

UTokyo ROLES Survey
SAFER
(Security, Alliance, and Foreign Engagement Research)
Sep 2026



東大先端研

Research Center for
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The University of Tokyo

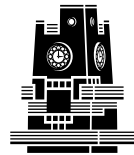
ROLES

UTokyo ROLES Survey

SAFER (Security, Alliance, and Foreign Engagement Research) September 2026

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The color scheme of this report references the UK government agency's color diversity guidelines.

Aim and Scope of this Survey:

The primary purpose of this survey, which began in August 2024, is to elucidate how people perceive Japan's diplomacy, national security, and the international situation surrounding Japan. The media have conducted similar surveys on these themes in the past. Nonetheless, the questions were often limited in scope and conducted sporadically. Thus, they were not necessarily designed to capture long-term trends. Our survey aims to understand the public's perceptions amid the rapidly changing international environment surrounding Japan. Further, it seeks to examine them from a long-term perspective while comparing them with similar surveys conducted in other countries to achieve a deeper understanding.

On our 5th Survey:

Since the previous survey in February 2026, a series of major developments has taken place, including the war in Iran and the Hormuz crisis, the Japan–U.S. and U.S.–China summits, and the relaxation of restrictions on Japan's defense exports.

During this period, there have been some changes in the Japanese public's perceptions of foreign and security issues. Perceptions of the U.S. have shifted: the proportions of respondents who view Japan–U.S. relations as good and who believe that U.S. influence is growing have once again declined. By contrast, there has been little change in the proportion who believe that Japan is protected by the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” or in public confidence that the U.S. would intervene militarily in the event of a contingency.

Public anxiety about Japan's security environment remains strong, driven by perceptions of threats from China, Russia, and North Korea. Some 60 to 70 percent of respondents believe that Japan could become involved in conflicts in the Middle East, on the Korean Peninsula, or over Taiwan. While support for increasing defense spending and strengthening the Japan–U.S. alliance exceeds opposition, there remains strong opposition to both Japan developing its own nuclear weapons and the U.S. deploying nuclear weapons on Japanese soil.

The latest survey also found an increase in the proportion of respondents who regard an energy crisis as an immediate threat to Japan's security. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that respondents willing to accept higher energy prices resulting from sanctions against Russia outnumber those unwilling to do so.

Methodology

Survey Title: Survey SAFER (Security, Alliance, and Foreign Engagement Research)

Survey Period: August 18-20, 2026

Sample Size: N = 2009

Margin of Errors: 2.19% (Confidence level 95%)

Survey Mode: CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing)

Population: Japanese citizens aged 18 -79.

Sampling Method (Quota sampling):

Stratification: Stratified by sex, age group, and region* of residence based on census data.

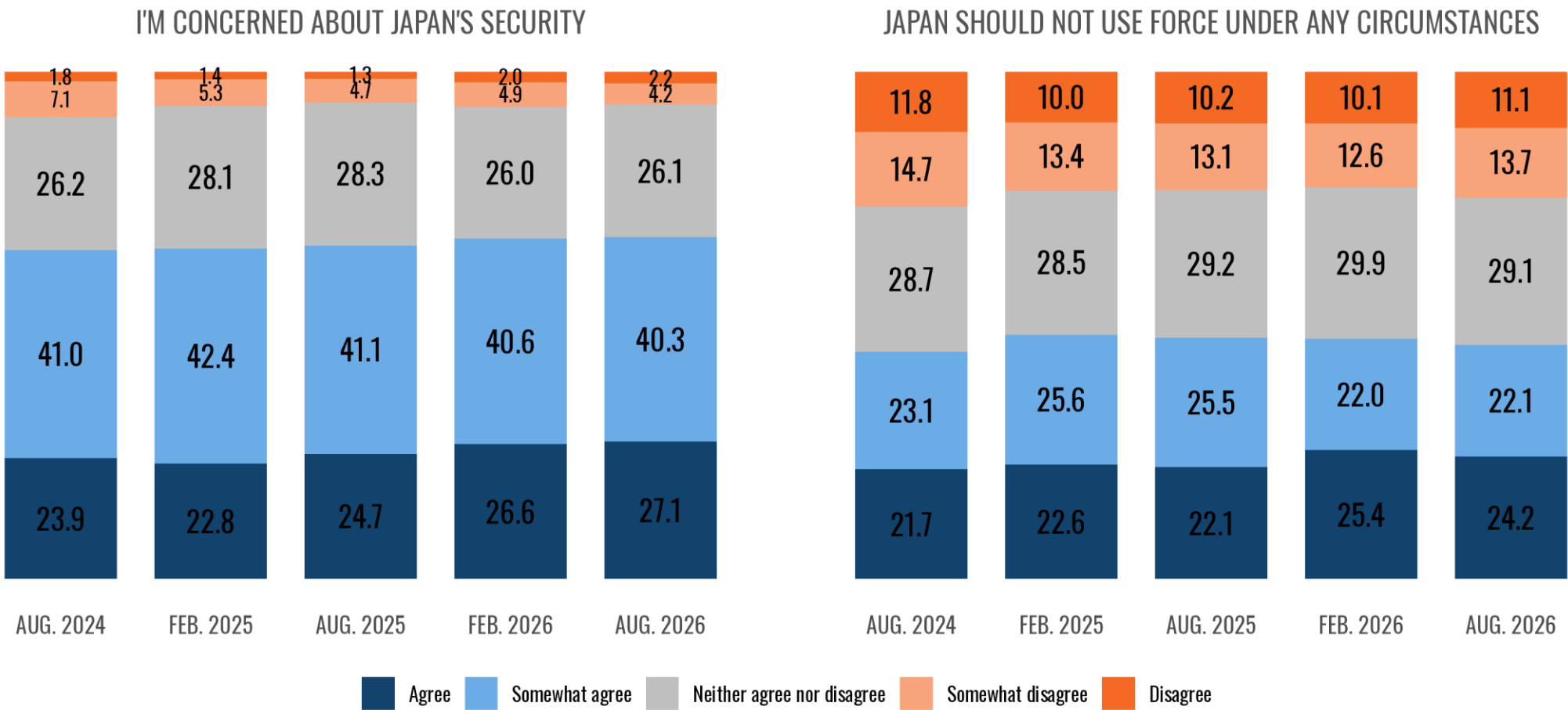
* 7 regions; Hokkaido/Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu/Okinawa

Sample: Distributed to registered monitors of Rakuten Insight.

This survey was approved by the IRB - The Ethics Review Expert Committee, The University of Tokyo (Review No. 23-363).

