PEOPLE
ON WAR

Country report France, United Kingdom, United States
ICRC worldwide consultation on the rules of war

Report by Greenberg Research, Inc.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

About the People on War project

To mark the 50th anniversary of the modern Geneva Conventions (on 12 August 1999), the ICRC launched its People on War project with the aim of building greater respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. At centre stage is a worldwide consultation giving the general public a chance to air their views on the many facets of war. The idea was that civilians and combatants alike would be able to share their experiences, express their opinions on what basic rules should apply in war, discuss why those rules sometimes break down and look at what the future holds.

With this in mind, the ICRC commissioned Greenberg Research, Inc. to design a research programme that would enable people to be heard in the most effective way possible. Under the guidance of Greenberg Research, ICRC staff and Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers carried out this consultation in 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia/Abkhazia, Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia and South Africa), conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews, group discussions and national public opinion surveys. Surveys on the basis of a questionnaire only were conducted in a further five countries (France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) in order to reflect these people's perceptions of war.

Greenberg Research analysts then prepared a series of Country Reports on the basis of the findings. The reports open up this new, important discourse to a wider audience, while remaining conscious of the need to protect the safety of all those who participated.

By making this consultation public, the ICRC hopes to initiate a local and international debate on the humanitarian aspects of war – a debate that should be joined by the major political players, international and non-governmental organizations and aid specialists.

Greenberg Research, Inc.

Greenberg Research is an opinion research firm that has worked for over two decades to help organizations and leaders around the world advance their goals in the face of rapid change. It specializes in using advanced methods of opinion research – surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews – to help form strategies for political parties, corporations and non-governmental organizations.

Greenberg Research has extensive experience in Europe and the United States, but also in the Middle East, Asia, southern Africa and Central and South America. It has conducted research in war-torn, politically complex and remote settings. In its work for corporations and non-governmental organizations, it has explored a broad range of global issues, including landmines, genetic engineering, climate change, race and gender relations, trade and information technologies.

The opinions expressed in this report are not those of the ICRC. The ICRC retained Greenberg Research, Inc. to design and oversee the People on War consultation. Greenberg Research compiled and analysed the results and is responsible for the content and interpretation.

ICRC, Geneva, October 1999

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Country methodology

The findings in this report are based on surveys of the general public conducted in the United Kingdom (19 to 21 March 1999), France (30 March to 6 April 1999) and the United States (30 March to 6 April 1999), using a questionnaire developed with the ICRC. While many of the questions parallel the ones posed in the countries affected by armed conflict, others were added in order to gauge how the publics in these Security Council countries view wars largely fought some distance away and how they view the role of the international community.

Greenberg Research designed and administered these telephone surveys, which were conducted by professional interviewers, in conjunction with Accurate Data Collection (ADC) and National Opinion Polls (NOP), full service research organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom. The surveys reached 1,000 adults (18 years or older) nationwide in the United States, 750 in the United Kingdom and 755 in France.

Telephone numbers for these interviews were generated by a random digit dial process, thereby allowing access to all listed and unlisted phones. The list was stratified by state or region. Quotas were assigned to reflect the percentage of households within these states or regions. The data were weighted by gender, education, age, region, split sample and marital status to ensure the sample is an accurate reflection of the population. The sample size with this weight applied is 1,000 cases.

In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. For example, if a response to a given question answered by all respondents was 50 per cent, one could be 95 per cent confident that the true percentage would fall within plus or minus 3.1 per cent of this result or between 46.9 per cent and 53.1 per cent.[1]

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[1] The table in Annex 3 (see p. 39) represents the estimated sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses.

Executive summary

The ICRC began its consultation with the people living in these Security Council countries at the start of the NATO air strikes in Yugoslavia.[2] This report focuses on three of the countries that were involved in the war at the time: the United Kingdom, where people were interviewed during the week leading up to the bombing, and France and the United States, where interviews were conducted during the first week of the war. In each case, attitudes towards war, the ability to limit what combatants do in conflict, the role of international humanitarian law and the international community, and the treatment of war crimes were explored. This report complements the findings of the ICRC's year-long consultation with the people living in war-torn countries around the world, including those in the Balkans.

The study shows broad support in the France, the United Kingdom and the United States for international interventions to limit the full scope of war and protect civilians – from participation in international peacekeeping operations and the provision of humanitarian aid to joining an international military force. The findings are summarized below:

- When it comes to protecting civilian populations under siege, the public in these three countries wants more, not less, intervention by the international community. Americans favour more intervention only if it is carried out together with other countries.

- Overall, broad support was found in all three countries (60 per cent) for joining an international military force to stop a war in which civilian populations are at great risk. While isolationist sentiments, particularly in the United States, create ambivalence about involvement in wars around the world, there is very broad support for international peacekeeping and the role of the United Nations (UN) and the ICRC in limiting the impact of war.

- The public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States generally believes that specific interventions by the international community to protect civilians are a good idea and can make things better for the beleaguered civilian populations: 80 per cent support the idea of "protected areas". Support is strong despite a great deal of scepticism as to whether past efforts have prevented things from getting worse.

People's views on humanitarian interventions lie within the wider context of war in general. For example, there is a consensus in principle that combatants and civilians must be distinguished, though within that consensus are considerable differences between these countries on specific actions that put civilians at risk.

- About two-thirds of the public in the United Kingdom and France accept an absolute standard on distinguishing combatants and civilians, compared with a majority in the United States. Those who accept less than an absolute standard are more likely to accept military practices that put civilians at risk.

- The basis for prohibited conduct is normative, not material or pragmatic: about 80 per cent say it is wrong, compared with 9 to 17 per cent who say "it just causes too many problems". In the war zones, not surprisingly, many more people focus on problems like hate, physical suffering and property damage, though the normative foundations are also strong.

- In the United Kingdom, the norm is rooted, above all, in human rights; in France, in human rights and a personal code and culture; in the United States, in human rights and social norms, including religion.

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[2] The ICRC conducted part of its consultation with the general public in countries that are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The timing of the survey was planned prior to the outbreak of the conflict in Yugoslavia.

In the European countries – France and the United Kingdom – very large majorities oppose virtually every military action that blurs the line between combatants and civilians. However, significant minorities find acceptable military practices that put civilians at risk. The publics in these countries seem no less open than those in the war zones to breaking down the barriers between civilians and combatants.

- Between a quarter and a third of Britons seem willing to accept military actions in largely civilian areas, if the actions advance the war aims by weakening the enemy.

- The French public is least open to military actions that endanger civilians or that blur the conceptual barrier between combatants and non-combatants. Just 7 per cent would countenance the planting of landmines that might later harm civilians.

- However, even in France, a minority accept that civilians and civilian institutions, as part of the war environment, can be subjected to certain kinds of attacks: 18 per cent accept depriving civilian populations of food, medicine, water or electricity in order to weaken the enemy.

The public in the United States stands out from those of the other two countries. In some areas, the American public affirms the line between civilians and combatants: two-thirds reject the idea that civilians become combatants simply by providing food, shelter or medicine to their military forces. On other issues, however, the American public is much less sure.

- A near majority of Americans (44 per cent) say it is part of war to attack "enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed".

- Across a range of questions, it is evident that at least a third of Americans accept, as part of war and not wrong, military actions against civilian targets and ones where there is a significant probability of civilian casualties.

The European public, particularly the French, understands and accepts the military's obligations towards prisoners of war. In the United States, people are much less conscious of these obligations. Nevertheless, awareness of the obligations in all three countries is significantly higher than in the war zones surveyed by the ICRC.

- In the United States, 37 per cent say the authorities do not have to allow prisoners contact with a relative and 39 per cent say they do not have to allow visits by an independent organization. While two-thirds (65 per cent) say prisoners cannot be subjected to torture to get important military information, fully 32 per cent say they can.

- Understanding obligations, however, does not mean that people necessarily favour practices that endanger prisoners of war. For example, just about one in ten in these countries would approve of killing prisoners if the other side were doing it; about 85 per cent in all three countries reject the concept of reciprocity when it comes to prisoners.

A large majority of the public in these countries have heard of the Geneva Conventions, though about a third in the United States and France have not. People describe the Geneva Conventions mainly as laws or rules that regulate how wars are fought and how prisoners of war have to be treated. Nonetheless, there are many people in these countries who simply do not know that certain practices in war are subject to law.

- Fully 63 per cent of the American public say there are no laws to stop attacks on populated areas, but so do 46 per cent of the British and 30 per cent of the French.

In France, the United Kingdom and the United States, there is a near consensus on war crimes: about 80 per cent agree that there are rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished. The consensus carries over to what action should be taken against such individuals: 80 per cent in the United States, 82 per cent in the United Kingdom and 91 per cent in France would put them on trial. These countries differ, however, on who should take responsibility for prosecutions.

- The French are the most internationalist: 62 per cent favour trials before an international criminal court.

- A small majority in the United Kingdom favour an international criminal court (51 per cent), but there is more support for the national institutions of the country at war. Overall, about 40 per cent think the government, the military or the courts in the country concerned should punish war criminals.

- In the United States, 40 per cent would go to an international court, while half would go to national institutions, with the military seen to play an important role in holding wrongdoers accountable.

In all three countries, the ICRC is seen as the dominant organization with responsibility for protecting prisoners and civilian populations at risk in war.

- Over 70 per cent, for example, cite the ICRC as the independent organization that ought to be able to visit prisoners of war.

- For helping towns or villages that have been cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity, again people say the ICRC is the principal institution to turn to (63 per cent of the British, 64 per cent of the French and 71 per cent of Americans).

In these countries, the orientation towards combatants and civilians in wars abroad is rooted in a deeper orientation towards war in general. Where people are more internationalist, that is, focused on events abroad and emotionally engaged with the participants, and, above all, where they have a sense of human capacity to shape events, there is greater support for the idea that even wars have limits. People accept that civilians will be caught in battle or that atrocities will take place, not because they support such practices, but because of simple feelings, indifference or impotence.

- The internationalist segment is always more engaged and supportive of international humanitarian law. They form a kind of internationalist elite that gives greater force to norms and practices that limit what combatants can do in war.

- France, the United Kingdom and the United States are split on the question of efficacy, that is, whether it is or isn't possible to prevent atrocities in war. By about a 5 to 4 ratio, Europeans tilt towards belief in the capacity to prevent atrocities; by about the same ratio, Americans tilt towards a sense of the inevitability of some atrocities occurring.

- The Geneva Conventions presume efficacy – the capacity of the international community and nations to shape the character of war. Only the French public, however, is near to having a majority who believe the Conventions prevent wars from getting worse.

Whatever the overall orientation towards wars abroad, people in France, the United Kingdom and the United States support a broad range of measures to reduce the number of victims in war:

• There is strong support for increasing the effectiveness of laws and rules that limit what combatants can do in war (78 to 82 per cent believe it is extremely or somewhat important).

• The French would give the highest priority by far to reducing the weaponry available in the world (68 per cent consider it extremely important), followed by increasing the efficacy of international humanitarian law (58 per cent consider it extremely important).

• The British and the Americans would give the highest priority to increasing the accuracy of weapons to reduce the chances of unintended casualties (58 and 48 per cent consider it extremely important). This is followed by increasing the efficacy of the rules of war (54 and 40 per cent consider it extremely important), followed by expanded news coverage (54 and 37 per cent consider it extremely important).

International interventions to protect civilians

Public support in France, the United Kingdom and the United States for their own country's involvement in a conflict is highest when participation in the conflict centres on peacekeeping. Support for such an engagement is near consensus: over 80 per cent say their own country should send troops as part of a peacekeeping force to limit casualties. The French are, by far, the most supportive of a peacekeeping role (63 per cent in strong agreement), and Americans express the least enthusiasm (41 per cent in strong agreement). Whatever the record of success or failure of international peacekeeping operations in conflicts around the world, the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States remains committed to participation.

There is also broad support in these countries for international interventions to limit the full impact of war. About 60 per cent of the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States support sending their own country's troops as part of an international force to stop wars in which the civilian population is at great risk. About a quarter of the public in the United Kingdom and the United States and one-third in France are intensely supportive (as indicated by the shaded area in Figure 1 below). Across these countries, about a third oppose sending troops as part of such an international force. (See Figure 1.)

FIGURE 1
Joining the conflict
(per cent of total population who "agree" with the statement "Your country should…")[3]

While there is a large majority in France, the United Kingdom and the United States supportive of international intervention where civilians are at risk, there are some underlying doubts in these countries about entanglement in wars abroad. It is not a problem in France, where internationalist sentiment is very strong: 37 per cent agree with the statement, "France should not get involved in these wars abroad", but a substantial majority of 57 per cent reject such disengagement. The British public is evenly split on the statement (47 to 47 per cent). In the United States, a very large majority of 61 per cent agree that the United States should stay out. This suggests a strong streak of isolationism in the United States, which vies with strong support for engagement to limit the humanitarian impact of disasters.

