

October 2002

Chapter 4 International Cooperation/International Treaties and Agreements

**International Criminal Court**

Especially prominent is the controversy over the newly forming International Criminal Court, which the Bush administration has strongly opposed. When simply asked if the United States should participate in the agreement to establish an International Criminal Court that would try individuals for war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity if their own country won't try them, 71% say the United States should participate, while only 22% are opposed. In order to determine whether this response would be significantly different if respondents heard arguments for and against it, including the key objection voiced by U.S. officials, a separate sample was asked the following:

“A permanent International Criminal Court has been established by the UN to try individuals suspected of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Some say the United States should not support the court because trumped up charges may be brought against Americans, for example, U.S. soldiers who use force in the course of a peacekeeping operation. Others say that the U.S. should support the court because the world needs a better way to prosecute war criminals, many of whom go unpunished today. Do you think the U.S. should or should not support the permanent International Criminal Court?”

In response to this question, support for the ICC was only slightly lower, at 65%, with 28% opposed.