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Preliminary Examination Secondary 4 (O-Level Programme)

HUMANITIES (HISTORY)

2261/02

Paper 2: The Making of the Contemporary World Order (1900s-1991)

29 August 2025

Additional Materials: Answer Booklets

1 hr 50 mins

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, index number and class on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

You may use a soft pencil for any rough working.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

DO NOT WRITE ON THE MARGINS.

Section A

Answer **all parts** of Question 1.

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

Write all answers on the Answer Booklets provided.

For examiner's use only:

Section A	/ 30 m
Section B	/ 20 m
Total	/ 50 marks

At the end of the examination, submit Section A and B separately.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

Section A: Source-Based Case Study

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 to 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 is the message of the card? Explain your answer. [5]

(b) Study Sources B and C.

How far does source B make you surprised by what source C says about the Inchon landings? Explain your answer. [6]

(c) Study Source D.

How reliable are Truman's claims? Explain your answer. [6]

(d) Study Source F.

How useful is this source in helping us understand the role of General MacArthur in the Korean war? Explain your answer. [5]

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

'General MacArthur was a poor military leader.' How far do these sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. [8]

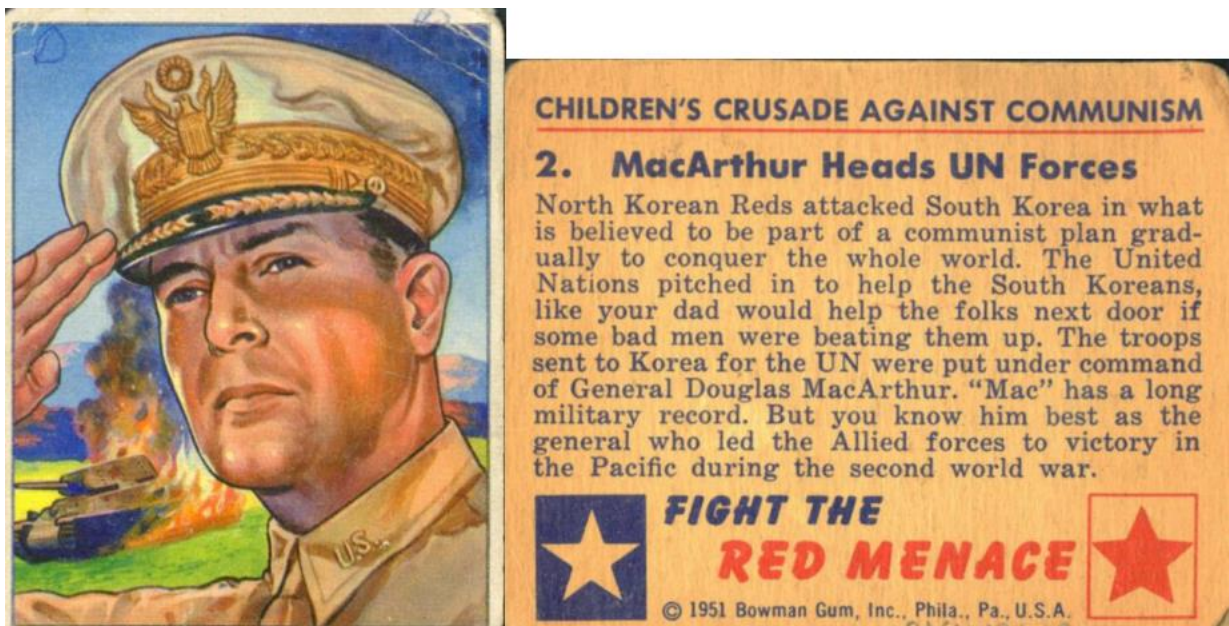
General Douglas MacArthur and the Korean war

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When North Korean troops poured across the border to invade South Korea, on 25 June 1950, President Harry Truman was determined to resist the impending Communist takeover. Through the approval of the Security Council, a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force under the Command of General Douglas MacArthur were swiftly deployed to help defend South Korea. MacArthur's tactical acumen was evident. When UN forces were pushed to the Pusan Perimeter, he planned an amphibious landing of forces at Incheon on 15th September 1950, taking the North Koreans by surprise and forcing them to retreat across the 38th parallel. He was nevertheless not without his flaws. Having reassured President Truman that the Chinese would not intervene, he was himself taken by surprise when they poured across the Yalu River to assist the North Koreans on 3rd November 1950. Increasingly hostile and seemingly defiant, he was eventually dismissed by President Truman and replaced by his deputy Matthew Ridgeway.

How should we assess the role of General MacArthur in the Korean War?

