

Name

25/Y4EYE/HI

1 hour 50 mins

YEAR FOUR

This question paper consists of 6 printed pages (including this cover page)

Question 1 is **compulsory** for all candidates.

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources you are told to use. In answering the questions, you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

1 (a) Study Source A.

What can you tell from this source about Truman's attitude towards Stalin at the Potsdam Conference? Explain your answer [5]

(b) Study Sources B and C.

How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer. [5]

(c) Study Source D.

Are you surprised by this source? Explain your answer. [6]

(d) Study Sources E and F.

How far does Source F disprove the claims made in Source E about the Soviet Union? Explain your answer. [6]

(e) Study **all** the sources.

'The Cold War came about because the Soviet Union was afraid of the Western Powers.' How far do the sources support this judgement? Explain your answer. [8]

Conflict between the West and the Soviet Union

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully and then answer all the questions.

While the USA and the Soviet Union were part of the Grand Alliance in World War II, tensions emerged between the two new superpowers at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. The USA was working on an atomic bomb to be dropped on Nazi Germany, but the bomb was only ready on 18 July 1945. Hence, President Truman authorised the atomic bombs to be dropped on Japan. Stalin viewed the use of the bombs as a potential threat to the Soviet Union. The USA's containment policy in 1947 and the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1949 further intensified his suspicion of the Western powers. The Soviet Union accelerated its nuclear program, successfully testing its first atomic bomb on 29 August 1949. The Soviet Union went on to test its first hydrogen bomb on 12 August 1953.

Did the Cold War come about because the Western Powers threatened the Soviet Union?

Source A: *Truman's entry in his diary on 17 and 18 July 1945.*

17th July: "Just spent a couple of hours with Stalin. He put out his hands and smiled. I did the same. I told Stalin I am no diplomat. It pleased him. I have some important things to tell him which I am not doing now. Most of the big points are settled. He'll be in the Japanese war on August 15th. We had lunch, talked socially, put on a real show, drank toasts to everyone and had pictures in the backyard. I can deal with Stalin. He is honest but smart as hell."

18th July: "Stalin's luncheon was most satisfactory. I invited him to come to the US. He said he wanted to cooperate with the US in peace as we had cooperated in war, but it would be harder. He gave me a most cordial smile. It is certainly a good thing that Stalin did not discover this bomb. It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most useful."

Source B: *An account by Truman's interpreter Charles Bohlen about Truman informing Stalin about the atomic bomb on 24 July 1945.*

Three days after the successful test blast, Truman decided it would be wise to tell Stalin the news. Truman told Stalin that the United States had "a new weapon of unusual destructive force." Apparently, the President did not tell Stalin the new weapon was an atomic bomb, and the Soviet leader did not ask or show any special interest. He merely nodded and said something. "All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make good use of it against the Japanese," Truman wrote. Across the room, I watched Stalin's face carefully as the President broke the news. So reactionless was Stalin's response that there was some question in my mind whether the President's message had got through. I should have known better than to underrate the dictator.

Source C: *Stalin's Top-Secret order to Beria, the NKVD State Security Chief on 20 August 1945. Kurchatov was the Scientific Director of the Soviet atomic project.*

Provide us with atomic weapons in the shortest possible time. The equilibrium has been destroyed. Provide the bomb! It will remove a great danger for us. The bomb is a powerful thing. Take all measures to organise foreign intelligence work to gain more complete technical and economic information about the uranium industry and about atomic bombs. Do not bother our physicists with political seminars. Let them use all their time for their professional work. Leave them in peace. We can always shoot them later. Tell the physicists they can ask for anything. There will be no refusals. Those who were marked to be shot in case of failure of the test will receive the title of Hero of Socialist Labour; those who would have received maximum prison terms will be given the Order of Lenin. As for Kurchatov, he will get an elegant double-storied mansion with marble fireplaces, wooden paneling and a sweeping staircase with Italian craftsmen to finish the interior.

