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AUTHORS

Gail J. Buttorff
Samuel T. Danilola
Jim Granato
Catherine M. Miers
Soran Mohtadi
Maria P. Perez Argüelles
Pablo M. Pinto
Savannah L. Sipole
Garrett P. Upchurch
Agustín Vallejo
M.C. Sunny Wong

Houston Views on the War with Iran: Limited Support and Rising Concerns

We examine Greater Houston residents' views on the war with Iran using the April 2026 wave of the University of Houston Hobby School's SPACE City Panel. The analysis documents attitudes toward military action, sending U.S. ground troops into Iran, perceived economic and security consequences, and differences by political party, gender, and household income. The data show limited support for military action, broad opposition to sending ground troops, and mostly negative expectations about the war's consequences, especially for energy prices, the U.S. economy, and national security.



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Key Takeaways

- Support for military action in Iran is limited:** Fewer than one-third of Greater Houston area residents support military action in Iran (~29%).
- Widespread opposition to sending U.S. ground troops:** ~83% oppose sending U.S. ground troops into Iran.
- Political differences are sharp, but support falls when ground troops are mentioned:** A majority of Republicans support military action (~63%), but support drops for sending U.S. ground troops (~39%).
- Houstonians expect mostly negative consequences from the war:** Large majorities expect the war to raise energy prices (88.7%), increase the federal deficit and debt (86.4%), and harm the U.S. economy (85.6%).
- Concerns about national security loom large:** Most respondents also anticipate that the war will make Americans less safe abroad (83.4%), weaken U.S. national security (77.6%), and reduce personal safety (56.9%).
- Women and lower-income residents perceive the consequences of war more negatively:** Women are more likely than men to expect the war to negatively affect their personal safety (64.4% vs. 49%, respectively); higher proportions of lower-income respondents believe they are less safe due to the war, relative to their higher-income counterparts (62.6% vs. 47.1%, respectively).

Introduction

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel began bombing Iran, escalating tensions that had been mounting for months.¹ While the possibility of war was a subject of growing speculation, the onset of military action interrupted, for a second time, nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and Iran.

In the weeks leading up to the war, national polls suggested limited public support for a broader military confrontation with Iran. A late-February Economist/YouGov survey, conducted just days before the bombing, found that few Americans supported U.S. military action against Iran, even as a majority believed such action was likely within the next month.²

On April 8, 2026, the United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire. Subsequent talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, ended without agreement on April 12, and the ceasefire remains fragile. With talks so far unsuccessful and the prospect of renewed conflict looming, it is important to understand how the public evaluates the war and its likely consequences.

Given the Greater Houston area’s deep ties to global energy markets and its diverse immigrant communities, the conflict carries distinct local relevance. This report examines attitudes toward the war with Iran among residents of the Greater Houston area. Beyond documenting support for or opposition to military action, it also explores how respondents assess the war’s likely consequences at the international, national, and personal levels.

Support for Military Action and the Limits of Escalation

Support for military action in Iran is clearly a minority position in the Greater Houston area. As shown in Figure 1, 55.7% of respondents strongly oppose military action and

another 14.9% somewhat oppose it, compared with 15.7% who somewhat and 13.7% who strongly support military action. Support falls further when the question turns to a deeper U.S. military commitment. Two-thirds of Greater Houston area residents (66.5%) strongly oppose sending U.S. ground troops, and 16.6% somewhat oppose it, while only 11.4% and 5.5% somewhat and strongly support doing so, respectively. In short, respondents distinguish between military action in general and a more expansive ground war, with markedly less willingness to endorse the latter. This pattern holds across partisan alignment, albeit from very different initial levels of support.

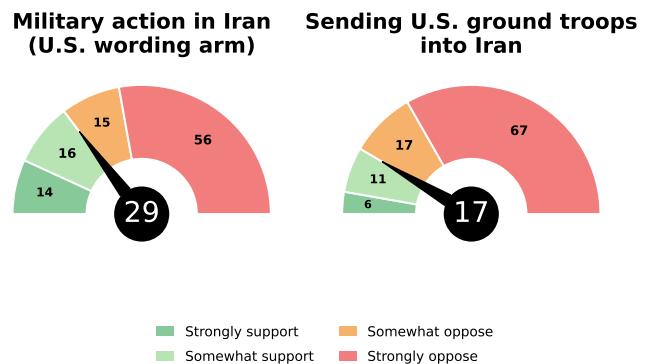


Figure 1 Support for military action in Iran and for sending U.S. ground troops into Iran

Figure 2 shows that Democrats are overwhelmingly opposed to any military action and especially to sending U.S. ground troops into Iran: only 9.9% support military action and only 6.6% support sending ground troops. Independents are also opposed, with support falling from 15.8% for military action to 9.4% for ground troops. Republicans are the only group in which a majority supports military action in Iran: 63.4% of respondents identifying with the Republi-

can Party either strongly or somewhat support U.S.-Israeli military action in Iran.