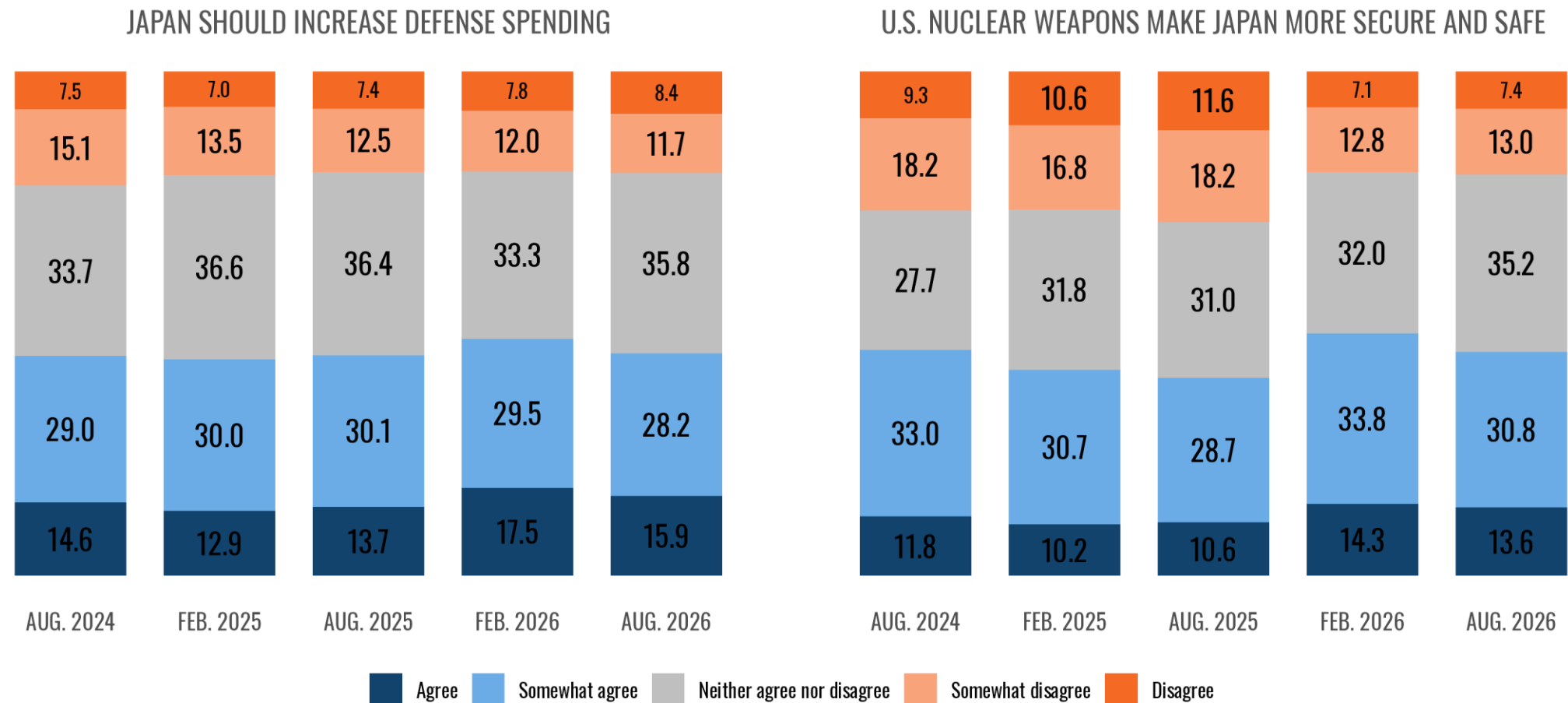
Survey Results

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (%) n = 2009



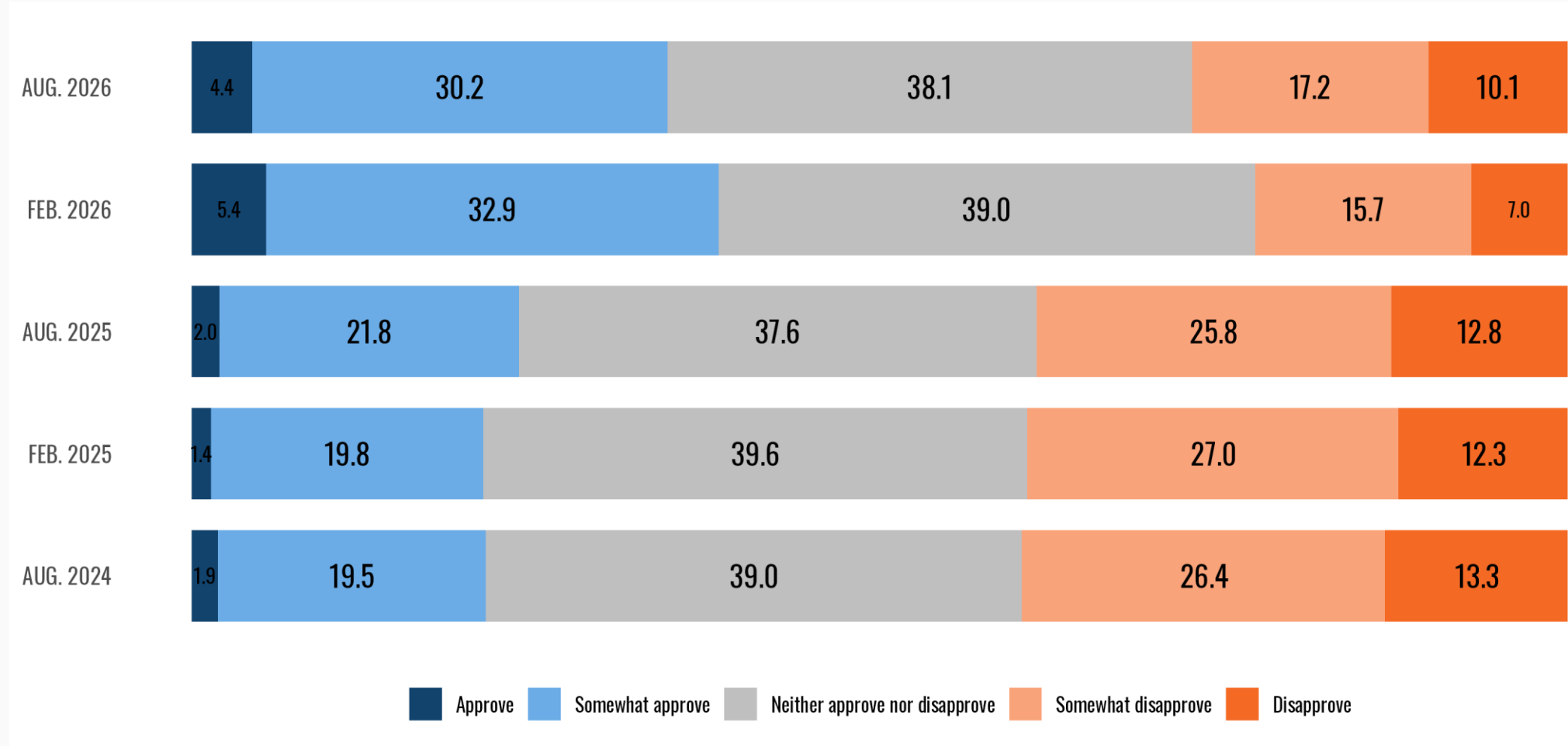
- Approximately 65% of respondents expressed concern about Japan's security.
- Over 45% of respondents think that force should not be used under any circumstances.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (%) n = 2009



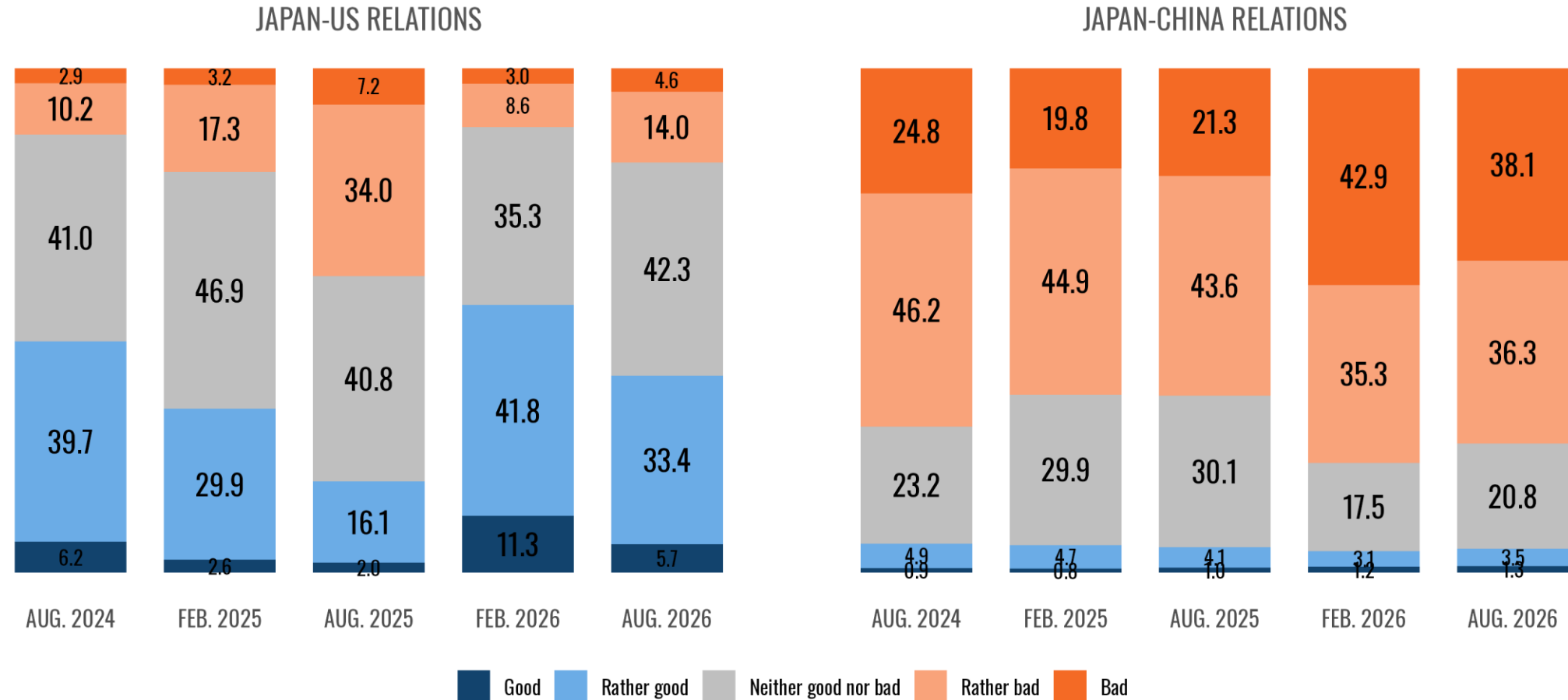
- Those who favor an increase in defense spending are twice as likely as those who are against it
- Those who believe Japan's security is protected by the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" have outweighed those who do not.