When the focus is placed purely on the question of international intervention to protect civilian populations under siege – cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity – or to hold accountable those responsible for war crimes, the public in these countries wants more, not less, intervention by the international community. In Europe, support for intervention by the international community is nearly absolute (80 per cent in the United Kingdom and 79 per cent in France); in the United States, support is very high (59 per cent), though a significant minority of 32 per cent would like to see less of it or even no direct United States involvement.

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[3] To help understand this and other graphs, this footnote describes a few of the vertical bars. For example, in the United Kingdom, 58 per cent of the population agree that their country should try to stop wars by sending troops as part of an international force. That 58 per cent is comprised of 26 per cent who agree strongly and the remaining 32 per cent who somewhat agree.

FIGURE 2
International intervention

(per cent of total population responding)[4]

	United Kingdom		United States		France	
	Intl. community	Own country	Intl. community	Own country	Intl. community	Own country
More intervention	80%	48%	59%	39%	79%	52%
Less intervention	8%	33%	32%	50%	9%	20%
No intervention	3%	8%	6%	8%	4%	8%
Don't know	8%	11%	3%	3%	8%	20%

Question: In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention from the [international community *or* country name] to deal with these kinds of issues [civilians being cut off from food, water, medical supplies or electricity]?

A majority of the French public (52 per cent) and a near majority of the British public (48 per cent) are in favour of more intervention to protect civilians or to address war-crimes issues, even when the task falls to their own country without a clear international role. Only one-third in the United Kingdom and one-fifth in France want less intervention by their own country on these issues. Conversely, a majority of Americans (50 per cent) want less intervention by their country, in the absence of a clear involvement by the international community; 39 per cent support a larger role. (See Figure 2.)

The public in these countries generally believes that specific interventions by the international community to protect civilians are a good idea and can make things better for beleaguered civilian populations. Majorities in all three countries believe that international peacekeeping forces make things better for civilians during war. Over a quarter believe they are ineffective, but very few actually think they make things worse. (See Figure 3.)

FIGURE 3
International peacekeeping

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: Do international peacekeeping forces make it better or worse for civilians during these wars, or don't they make any difference?

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[4] For example, in the United Kingdom, 80 per cent of the population want more intervention when the international community is involved; 8 per cent want less (first column). Where involvement includes the United Kingdom, 48 per cent want more intervention and 33 per cent want less (second column).

At the same time, there is overwhelming support – well over 80 per cent – for the idea that the international community creates "protected areas" where civilian populations should not be attacked during war. (See Figure 4.) The public supports the policy despite a great deal of caution as to whether such areas have protected people where they have been employed. Americans are the most positive about the efficacy of protected areas (45 per cent). Just one-third in the United Kingdom and about a quarter in France think internationally created protected areas have made things better. The Europeans, perhaps because of the experience of Bosnia-Herzegovina, are much more cautious. Only about 10 per cent think they have made things worse, but nearly 40 per cent in both the United Kingdom and France say they have made no difference.

FIGURE 4
Protected areas

(per cent of total population responding)

	United Kingdom	United States	France
Better	34%	45%	28%
Worse	10%	18%	11%
No difference	38%	29%	40%
Don't know	18%	8%	21%

Question: As far as you can tell, have these "protected areas" made it better or worse for civilians during these wars, or haven't they made any difference?

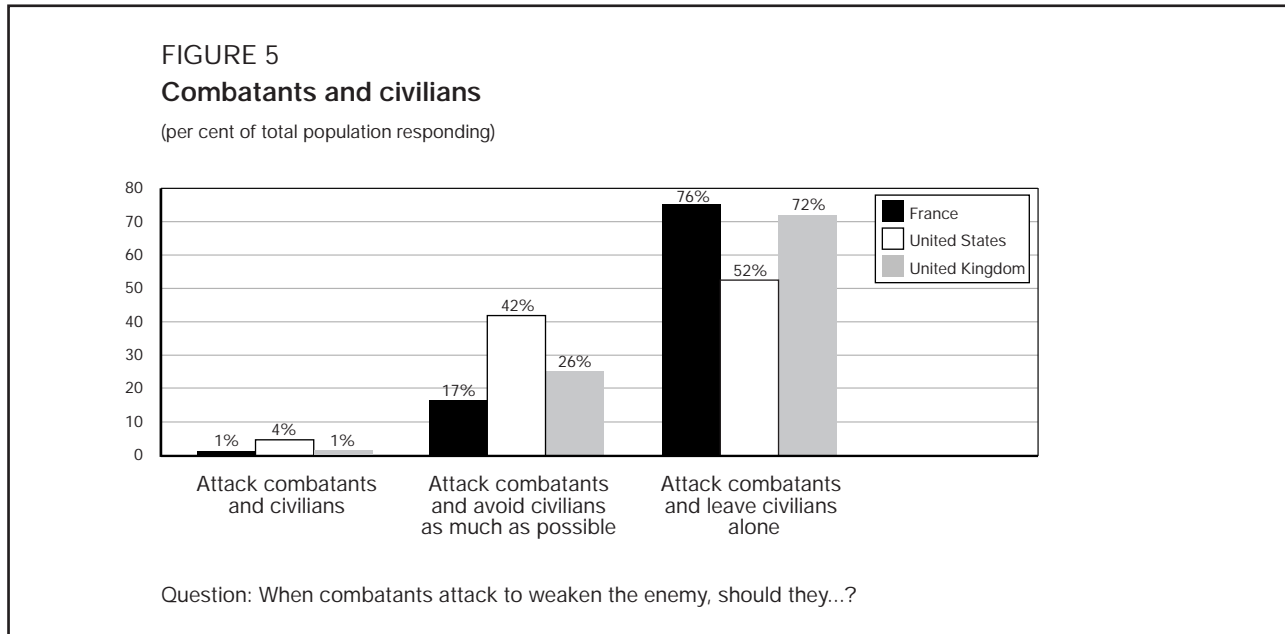Their own experience of war has made people in Bosnia-Herzegovina much more cautious about the success of international intervention. In the ICRC consultation in Bosnia-Herzegovina conducted in early 1999, a small majority of 52 per cent say "protected areas" are a good idea – well below the nearly absolute support for the idea expressed in France (85 per cent), the United Kingdom (87 per cent) and the United States (81 per cent). About one-third of the people surveyed in Bosnia-Herzegovina think such areas are a bad idea. Regarding the efficacy of the international peacekeeping forces in the region: 42 per cent of Bosnians think UNPROFOR made things better and 38 per cent think it made no difference; 12 per cent think it made things worse. The publics in France, the United Kingdom and the United States offer roughly similar judgements on the efficacy of international peacekeeping forces: 54 per cent say they make things better, 29 per cent say they make no difference, and 9 per cent think they make things worse.

Attitudes towards military intervention to protect civilian populations were no doubt shaped by the experience of the current war in Yugoslavia. At the outset of the war, the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States generally expressed support for the principle of intervention. That support is embedded in a generally shared view that the use of military force – to stop a conflict, protect civilians or hold war criminals accountable – is appropriate for the international community and, in some cases, their own country acting alone. That consensus is challenged by doubts about the effectiveness of recent interventions and the undercurrent of isolationism that affects policy in the leading military power, the United States.

Combatants and civilians

Nearly everyone in France, the United Kingdom and the United States believes war should be fought in ways that leave civilians alone or that avoid them as much as possible. (See Figure 5.) There is a consensus that in principle combatants and civilians must be distinguished. However, within that consensus, there are considerable differences between the three countries on the specific actions that put civilians at risk. About three-quarters of the public in the United Kingdom and France accept the higher standard, "attack enemy combatants and leave civilians alone". Smaller numbers accept the more permissive standard, "attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible" (26 per cent in the United Kingdom and 17 per cent in France). This result is roughly comparable to that found in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

FIGURE 5
Combatants and civilians

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they...?

The public in the United States is much less absolutist about the distinction between combatants and civilians. A bare majority (52 per cent) support the strongest protection, "leave civilians alone", and fully 42 per cent accept the best-effort distinction, "avoid civilians as much as possible", while another 4 per cent accept no distinction and would simply "attack combatants and civilians".

Unfortunately, the commitment to avoid civilians as much as possible – consistent with the Geneva Conventions – opens the way to explicit attacks on civilian populations, which are, perhaps, inconsistent with the Conventions. Those who accept the best-effort standard are much more likely to say it is acceptable to attack civilians who voluntarily shelter or feed their combatants (in the United Kingdom, 31 per cent compared with 13 per cent of those who accept the more absolute standard). They are also more likely to countenance attacks on populated areas, even though many civilians would be killed (in the United States, 56 per cent, compared with 36 per cent), and accept the use of non-targeted weapons such as landmines (in France, 11 per cent compared with 6 per cent).

As the century closes, discussions on international humanitarian law will have to address this pattern. An absolute prohibition produces a greatly reduced openness to actions and weapons that harm civilians. A prohibition based on the intention to avoid civilians as much as possible opens the door to indirect and direct attacks on civilian populations, as seen in the wars of the second half of this century.

The principle

A large majority of the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States are able to articulate in answer to an open-ended question the things that soldiers and fighters should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy. About 35 to 40 per cent do not cite anything specific or say they do not know, but a substantial majority can articulate things that are prohibited. At the top of people's lists are: the killing, shooting or targeting of innocent or unarmed civilians (about 25 to 30 per cent across all three countries); harming or torturing prisoners (about 10 per cent); barbaric acts, including rape, torture and atrocities (about 30 per cent in France); and attacks on women and children (about 10 to 15 per cent).

When asked what weapons should never be allowed in war, majorities in each country focus first on nuclear weapons (52 per cent in the United Kingdom, 56 per cent in the United States and 44 per cent in France). Nearly as many would bar chemical and biological weapons and nerve gas (56 per cent in the United Kingdom, 49 per cent in the United States and 40 per cent in France). With greater relevance for the recent conflict in the Balkans, nearly a quarter of Europeans would also ban landmines, but only 3 per cent of Americans mention landmines as an impermissible weapon.

In France, the United Kingdom and the United States, people believe soldiers and fighters should not be allowed to do certain things in war, above all, because "it is wrong". The foundation for prohibited conduct is normative, not material or pragmatic: about 80 per cent say "it's wrong", compared with 9 to 17 per cent who say "it just causes too many problems". In the war zones, not surprisingly, many more people focus on such problems as hate, physical suffering and property damage, though the normative foundations are also strong. In the countries removed from the violence, however, people root the prohibitions in normative principles, right and wrong.

While people in these countries share a normative framework on this issue, they situate their norms very differently. Majorities in all three countries refer first to "human rights" – the notion that certain actions violate the dignity or sanctity of human beings. This is particularly true in the United Kingdom, where two-thirds of people focus on the violation of human rights as the reason for considering certain actions to be wrong. In France, they are deemed wrong because it is against human rights first (55 per cent) but also because it is against their "personal code", that is, people's individual set of beliefs (44 per cent). The French also say that certain actions go against their "culture" (13 per cent). In the United States, people believe certain things are wrong because they are against human rights (51 per cent) and against their personal code (29 per cent). However, in the United States, certain actions by soldiers and fighters are also seen to violate social norms – they go against religion (26 per cent) and against "what people here believe" (14 per cent). (See Figure 6.)

FIGURE 6
Basis for the norm

(per cent of those who say "it's wrong")[5]

	United Kingdom	United States	France
Against human rights	66%	51%	55%
Against your personal code	30%	29%	44%
Against your religion	9%	26%	10%
Against the law	8%	12%	7%
Against what most people here believe	8%	14%	6%
Against your culture	3%	5%	13%

Question: When you say it's wrong, is it primarily wrong because it is...?

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[5] Some respondents said combatants should not be allowed to do certain things in war because they are "wrong". Those respondents were then asked why they are wrong. In the United Kingdom, 66 per cent say they are wrong because they go against human rights; 30 per cent say they violate their personal code.

Eliding combatants and civilians

A majority of the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States say it is wrong for combatants to attack civilians, even when combatants and civilians are intermingled in towns and villages. In similar numbers, they reject "ethnic cleansing" or any tactic that disrupts civilian life to weaken the enemy. Large majorities also respect the rights of prisoners and acknowledge the obligations of armies, formal and informal, to treat prisoners in certain ways.