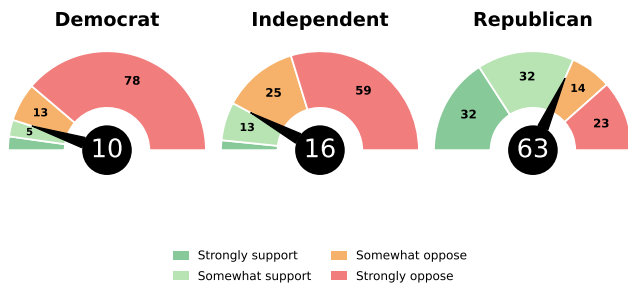


Figure 2 Support for military action in Iran by Party ID

Yet even among Republicans, strong support drops sharply from 31.7% to 12.0% when ground troops are mentioned. Taken together, the figures point to broad opposition to the war and to any escalation beyond initial military action, including among many respondents who are aligned with the president’s party and who are otherwise open to the use of force.

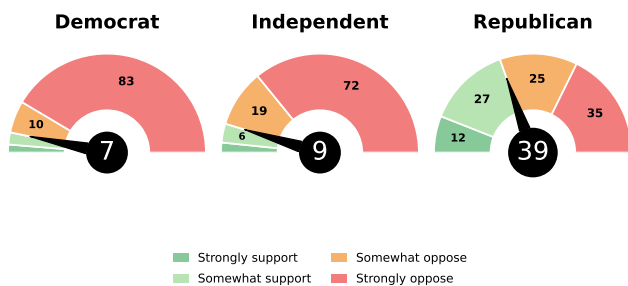


Figure 3 Support for sending U.S. ground troops into Iran by Party ID

The Consequences of War

In response to the U.S.-Israeli attacks, Iran attacked U.S. allies in the region and, on March 2, 2026, closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping route for oil, gas, and trade more generally. Although the strait was reopened to non-hostile nations on March 5, the restricted traffic has rippled through the global economy, most visibly in the price and supply of energy. Longer-term disruptions to critical inputs such as helium, urea, and jet fuel are likely to compound these effects, putting further pressure on prices and economies worldwide, especially since the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports imposed in mid-April. To gauge how the public perceives the consequences of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, we asked respondents the extent to which the war will affect a range of outcomes, including energy prices and national security.

The limited appetite for escalation documented above is

consistent with respondents’ perceptions of the expected consequences of a protracted war. Figure 4, in particular, reflects strong concern about domestic economic spillovers. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 88.7%, expect negative effects on energy prices in the United States, including 66.4% who expect very negative effects. According to data from the Center for American Progress, the national average regular gasoline price increased 34.9%, from \$2.98 per gallon on February 27, 2026 to \$4.02 on April 22, 2026.³ Large majorities also anticipate negative consequences for the federal deficit and debt (86.4%) and for the U.S. economy generally (85.6%).

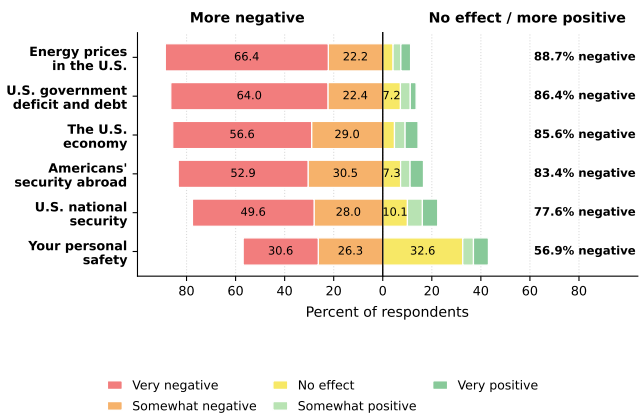


Figure 4 Expected effects of war in Iran on energy prices, security, the economy, personal safety, and the federal deficit

Expectations about the impact on national security are also more negative than positive. More than four in five respondents expect negative consequences for Americans’ security abroad (83.4%), and 77.6% perceive the war as having negative effects on U.S. national security; only 12.3% of respondents anticipate positive effects. Expectations regarding personal safety are more mixed than in other domains, but still skew negative: 57% of respondents anticipate negative effects, compared to 32.6% who expect no change and only a small minority who foresee improvements. Overall, Figure 4 provides little evidence that respondents expect the costs of war to be offset by security gains. Across every domain reported, negative expectations outweigh positive ones.