Source D: *An American cartoon titled 'Backing It up' about the formation of NATO in 1949.*



Source E: *Excerpts from the NSC 68 published on 7 Apr 1950.*

Should a major war occur in 1950 the Soviet Union is in a sufficiently advanced state of preparation immediately to undertake and carry out the following campaigns.

1. Overrun Western Europe; drive toward the oil-bearing areas of the Middle East; and consolidate Communist gains in the Far East;
2. Launch air attacks against Britain and sea attacks against the lines of communications of the Western Powers in the Atlantic and the Pacific;
3. Attack selected targets with atomic weapons, including the likelihood of attacks against targets in Alaska, Canada, and the United States.

The Soviet Union has the military capacity to support its design for world domination. The Soviet Union possesses armed forces far more than those necessary to defend its national territory. This excessive strength, coupled with an atomic capability, provides great coercive power in furtherance of its objectives and deters the victims of its aggression any action which would risk war.

Source F: *Stalin's interview with Pravda on 6 Oct 1951.*

They are alarmed because the secret of the atom bomb is possessed not only by themselves but also by other countries, the Soviet Union primarily. They would like to be the monopolist of the production of the atom bomb; they would like to have unlimited power to intimidate and blackmail other countries. But on what grounds do they think so, by what right? Does the interest of preserving peace require such a monopoly? Of course, the aggressors want the Soviet Union to be unarmed in the event of their attack upon it. The Soviet Union, however, does not agree to this and it thinks that it should be fully prepared to meet any aggressor. Consequently, if one has no intention of attacking the Soviet Union, their alarm should be considered as pointless and false, because the Soviet Union does not contemplate ever attacking any other country.

SECTION B: Essays

Answer any **TWO** questions.

- 2** 'War broke out in Korea in 1950 because of the conflicting ambitions of Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 3** 'Saigon fell to the communists in 1975 because of the US policy of Vietnamisation.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 4** 'The Cold War came to an end because of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Sources acknowledgement

Source A: alphahistory.com/coldwar/harry-truman-diary-potsdam-1945

Source B: www.dannen.com/decision/potsdam.html

Source C: ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/sa/sa_99zum03.html

Source D: <https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/HTMLArticles/Origins/Unit8/Primary-Sources-Cold-War>

Source E:

<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/nsc-68-united-states-objectives-and-programs-for-national-security/>

Source F: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/d0743acd-c816-43b7-a415-5674372cb4f5/publishable_en.pdf

End of Paper

1	(a)	Study Source A. What can you tell from this source about Truman's attitude towards Stalin at the Potsdam Conference? Explain your answer? Explain your answer.	[5]
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L1 Describes the source [1]

L2 Answers claiming Truman got along well with Stalin [2]

B said the two shook hands, took photos, C said Truman invited Stalin to the US/Stalin wanted to work with US.

L3 Answers inferring Truman's positive attitude towards Stalin [3]

On 17 July Truman was still friendly with Stalin but on 18 July, Truman was thinking how to use the atomic bomb to gain some leverage over Stalin/make USSR afraid/contain communism. [3]

L4 Answers inferring Truman's cautious attitude towards Stalin [4]

It is evident Truman was all along cautious/distrustful about Stalin. Truman talked about his interactions with Stalin courtesy, he acknowledged on both occasions, that Stalin was smart as hell and it was hard to work with the USSR. [4]

L5 Answers inferring Truman attitude towards Stalin toughened/changed [5]

Truman knew Stalin was "smart as hell" but "he could deal with him" so Truman was nice towards Stalin because he needed Stalin's participation in the Pacific War. After 18 July after he knew he had the atomic bomb, Truman's attitude toughened towards Stalin, he felt he didn't need Stalin anymore Could even use the atomic bomb to gain leverage over Stalin. [5]

	(b)	Study Sources B and C. How similar are these two sources? Explain your answer.	[5]
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L1 Compares provenance/topic [1]

L2 Similarities or Differences [2-3]

Similar that Stalin was told of the US atomic bomb.