Nonetheless, significant minorities in these countries, particularly in the United States, seem ready to accept that civilians may be attacked or put at risk in order to weaken the enemy. Significant minorities question whether military authorities are obligated to treat prisoners in a humane way. Many believe that the emotions of war, particularly the loss of people close to them, could push them to harm surrendering prisoners. Indeed, this study indicates that the public in these countries, particularly in the United States, is at least as willing as those who have lived in the war zones to blur the line between combatants and civilians.

The European countries – France and the United Kingdom – respond similarly to the challenges of protecting non-combatants from the ravages of conflict. Very large majorities in both countries oppose virtually every military action that blurs the line between combatant and civilian, though this is also true of the ICRC research in the war zones. Indeed, the responses of the European public are quite similar to the responses of those more directly in the line of fire. Yet, small but significant minorities would endanger civilians and, in some cases, involve civilians directly.

Between a quarter and a third of Britons seem willing to accept military attacks on largely civilian areas, if the action advances the war aims by weakening the enemy. For example, 35 per cent of the British public say "attacking religious and historical monuments" is part of war; just 56 per cent say it is wrong, while 7 per cent volunteer that it is both wrong and part of war. Fully a third of the British public (32 per cent) say "attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed" is part of war, with only 47 per cent responding that it is wrong. When the information is added that "women and children would be killed", acceptance drops to 26 per cent, but that is still one in four Britons.

A significant minority in the United Kingdom seem to accept that civilian support for combatants opens them up to attack: 25 per cent say it is part of war for soldiers and fighters to deprive "the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy"; 18 per cent say it is acceptable to attack "civilians who voluntarily give food and shelter to enemy combatants". While large majorities of the British public reject attacks of this kind, a significant minority would break down the barrier that protects civilians, if they were to provide material support to the enemy. On some of these issues, such as attacking civilians who voluntarily provide military support to the enemy, people in the United Kingdom express views very similar to those living in the war zones. On other questions, such as attacking religious or historical sites, the British seem considerably more willing than people in war zones to endanger civilian institutions.

FIGURE 7

Acceptance of war practices

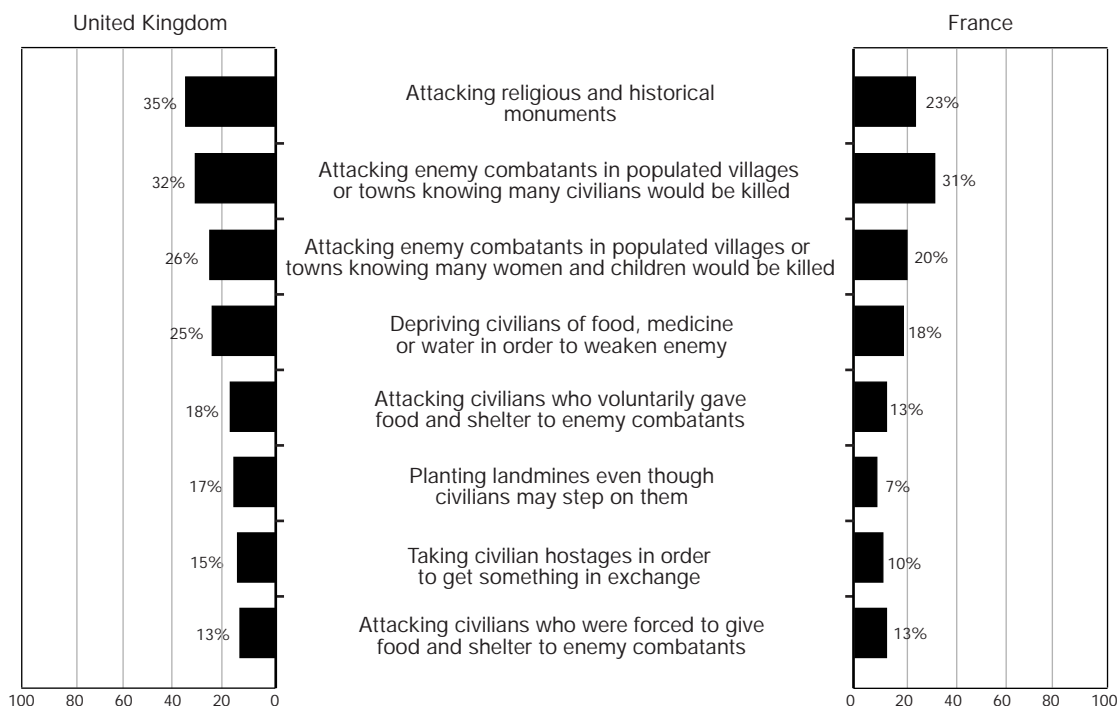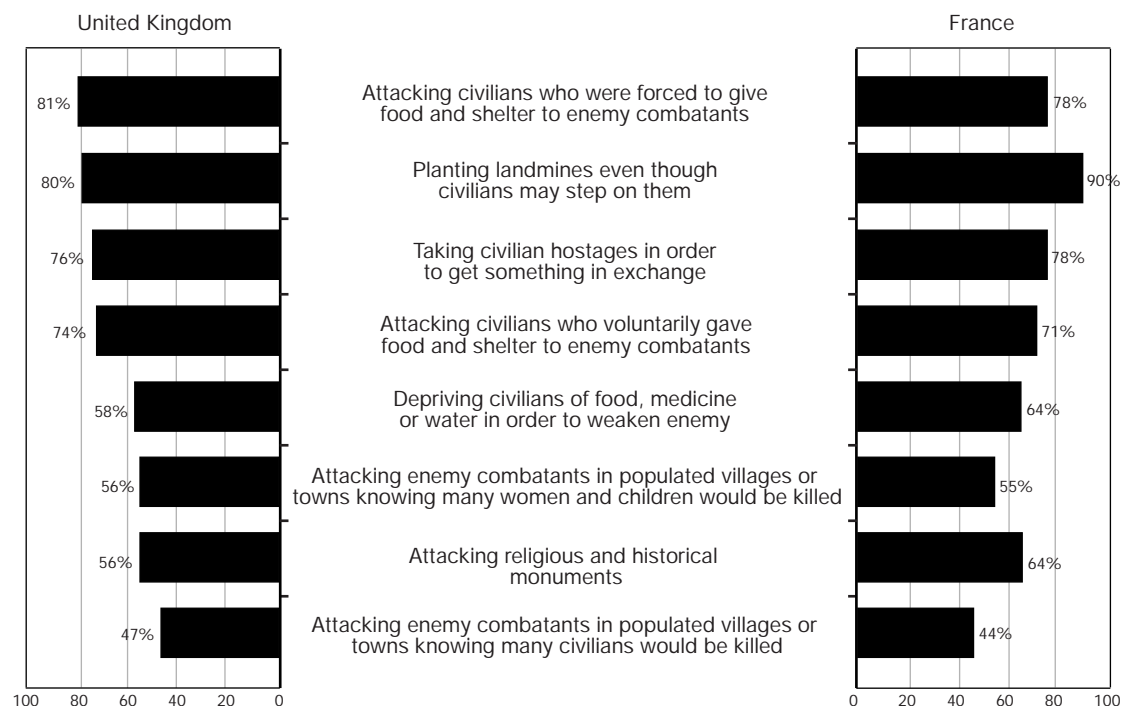(per cent of total population in each country who think it is "okay")[6]

United Kingdom | France

United Kingdom	Practice	France
35%	Attacking religious and historical monuments	23%
32%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed	31%
26%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many women and children would be killed	20%
25%	Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water in order to weaken enemy	18%
18%	Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants	13%
17%	Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them	7%
15%	Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange	10%
13%	Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants	13%

FIGURE 8

Acceptance of war practices

(per cent of total population in each country who think it is "not okay")[7]

United Kingdom | France

United Kingdom	Practice	France
81%	Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants	78%
80%	Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them	90%
76%	Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange	78%
74%	Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants	71%
58%	Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water in order to weaken enemy	64%
56%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many women and children would be killed	55%
56%	Attacking religious and historical monuments	64%
47%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed	44%

[6]This chart displays the results for a series of questions, each of which asked whether it was "okay" to do certain things in war that would blur the line between combatants and non-combatants. For example, 35 per cent of the British respondents say it is "okay" or "part of war" for combatants to attack religious and historical monuments. The British results are displayed on the left and the French results on the right.
[7]This graph is the same as in Figure 7 except that it displays the percentages of those who say certain things are "not okay".

The French public is least open to military actions that endanger civilians or that blur the line between combatants and non-combatants. Just 7 per cent would countenance the planting of landmines that might later kill civilians; only 10 per cent would accept hostage-taking; and 13 per cent would accept attacking civilians who voluntarily provide material support to combatants. In each case, the views of the French public stand out from those of other countries and in comparison with thinking in the war zones. The French people, it seems, refuse to compromise on the distinction between civilians and combatants, simply because civilians provide support for their own forces.

However, even in France, a minority accept that civilians and civilian institutions, as part of the war environment, can be subjected to certain kinds of attack: 18 per cent accept depriving civilian populations of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy; 23 per cent accept attacking religious or historical sites, again to achieve military ends.

Still, it is striking how large the French consensus is against bringing civilians into war: two-thirds say it is wrong to attack religious sites; more than two-thirds reject attacks on civilian populations who provide military support; and 90 per cent reject the use of landmines.
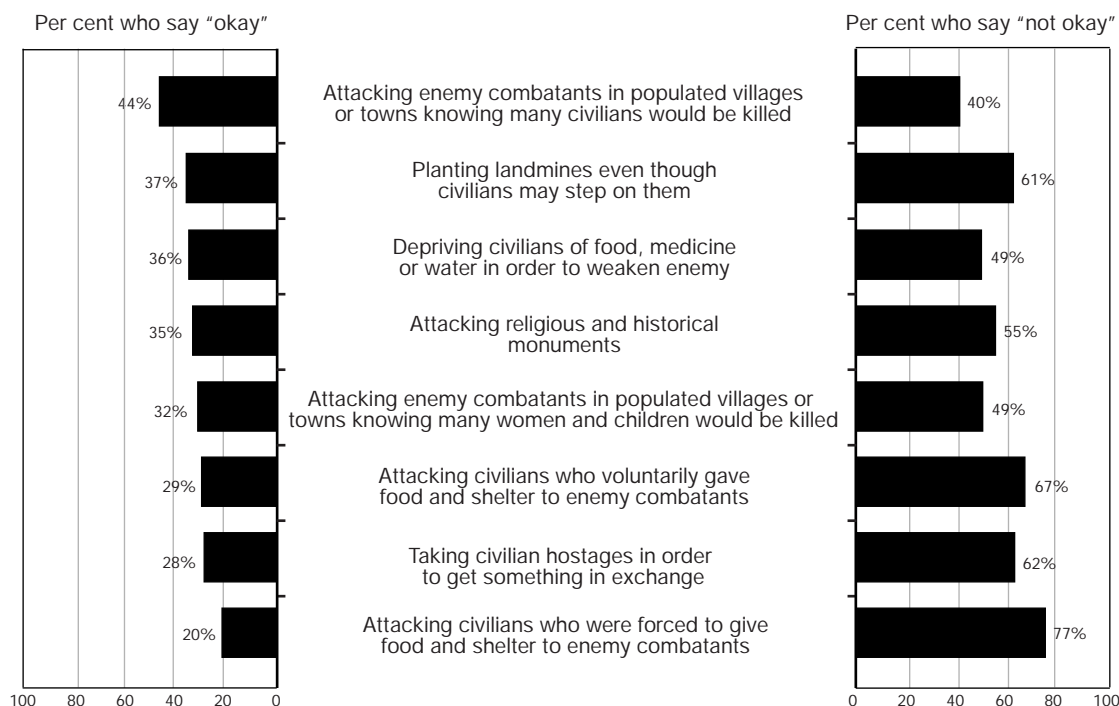
The public in the United States stands out from the publics in the United Kingdom and France. Two-thirds of the public reject the idea that civilians become combatants simply by providing food and shelter to their military forces; over 60 per cent reject the use of landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, mainly because it puts civilians at risk. After that, however, the consensus on what practices are acceptable in war breaks down. In the United States, the public is basically divided over whether it is acceptable to attack combatants in populated areas and to disrupt civilian life in order to weaken the enemy. A near majority of Americans (44 per cent) say it is part of war to attack "enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed". A small majority of 56 per cent say it is wrong, with 40 per cent responding outright that it is wrong and 16 per cent responding that it is wrong, but part of war. Here, the American public stands out from France and the United Kingdom, but also from people in the war zones, where just over a third say attacks on populated towns and villages are part of war.