Do you approve or disapprove of how the current Japanese government handles foreign and security issues in general? (%) n = 2009



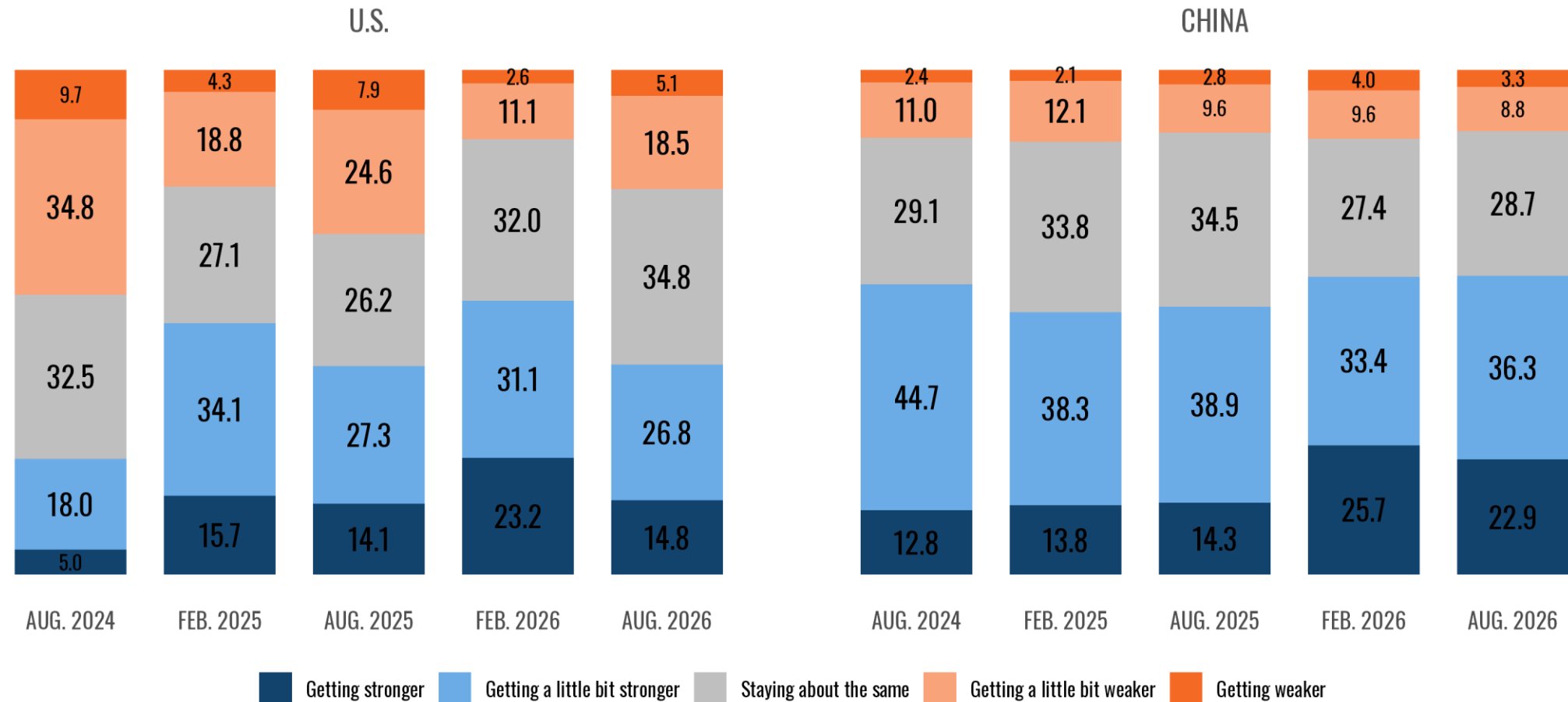
➤ There are more people who are in favor of the current administration's handling of foreign policy and security issues.

Do you think the current Japan-U.S. and Japan-China relations are good or bad? (%) n = 2009



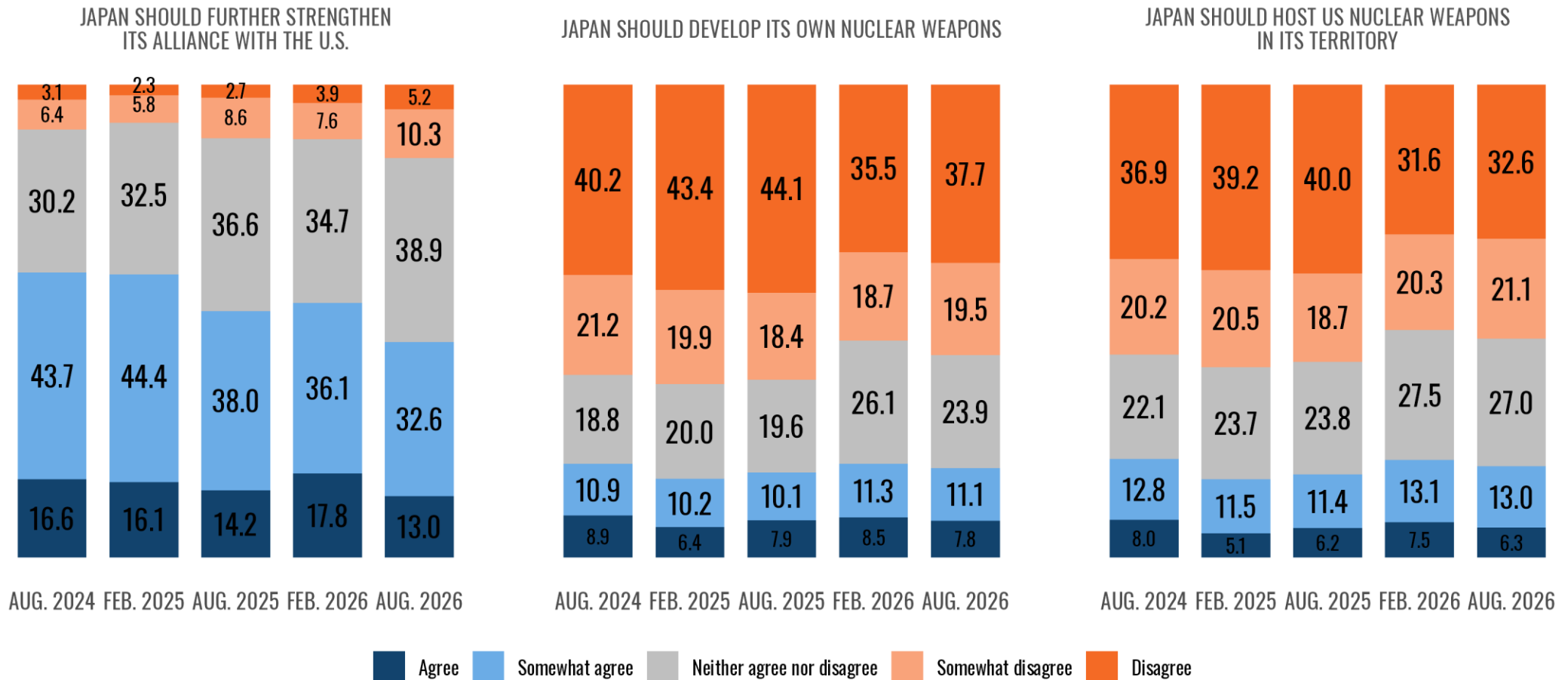
- The percentage of respondents who view Japan–U.S. relations as good has decreased again.
- The majority view Japan-China relations as bad.