L3 Similarities AND Differences [4]

Different in Stalin's reaction.

L4 Similar in the outcomes [5]

B wanted to frighten Stalin so that Stalin will be afraid of US power; C shows that Stalin felt threatened/was afraid.

US wanted to use the news of the atomic bomb to frighten Stalin. USSR, already knew of about the US atomic bomb, pretended to be disinterest but in fact they were indeed frightened and went to work immediately on developing their own bomb.

	(c)	Study Source D. Are you surprised by this source? Explain your answer.	[6]
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L1: Answers which do not consider the concept of surprise [1]

L2: Surprised/lack of surprise without explanation [2]

L3: Not surprised based on general content [3]

Not surprised since NATO's was set up to protect against Soviet aggression. [3]

Not surprised since most US cartoonist were strongly anti-Soviet, caught in Cold War mentality

CR Berlin Blockade in 1948-49 [4]

L4: Surprised based on specific context focusing on "nuclear retaliation" [5]

Surprised that NATO would consider nuclear retaliation against USSR that is not nuclear capable/ NATO considers Soviet Union aggressive

CK: Soviet Union had only set up Comecon as to counter the west introducing a new currency in their sector after Bizonia. Even the Berlin Blockade had been lifted by 1949. There was little reason to believe Soviet need to be met with "nuclear retaliation."

	(d)	Study Sources E and F. How far does Source F disprove the claims made in Source E about the Soviet Union? Explain your answer.	[6]
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L1: Answers based on undeveloped provenance [1]

L2: They agree, so F does not disprove that E was wrong [2]

Both sources show that the USSR was a threat so F does not prove that E is wrong.

L3: They disagree, so F disproves the claim in E [3]

Both sources do not agree on whether the USSR was a threat.

E claims the USSR as threatening/expansionist and will take over many territories because they of their newfound atomic capabilities. F disproves the claims in E by saying Soviets will only retaliate against those that threaten them. That E's claims were based on western powers wanting atomic monopoly to threaten a weaker USSR. F disproves the claims in E by showing that Soviets are not outrightly threatening.

L4: Both sides of L2 and L3 [4]

OR

L4: Identifies the disagreement, uses cross-reference to decide which is wrong [4-5]

Source F does not disprove the claims in E that USSR is expansionist because from my CK I know that immediately after WW2, the USSR occupied many areas of eastern Europe.

[this answer ignores the specific claims in E, generalises that USSR is threatening]

Source F disproves the claims in E that USSR is expansionist when F shows the USSR is defensive that can be supported by looking at Source B where the Soviets were worried of the threat by the West and Source C where the western powers have deliberately threatened the USSR, no wonder they feel the need to defend themselves. The USSR only wants to build buffer states around its border states to protect from the provocation from the west. [5]

L6 Identifies the disagreement, uses evaluation of the source's purpose to decide which is wrong [6]

Source E is being alarmist and exaggerating to present a worst-case scenario of Soviet threat to declare a policy of containment on the USSR. They were 1. shocked Soviet had the bomb so soon after the US, 2. Shocked by the spying within Manhattan Project, 3. China where they had supported the KMT turned communists 4. Korean tension was building up. Hence, they saw a worldwide communism expansionism and desperately wanted to contain communism hence the panic reaction. But the NSC was wrong: because 1. There were no further soviet takeovers after 1949 2. China was communist on its own strength and not due to Soviet communist consolidation 3. Though Stalin endorsed Kim's invasion of South Korea, the assistance came from China and even then, it was only when MacArthur threatened to cross the Yalu River that China joined the war with its volunteers. There was no Soviet domination claimed in Source E.

