most strongly, while pluralities among Forum for Democracy and DENK voters think this would be a bad idea. What that role should specifically be was not part of this survey but is obviously a crucial follow-up question.

Figure 27 EU member states, including the Netherlands, should have a military presence in the Indian Ocean and Pacific to protect their interests (e.g.: free movement of commercial vessels)



What to do in the event of a Taiwan crisis?

One of the flashpoints in Asia where a major security crisis involving the US could erupt is Taiwan. China has said repeatedly that it considers Taiwan a breakaway province that should be brought into the fold, and one possibility is that in the years to come Beijing may be tempted to blockade and even annex the island. President Joe Biden has said that US forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.⁵

The prospect of a China-US military clash over Taiwan would have global ramifications, not in the least because of the shockwaves it would send through global supply chains with serious negative effects for the global economy. Also, a military conflict involving the United States would raise the possibility that the NATO alliance would become involved. It is therefore important for European countries, including the Netherlands, to reflect on courses of action should such a scenario arise.

Under current conditions, when a conflict has not erupted but a simmering ‘Cold War’ is taking shape, we found that the Dutch population is split between staying neutral (52%) and supporting the United States (47%). But when asked what the Netherlands should do if China and the US become engaged in military hostilities over Taiwan, a small majority of respondents favours taking action to support the United States: respondent views range from supporting the US militarily (15%), cutting economic ties with China (14%), doing both (27%), or taking no steps (44%). Majorities of DENK and Forum for Democracy do not want to take any steps. BBB is split between doing nothing (50%) and doing something (23% want to give military support, 6% want to cut economic ties with China and 21% would do both).

Figure 28 If there is a new Cold War, but this time between the United States and China, ...

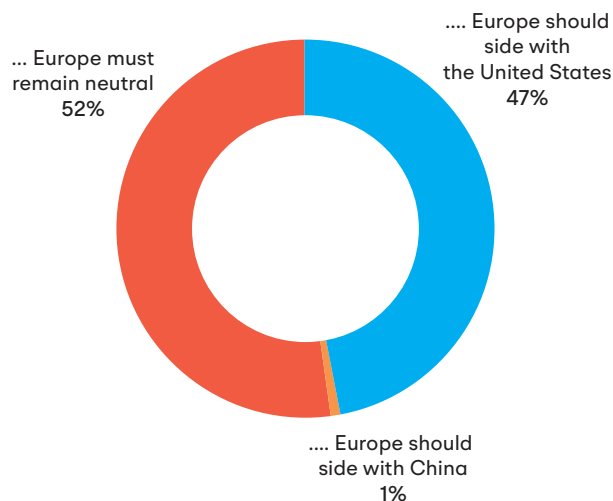
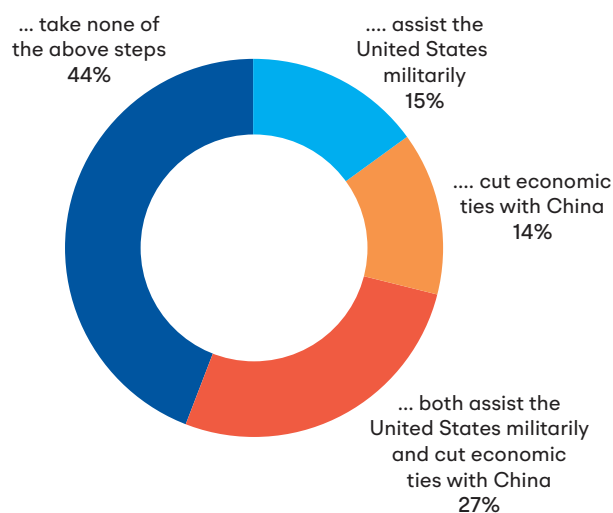
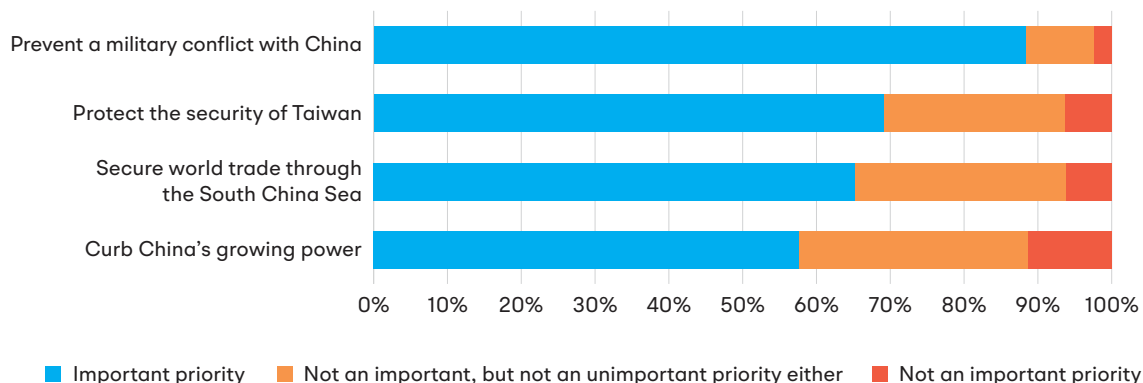


Figure 29 If the United States and China get into a military conflict over Taiwan, the Netherlands should...