Do you think the U.S./China influence in the world is currently getting stronger or weaker? (%) n = 2009



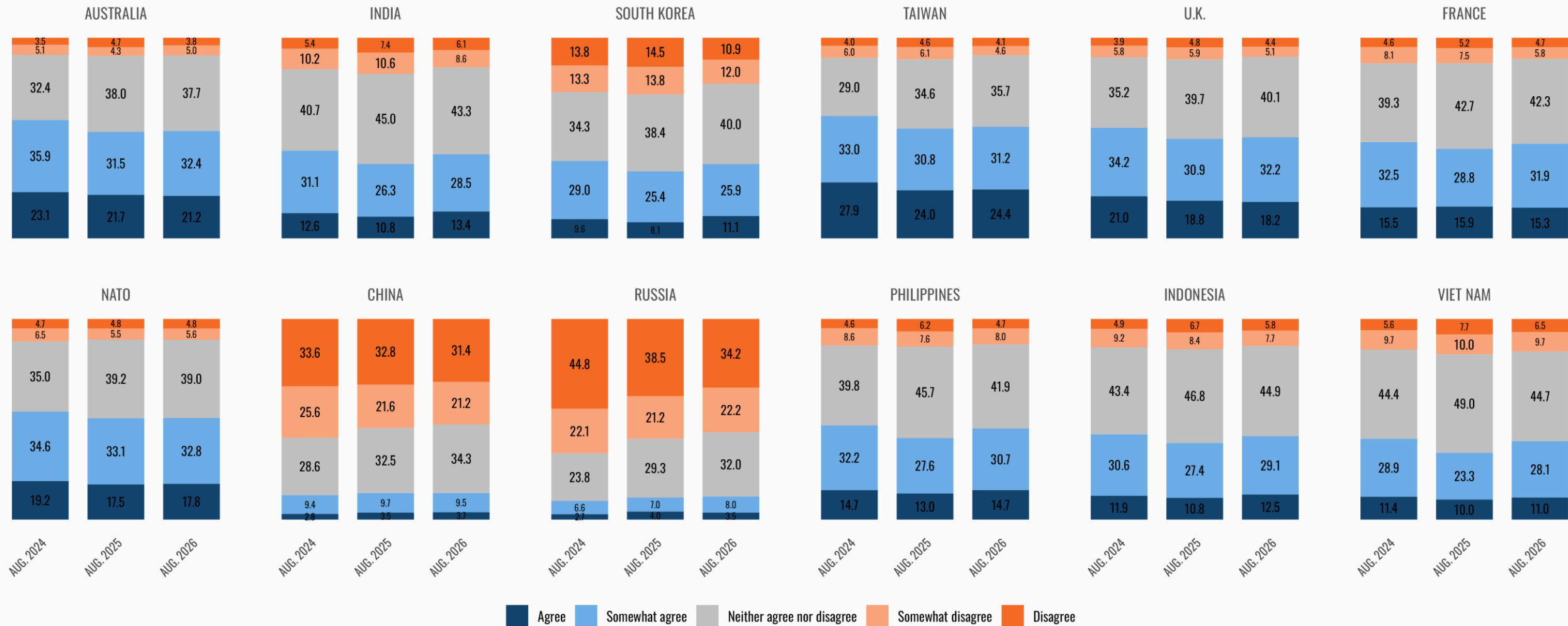
- The percentage of respondents who believe that U.S. influence is growing stronger has decreased since the previous survey.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (%) n = 2009



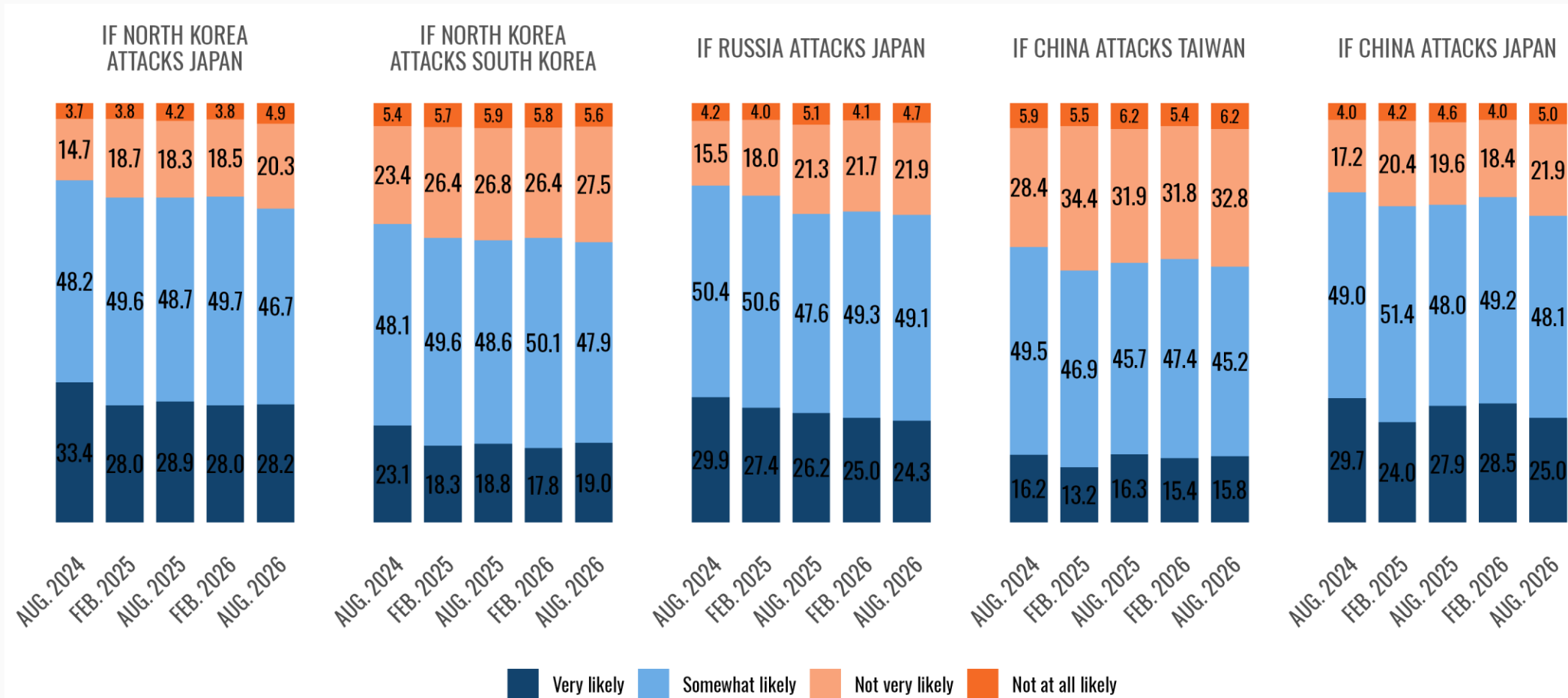
- Supporter of further strengthening the Japan–U.S. alliance outnumber opponents by roughly three to one, although support has been gradually declining..
- Over half of respondents were hesitant about or opposed to Japan either acquiring its own nuclear weapons or hosting U.S. nuclear weapons.

Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that Japan should strengthen security and defense cooperation with the following countries other than the U.S.? (%) n = 2009



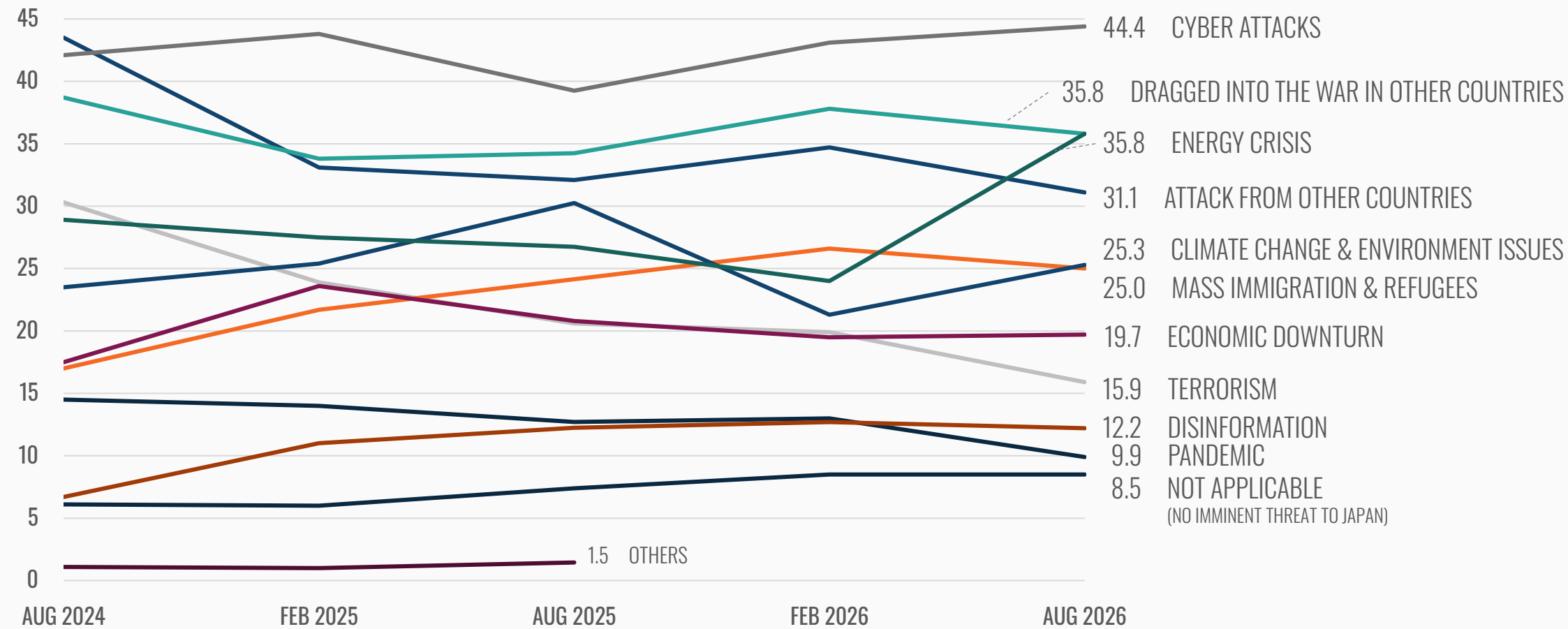
- Support for security and defense cooperation with the above countries outweighed the opposition, except China and Russia.
- In particular, there is a majority of support for security and defense cooperation with Taiwan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and NATO.

How likely do you think the U.S. would militarily intervene if the following circumstances happened? (%) n = 2009



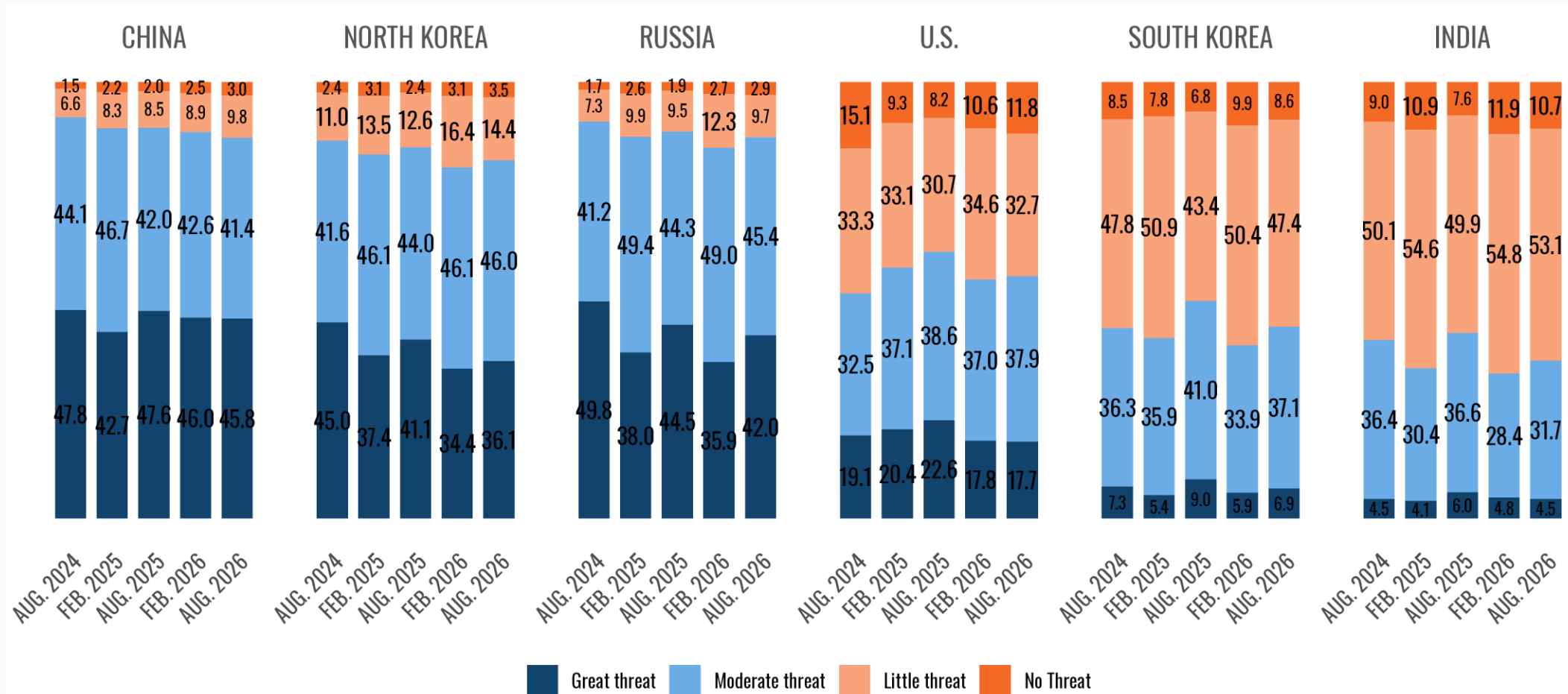
- The majority of respondents believe that the U.S. is likely to intervene militarily when North Korea, Russia, or China attacks Japan.

Please select three of the following options that you believe are imminent threats to Japan's security. (up to 3) (%) n = 2009