	(e)	Study all the sources. 'The Cold War came about because the Soviet Union was afraid of the Western Powers.' How far do these sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer.	[8]
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L1: Writes about the statement, no valid source use [1]

L2: Yes or No supported by valid source use [2-4]

A supports because it shows Truman was planning to use the atomic bomb to gain a strategic advantage over Stalin with the intent of making Stalin afraid. Such an attitude of coercion is likely to make Stalin more paranoid about US threat to its security and that would motivated Stalin to leave Red Army troops in Eastern Europe effectively turning them into proxy states under Soviet control. Such an attempt by Stalin establish satellite states in Eastern Europe to buffer against such a threat would be misconstrued as plans to spread communism which the US felt it needed to go against hence a Cold War emerged to thwart each others' "takeover" plans.

C supports because it shows Stalin's determination to develop their own atomic weapon because the balance of power has been disrupted. Stalin regarded the atomic bomb as a threat and wanted the Soviets to have atomic capability to protect itself. Soviet plans to keep up with the US fueled an arms race to protect its own sphere of influence which the west regarded as expansionist.

D supports because it shows NATO was created to retaliate against the USSR. With NATO formed to target the USSR, Stalin felt threatened by the west, decided to form his own military alliance the Warsaw Pact to counter the western threat.

F does support because it shows the USSR blaming the west for wanting nuclear monopoly showing that Stalin was afraid of western strength and the threat it posed to them. After this speech was made, the USSR went on to acquire the Hydrogen bomb to up their leverage against the USA.

L3 Yes and No supported by valid source use [5-8]

A does not support the Cold War that came about due to Soviet fear of the west. Instead, it shows Truman as the one who wanted to aggravate relations with Stalin. To begin Truman already had some suspicions about Stalin but with the atomic bomb, he decided to use it to threaten Stalin. This is likely to lead to Stalin feeling defensive and mistrusting of the West.

B does not support because it shows Stalin was unmoved by the news of the atomic bomb. Stalin was interested in the news of the atomic bomb; he was unconcerned showing that it did not make him afraid of the west. This is because he already knew about the bomb and planned to work on Soviet's own nuclear capability.

E does not support because it shows the USSR was aggressive and not afraid of the west. E accuses the USSR of planning to take over Europe with the aim of world domination. Soviet aggression is likely to trigger more measures by the US to contain communism. This is likely to escalate tension between both superpowers.

Bonus of two marks (i.e. +1, +1) for use of contextual knowledge to evaluate a source in relation to its reliability, sufficiency etc. but the total for the question must not exceed 8.

SECTION B: Essays

Answer any **TWO** questions.

- 2 'War broke out in Korea in 1950 because of the conflicting ambitions of Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

L1 Identifies/Describes [1-3]

L2 Explains GIVEN or OTHER REASONS [4-5]

L3 Explains GIVEN and OTHER REASONS [6-8]

Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2)

Conflicting ambitions of Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee

I agree with the statement. The Korean War broke out because of the conflicting ambitions of Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee. Syngman Rhee was the leader of South Korea and a staunch anti-communist. He helped to secure Korean independence from the Japanese and was able to gain a majority of the votes in the South and elected president of the newly founded Republic of Korea (South Korea) in August 1948. Rhee's rule proved to be increasingly authoritarian and intolerant of his political oppositions and suspected communists arresting and even killing them. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung, the leader of North Korea, was communist. He aimed to unite Korea under Communist rule. Kim Il Sung used propaganda extensively and promoted a cult of personality. The North Korean people greatly respected Kim as their leader. He promoted the doctrine of self-sufficiency and isolated North Korea from the rest of the world, so as to limit Western influence and opposition. Kim Il Sung was convinced that the whole of Korea should be united under one rule and sought to achieve sole control of Korea through the use of violence. As both Kim and Rhee struggled for control, between 1946 to 1950, both North and South Korea conducted border skirmishes, each accusing the other side for starting the skirmish. In South Korea, the aggressive speeches by Syngman Rhee against the North worsened relations, with Rhee stating that South Korea could conquer Pyongyang in three days. In North Korea, Kim Il Sung was building the North Korean military with military equipment and training provided by the Soviet Union. Eventually, Kim Il Sung was confident that North Korea was militarily strong enough to challenge Rhee. Hence, this resulted in Kim deciding that North Korea invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950.

