**WWII – U.S. rules of war**

What is the Document saying?

**U.S. War Department: 1940 Principles of War (excerpts)**

In 1940, the U.S. War Department issued a revised code governing the actions of the armed forces in wartime. The code based on the assumption that “Among civilized nations the conduct of war is regulated by certain well-established rules known as the rules or laws of war”.

According to the War Department, the conduct of U.S. soldier’s should be guided by three principles:

* *The principle of military necessity; under which, subject to the principles of humanity and chivalry, a belligerent is justified in applying any amount and any kind of force to compel the complete submission of the enemy with the least possible expenditure of time, life, and money [Under the principle of military necessity, U.S. forces would be justified in destroying civilian property and blocking transportation and communication routes to defeat an enemy, but not in indiscriminately killing civilians.];*
* *The principle of humanity, prohibiting employment of any such kind or degree of violence as is not actually necessary for the purpose of war [Under the principle of humanity, U.S. forces would be justified in attacking military camps and ammunition depots, but not hospitals, schools, and other non-military targets]; and*
* *The principle of chivalry, which demonstrates and forbids resort to dishonorable means, expedients, or conducts [Under the principle of chivalry, U.S. forces would be justified in fighting with all of their strength, but not in using poison gas or torturing prisoners].*

Although no international body existed to enforce the rules of war, the War Department planned to strictly observe them in the event of conflict and expected “all civilized nations” to do the same. Exceptions to the code were permitted only to carry out “legitimate reprisals for illegal conduct by the enemy”.

Summarize the main points of this document. Explain what it means