

E2 – A World Divided: Superpower Relations, 1944–90

Study the relevant sources in the Sources Insert.

Answer EITHER Question 7 OR Question 8.

EITHER

7 Use Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge.

How far do you agree with the view that the development of the Cold War in the years 1945–48 owed more to Soviet expansionism than to the USA's economic interests?

Explain your answer, using Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

8 Use Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge.

How far do you agree with the view that the Cold War came to an end because of mounting economic pressure on the Soviet Union during the 1980s?

Explain your answer, using Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)

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Sources for use with Question 7

SOURCE 7

(From Robert Wolfson and John Laver, *Years of Change: European History 1890–1990*, 3rd edition, published 2001)

1 The USA and Britain accepted that, because of the role of the USSR in defeating
Nazi Germany, much of Central and Eastern Europe was within the Soviet sphere
of influence. The problem for the West was that no-one was sure of the USSR's
intentions. It was recognised that, at the very least, Russia wanted friendly
5 governments on its western borders as a buffer against future attacks from the
West. However, particularly as the Cold War developed, many in the West assumed
that the USSR had a much more ambitious aim of consolidating Communist control
in its sphere of influence and then seeking to extend Soviet influence into Western
Europe itself. By 1948, Western attitudes had hardened as the USSR tightened its
10 grip over the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

SOURCE 8

(From Terry Morris and Derrick Murphy, *Europe 1870–1991*, 2nd edition, published 2001)

There were important economic advantages for the USA in starting a cold war. US
policy-makers feared another economic depression once the Second World War
was over. To prevent this from taking place, the US government hoped to keep
high levels of military and government expenditure. As a result, the USSR was
15 portrayed as aggressive and threatening. To prevent the spread of communism to
western Europe, the US government launched the European Recovery Programme
in 1947. Known as Marshall Aid, billions of US dollars were used to bring economic
recovery to western Europe as the best means of limiting communist influence.
Truman was responsible for creating the 'military-industrial complex' where big
20 business in the USA supported conflict with the USSR in order to keep high levels
of military spending.

SOURCE 9

(From Michael Lynch, *Stalin and Khrushchev: The USSR, 1924–64*, published 1990)

Since the USSR could not hope to compete on equal economic terms with the USA
immediately after the Second World War, Stalin concluded that the only policy
available was to withdraw the Soviet Union behind its new defensive east European
25 barrier. Germany became the new front line in this defensive system. This explains
why Stalin became so sensitive and uncooperative on the German question, always
regarding Western suggestions for a settlement as the thin end of the wedge being
driven into Soviet security. The USSR's economic plight made Marshall Aid a sorely
tempting offer, and Stalin for a brief period considered accepting it. But, in the
30 end, he felt he could not risk allowing the Eastern bloc to become economically
dependent upon the USA. The political dangers were too great.

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Answer EITHER Question 7 OR Question 8.**

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7 Use Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge.

How far do you agree with the view that the development of the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union in the years 1945–53 was primarily due to traditional great power rivalry?

Explain your answer, using Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

8 Use Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge.

'The Cold War came to an end mainly because of President Ronald Reagan's policies towards the Soviet Union.' How far do you agree with this opinion?

Explain your answer, using Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

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Sources for use with Question 7

SOURCE 7

(From Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*, published 1994)

1 Confrontation would probably have developed even without ideology. George Kennan, the American diplomat who in early 1946 formulated the USA's 'containment' policy, did not believe Russia was crusading for communism. He was an expert of the old school of diplomatic power politics. He saw Russia, Tsarist
5 or Bolshevik, as a backward and barbarous society ruled by men with a 'traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity', who saw 'security' only in the total destruction of rival power. Communism, in Kennan's opinion, made Russia more dangerous because it was the most ruthless of world-conquering ideologies. But the implication of Kennan's view was that the only 'rival power' to Russia, namely
10 the USA, would have to 'contain' its pressure by uncompromising resistance, even if Russia had not been communist.

SOURCE 8

(From Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War*, published 2003)

US planners viewed the establishment of a freer and more open international economic system as indispensable to the post-war order. Closed trading blocs and national economic barriers encouraged only rivalry and conflict. Marxism-
15 Leninism influenced the outlook and policies of the Soviet Union. Stalin and the Kremlin elite assumed conflict between the socialist and capitalist worlds to be inevitable, and were certain that proletarian revolution would prevail. Ideology imparted to Soviets and Americans alike a strong faith in the world-historical roles of their respective nations. On each side, leaders and ordinary citizens saw
20 their countries acting for much broader purposes than the mere advancement of national interests. Soviets and Americans each saw themselves acting out of noble motives to lead humanity into a grand new age of peace, justice and order. Married to the overwhelming power each nation possessed, those mirror-opposite ideological values provided a sure-fire recipe for conflict.

SOURCE 9

(From John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, published 1997)

25 Stalin's centrality to the origins of the Cold War is clear. For all their importance, one could have removed Roosevelt, Churchill, Truman and others, and a cold war would still have probably started. If one could have eliminated Stalin, alternative paths become quite conceivable. For, with the possible exception of Mao, no twentieth century leader imprinted himself upon his country as Stalin did. And given his
30 tendency to conduct 'domestic' cold wars, once Stalin was in control and once it was clear Russia would survive the war, then it looks equally clear that there was going to be a Cold War whatever the west did. Who was responsible? The answer is authoritarianism in general, and Stalin in particular.