More than a third of the American people (36 per cent) say it is part of war to deprive the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy. Half the public (49 per cent) say, flatly, that such practices are wrong, with another 15 per cent saying they are wrong, but still part of war. Here, American attitudes reflect those that the ICRC has recorded in the war zones around the world. (See Figure 9.)

Across a range of questions, it is evident that at least a third of Americans accept as "part of war" and not "wrong" military actions against civilian targets and ones that involve a significant probability of civilian casualties. These include: depriving civilian populations of food, medicine and water (36 per cent); attacking religious or historical monuments (35 per cent); attacking combatants in populated areas where women and children could be killed (32 per cent); and attacking civilians who voluntarily provide food and shelter to their military forces (29 per cent).

FIGURE 9
Acceptance of war practices

(United States respondents)

Per cent who say "okay"   Per cent who say "not okay"

Per cent who say "okay"	Practice	Per cent who say "not okay"
44%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed	40%
37%	Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them	61%
36%	Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water in order to weaken enemy	49%
35%	Attacking religious and historical monuments	55%
32%	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many women and children would be killed	49%
29%	Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants	67%
28%	Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange	62%
20%	Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants	77%

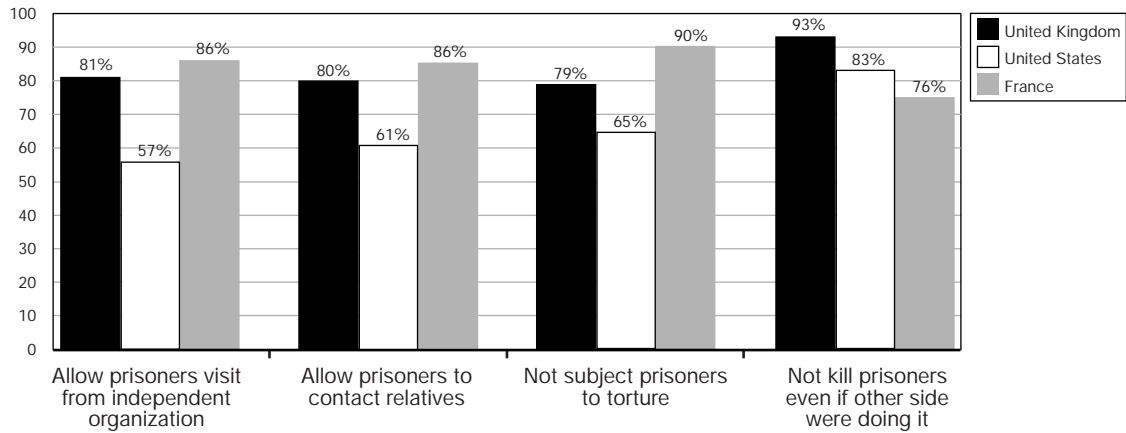100 80 60 40 20 0   0 20 40 60 80 100

Prisoners of war

The European public, particularly the French, understands and accepts the military's obligations on the treatment of prisoners of war. People in the United States are much less conscious of these obligations, and many believe that the military can isolate and even torture prisoners in their custody. The survey does not explore whether people support such practices, but rather whether they know of any obligations that the military must heed with respect to prisoners of war.

The British and French public overwhelmingly understands these obligations: about 80 per cent of the British and about 90 per cent of the French say the authorities are obligated to allow prisoners contact with relatives and visits by representatives of independent organizations; similar proportions say that the authorities cannot torture prisoners, even to obtain important military information. Consciousness of these obligations in these countries is significantly higher than in the war zones surveyed by the ICRC. (See Figure 10.)

Consciousness of these obligations is substantially lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom and France: 37 per cent say the authorities do not have to allow prisoners contact with a relative and 39 per cent say they do not have to allow visits by an independent organization. While two-thirds (65 per cent) say prisoners cannot be subjected to torture to get important military information, fully 32 per cent say they can.

FIGURE 10
Prisoners of war

(per cent of total population responding)[8]

Question: Now let me ask you how prisoners of war should be treated.

Understanding the obligations, however, is not the same as favouring practices that endanger prisoners of war. For example, just about one in ten in these countries would approve of killing prisoners if the other side were doing it; about 85 per cent in all the countries reject the concept of reciprocity when it comes to prisoners. About 90 per cent say they would never think that "captured enemy soldiers or fighters deserve to die".
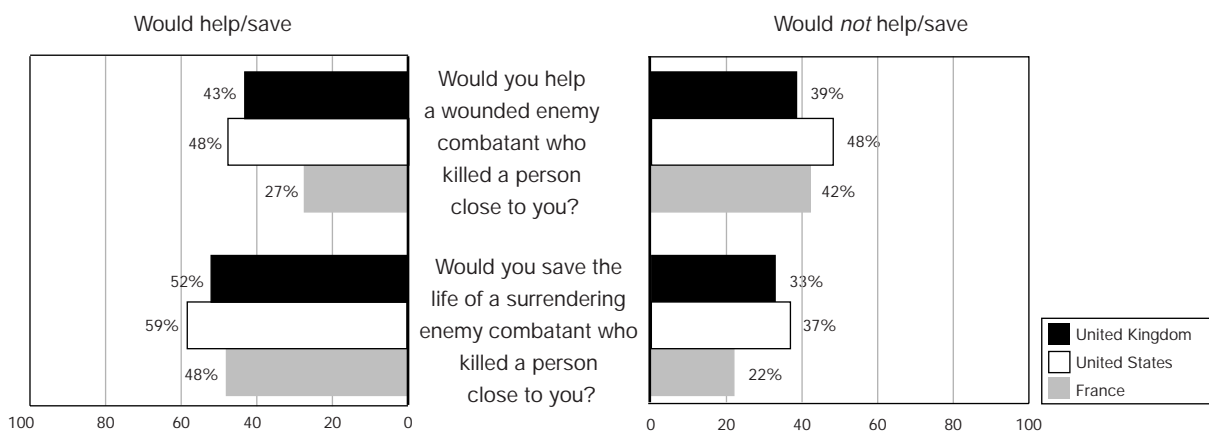
While the American public is uncertain about a range of obligations to prisoners, two-thirds say prisoners cannot be tortured; 80 to 90 per cent of Americans reject reciprocity with regard to treatment of prisoners and renounce the idea that captured soldiers deserve to die.

However, the public in all three countries is a little uncertain that these instincts and obligations would hold up if they were actually thrown into a war situation. Just about 50 per cent of the public across France, the United Kingdom and the United States say they would save a surrendering combatant who killed a person close to them. The Americans are most likely (37 per cent) to say explicitly that they would not save such a person. The publics in all three countries are also uncertain about how they would treat a wounded enemy combatant who had killed a person close to them. Americans are the most likely to say they would help, but only 48 per cent say that. About 40 per cent of the people in these countries say they would not provide help. (See Figure 11.)

[8]The percentages in this figure reflect the proportion in each country who accept certain obligations with respect to prisoners of war.

FIGURE 11
Wounded or surrendering combatants
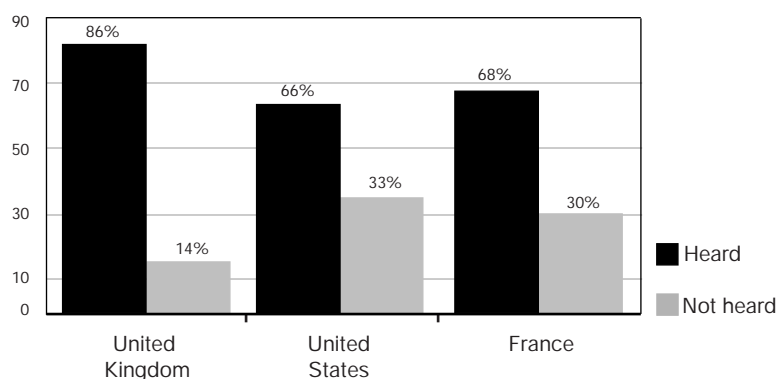(per cent of total population responding)

Would help/save   Would *not* help/save

Would you help a wounded enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?
- United Kingdom: 43% / 39%
- United States: 48% / 48%
- France: 27% / 42%

Would you save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?
- United Kingdom: 52% / 33%
- United States: 59% / 37%
- France: 48% / 22%

Legend:
- ■ United Kingdom
- □ United States
- ▨ France

When presented with each of these situations, people in these countries respond very similarly to those in the war zones. Quite large minorities, in and outside the war zones, readily admit that they would be capable of acting in ways that lead to captured combatants being seriously harmed.

Geneva Conventions

Large majorities of the public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States have heard of the Geneva Conventions, though about a third in the United States and France have not. About two-thirds of those who have heard of the Conventions provide a reasonably accurate description of what they are about; less than half of the public in these countries is genuinely knowledgeable. (See Figure 12.)

FIGURE 12
Geneva Conventions
(per cent of total population responding)

Country	Heard	Not heard
United Kingdom	86%	14%
United States	66%	33%
France	68%	30%

Legend:
- ■ Heard
- ▨ Not heard

Question: Let me ask you something very different. Have you heard of the Geneva Conventions?

⁹The bars above the mid-point represent the percentage of people who would help or save a wounded or surrendering combatant. The bars below the line represent the percentage who would not.

People describe the Geneva Conventions mainly as laws or rules that regulate how wars are fought and how prisoners of war have to be treated. Nonetheless, the Conventions do not travel easily to the front, particularly as law. For example, in Europe, a third of the public accepts as part of war "attacking enemy combatants in populated villages in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed"; in the United States, 44 per cent accept such attacks. Regardless of people's position on military practice, many people in these countries simply do not know that these practices are subject to law. Fully 63 per cent of the American public say there are no laws to stop such attacks, as do 46 per cent of the British and 30 per cent of the French. Knowledge of international humanitarian law is obviously much greater in France, but still large portions of the public in all of these countries do not view these military practices as matters of law.

War crimes

In France, the United Kingdom and the United States, there is a near consensus on war crimes: about 80 per cent agree that there are rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished. One in five in the United States (21 per cent) say there are no such rules, but that does not detract from the scale of belief in war crimes, which rises to 78 per cent in the United States. This consensus carries over to what action should be taken against war criminals: 80 per cent in the United States, 82 per cent in the United Kingdom and 91 per cent in France would put them on trial. There is virtually no interest in these countries for amnesty, forgiveness or other steps that might avoid a legal process.

While there is a consensus on the occurrence of war crimes and the need for war-crimes trials, there is no consensus on which bodies ought to have jurisdiction. The French are the most internationalist: 62 per cent favour a trial before an international criminal court. A small majority in the United Kingdom favour going to an international court (51 per cent), but there is more interest in entrusting the matter to the institutions of the country at war. Overall, about 40 per cent see a country's government, military or courts punish those who commit war crimes. In the United States, 40 per cent would go to an international court, while half would go to national institutions, with the military seen to play an important role in holding wrongdoers accountable. (See Figure 13.)

FIGURE 13
Who should punish wrongdoers?
(per cent of total population responding)

	United Kingdom	United States	France
International criminal court	51%	40%	62%
The governments in the countries at war	20%	21%	12%
The military itself	11%	21%	2%
The courts in the countries at war	7%	8%	7%
The civilian population	2%	2%	5%
The politicians in the countries at war	1%	2%	3%

Question: If these rules are broken in war, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers?

In the war zones themselves, very large majorities believe in the concept of war crimes and in putting wrongdoers on trial. In most of them, however, majorities would have the country's own institutions take responsibility for punishing the guilty. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, people are evenly divided as to whether to go to international or national institutions.

The ICRC's role

In France, the United Kingdom and the United States, the ICRC is seen as the dominant organization with responsibility for protecting prisoners and civilian populations at risk in war. Over 70 per cent, for example, cite the ICRC as the independent organization that ought to be able to visit prisoners of war.

FIGURE 14

Visit by representative

(per cent of total population responding in each country)[10]

	United Kingdom	United States	France
ICRC representative	74%	71%	71%
Human rights group representative	47%	37%	61%
UN representative	42%	48%	31%
Religious clerics/ministers	33%	56%	27%
Journalists	16%	24%	14%
Family/relatives/parents	0%	0%	0%
Anyone/anybody allowed	0%	3%	0%
Don't know	2%	0%	2%

Question: Which of the following people should be allowed to visit prisoners of war?

For helping towns or villages cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity, again, people say the ICRC is the principal institution to turn to first for help (63 per cent of the British, 64 per cent of the French and 71 per cent of Americans). (See Figure 15.)

The French also assign a very large role to international humanitarian organizations: 64 per cent would turn to them. The British to a lesser extent look to humanitarian organizations (36 per cent) and to the UN (34 per cent). The Americans would also grant a significant role to humanitarian organizations (30 per cent), to the UN (28 per cent) and, uniquely, to religious leaders (29 per cent).