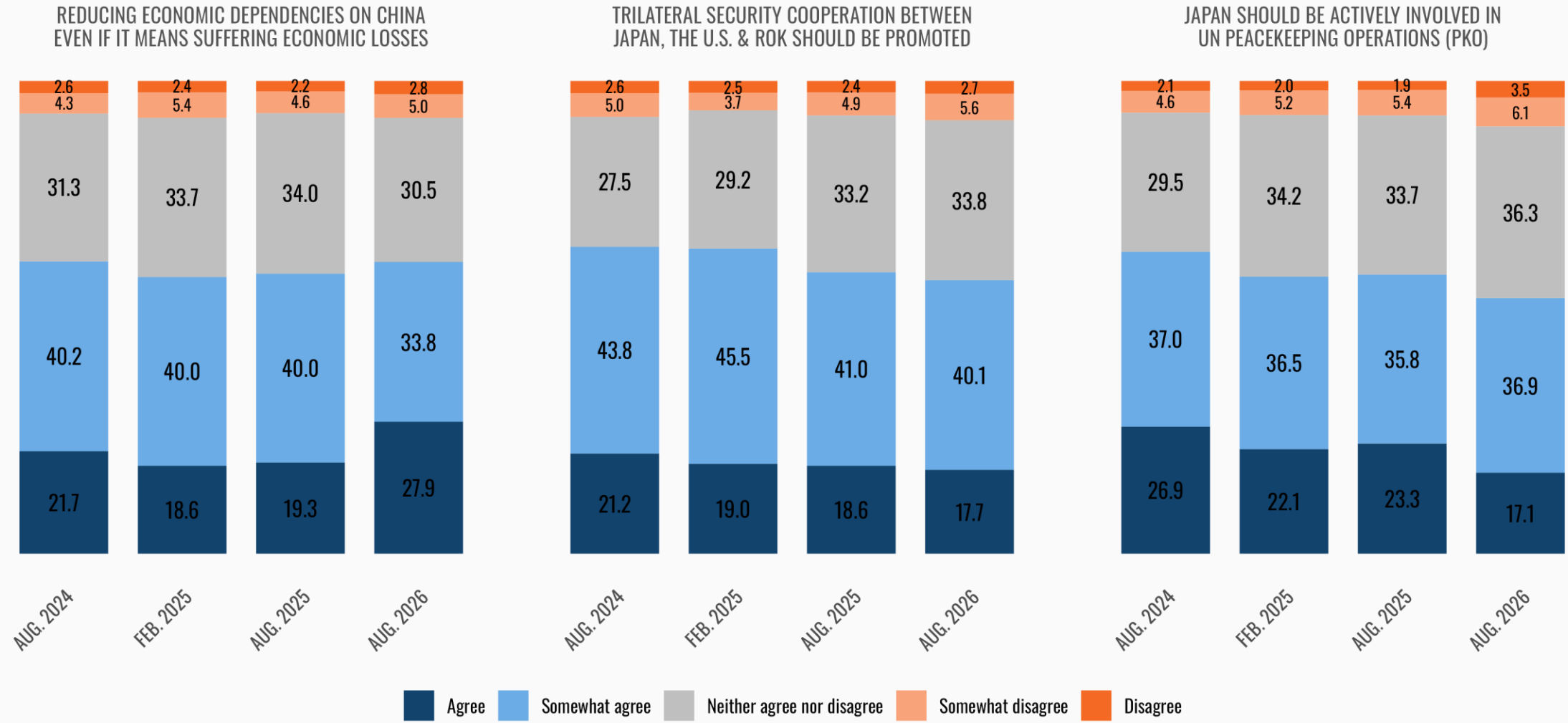
➤ An increasing number of respondents view energy crisis and climate issues as imminent threats.

To what extent do you think each of the following countries is a threat to Japan's security? (%) n = 2009



- A substantial number of respondents perceive China, Russia, and North Korea as threats to Japan's security. Furthermore, approximately half of the respondents view the U.S. as a threat.

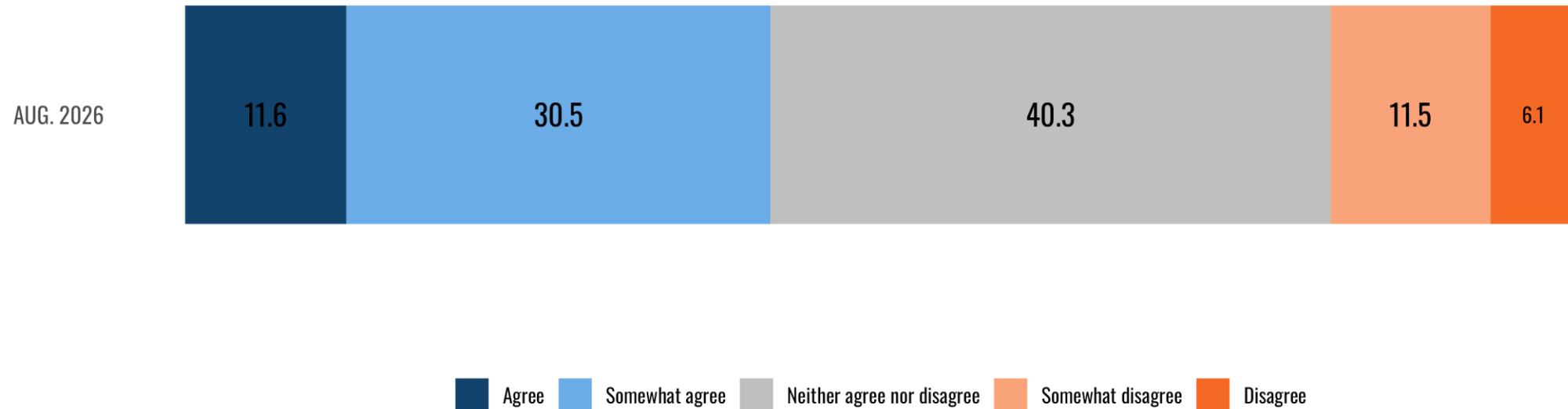
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%) n = 2009



- Approximately 60 percent of respondents believe Japan should reduce its economic dependence on China, even if it comes at an economic cost.
- A majority of respondents believe that security cooperation among Japan, the U.S. and South Korea should be promoted.

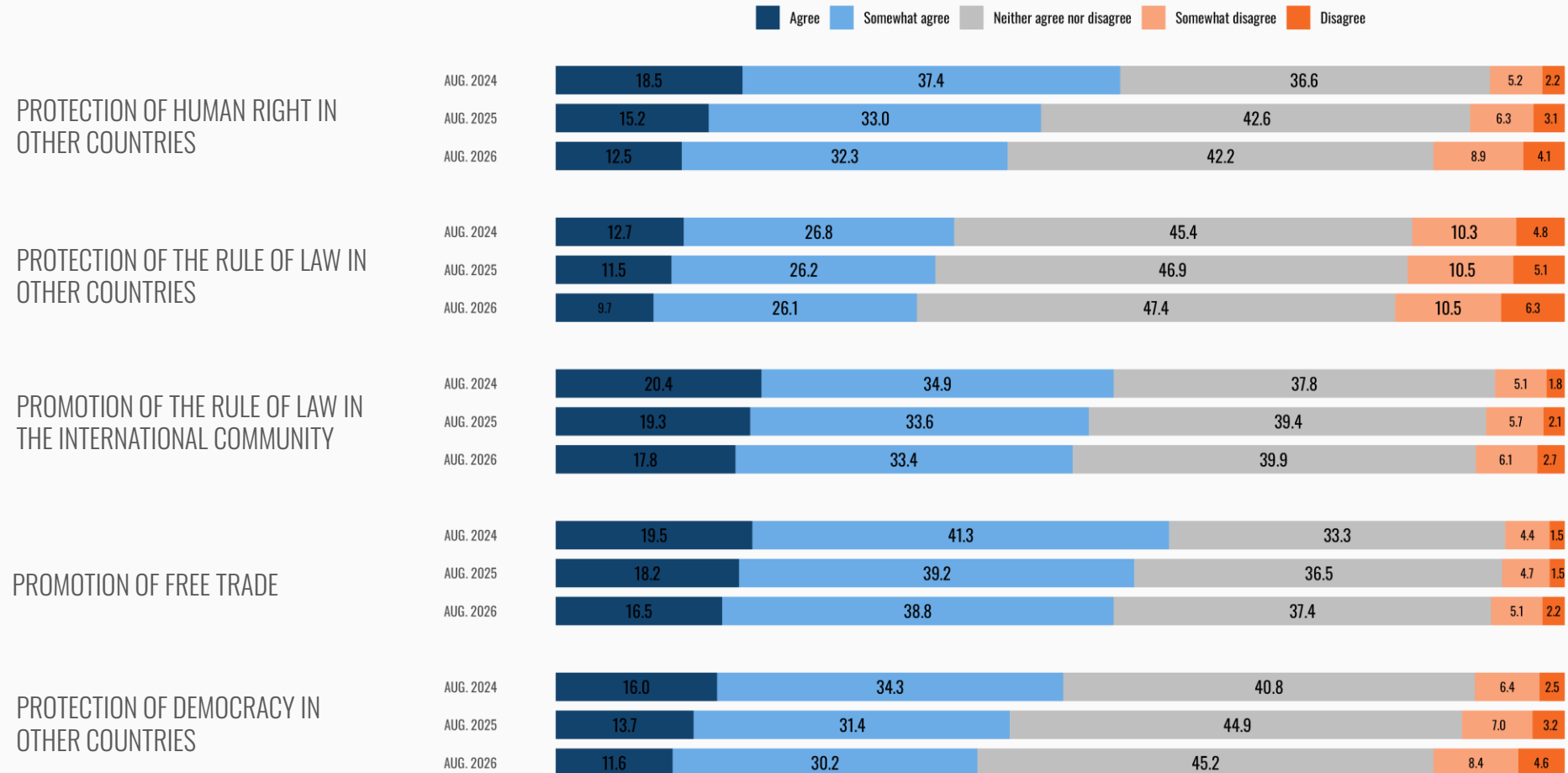
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%) n = 2009