Who Feels Most Exposed? Income, Gender, and Party Differences

In addition to stark partisan differences in support for military action, Figures 5 and 6 show that expectations about the consequences of the war are also patterned by gender and income, consistent with broader findings that perceptions of security risks vary across these groups.

Women are consistently more likely than men to expect the war to worsen both national security and personal safety

(Figure 5). Regarding the impact of the war on U.S. national security, 80.0% of women expect negative effects, compared with 75.1% of men. Men are slightly more likely than women to expect positive effects (13.2% versus 11.5%). The gender gap widens further when it comes to personal safety: 64.4% of women expect negative effects, compared with 49.0% of men, whereas men are considerably more likely to report no expected impact (40.2% versus 25.4%).

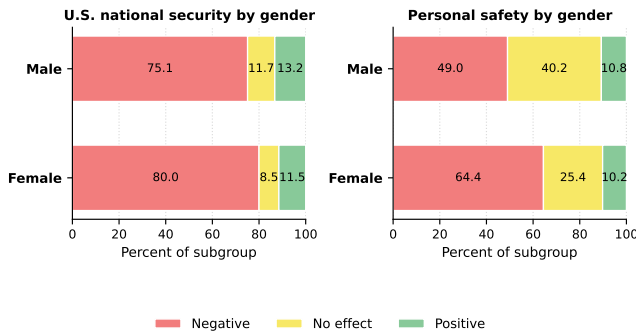


Figure 5 Expected effects of war in Iran on U.S. national security and personal safety by gender

Income differences point in a similar direction, as reflected in Figure 6. Negative expectations about U.S. national security are high across all household income groups, ranging from 75.7% among respondents in households earning \$50,000 to \$99,999 to 77.9% among those earning under \$50,000. Positive assessments are somewhat more common among respondents in households earning \$100,000 to \$149,999 (15.7%) than in other income groups.

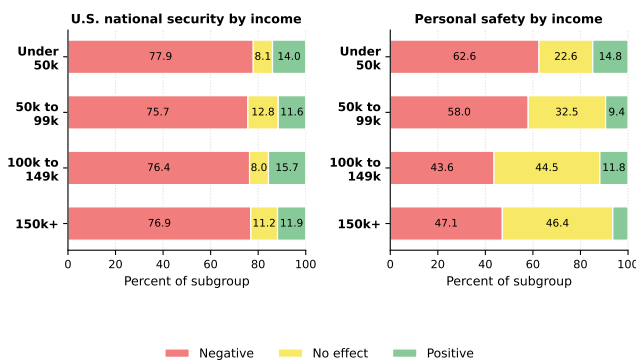


Figure 6 Expected effects of war in Iran on U.S. national security and personal safety by household income

We find larger differences for expectations on the impact of the war on personal safety. Nearly two-thirds of respondents in households under \$50,000 (62.6%) expect the war to make them less safe, compared with 58.0% in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range, 43.6% in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 range, and 47.1% among those earning \$150,000 or more. At the same time, responses indicating that the war has

no effect on personal safety rise with income, from 22.6% among those under \$50,000 to 46.4% among those earning \$150,000 or more. Notably, among respondents in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 bracket, the most common response is that the war has no impact on personal safety rather than having a negative effect, while among those earning \$150,000 or more the two responses are nearly equal. Taken together, these patterns suggest that the sense of direct exposure to the consequences of war is strongest among lower-income residents.

Across partisan alignment, respondents view the war as having negative economic consequences. Eighty-three percent of Republicans, 86.8% of Independents, and 92.9% of Democrats think the war will raise energy prices. Three-quarters or more of respondents across all partisan groups also think the war will have negative impacts on the U.S. economy and on the U.S. government deficit and debt.⁴ We observe much bigger partisan gaps when it comes to the war’s impact on safety and security. While 66.9% of Democrats and 65.4% of Independents view the war as having a negative impact on their personal safety, only 34.3% of Republicans do. Just over half of Republicans (55.7%) expect the war to negatively impact U.S. national security, compared to 89.3% and 82.5% of Democrats and Independents, respectively.