Conflicting interests of the Soviet Union and the USA

I disagree with the statement. The Korean War broke out because of the **conflicting interests of the Soviet Union and the USA**. The Soviets wanted Korea to be under their control as they felt it was important to spread communism in Asia and to provide support to the communists in China. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the USSR was to join the US and other Allies to jointly control Korea, in exchange for the USSR's involvement in the fight against the Japanese in World War II. At the Potsdam Conference from July to August 1945, the Western powers agreed to divide Korea into two occupation zones along the 38th parallel. The Soviet Union would control the north, while the USA would control the south. Both the Soviet Union and the US began to influence politics in the respective parts of Korea they controlled, with the aim of having

Korean political leaders under their influence. In 1947, the UN called for free elections to be held in Korea to establish the government of a united Korea. However, both the USSR and the US rejected elections for the whole of Korea. The USSR was concerned that Korea would vote more for the democracies, as two-thirds of the Koreans lived in US-controlled South Korea. The US was concerned that the Korean people, who were still facing economic problems, would vote the communists into power. The US decided not to work with the USSR to resolve the matter of having a unified Korean election. The US then decided to hold a separate election in South Korea in May 1948, where Rhee and his supporters eventually gained a majority of the votes. As a result, the Soviet Union also conducted a separate election in North Korea in August 1948, which resulted in Kim Il Sung becoming the leader of North Korea. The struggle for power continued as both the Soviet Union and the US armed the two new countries, each providing North and South Korea with weapons and military training respectively. This caused both North and South Korea to build up their militaries, believing that the Soviet Union and the USA would support them respectively in the event of a conflict. US support led to an overconfident Rhee, who conducted border skirmishes against North Korea. On the other side, Stalin gave permission to Kim Il Sung to attack South Korea, leading to North Korea invading South Korea on 25 June 1950.

Conclusion

Overall, I do not agree with the statement. The Korean War broke out due to both factors, which was due to the conflicting ambitions of Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee and the conflicting interests of the Soviet Union and the USA. The ideological rivalry between democratic US and communist Soviet Union resulted in both of them supporting the nationalists of both sides. This came in helping respective sides to establish their governments, and supplying them with military resources. This support met Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Sung's needs to compete against each other, as they could mobilise the military resources from the US and the Soviet Union respectively to challenge each other, which resulted in initial border skirmishes and rhetoric against each other, worsening relations between South Korea and North Korea. Hence, both factors complemented and led to North Korea's invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950.

- 3** 'Saigon fell to the communists in 1975 because of the US policy of Vietnamisation.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer [10]

L1 Identifies/Describes [1-3]

L2 Explains GIVEN or OTHER REASONS [4-5]

L3 Explains GIVEN and OTHER REASONS [6-8]

Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2)

Policy of Vietnamisation

Saigon fell to the communists in 1975 largely due to US policy of Vietnamisation because Vietnamisation deprived the Saigon government of the manpower, material and funding it needed to hold off the communist advance after 1972. The failure of US forces to make clear progress against the communists in the war after 3 years of sustained aerial bombardment under Operation Rolling Thunder and direct US ground troop involvement made many Americans doubt the morality of the war. The shock of the Tet Offensive in

1968 and many other events involving atrocities committed by US forces led to extensive negative media coverage that stroked rising anti-war sentiments in the US. The domestic self-doubt helped Richard Nixon win the presidency by promising Peace with Honor, finding a way to withdraw US military forces through Vietnamisation, by transferring the responsibility of fighting the war back to the South Vietnamese government and its military. With Vietnamisation, some 400,000 US ground troops were withdrawn from 1969 to 1971. By March 1973, all combat troops had left. Without US troops to lead in the search and destroy operations, the DRV launched more ambitious attempts to topple the Saigon government such as the Easter Offensive of 1972. Not only were troops withdrawn, even funding for Thieu's government was cut by Congress. With no manpower and funding, there was no replacement for spent ammunition nor maintenance for weapon systems, the ARVN was unable to put up effective resistance or prevent more NVA incursions from taking over more cities and provinces in their southward advance. By April 1975, it was clear South Vietnam was finished, Thieu fled and Saigon was taken over by the communists.