FIGURE 15

Turn to for help

(per cent of total population responding in each country)

	United Kingdom	United States	France
The ICRC or Red Cross	63%	71%	64%
International humanitarian organizations	36%	30%	64%
The United Nations	34%	28%	15%
Military and combatants	14%	14%	7%
Journalists and the news media	10%	9%	6%
Government leaders	6%	10%	5%
Religious leaders	6%	29%	5%
International criminal court	5%	4%	9%
Other countries	2%	2%	3%

Question: During wars, civilian areas are sometimes attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. I'm going to read a list of organizations and people to whom civilians can turn to stop these kinds of things. Please tell me which *two* are most important to be there.

---

[10]Respondents were allowed to opt for more than one choice; thus, the column percentages add up to a number greater than 100 per cent. In the United Kingdom, for example, 74 per cent say an ICRC representative should be allowed to visit prisoners of war; 47 per cent say representatives of human rights groups should be allowed to make such visits.

Patterns of support

People's views on war are shaped by generational and wartime experience. Class is important in the United States: the better-educated are more likely to believe in limits on war. It is not a class issue in Europe, however. People there relate to war mainly through their gender and family roles, shaped by experience.

The gender divide is the starting point. By significant margins, women are consistently more likely to want absolute barriers between combatants and civilians and, therefore, are less likely to countenance attacks on civilians as part of war. This is evident in nearly every aspect of this issue, as illustrated below:

Attacking civilians who provide food and shelter to their combatants

• In the United States, 36 per cent of men find it acceptable, but only 22 per cent of women.

• In the United Kingdom, 25 per cent of men find it acceptable, but only 12 per cent of women.

• In France, 14 per cent of men find it acceptable, but only 12 per cent of women.

Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages knowing many civilians would be killed

• In the United States, 36 per cent of men find it acceptable, but only 22 per cent of women.

• In the United Kingdom, 25 per cent of men find it acceptable, but only 12 per cent of women.

• In France, 32 per cent of men find it acceptable, but just 20 per cent of women.

The gender divide is overlain by an age divide to create the principal clusters of thinking in these countries about war and its limits. The age divide does not operate automatically or linearly, however. Each country brings a different kind of gender-age culture to the issue, influenced by the military experience of older men.

Protecting prisoners and civilians

France in this study has the largest portion of the population who have served in the military (37 per cent). The veterans in France, as in all three countries, are more likely to see attacks on civilian populations as part of war: 42 per cent say it is wrong to attack combatants in populated areas where many civilians would die (compared with 53 per cent of non-veterans); 56 per cent say it is wrong to deprive villages of food, water and medicine to weaken the enemy (compared with 67 per cent of non-veterans). However, in France, as in the United Kingdom but not the United States, veterans are more likely to protect potential prisoners of war: 43 per cent would save a surrendering enemy combatant who killed somebody close (compared with 35 per cent of non-veterans).

The veterans' response to the treatment of prisoners of war reflects a general age-related response in France and the United States. The older people are in France, the more likely they are to want to protect prisoners. The younger they are, the more likely they are to give in to the emotions of war when it comes to prisoners. Thus, just 27 per cent of those between 18 and 29 years of age would save a surrendering combatant who had killed someone close to them, compared with 47 per cent of all those over the age of 50.

In France, younger people are marginally less likely to countenance attacks on civilian populations, which makes younger women, under the age of 50, the strongest constituency for protecting civilian populations during war (78 per cent), followed closely by the younger men (77 per cent). Younger women, for example, are the most committed to strengthening the rules of war in order to reduce the number of war victims.

In the United Kingdom, the gender divide is quite large, and the veterans, as in France, are more protective of prisoners of war and less protective of civilians. Age is not a big divide in the United Kingdom on humanitarian law issues, though the veteran population shifts the thinking of older men, as also seen in France. Therefore, older men, while the most protective of prisoners, are by far the least protective of civilians. Nearly half of older men (48 per cent) say it is part of war to attack populated villages, compared with 34 per cent of younger men and 18 per cent of all women.

In the United States, age and gender follow a similar pattern, though age, gender and military service all seem to act in exaggerated ways to create a dramatic differentiation.

- *Younger women.* They are the group most protective of civilians and captured or injured combatants. Just 28 per cent say attacking populated villages is part of war; just 26 per cent see depriving villages of food, water and medicine as acceptable.

- *Older women.* Compared with younger women, they are not as protective of prisoners or civilians.

- *Older men.* Because of the role of age and military service, the older men have similar views to the younger women on the issue of prisoners of war. Conversely, those same factors lead them to accept attacks on civilians as normal: 50 per cent say it is part of war to attack populated villages and 41 per cent would accept depriving civilian populations to gain an advantage over the enemy.

- *Younger men.* They are least likely to be protective of non-combatants and most likely to serve in the military. A large majority of younger men (61 per cent) say they would not help or save a wounded or surrendering combatant who had killed somebody close to them. At the same time, about 40 per cent accept as part of war both attacking and depriving civilian populations.

Younger men in the United States bring a kind of bravado to these issues that distinguishes them from groups elsewhere in the three countries surveyed, but also from the other social segments in the United States. Of them, 18 per cent say they would support the reciprocal killing of prisoners, if the other side were doing it; 17 per cent say they sometimes think captured enemy combatants deserve to die. Their bravado is balanced by the women in the United States, particularly married women with children, who respond very differently to war situations and to these issues.

Orientation towards war

In France, the United Kingdom and the United States, the orientation towards combatants and civilians in wars abroad is rooted in a deeper orientation towards war in general. Where people are more focused on events abroad, are emotionally engaged with the participants and, above all, have a sense of human capacity to shape events, there is stronger support for the idea that even wars have limits. The concept of limits loses ground, not because people are indifferent to atrocities, but because many have come to see today's wars and their combatants as undifferentiated. They lose interest in the wars and their causes and their fighters, which leads to a sense that today's wars and excesses are natural, not worthy of special attention, perhaps beyond one's ability to shape. Banality is the main threat to the concept of limits on war. People accept that civilians will be caught in battle or that atrocities will occur, not because they support such practices, but because of simple feelings, indifference and impotence. Many people feel they are in no position to give war a different character – the premise underlying the Geneva Conventions.
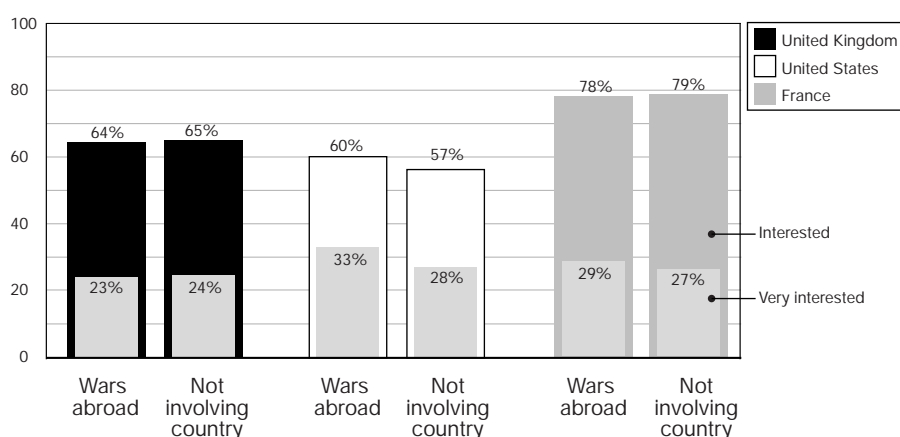
Internationalist

Because these surveys took place while NATO was conducting an air campaign against Yugoslavia, the public no doubt expressed heightened interest in wars taking place in countries abroad. The United States, which was leading the military effort at the time, has the largest bloc showing intense interest, but interest is broader in Europe. While 60 per cent of Americans say they are very interested or interested in wars abroad, that number rises to 64 per cent in the United Kingdom and as high as 78 per cent in France. (See Figure 16.)

European interest in wars is less nationalist than in the United States. When the question is rephrased to say, "wars not involving [your own country]", interest drops somewhat (33 to 28 per cent very interested) in the United States, but remains essentially the same in the United Kingdom and France. The same pattern holds on other questions below. Europeans' orientation to wars abroad tends to be less affected by their own country's involvement.

FIGURE 16
Interest in wars
(per cent of total population responding very interested or interested)

Question: As you know, newspapers and the TV news report on wars taking place in countries abroad (not involving survey country). When you see these stories, are you very interested, somewhat interested, only a little interested or not at all interested?

The strong internationalist segment who follow wars abroad very closely are also quite important to the viability of international humanitarian law. While support for limits on war varies widely within these countries, the internationalist segment is always more engaged and supportive. They form an internationalist elite that gives greater force to norms and practices that limit what combatants can do in war.

This elite segment probably appears larger and broader because of the higher international interest at the time of the war in Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, this segment is much more likely to take sides, to be engaged in the conflict, and therefore more likely to believe in international action. In the United Kingdom, for example, those intensely interested in wars abroad are much more likely to take sides: 40 per cent, compared with 12 per cent of those who are little interested. The same pattern is clear in France and the United States. (See Figure 17.)

FIGURE 17
International interest and taking sides
(per cent of population responding for each interest level)[11]

	Very interested	Interested	Somewhat interested	Little or not interested
United Kingdom (per cent taking sides)	40%	23%	17%	12%
United States (per cent taking sides)	58%	39%	38%	16%
France (per cent taking sides)	58%	50%	39%	7%

Question: When you see stories on wars abroad, do you generally find yourself favouring one of the sides, or generally do you not take sides?

Interest and engagement in today's wars also produce an increased belief that combatants should not put civilians at risk. While 74 per cent of the most internationalist segment in the United Kingdom say it is wrong to deprive civilians of food, water and medicine in order to weaken the enemy, just 45 per cent of the least internationalist think this. (See Figure 18.) Again, the same pattern holds for all three countries.

FIGURE 18
International interest and depriving civilians
(per cent of population responding for each interest level)[12]

	Very interested	Interested	Somewhat interested	Little or not interested
United Kingdom (per cent saying it's wrong)	74%	58%	50%	45%
United States (per cent saying it's wrong)	53%	45%	48%	49%
France (per cent saying it's wrong)	64%	64%	66%	54%

Question: What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy. Is that wrong or just part of the war?
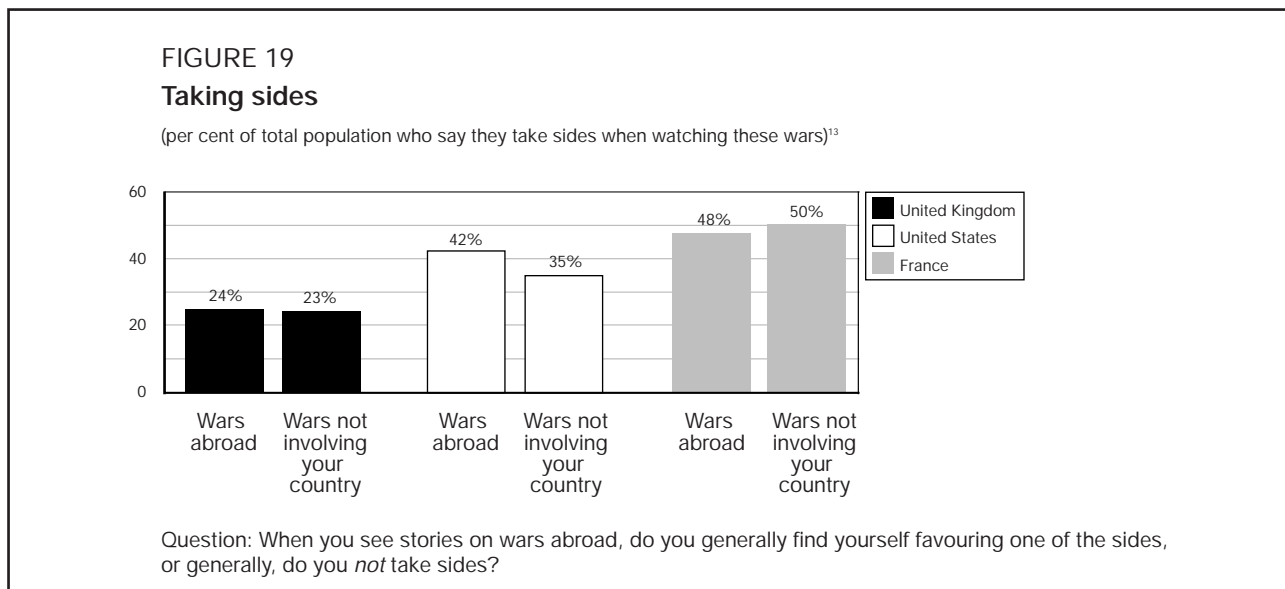
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[11]In the United Kingdom, for example, 40 per cent of those very interested in wars abroad take sides. This compares with 58 per cent of those very interested in the United States and France who take sides. Those who are less interested in wars abroad are less likely to take sides. For example, in France, just 7 per cent of those who are not interested at all take sides in these wars.
[12]In the United Kingdom, for example, among those very interested in wars abroad, 74 per cent say it is wrong to deprive civilians of food, medicine or water. Among those who are little or not at all interested, 45 per cent say it is wrong.