JAPAN SHOULD ACCEPT HIGHER ENERGY COSTS DUE TO THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON RUSSIA



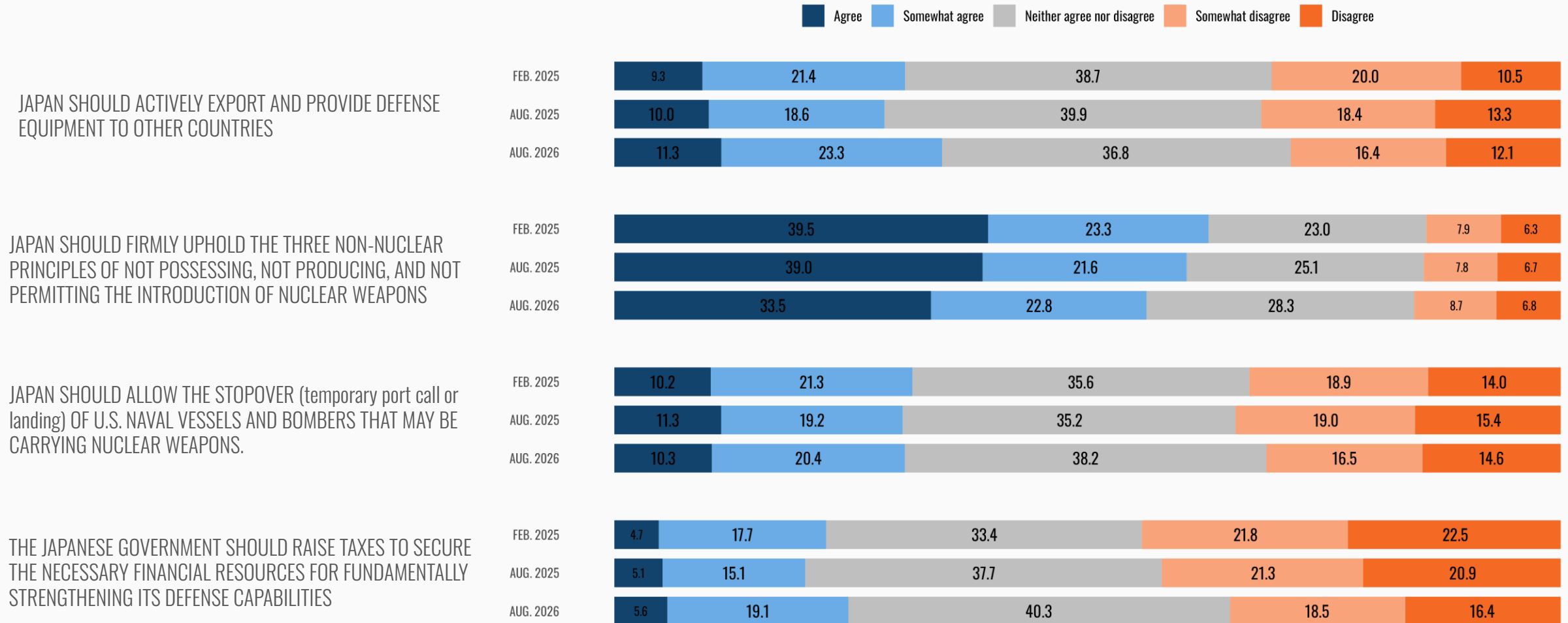
- Approximately 40% of Japanese people are willing to accept higher energy prices as a result of sanctions against Russia.

Do you agree or disagree that Japan should pursue the following values as diplomatic goals, even in conflict with other countries?
(%) n = 2009



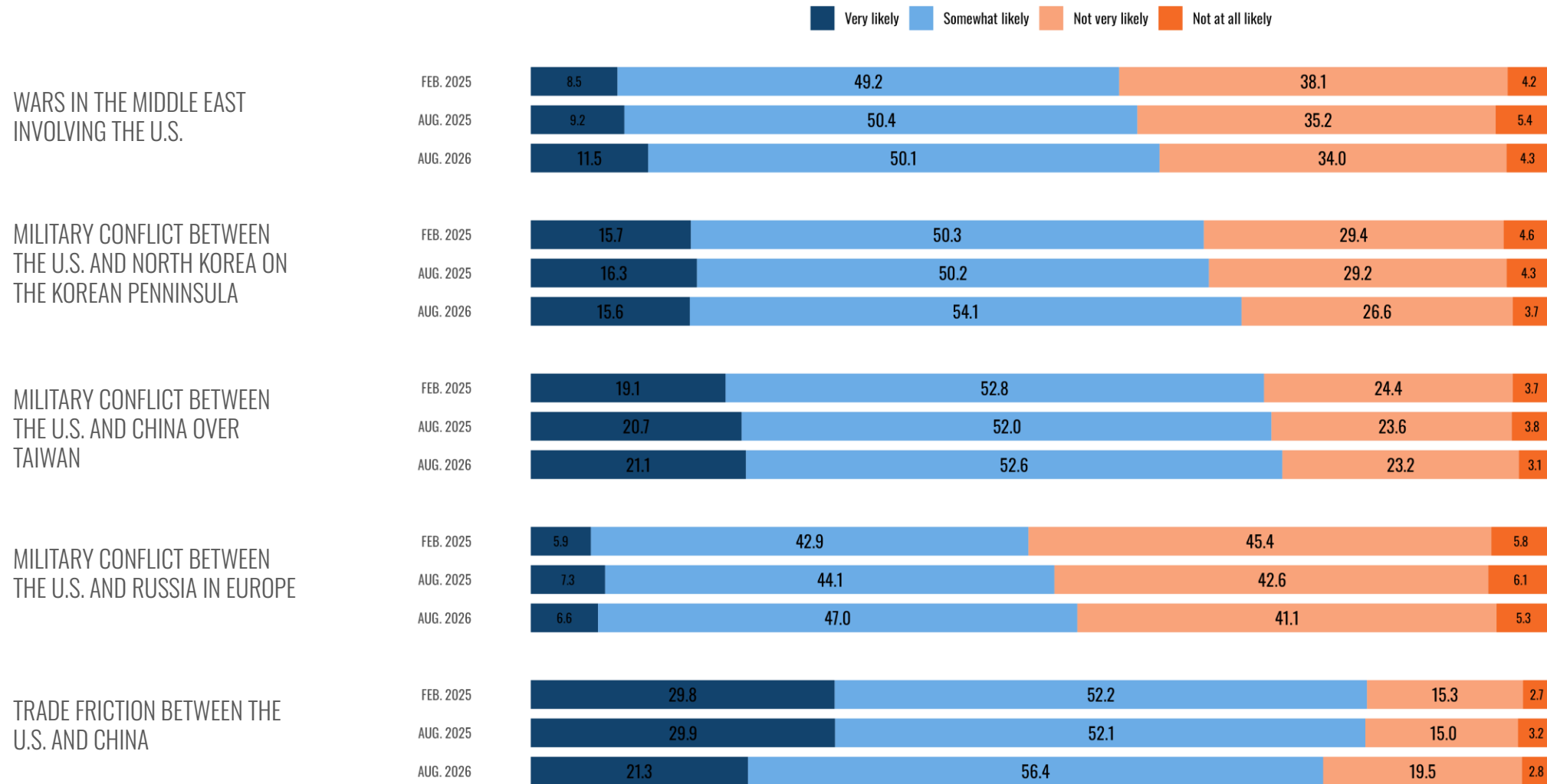
- The majority of the respondents support pursuing values such as “the rule of law in the international community” and “promotion of free trade” as diplomatic goals, even if this leads to conflict with other countries.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (%) n = 2009