Source A: *A trading card produced in America by a bubble-gum company in 1951 as part of a card series titled "children's crusade against communism".*



Source B: *A news report from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on the Inchon landings, published on 15 September 1950.*

The allied landing forces were the largest assembled anywhere since World War II. They were watched by their commander, General Douglas MacArthur, from the flagship of the supporting fleet. After the initial landings, he signaled to the assault force, "The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning." He also paid tribute to "the clockwork coordination and cooperation between the services involved." There has been little resistance from the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), who are believed to have been taken completely by surprise by the attack.

Source C: *An article published by a military analyst in the journal of the United States Naval Institute in 1954. The institute trains officers of the United States Navy in the art of naval warfare.*

The amphibious assault at Inchon, Korea, was remembered by military professionals as “brilliant,” “daring,” and “skillful.” These adjectives are not inaccurate. No one can dispute the results of Inchon. MacArthur’s insistence that the Reds would consider an Inchon assault insane and impossible; it would take them by surprise and opposition would be light was correct. A critical analysis of that campaign, however, through a study of the obstacles which were faced and the hazards which were accepted will reveal how great the chances of disaster were. General MacArthur himself told the planners. “I realize that Inchon is a 5000 to 1 gamble. I am used to taking those odds.” Any objective review of Inchon will warn that the success of this operation should not be accepted, *per se*, as a yardstick of future capability.

Source D: *An extract of an oral interview conducted by an American reporter with Harry Truman in the 1960s when he was no longer President.*

MacArthur was always play acting. He was wearing those sunglasses of his and a shirt that was unbuttoned and a cap that had a lot of hardware. I never did understand, an old man like that and a five-star general to boot, and he went around dressed up like a nineteen-year-old second lieutenant. But I overlooked that. I fired him because he wouldn’t respect the authority of the President. That’s the answer to that. I didn’t fire him because he was stupid, although he was, but that’s not against the law for generals. If it was, half to three-quarters of them would be in jail. There were times when I’m afraid he wasn’t right in the head. And there never was anyone around to keep him in line. He didn’t have anyone on his staff who wasn’t a *bootlicker.

**bootlicker - someone who flatters his superior and agrees with everything he says.*

Source E: *An excerpt from an article discussing the Korean war, by a Professor of Strategic Studies published in 2019 in a current affairs magazine.*

The North Korean capital, Pyongyang, was captured on 19th October and MacArthur had ordered his troops all the way up to the Yalu River. This occurred despite multiple intelligence sources reporting the presence of a sizeable Chinese intervention force ready to ambush UN forces and cut their supply lines. MacArthur and his intelligence chief, General Charles A. Willoughby, dismissed these reports. A *sycophant, Willoughby knew what MacArthur wanted. His intelligence reports always blend seamlessly with what MacArthur intended to do in the first place. The subsequent rout of the 8th U.S. Army and its South Korean allies from November to December 1950 from the Yalu River on the border between North Korea and China down to below the 38th parallel bisecting the Korean Peninsula, covered some 120 miles in ten days and cost the lives of thousands of American and South Korean soldiers.

**sycophant – someone who is very obedient to superiors to gain personal advantage.*

Source F: *An assessment of MacArthur by an American historian, written in 2000.*

Our lack of preparedness for the invasion, our disastrous retreat to a corner of Korea, the daring and brilliant landing at Inchon which led to the recapture of all of South Korea earlier gained by the North, the miscalculations in pursuing the enemy across the 38th parallel, the headlong retreats from the Yalu River, and the clawing back to the 38th parallel, all can be blamed or credited to MacArthur. He was vain, blind to criticism and so insubordinate that Truman was forced to fire him. Yet years later, the war would end where MacArthur had left it, at the 38th parallel that still stands as one of history’s last frontiers between communism and freedom.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

- 2 'The main reason why the Weimar government was unpopular with the German people was because it signed the Treaty of Versailles.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 3 'Japan attacked Pearl Harbour because they saw USA as a threat to their Co-Prosperity Plan.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 4 'The Tet offensive was the main reason for the shifting sentiments in the United States towards the Vietnam War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

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Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A : <https://www.skytamer.com/R701-12.html>
Source B : <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/15/>
Source C : <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1954/january/inchon-analysis-gamble>
Source D : https://www.huffpost.com/entry/harry-truman-talks-about_b_621832
Source E : <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/is-this-the-worst-intelligence-chief-in-the-us-armys-history/>
Source F : Stanley Weintraub "MacArthur's War, Korea and the undoing of an American Hero" (New York: Free Press) 2000.