Determination of the DRV/Provisional Revolutionary Government

Another reason for the fall of Saigon in 1975 was the determination of the DRV and the Vietcong to unify the country. The DRV had been resolute in their determination to overthrow the Republic country and unify North and South Vietnam under the leadership of the Communist Party. This has been their aim since 1959 when Le Duan adopted the plan Road to the South to support the Viet Cong to topple Diem's government. With Diem assassination in 1963 and South Vietnam in upheaval, Hanoi stepped up its insurgency in the South by intensifying conscription in the North and sending NVA regulars down Route 559 (the Ho Chi Minh Trail) into South Vietnam. Such were the numbers in the South that NVA & VC forces were able to engage US forces in major battles such as at Ia Drang, Dak To and Khe Sanh. They were even able to mount a coordinated attack on over 100 cities in the January 1968 Tet Offensive, bringing the war from the countryside and jungles into the streets of Sai Gon and Hue, thought to be safe from VC attacks. Despite the losses of more than 10,000 VC fighters, the NVA did not give up. They mounted more attacks throughout 1968 and into 1972 in the face of US bombing campaigns Operation Linebacker I and II in 1972 while engaging in peace talks with the US. The DRV's determination to unify the country was the driving force that made them pushed hard from all fronts in 1975 to knock out South Vietnam's defences to finally take over Saigon.

Incompetence of South Vietnam

Another reason for the fall of Saigon in 1975 was due to the incompetence of the South Vietnam government to make use of US support to strengthen their country against communist attacks. South Vietnam had enjoyed US support in terms of funding and military advisory since 1956 but they had failed to make use of the assistance to build a strong nation. Diem was more interested in protecting his own cliques, did not govern well, alienated the urban population, made the Buddhists hate him and turned the countryside against him through his ill-advised programs. After his assassination, the country experienced even more instability when the ARVN generals who plotted against Diem locked in rivalry and each General seeking to profit from their partnership with the US. ARVN soldiers were not chosen based on ability but through nepotism, ARVN personnel feared the VC, often refusing to engage the VC preferring to run away. Morale was low and corruption was rampant. Under such poor political and military leadership, South Vietnam was a house of cards waiting to collapse. Without US air power or military back-up, the ARVN could not resist the communists' push into South Vietnam after 1974. When Nguyen Van Thieu himself resigned and fled instead of standing with his people to protect his country, Saigon fell to the communists on 30 April 1975.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the incompetence and corruption of the South Vietnam government was the main reason for its fall. South Vietnam had been a degenerate state solely dependent on the US for support to the point they never had any motivation to fend for themselves. The situation was already bad enough even before 1964 that the US had to send in ground troops so as not to lose face or lose South Vietnam. South Vietnam was a failed state propped up by the US support. It was practically the US doing the fighting for the ARVN such that when that support was removed, the South's incompetence and degenerate condition became open to DRV onslaughts even though the DRV by then was already weakened after the Tet Offensive and the Easter Offensive of 1972, they were still able to overrun the Republic of Vietnam and bring about the fall of Saigon. Vietnamisation merely proved it has nothing on its own to survive. DRV's determination merely quickened that expose.