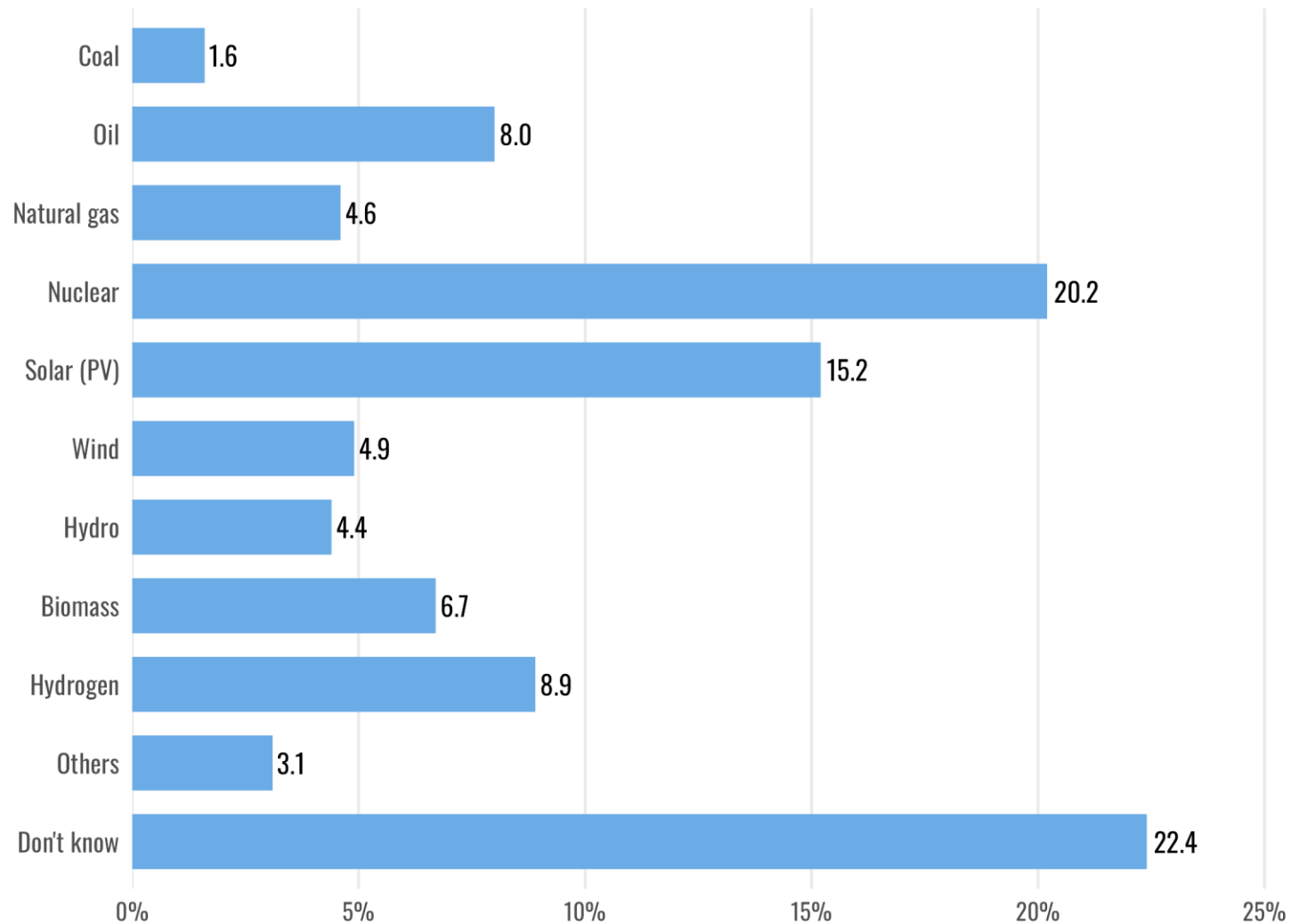
- More respondents supported than opposed the active export and provision of defense equipment to other countries.
- Over half of respondents agree that Japan should uphold the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

How likely do you think it is that Japan will get involved in the following situation? (%) n = 2009

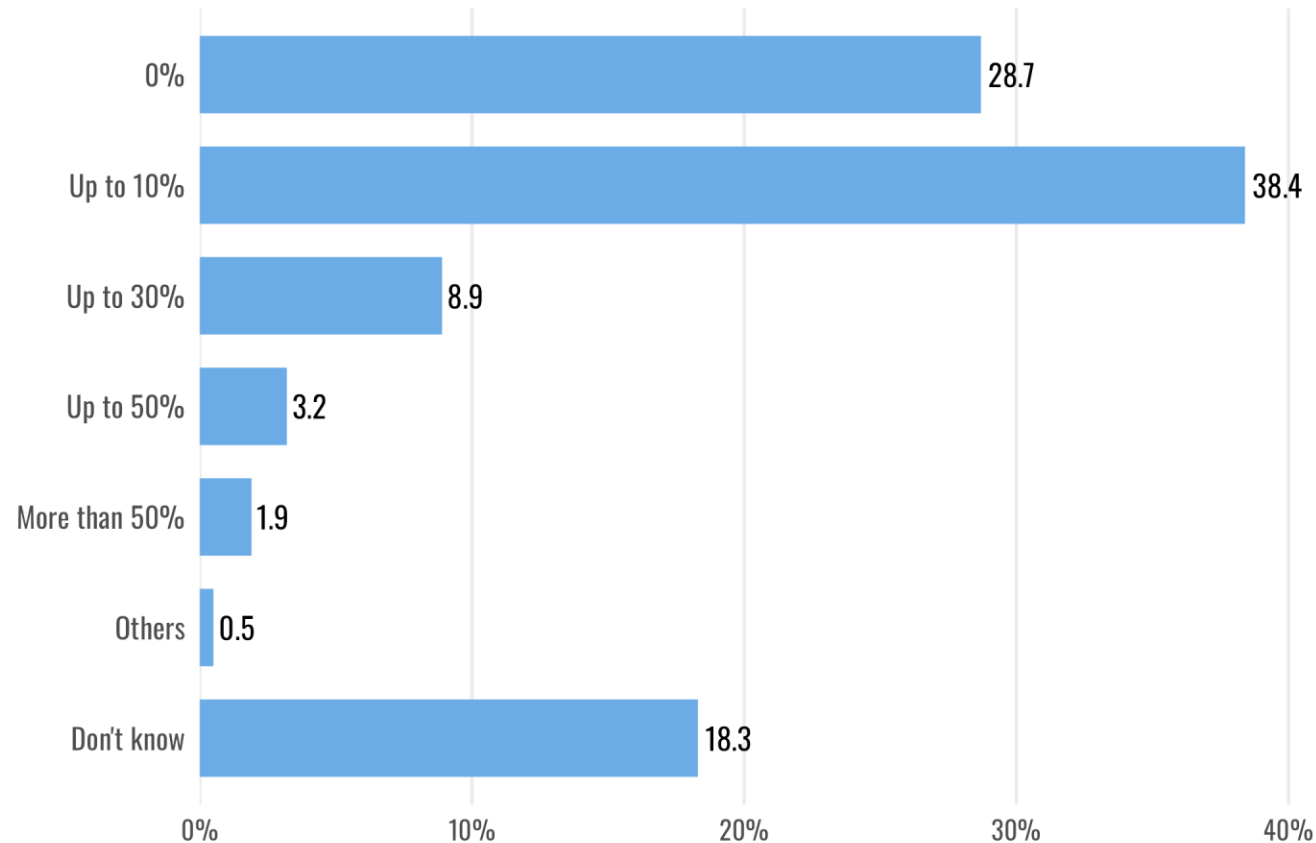


- 60-70% of respondents believe that Japan could become involved in a conflict in the Middle East, on the Korean Peninsula, or over Taiwan.

In order to meet future energy demand, which of the following energy sources do you think Japan should prioritize? N = 2009



If you had to pay an additional fee every year to increase the share of renewable energy, by what percentage would you be willing to accept an increase in your current electricity bill? N = 2009



- One third Japanese people would accept a price increase of up to 10% to promote the adoption of renewable energy