5 David Brunnstrom & Trevor Hunnicutt, “[Biden says US forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion](#)”, Reuters, 19 September 2022,

Figure 30 Tensions are rising between the United States and China.
What should be US priorities towards China?



What do Dutch respondents think US foreign policy towards China should focus on? Here, a majority feels that preventing a military conflict should be the overarching priority, followed by the objective to protect Taiwan and securing trade. These priorities, however, may be at cross purposes with each other. After all, US military escalation may be necessary to deter a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, but this may increase tensions in the region, which would have negative consequences for trade across the region and beyond.

On the question of the growing geopolitical competition between the US and China, supporters of Forum for Democracy prefer the Netherlands to avoid choosing sides (84%). By contrast, though a majority of PVV voters also lean to staying neutral (56%), a large minority (43%) would support the US. This highlights a cleavage on the conservative side of the political spectrum, which has also become apparent in other responses in this survey: Forum for Democracy supporters think the Netherlands should not be active in the Indo-Pacific, but PVV voters think it should. Forum for Democracy voters see no problem in continuing to buy Chinese microchips, while the constituency of the PVV think this is problematic. And as we have seen at the beginning, Forum for Democracy supporters are positive about the prospects of a Trump presidency, while PVV supporters are not.

The push and pull of the transatlantic relationship

From this survey several issues become apparent that the government of the Netherlands will have to address in its relations with a new US administration. There is a clear paradox: Dutch voters seek more European sovereignty, both in military and economic terms, but at the same time they want close cooperation with the US, particularly when it comes to dealing with China and the Asia-Pacific in general. This is compounded by a common belief that US and European interests are diverging and that the US security guarantee for Europe is fragile. How can the Dutch government pursue a strategy of increased European sovereignty – a form of independence from the US or ‘strategic autonomy’ – without giving the impression that Europe really wants to go it alone?

A number of paradoxes can be identified in the data that hint at this dilemma. The Dutch population recognises US leadership of the West but also a gradual decline of America’s international standing in the years to come. A majority of Dutch respondents would support the US economically or militarily if a conflict erupted between China and the US over Taiwan, but a majority question whether the US security guarantee for Europe will continue. Half of Dutch respondents believe the transatlantic relationship will deteriorate in years to come, but a majority wants to form an economic bloc with the US against China. These

paradoxes demonstrate the push and pull of the transatlantic relationship. In foreign policy terms, it can be described as a form of separation anxiety. The Dutch population observes a transatlantic drift and expects its government to prepare accordingly, but that same population is unprepared or unwilling to see this transatlantic pessimism lead to irreparable rifts. Ultimately, it seems the Dutch public wants to retain a close relationship with Washington, but that new relationship must be based on an equal, more autonomous, footing. To understand, nourish and manage this relationship will require constant focus and attention in The Hague. How to achieve this, will be a key policy objective in the years to come, which will also require continuous engagement with the Dutch public at large. Particularly that is, if the winner in November is Donald Trump.

But there is one conclusion that stands out, regardless of the election result: the traditional view that the Dutch are unreservedly Atlanticist should be nuanced. We see significant pessimism among Dutch respondents about the state of US democracy, concerns about Dutch and European dependence on the US, and doubts about the US-European relationship. Policymakers, politicians and opinion-leaders should be aware that whatever the outcome of the US elections, the transatlantic partnership is undergoing significant change.

ANNEX

Figure A Dutch companies are too dependent on US software companies, such as Microsoft (Outlook, Teams, etc), Amazon (cloud services) and X and Facebook (social media)

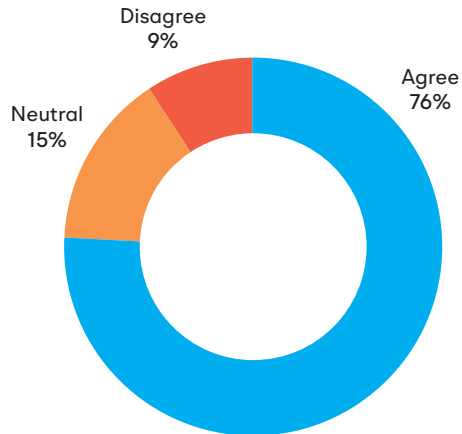


Figure C To become less economically dependent on the US dollar, the European Union should seek to make the Euro a more important international currency