- 4 “The Cold War came to an end because of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

L1 Identifies/Describes [1-3]

L2 Explains GIVEN or OTHER REASONS [4-5]

L3 Explains GIVEN and OTHER REASONS [6-8]

Award an additional 2 marks (to a maximum of 10 marks) for a balanced conclusion based on an explicit consideration of the relative importance of different reasons. The total marks to be awarded for the response will be based on marks obtained at L3 + 2 bonus marks: i.e. L3/6+2; L3/7+2; L3/8+2)

Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe

The Cold War came to an end in 1991 because of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. As Gorbachev introduced his reforms in the USSR, demand rose for reforms across Eastern Europe. Glasnost and Perestroika gave the people of Eastern Europe some hope for reform. In July 1988, Gorbachev made a speech at the Warsaw Pact summit stating his intention to withdraw large numbers of Soviet troops, tanks and aircraft from the Warsaw Pact. He reinforced these intentions in a speech to the Polish parliament. In March 1989, Gorbachev told the Warsaw Pact leaders that the Soviet army would leave Eastern Europe and no longer prop them up. They would have to listen to their people. In response to the news, ‘Solidarity’ trade union in Poland organized huge anti-government strikes, forced the government to allow free elections, where the communists were heavily defeated. Revolutionary protests rapidly spread to all the other Soviet satellite states such as Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia culminating in the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War and division of Europe in November 1989. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, communism in the Eastern European ended, ending the ideological division of Europe once called the Iron Curtain by Winston Churchill. With the western democracies no longer concerned of the ideological threat from communism, as the ideological tension between the communist Soviet Union and the democratic USA, ended.

US economic and military superiority

The Cold War came to an end in 1991 because of US economic and military superiority. In the 1970s, the USA's economy suffered a severe downturn due to two oil crises in 1973 and 1979, as well as the great costs incurred in its involvement in the Vietnam War. To address the problem, Reagan began a process of economic liberalisation, where

individual enterprise was encouraged instead of having the people rely too much on the government for goods and services. This also included cutting national budgets and selling off national assets such as phone companies, oil companies and airlines. Thatcher also implemented similar measures in Britain, and other Western European countries followed suit. While controversial, their reforms greatly restructured the economies of Western Europe and the USA, stimulated economic growth and launched a financial boom in the West during the 1980s. The booming economy gave Reagan and his allies the confidence and the money to champion US values of capitalism and democracy. Reagan believed in taking a tough line with the USSR wherever possible and increasing US defence spending. He supported anti-communist forces in Afghanistan and Nicaragua. He increased the US defence budget massively. In his first two weeks in office, he increased the defence budget by \$32.6 billion. New weapons systems such as the B1 nuclear bomber were introduced. In 1982, he gave the go-ahead for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, popularly known as the "Star Wars" programme). This was a multi-billion-dollar project to create a system that could use satellites and lasers to destroy missiles before they hit their targets. Clearly, such a system could change the nature of nuclear war. As it turned out, SDI did not develop into a viable weapon. However, it put pressure on the Soviets, who were never sure whether the weapon would become a reality. The USSR was already finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the United States, given its stretched resources. This eventually resulted in Gorbachev's 'new thinking', where no nation's security could be achieved at the expense of another's. This resulted in Soviet Union cutting defence spending, which reduced military tensions. Reagan and Gorbachev also signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 1987 to reduce the number of missiles in Europe. The Soviet Union also withdrew its troops from Afghanistan in 1989. These actions were positive steps to end the military tension between the Soviet Union and the USA, leading to the end of the Cold War,

Conclusion

Overall, I agree that the Cold War came to an end due to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. This is because although US economic and military superiority forced the USSR to reduce its weapons and tensions with the US, Gorbachev did it with the intention of allowing the communist Soviet Union to be reformed in its economy, more than to end the Cold War. Hence, it was the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe which provided the clearest signal that many Eastern European people rejected communism. It was also clear that the Soviet Union would no longer send its troops to support Eastern European communist governments. This served as the stronger signal that the Soviet Union's communist base was weakened and would no longer continue to challenge democratic USA to influence the world, leading to the end of the Cold War,