This segment, those more likely to take an interest in wars and take sides, also imagine that they would behave very differently if confronted with a war situation. Nearly 60 per cent of the internationalist segment in the United Kingdom say they would help or save a wounded or surrendering soldier or fighter; just 41 per cent of the least internationalist would do so. In the United States, 61 per cent of the internationalist segment say they would help or save a wounded or surrendering combatant, compared with 46 per cent of the least internationalist. In France, people are less certain of their virtue in these circumstances, but the same pattern holds: 47 per cent of the internationalists would help or save a wounded or surrendering combatant, while 34 per cent of the least internationalist would. Interest and engagement put people in a different state of mind about war and about the treatment of non-combatants.

Engagement in wars

Since this survey took place in the midst of the Kosovo crisis, one would expect the public to take sides in wars abroad. In fact, there is no majority in France, the United Kingdom or the United States who side automatically with any particular party to a conflict. The British seem uniquely disengaged from the warring parties: only about a quarter say they favour a side, whether or not the United Kingdom is involved in the war. The American public is marginally more inclined to take a side when the United States might be involved (42 per cent), which drops to 35 per cent when the United States is not involved. The French are the most likely to become engaged with these wars and champion a side: half say they favour a side, whether their country is involved or not. (See Figure 19.)

FIGURE 19

Taking sides

(per cent of total population who say they take sides when watching these wars)[13]

Question: When you see stories on wars abroad, do you generally find yourself favouring one of the sides, or generally, do you *not* take sides?
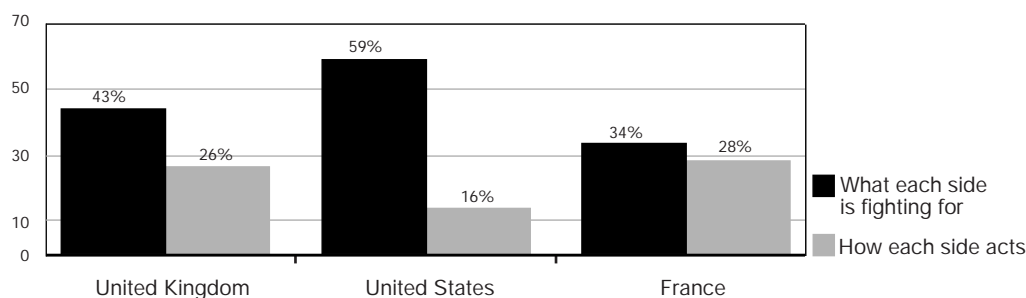
When taking sides, the public's primary focus in these countries is on what the combatants are fighting for, not on how they are conducting themselves in battle, in other words, in their cause, not in international humanitarian law. This is particularly true in the United States, where 59 per cent say, when thinking about taking a side, that what is important is "what each side is fighting for". The French are least likely to focus on the war goals (34 per cent), with nearly as many saying they focus on "how each side acts during the war" (28 per cent). The British are somewhere in between – they are more like the Americans when it comes to the war goals (43 per cent) and more like the French on how the combatants act (26 per cent). In all three countries, one in five say they focus on both the war goals and on conduct in war. (See Figure 20.)

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[11]Respondents were asked if, when seeing stories on war abroad, they generally favoured one of the sides or generally did not take sides. In the United Kingdom, 24 per cent say they take sides when seeing stories on wars abroad; a similar number, 23 per cent, take sides when seeing stories on wars abroad "not involving their own country".

FIGURE 20
Character of war

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: When thinking about favouring one side in war, which is more important to you:
what each side is fighting for *or* how each side acts during the war?
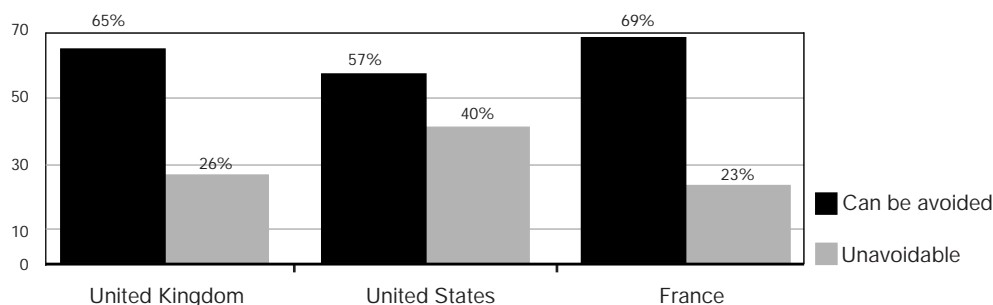
Sense of efficacy in shaping the character of war

The most important dimension of thinking on war centres on human capacity to shape the course of war. On one side is a feeling that the character of war is unchanging, given and perhaps natural. The behaviour of combatants is seen as a given in the nature of war, and thus not likely to be changed by governments and the international community. On the other side is a sense that war and atrocities are preventable; the international community, governments and citizens can shape events.

The public in France, the United Kingdom and the United States begins with a strong sense that wars abroad can be avoided. Two-thirds of the British and French publics (65 and 69 per cent) believe this, as do a sizeable majority of Americans (57 per cent). The segment resigned to wars constitutes only a quarter of the European public, though it rises to 40 per cent in the United States. (See Figure 21.)
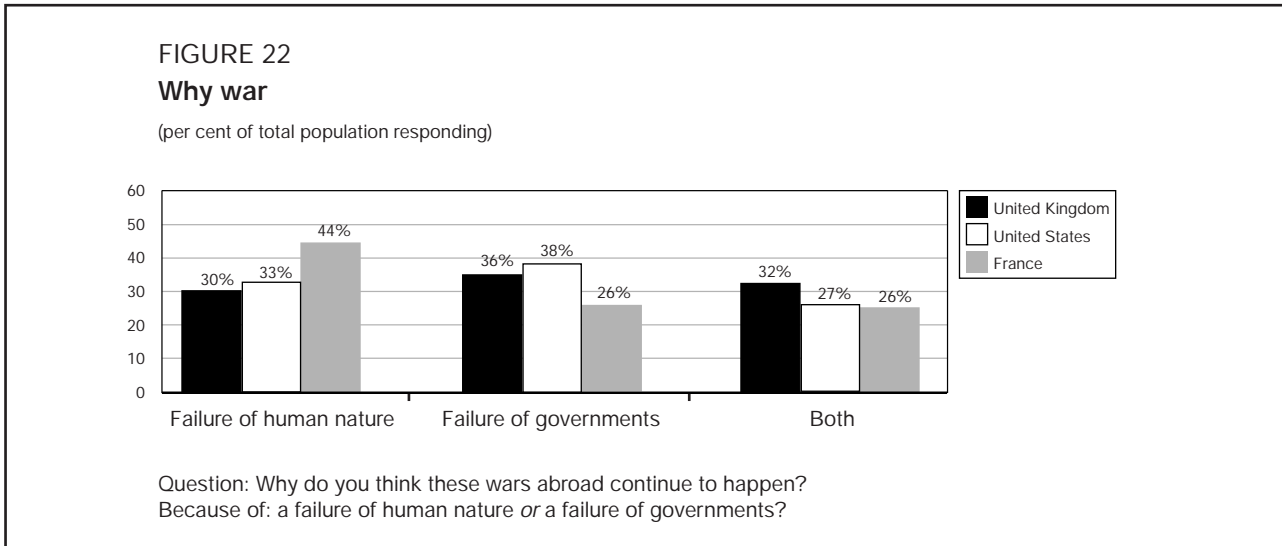
FIGURE 21
Avoidability of war
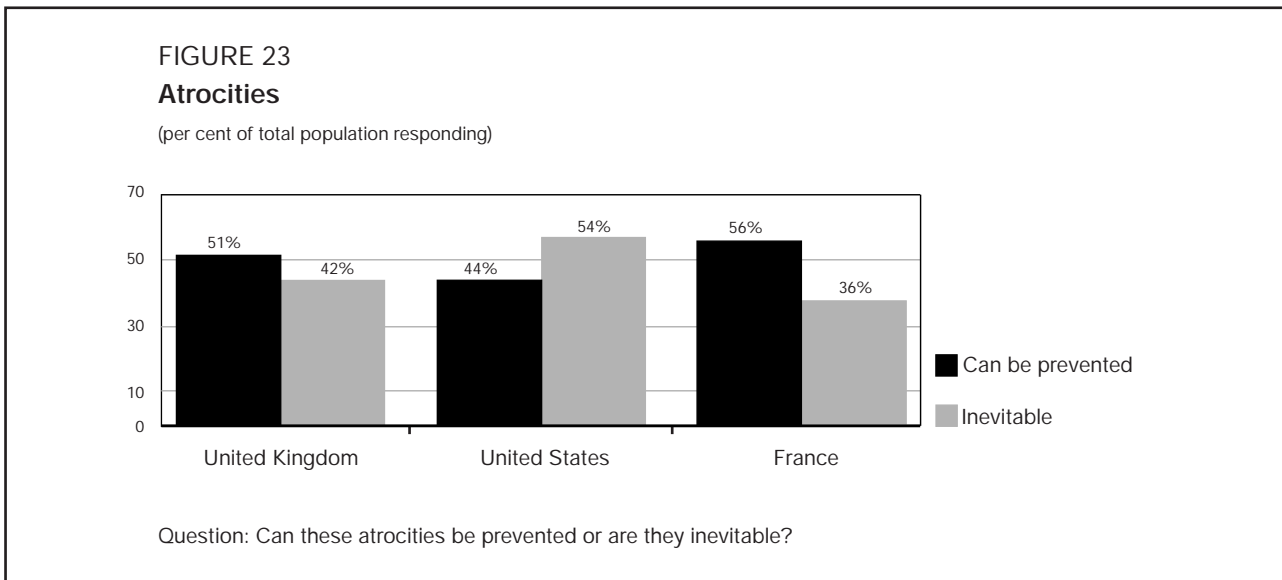
(per cent of total population responding)

Question: Can many of these wars abroad be avoided or are they mainly unavoidable?

Opinion in these countries is quite fragmented as to the cause of wars – some people say they happen because of a failure of human nature, others because of a failure of government, and yet others say it is because of both. (The French are marginally more likely to dwell on human nature.) (See Figure 22.) The key to a sense of efficacy in shaping the character of war, however, is the attitude towards governments. As seen below, those who think better of governments, as in France, are more likely to believe concerted action can make a difference.

FIGURE 22
Why war

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: Why do you think these wars abroad continue to happen?
Because of: a failure of human nature *or* a failure of governments?

These countries are divided on the question of efficacy – whether or not it is possible to prevent atrocities in war. By about a 5 to 4 ratio, Europeans tilt towards belief in the capacity to prevent; by about the same ratio, 5 to 4, Americans tilt towards a sense of inevitability. (See Figure 23.)

FIGURE 23
Atrocities

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: Can these atrocities be prevented or are they inevitable?

Efficacy creates a powerful divide in the thinking on combatants and civilians in today's wars. Those who think atrocities can be prevented are much less likely to say threats to civilians are part of war. They are more likely to be protective of prisoners of war. Perhaps most importantly for this project, they are much more likely to believe the Geneva Conventions can prevent wars from getting worse.

In the United States, the pattern is dramatic, as seen in the figure below. Among those who think wars are avoidable, 55 per cent say it is wrong to deprive villages of food, water and medicine to weaken the enemy, compared with 41 per cent of those who think wars are unavoidable; 53 per cent say it is wrong to attack enemy combatants in populated villages or towns, knowing that many civilians would be killed (including women and children), compared with just 33 per cent among those resigned to war. The same pattern is evident in France and the United Kingdom. (See Figure 24.) Those who think governments or international players can prevent war are the strongest advocates of maintaining a distinction between combatants and civilians.