Does Framing Matter? The “U.S.” vs. “U.S.-Israel” War

To assess whether support for military action depends on how the conflict is framed, we embedded a survey experiment that varies whether Israel is explicitly mentioned alongside the United States as a partner in the attacks on Iran. Half of respondents received the question “Do you support or oppose the U.S. decision to take military action in Iran?” and half received the same question but with the wording “the U.S.-Israel decision.”

The results indicate that support is modestly sensitive to this framing. As shown in Figure 7, support is higher when respondents are asked about military action by the United States alone than when the question refers to “U.S.-Israel” action. Under the “U.S.” wording, 28.8% express support (15.0% somewhat and 13.8% strongly), compared with 22.7% under the “U.S.-Israel” wording (10.3% somewhat and 12.3% strongly). At the same time, strong opposition increases from 58.4% to 62.6%. The overall difference reaches conventional levels of statistical significance at the 0.05% threshold ($p = 0.042$).

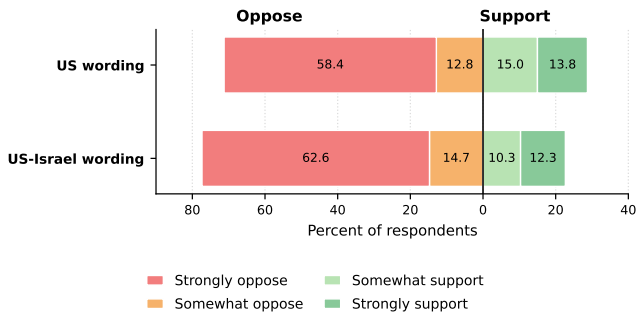


Figure 7 Support for military action in Iran under “U.S.” and “U.S.-Israel” question wording ($p = 0.042$).

Figure 8 shows that this framing effect varies across groups broken down by partisan alignment. Democrats are overwhelmingly opposed under both wordings, suggesting limited room for sensitivity to framing: strong opposition stands at 83.9% under the “U.S.” wording and drops slightly to 81.2% under the “U.S.-Israel” wording. Among independents, support declines slightly, from 16.3% to 14.2%. The largest shifts occur among Republicans. Support falls from 16.3% to 14.2%, and strong opposition rises from 18.3% to 24.3%. However, these subgroup differences do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance, suggesting that party alignment does not make respondents more or less sensitive to framing.

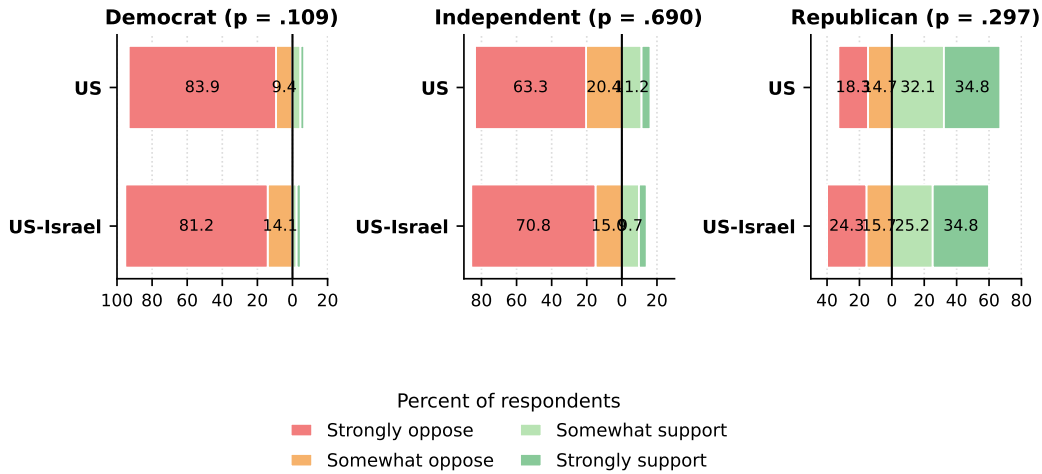


Figure 8 Support for military action in Iran under “U.S.” and “U.S.-Israel” question wording by Party ID.