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How far do you agree with the view that superpower misjudgements account for the development of the Cold War in the years 1945–53?

Explain your answer, using Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

8 Use Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge.

'The Cold War came to an end because the Soviet bloc was fatally undermined by popular protests in Eastern Europe.' How far do you agree with this view?

Explain your answer, using Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

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Sources for use with Question 7

SOURCE 7

(From Martin McCauley, *The Origins of the Cold War 1941–1949*, published 2008)

1 The greater strength of the US political and economic system, compared with that of the USSR, gave Washington greater opportunities to change the post-war world. Had they so desired, the Americans could have recognised the Soviet sphere of influence in eastern and south-eastern Europe, drawn the Soviets into joint control
5 of atomic weapons, and contributed to the reconstruction of the Soviet economy. American decision-makers misread Soviet security interests in eastern and south-eastern Europe as proof of Soviet expansionism and refused to cooperate. This, in turn, led the Soviets to see US policy as aggressive capitalist expansionism and to harden their own attitude in their own sphere of influence. A vicious circle thus
10 came into being and it could not be broken after 1945.

SOURCE 8

(From Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*, published 1996)

Stalin's road to the Cold War, in the years after 1946, was strewn with miscalculations. He did not want to provoke American and British 'imperialism', yet he overreacted to any perceived threat in Germany and in Eastern Europe. In response to the Marshall Plan, Stalin began to consolidate a Soviet security zone in Eastern Europe
15 by ruthless police methods and intensive Communist propaganda. Trying to stop Western separatist policies in Germany, he triggered the Berlin blockade crisis. By sanctioning North Korean aggression, Stalin subjected the Koreans, his Chinese ally, and the rest of the world to a bloody and protracted war that contained the real danger of a global conflict.

SOURCE 9

(From Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War*, published 1992)

20 Two nations with quite different ideologies emerged from the rubble of World War Two to claim high rank. The United States and the Soviet Union, eager to realise their visions of the post-war world and to seize opportunities for extending their respective influence, tried to fill vacuums of power. Although handicapped by its economic wreckage, Russia held predominant post-war power over its East
25 European neighbours. Still, the Soviet Union was a regional, not a global, power before the early 1950s. The United States had more opportunities and resources than other nations to shape the post-war system. By exercising their global power – through military occupations, foreign aid and loans, and domination of the United Nations – US officials pushed the world toward the American post-war goal
30 of a non-radical, capitalist, free trade international order.

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How far do you agree with the view that, in the years 1945–50, the Cold War developed as a result of US and Soviet security needs?

Explain your answer, using Sources 7, 8 and 9 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

8 Use Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge.

'Mikhail Gorbachev's rejection of old Soviet thinking on foreign affairs in the mid to late 1980s brought the Cold War to an end.' How far do you agree with this view?

Explain your answer, using Sources 10, 11 and 12 and your own knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

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CW US and Soviet security needs

Source 7. More to do with American national security than joint ...

Source 8. Agreed developed as a result of mutual security needs

Source 9. Ideology and expansionism, largely Russian line.



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SOURCE 7

(From Melvyn P. Leffler, *The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945–48*, published 1984)

1 The dynamics of the Cold War are easier to understand when one grasps the American conception of national security. This included a strategic sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere, domination of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, access to the markets and resources of Eurasia, and nuclear superiority. Challenges
5 to this concept of national security were certain to provoke a firm American response. This occurred initially when decisions were made in favour of the Truman doctrine, Marshall Plan, military assistance, Atlantic alliance, and German and Japanese rehabilitation. The 'loss' of China, Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb, and the North Korean attack on South Korea intensified the perception of
10 a national security threat. Truman responded with military assistance to southeast Asia, a decision to build the hydrogen bomb, direct military intervention in Korea, a commitment to station troops permanently in Europe, expansion of the American alliance system, and a massive US rearmament programme.

SOURCE 8

(From Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Origins of the Cold War*, published 1967)

The Cold War was the product of a dilemma. Each side felt compelled to adopt
15 policies which the other could only regard as a threat. Each then felt compelled to undertake defensive measures. The Russians saw no choice but to consolidate their security in Eastern Europe. The Americans, regarding Eastern Europe as the first step toward Western Europe, responded by asserting their interest in the zone the Russians regarded as vital for their security. The Russians concluded the West
20 were planning capitalist encirclement and laying the foundations for anti-Soviet regimes in this key area. Each side, in pursuing its own deeply held principles, was only confirming the other's fear that it was bent on aggression.

SOURCE 9

(From Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: From Nicholas II to Putin*, published 2003)

The USA and the USSR had diametrically opposite interests. Both states aimed to expand their global power and were not too scrupulous about the methods used.
25 They also had opposing ideologies. Each was armed to the teeth. Each knew little about the politicians and society of the other side. Was the balance of responsibility equal? No, because the USSR depended much more directly than its rival upon militarism, terror and injustice to get its way. There was as much financial and political persuasion as manipulation and force at work in the American domination
30 of Western Europe. But manipulation and force was the predominant method of the USSR in Eastern Europe.