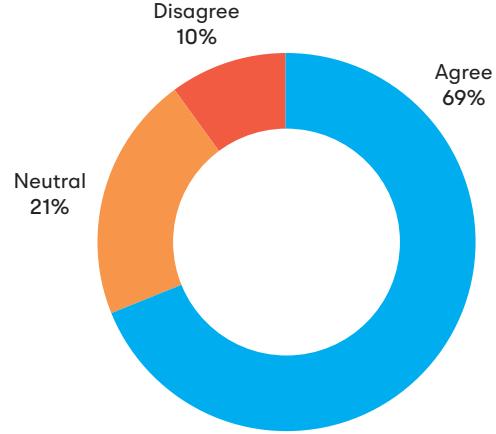


Figure B The EU should make money available to European companies to prevent them from moving to the US, now that the US is trying to bring them in with subsidies

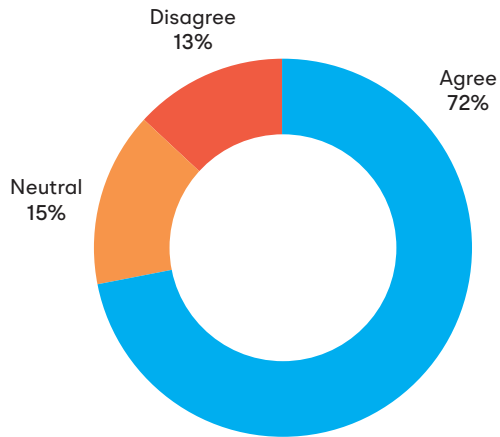


Figure D America and Europe must form an economic bloc against China, even if it makes products more expensive because we get less cheap stuff from China

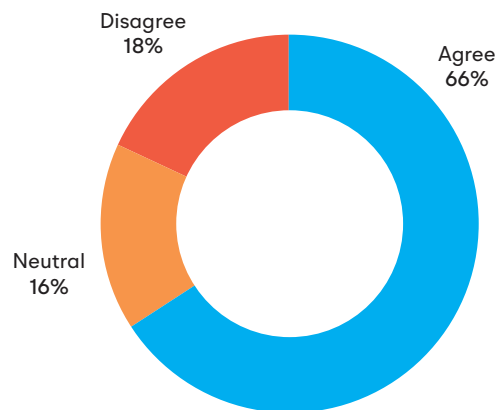


Figure E Which of the policy options below do you support, when it comes to securing access to microchips?

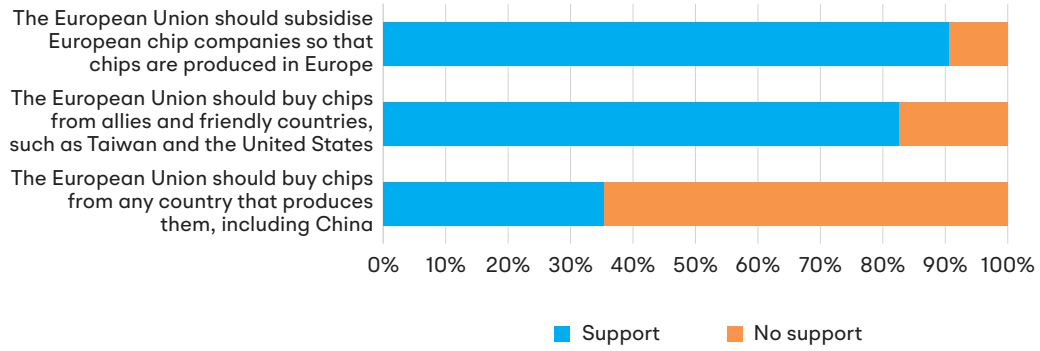


Figure F The European Union should not wage an economic war against China or else the supply of these raw materials will be jeopardised

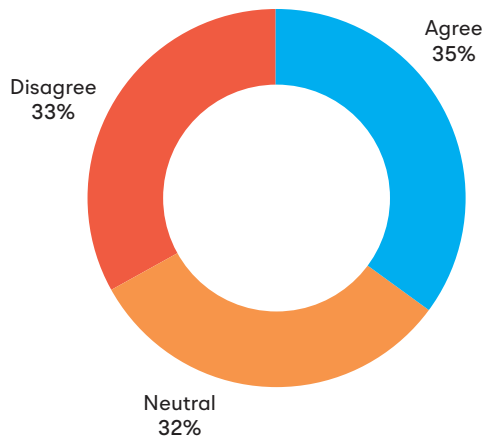


Figure G Results per political constituency on most relevant points (percentage of constituency that agrees with statement)