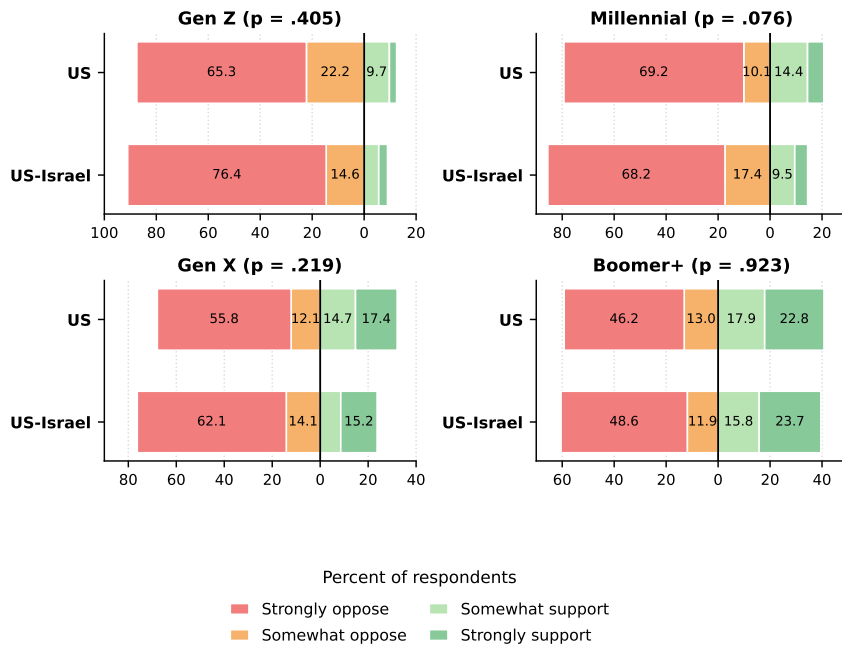


Figure 9 Support for military action in Iran under “U.S.” and “U.S.-Israel” question wording by generation.

The generational results in Figure 9 provide the clearest descriptive evidence that framing effects are not uniform. Among Gen Z respondents, support declines from 12.5% under the “U.S.” wording to 9.0% under the “U.S.-Israel” wording. Among Millennials, support falls from 20.7% to 14.5%, although this difference narrowly misses conventional significance ($p = 0.076$). Gen X respondents exhibit a similar pattern, with support declining from 32.1% to 23.7%. By contrast, attitudes among Boomers shift only modestly, from 40.8% to 39.6% support.

Taken together, the results from the survey experiment suggest that explicitly linking the intervention to Israel reduces support for military action, particularly among younger and middle-aged respondents, although opposition remains the dominant view under either framing.

Conclusion

This report provides a snapshot of Greater Houston area residents’ views on the war with Iran. The results show that the support for military action in Iran is a minority position, and support falls further when the question turns to sending U.S. ground troops into Iran. Democrats and Independents are overwhelmingly opposed to U.S.-Israel military action in Iran, while Republicans are much more supportive. Even among Republicans, however, support drops significantly when considering the possibility of U.S. ground troops.

The findings also show that Greater Houston area residents expect the war to have mainly negative consequences. Larger shares expect negative effects on energy prices, the U.S. economy, the federal deficit and debt, and national security. However, concerns about personal safety are stronger among women and lower-income residents. Overall, the results suggest that the region’s residents are concerned about broader economic and security costs of the

war, which will likely worsen with further stalemate or escalation.

Notes

1. Parisa Hafezi, Phil Stewart, and Idrees Ali. “Iranian leader Khamenei killed in air strikes as U.S., Israel launch attacks.” *Reuters*, February 28, 2026.
2. Alexander Rossell Hayes. “Few Americans support U.S. military action against Iran, but a majority think it’s likely.” *YouGov*, February 24, 2026.
3. Emily Gee, “State-by-State Increases in Gas Prices Since Trump’s War on Iran.” *Center for American Progress*, April 23, 2026.
4. Negative perceptions of the impacts of the war on the U.S. economy and government deficit and debt: 74.4% and 77.5% for Republicans; 86.1% and 82.7% for Independents; and 92.1% and 93.2% for Democrats.

Methodology

Sample & data collection. *SPACE City Panel, Wave 4, April 2026; N = 1,525; mode: online. MOE: ±3.53%.*

Weights. *Post-stratified to age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, county. Missing demographics imputed.*

Exclusions. *Unless explicit in figure, Don’t knows and Skipped responses excluded from figures or analyses.*

Percentages. *Unless explicit in text or figure, percentages are calculated over valid responses. Percentages shown in figures are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point unless decimals are displayed; because categories are rounded independently, totals may not sum exactly to 100%.*