FIGURE 24

Efficacy and civilians in war

(per cent of total population responding "wars can be avoided" or "wars are unavoidable")[14]

	Can be avoided	Unavoidable
Wrong to attack villages		
United Kingdom	55%	46%
United States	53%	33%
France	53%	42%
Wrong to deprive civilians		
United Kingdom	56%	48%
United States	55%	41%
France	67%	54%

Question: What about attacking the enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy? Is that wrong or just part of war?
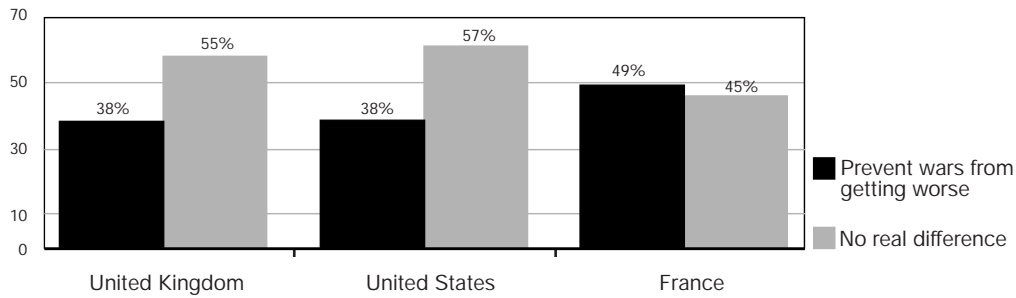
Question: What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy? Is that wrong or just part of war?

During the survey, people were read a description of the Geneva Conventions, which are premised on the capacity of nations through international treaties to impose limits on war. The Geneva Conventions presume efficacy – the capacity of the international community and nations to shape the character of war. Only the French public, however, comes close to having a majority who believe the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse (49 per cent). While significant minorities in the United States and the United Kingdom believe the Geneva Conventions are effective (38 per cent), majorities say they make no real difference (55 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively). The battle over the efficacy of international humanitarian law remains unfinished, even in the most internationalist countries and countries most oriented towards international humanitarian law. (See Figure 25.)

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[11]For example, among those who think war can be avoided, 55 per cent in the United Kingdom say it is wrong to attack villages. Among those who say wars are unavoidable, 46 per cent say it is wrong.

FIGURE 25

Impact of Geneva Conventions

(per cent of total population responding)

Question: Do you think the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse or do they make no real difference?

Obviously, these three countries have very different orientations towards wars and their limits. France, which is the most interested and engaged in wars taking place abroad, most likely to champion the cause of warring parties, least critical of governmental failures and most confident that wars and atrocities can be avoided, is the country most supportive of the rules of war and least willing to lower the barrier between combatants and civilians. The United States has a different orientation overall. The American public is the least interested and engaged with wars abroad, the most critical of governments for the wars taking place and the least confident that wars and atrocities can be forestalled. Not surprisingly, it is also the most resigned to the course of war and the diminishing barrier between combatants and civilians.

At the same time, in each of the countries, people who are intensely interested in and engaged with wars abroad and confident of governments' capacity to prevent wars and abuses also want to believe that war can have limits. Whether living in France, the United Kingdom or the United States, people with such an orientation express very similar views on how wars should be fought.

What now?

The people in these countries are overwhelmingly supportive of collective steps to reduce the number of victims in war. Whatever the overall orientation towards wars abroad, people would support a broad range of measures, including making the laws and rules more effective.

- *Increasing the effectiveness of laws and rules that limit what combatants can do in war* (78 to 82 per cent say it is extremely or somewhat important).

- *Increasing the accuracy of weapons to reduce the unintended casualties* (73 to 82 per cent say it is extremely or somewhat important).

- *Increasing the news coverage of these wars so that atrocities are exposed* (70 to 78 per cent say it is extremely or somewhat important).

- *Decreasing the numbers of weapons available to soldiers and fighters in the world* (61 to 84 per cent say it is extremely or somewhat important).

These countries, while all supportive of initiatives in each of these areas, bring different priorities to the problems of war at the end of the century. The French would give the highest priority by far to reducing the weaponry available in the world, followed by increasing the efficacy of international humanitarian law. They are least interested in increasing the accuracy of weapons. The British show somewhat greater interest than the Americans do in each of these initiatives, but the priorities of these two countries are the same. They would give the highest priority to increasing the accuracy of weapons to reduce the chances of unintended casualties, followed by increasing the efficacy of the rules of war and then expanded news coverage. The American and British publics show the least interest in reducing the number of weapons available in war. (See Figure 26.)

FIGURE 26
Reducing victims in war

(per cent of total population responding extremely important way to try to reduce the number of victims)

	United Kingdom	United States	France
Increasing the effectiveness of laws and rules that limit what combatants can do	54%	40%	58%
Increasing the accuracy of weapons to reduce the unintended casualties	58%	48%	52%
Increasing the news coverage of these wars so that atrocities are exposed	54%	37%	54%
Decreasing the numbers of weapons available to soldiers and fighters	47%	29%	68%

Question: I'm going to read you different ways to reduce the number of victims in war. Please tell me whether each would be an extremely important, somewhat important, a little important or not very important way to reduce the number of victims.

The results suggest a paradox, which will be important to the unfolding debate about war and its limits. The public in these countries believes in the distinction between combatants and civilians and believe that combatants should not be allowed to do certain things in war. They believe these acts are wrong. Nonetheless, significant minorities accept as part of war actions that overlook the distinction and put civilians at risk. Fortunately, that disjunction does not keep the public in these countries from supporting strong actions on these issues. The public overwhelmingly believes in the concept of war crimes. People believe in trials to hold the perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, as we have just seen, they support actions – including more effective rules and laws of war – to reduce the number of victims in war.

Annex 1: General methodology

The ICRC's worldwide consultation on the rules of war, which is the cornerstone of the People on War project, was carried out in 12 countries that have been ravaged by war over the past decades. In each case, the ICRC conducted a public opinion survey with a representative sample of the country's population and organized in-depth interviews and focus groups with those involved in or directly affected by the conflict.

For comparative purposes, the views of people were also sought in France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States on the basis of the opinion survey only.

The consultation was based on three principal research methods:

- A survey of 1,000 (in some cases 1,500) respondents representative of the country's general population;

- Focus groups (between 8 and 12 depending on the country) allowing a professionally moderated and intensive discussion in small groups;

- In-depth, face-to-face interviews (about 20 in each country) with individuals with specific war experiences.

In almost every case, the ICRC and local Red Cross or Red Crescent staff conducted the interviews, organized the focus groups, including recruitment of participants, and helped with translation/interpreting. Greenberg Research, with a local partner company, developed the sample design for the survey, processed data in electronic form, provided moderators and prepared transcripts.

Opinion survey

Questionnaire. The opinion survey questioned people on their war experiences and views on international humanitarian law. The survey was mainly standardized for all countries, though the wording was modified to reflect each context and to achieve consistent meaning. About 10 per cent of the questions were contextual and in many cases unique to the country. In the additional five countries, the questionnaire was designed to elicit people's perceptions on war and international humanitarian law.

The questionnaires were developed by Greenberg Research, in consultation with the ICRC, on the basis of interviews with humanitarian law experts in the United States and Europe. The survey and questions were pre-tested in Mozambique and Colombia.

Sample design. In each country, interviews were held with 1,000 to 1,500 respondents, selected by a stratified, multistage cluster sampling method. The sample was stratified to ensure representation (500 interviews) from each of the principal conflict-affected geographic areas or ethnic/religious groups. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, this meant some 1,500 interviews (500 from Republika Srpska and 500 each from the Bosniac and Croat areas of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina); in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, this meant 1,000 interviews (500 in Israel and 500 in the occupied territories and the autonomous territories). These areas were divided into urban and rural geographic units (strata), to ensure representation of urban and rural populations.

The local partner randomly selected small geographic units within these strata. These units – 100 to 200 in each country – constituted the sampling points for the survey. In each geographic unit, 10 households (though fewer in some countries) were selected using a random route method appropriate to the country. In some cases, interviewers were provided with a map and a route; in others, interviewers were simply given a route and selection instructions.

Within households, respondents were selected using a Kish grid (a respondent selection key that employs a combination of random numbers, alphabet codes and the number of available members in a household to identify the appropriate respondent) or the birthday criterion (a respondent selection process that employs dates of birth to determine the appropriate respondent). Interviewers were to make three attempts to achieve a completed interview, including locating the respondent elsewhere. In nearly every country, non-response was below 10 per cent.

The demographic distribution of the surveyed respondents was compared with the best available census data on education, age, household type and occupation. Where the sample survey was sharply askew (e.g., too many college-educated or too many young respondents), statistical weights were applied to eliminate the bias.

Interviews carried out by phone reached 755 adults in France, 1,000 in Switzerland, 750 in the United Kingdom and 1,000 in the United States, and 1,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out in the Russian Federation.

Survey administration

In nearly all the countries, the survey was administered by the ICRC, with the assistance of Greenberg Research and a local research partner. Interviews were conducted by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff. Greenberg Research provided training, which typically took two days.

Parallel research. In three of the countries – Colombia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Philippines – Greenberg Research commissioned a parallel quantitative survey, administered by a local research company using professional interviewers, in order to identify patterns of bias. The results of the parallel studies were then compared with the results of the ICRC-administered surveys. The exercise found only a few areas of systematic bias. Those interviewed by the ICRC and Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, for example, were consistently more supportive of the ICRC's role and more aware of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war. However, the parallel research found few systematic differences in opinions on international humanitarian law. The ICRC results closely resemble the parallel survey results on most other questions. (A technical report assessing the parallel research and Red Cross bias is available separately.)

In-depth research

Focus groups. The focus groups provided a relatively unstructured environment for people to discuss their war experiences freely, express their views on the appropriate limits to war and consider possible actions against those who exceed them. To be effective, the groups had to be as homogeneous as possible, that is, the participants all had to have similar characteristics. Thus, in general, the participants in a group came from the same area, were all male or all female and shared an important war experience (e.g., families of missing persons, ex-soldiers, ex-fighters, prisoners, teachers or journalists). The discussions were frequently intense and emotional and provide a rich commentary on how the public approaches these issues.

In each country, 8 to 12 focus groups were organized – four in each of the principal conflict areas. The participants were recruited by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, based on guidelines provided by Greenberg Research. The local research company provided a professional moderator, who facilitated the discussions using guidelines prepared by Greenberg Research.

The discussions were held in focus-group facilities, school classrooms, hotel rooms and even in the open air, if, for example, they involved guerrilla fighters. ICRC, Red Cross/Red Crescent and Greenberg Research staff observed and listened to the discussions from an adjoining location, with simultaneous translation in English. The focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed in English.

In-depth interviews. To help interpret the full meaning of the survey responses, about 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had had specific war experiences. The in-depth interview guidelines repeated questions from the public opinion survey, although they allowed for open-ended, rather than categorized responses. Interviewers were encouraged to probe and follow up on responses.

The in-depth interviews involved a broad range of people – officers, medical personnel, students (secondary school and university), journalists, former combatants, refugees, displaced persons, family members of missing persons, war invalids and others. The interviews were recorded on tape, transcribed and translated into English by the local partner.

Annex 2: Questionnaire*

Introduction

We are talking to people to get their views on some issues and laws, and I would like your help with that. We're not trying to sell anything, and this is completely confidential. Would it be possible to ask a few questions to the person who is 18 years or older and whose birthday is **[FIRST AFTER TODAY]**? **[IF NECESSARY:** the interview will take about 20 minutes].

1. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** First, when you think about what is going on in the world today, are things mainly going in the right direction or mainly going in the wrong direction?

- [ ] Right direction
- [ ] Wrong direction
- [ ] Both [Volunteered response]
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

2.** SPLIT A: As you know, newspapers and the TV news report on wars taking place in countries abroad. When you see those stories, are you very interested, interested, somewhat interested, or only a little interested, or not at all interested?

SPLIT B: As you know, newspapers and the TV news report on wars taking place in countries abroad, not involving **[COUNTRY NAME]**. When you see those stories, are you very interested, interested, somewhat interested, only a little interested, or not at all interested?

	SPLIT A	SPLIT B
Very interested	☐	☐
Interested	☐	☐
Somewhat interested	☐	☐
Only a little interested	☐	☐
Not at all interested	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐

3. SPLIT A: When you see stories on war abroad, do you generally find yourself favouring one of the sides, or generally, do you *not* take sides?

SPLIT B: When you see stories on war abroad not involving **[COUNTRY NAME]**, do you generally find yourself favouring one of the sides, or generally, do you *not* take sides?

	SPLIT A	SPLIT B
Take sides	☐	☐
Not take sides	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐

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* This questionnaire is the standard one used in France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States.
** In the next set of questions, the sample was randomly split in two. Split A was asked of one half and Split B was asked of the other half.

4. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** When thinking about favouring one side in a war, which is more
    important to you? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ What each side is fighting for
>   *OR*
☐ How each side acts during the war
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

5. Can many of these wars abroad be avoided or are they mainly unavoidable?

☐ Can be avoided
☐ Unavoidable
☐ [Don't know/refused]

6. Why do you think these wars abroad continue to happen? Because of...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ A failure of human nature
>   *OR*
☐ A failure of governments
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

7. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** Let me ask you something different. I want to ask your views on what
    happens with soldiers and fighters during war. In your view, is there anything that soldiers and fighters
    should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS
    POSSIBLE]**

    IF NO RESPONSE, GO TO Q11

8. **[IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANY RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTION]** Could you tell me the main
    reason why they should not do that? Is it because...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ It's wrong   ➜ **GO TO Q9**
☐ It just causes too many problems   ➜ **GO TO Q10**
☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➜ **GO TO Q11**

9. When you say, it's wrong, is it primarily wrong because it is…? **[READ AND ROTATE]**
    [START WITH DIFFERENT ITEM EACH TIME] [MULTIPLE MENTION POSSIBLE]

☐ Against the law
☐ Against your personal code
☐ Against your religion
☐ Against what most people here believe
☐ Against your culture
☐ Against human rights
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

10. **[IF "IT JUST CAUSES TOO MANY PROBLEMS"]** When you say, it just causes too many problems, are you thinking it…? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

☐ Produces too much hate and division
☐ Causes too much psychological damage
☐ Produces too much destruction
☐ Causes too much physical suffering
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

11. Now I would like to ask you some *general* questions about how, in your view, combatants – soldiers and fighters – should behave in times of war. When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they…? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ Attack enemy combatants and civilians
☐ Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible
    OR
☐ Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone
☐ [Don't know/refused]

12. Let me ask you about some things that combatants – soldiers and fighters – may do to weaken the enemy they are fighting against. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it to weaken the enemy.

    SPLIT A: What about attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

    SPLIT B: What about attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

	SPLIT A	SPLIT B
Okay	☐	☐
Not okay	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐

13. I will now describe some situations that may happen during war. For each situation, I would like you to *imagine* that you are part of that situation. Tell me how you think you would behave if the decisions were completely up to you. Here comes the first imaginary situation.

    SPLIT A: Would you save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

    SPLIT B: Would you help a wounded enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

	SPLIT A		SPLIT B
Would save	☐	Would help	☐
Would not save	☐	Would not help	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	[Don't know/refused]	☐

14. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** Now I'm going to ask your opinion on some of the things soldiers and fighters might do in times of war. What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy? Is that wrong or just part of war?

☐ Wrong
☐ Part of war
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

15. Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

☐ Laws – can't do that
☐ No laws
☐ [Don't know/refused]

16. **SPLIT A:** What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed?

   SPLIT B: What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many women and children would be killed?

   Is that wrong or just part of war?

	SPLIT A	SPLIT B
Wrong	☐	☐
Part of war	☐	☐
Both [Volunteered response]	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐

17. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** Are there any laws that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

☐ Laws – can't do that
☐ No laws
☐ [Don't know/refused]

18. What about attacking religious and historical monuments, in order to weaken the enemy. Is that wrong or just part of war?

☐ Wrong
☐ Part of war
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

19. What about taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange? Is that wrong or just part of war?

☐ Wrong
☐ Part of war
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

20. Now something different. Sometimes in these wars, the international community will create "protected areas", where civilian populations are not to be attacked. Do you think that these protected areas are a good or bad idea?

☐ Good idea
☐ Bad idea
☐ [Don't know/refused]

21. As far as you can tell, have these "protected areas" made it better or worse for civilians during these wars, or haven't they made any difference?

☐ Better
☐ Worse
☐ No difference
☐ [Don't know/refused]

22. Do international peacekeeping forces make it better or worse for civilians during these wars, or don't they make any difference?

☐ Better
☐ Worse
☐ No difference
☐ [Don't know/refused]

23. Let me ask you something else. Are there types of weapons that should just never be used during war? **[FOLLOW UP IF YES]** What types of weapons would you think of? **[CHECK RESPONSE BELOW] [DO NOT READ CHOICES] [MULTIPLE MENTION ALLOWED]**

☐ Landmines
☐ Laser weapons
☐ Napalm
☐ Nuclear weapons
☐ Chemical/biological weapons
☐ Cluster bombs
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ No – are no weapons that shouldn't be used
☐ [Don't know/refused]
☐ Smart bombs
☐ Bombing (general)

24. What about soldiers and fighters planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

☐ Okay, if necessary
☐ Not okay
☐ [Don't know/refused]

25. Now let me ask you how prisoners of war should be treated. Must a prisoner of war be allowed to contact relatives, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

☐ Must allow
☐ Don't have to allow
☐ [Don't know/refused]

26. Is it true that a prisoner of war cannot be subjected to torture to obtain important military information, or can a prisoner of war be subjected to torture?

☐ Cannot subject
☐ Can subject
☐ [Don't know/refused]

27. Must a prisoner of war be allowed a visit by a representative from an independent organization, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

☐ Must allow   ➔ **GO TO Q28**
☐ Don't have to allow   ➔ **GO TO Q29**
☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➔ **GO TO Q29**

28. **[IF MUST ALLOW]** Which of the following people should be allowed to visit prisoners of war...?
    [READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]

☐ UN representatives
☐ International Committee of the Red Cross representatives
☐ Human rights group representatives
☐ Journalists
☐ Religious clerics/ministers
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

29. Once again, I want you to *imagine* yourself in the following situations and tell me what you think you would do if the decisions were completely up to you. If one side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by the other side or would you not approve it?

☐ Would approve
☐ Would not approve
☐ [Don't know/refused]

[FOLLOW-UP IF RESPONDENT PROTESTS] Just imagine you happen to find yourself in this situation.

30. In general, do you ever think that captured enemy soldiers or fighters deserve to die?

☐ Think deserve to die
☐ No
☐ [Don't know/refused]

31. Now let me ask you for your opinion about something else, about *young people* being soldiers or fighters. At what age is a young person mature enough to be a combatant? **[READ LIST UNTIL RESPONDENT CHOOSES AN ANSWER]**

- [ ] 14 years or under
- [ ] 15 years
- [ ] 16 years
- [ ] 17 years
- [ ] 18 years
- [ ] 19 years
- [ ] 20 years
- [ ] 21 years
- [ ] Above 21 years
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

32. Let me ask you something very different. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?

- [ ] Yes – heard
- [ ] No – not heard   ➔ **GO TO Q35**
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]   ➔ **GO TO Q35**

33. **[IF HEARD OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS]** Could you tell me what the Geneva Conventions are about? **[WRITE DOWN ANSWER AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

34. **[MARK APPROPRIATE RESPONSE]**

- [ ] Accurate
- [ ] Not accurate

35. Let me read you a statement about the Geneva Conventions.

The Geneva Conventions are a series of international treaties that impose limits on war by describing some rules of war. Most countries in the world have signed these treaties.

Do you think the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse or do they make no real difference?

- [ ] Prevent wars from getting worse
- [ ] No real difference
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

36. You are probably familiar with the red cross emblem. What kind of people or things does this symbol protect during war? **[WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

37. Are there rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No   ➔ **GO TO Q40**
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]   ➔ **GO TO Q40**

38. If these rules are broken in war, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

☐ The government in the countries at war
☐ The courts in the countries at war
☐ International criminal court
☐ The military itself
☐ The civilian population
☐ The politicians in the countries at war
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ Does not apply, rules are not broken [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

39. When the war is over, should people who have broken these rules…? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

☐ Be put on trial
☐ Be exposed to the public but not be put on trial
☐ Be forgotten when the war is over
☐ Be forgiven after the war
☐ Granted amnesty
☐ [Don't know/refused]

40. During wars, civilian areas are sometimes attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. I'm going to read a list of organizations and people to whom civilians can turn to stop these kinds of things. Please tell me which *two* are most important to be there. **[READ AND ROTATE] [RECORD THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSES]** **[FOLLOW UP WITH:** Which two have played the biggest role?**]**

☐ The military and combatants
☐ Religious leaders
☐ International humanitarian organizations
☐ Journalists and the news media
☐ The United Nations
☐ ICRC or Red Cross
☐ Government leaders
☐ International criminal court
☐ Other countries
☐ Nobody did anything [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

41. SPLIT A: In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention from the international community to deal with these kinds of issues?

    SPLIT B: In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention by **[COUNTRY NAME]** to deal with these kinds of issues?

	SPLIT A	SPLIT B
More intervention	☐	☐
Less intervention	☐	☐
No intervention [Volunteered response]	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐

42. Which of the following statements best describes your own feelings about these rules and laws limiting what soldiers and fighters can do in war? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ These rules are necessary because there will always be wars
☐ These rules are very important, but it would be better to work at ways to prevent war
☐ These rules encourage wars by saying there is an acceptable way to conduct war
☐ [Don't know/refused]

I'm going to read you different ways to reduce the number of victims in war. Please tell me whether each would be an extremely important, somewhat important, a little important or not very important way to reduce the number of victims. **[ROTATE ORDER]**

43. Increasing the effectiveness of laws and rules that limit what combatants can do in war.
44. Increasing the accuracy of weapons to reduce the unintended casualties.
45. Increasing the news coverage of these wars so that atrocities are exposed.
46. Decreasing the numbers of weapons available to soldiers and fighters in the world.

[FOLLOW UP] Is that an extremely important, somewhat important, little important or not very important way to reduce the number of victims?

	43	44	45	46
Extremely important	☐	☐	☐	☐
Somewhat important	☐	☐	☐	☐
A little important	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not very important	☐	☐	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐	☐	☐

47. Newspapers and TV sometimes report on atrocities taking place in wars abroad. Are atrocities like these taking place more frequently today, less frequently, or are they about as frequent as in the past?

☐ More frequently
☐ Less frequently
☐ About as frequent as in the past
☐ [Don't know/refused]

48. Can these atrocities be prevented or are they inevitable?

☐ Can be prevented
☐ Inevitable
☐ [Don't know/refused]

Let me read you some statements about the role **[COUNTRY NAME]** can play in these wars abroad. For each statement please tell me if you agree or disagree. **[ROTATE ORDER]**

49. **[COUNTRY NAME]** should provide humanitarian assistance to aid the victims of these wars, but not send troops.
50. **[COUNTRY NAME]** should try to stop these wars by using force and by sending troops as part of an international force.
51. **[COUNTRY NAME]** should try to limit casualties by sending troops as part of a peacekeeping force.
52. **[COUNTRY NAME]** should not get involved in these wars abroad.

    [FOLLOW UP] Do you strongly (agree/disagree) or somewhat (agree/disagree)?

	49	50	51	52
Strongly agree	☐	☐	☐	☐
Somewhat agree	☐	☐	☐	☐
Somewhat disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐
[Don't know/refused]	☐	☐	☐	☐

Finally, I want to ask you some questions for statistical purposes.

53. What is your age?_____
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

54. How many years of school have you had? _____ years
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

55. At some point, did you serve in the military, or did you not serve in the military?

    ☐ Yes – military   ➔ **GO TO Q56**
    ☐ Did not serve   ➔ **GO TO Q57**
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➔ **GO TO Q57**

56. **[ASK IF SERVED IN MILITARY]** Did you ever find yourself in combat or did you not find yourself in combat?

    ☐ Yes – combat
    ☐ Not in combat
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

57. What is your current family situation?

    ☐ Married (have a husband or wife)
    ☐ Single
    ☐ Live together with someone (in a permanent relationship)
    ☐ Divorced/separated
    ☐ Spouse of missing person
    ☐ Widow/widower
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

58. Do you have children? **[FOLLOW UP IF "YES"]** How many?

☐ No children
☐ Yes _____ children

59. What is your job now or are you not working?

☐ Farmer
☐ Manual worker
☐ Skilled worker
☐ Self employed
☐ Housewife/home care
☐ Soldier (combatant)
☐ Government employee
☐ Private sector employee
☐ Teacher/professor/intellectual
☐ Pensioner/retired
☐ Unemployed (looking for work)
☐ Unemployed (not looking for work)
☐ Student
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

Annex 3: Sampling error by percentage

(at 95 in 100 confidence level)

Percentages near

Sample size	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
1000	1.9	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5	1.9
900	2.0	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.0	2.6	2.0
800	2.1	2.8	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.1
700	2.2	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.0	2.2
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
500	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
300	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9

The ICRC's mission

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.