	PVV	GL-PvdA	VVD	NSC	D66	BBB	CDA	SP	FvD	PvdD	SGP	DENK	CU	Volt	Don't know	Non-voters	Total
Donald Trump's impact as President of the United States is negative	57%	99%	84%	88%	95%	78%	87%	80%	6%	89%	58%	32%	92%	97%	83%	61%	77%
If Trump becomes president, the West will become weaker	50%	88%	75%	77%	90%	69%	89%	90%	8%	82%	54%	67%	87%	84%	74%	53%	70%
Donald Trump's impact as president on the NL-US relationship is negative	61%	86%	81%	86%	92%	74%	84%	77%	25%	92%	61%	56%	92%	84%	83%	59%	76%
US presidential election in 2024 will be fair	44%	62%	59%	58%	61%	50%	61%	54%	6%	48%	70%	27%	73%	71%	43%	26%	51%
The US presidential elections in 2024 will lead to social unrest in the US	69%	83%	74%	71%	81%	68%	68%	68%	59%	75%	63%	64%	68%	61%	70%	68%	72%
I am pessimistic about the state of US democracy	60%	86%	72%	65%	89%	55%	73%	85%	87%	89%	58%	47%	64%	83%	80%	85%	74%
Whichever candidate wins the election, the US will remain prepared to protect Europe	33%	11%	25%	21%	20%	30%	22%	28%	28%	18%	48%	34%	18%	20%	22%	9%	23%
Europe should focus primarily on security in its own region and the US should focus primarily on China and the rest of Asia	39%	20%	26%	27%	18%	33%	35%	31%	41%	14%	36%	19%	14%	18%	30%	35%	29%
European countries need to cooperate much more on defence	85%	96%	98%	95%	94%	91%	97%	96%	24%	94%	78%	58%	95%	95%	93%	68%	89%
The Netherlands' dependence on US military resources is problematic	78%	80%	75%	81%	77%	77%	81%	86%	69%	82%	66%	83%	74%	85%	82%	75%	78%
It is important to strengthen the European defence industry to produce more of Europe's own military equipment	84%	78%	90%	90%	78%	90%	88%	81%	56%	82%	82%	92%	81%	90%	80%	65%	82%
If the United States stops supporting Ukraine, European countries should maintain or increase their aid to Ukraine	64%	98%	95%	93%	97%	85%	97%	84%	5%	96%	79%	37%	100%	93%	86%	54%	81%
If the United States and China get into a military conflict over Taiwan, the Netherlands should support the US either economically or militarily, or both.	54%	68%	59%	65%	71%	50%	69%	64%	15%	62%	70%	27%	71%	71%	48%	27%	56%
Securing global trade through the South China Sea should be a priority for the US as tensions between the US and China rise.	71%	64%	72%	69%	74%	71%	70%	65%	58%	58%	82%	57%	58%	55%	64%	39%	65%
Preventing military conflict with China should be a priority for the US as US-China tensions rise.	86%	93%	89%	87%	89%	91%	92%	89%	80%	91%	88%	76%	93%	89%	93%	73%	88%
America and Europe should form an economic bloc against China, even if it makes products more expensive because we get less cheap stuff from China	58%	76%	73%	76%	73%	63%	71%	72%	32%	74%	82%	8%	83%	71%	65%	52%	66%
Dutch companies are too dependent on American software companies, such as Microsoft, Amazon, X and Facebook	75%	77%	71%	78%	71%	76%	76%	92%	85%	76%	65%	85%	71%	82%	77%	72%	76%

About the Clingendael Institute

Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations – is a leading think tank and academy on international affairs. Through our analyses, training and public debate we aim to inspire and equip governments, businesses, and civil society in order to contribute to a secure, sustainable and just world.

www.clingendael.org
info@clingendael.org
+31 70 324 53 84

 @clingendaelorg
 The Clingendael Institute
 The Clingendael Institute
 clingendael_institute
 Clingendael Institute
 Newsletter

About the authors

Dr. Rem Korteweg is Senior Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute. He works on Europe's strategic role in the world, with a specific focus on the intersection between trade, foreign policy and security issues. He is also head of the Clingendael US Programme (CUSP).

Christopher Houtkamp is senior research fellow at the Clingendael Institute and head of the Resilience programme within the Security Unit of Clingendael and programme leader of the survey research as part of the Clingendael Foreign Policy Barometer.

Teun van der Laan is junior research fellow at the Clingendael Institute. He focuses on survey research in the context of the Clingendael Foreign Barometer and research as part of the Resilience programme.