

Name:	Index No:	Class:
--------------	------------------	---------------

S4

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025

HISTORY

2174/02

Paper 2: Developments in the post-World War II world:

The Cold War and decolonization in Southeast Asia, 1940s - 1991

27 August 2025

Secondary 4

1 hour 50 minutes

Additional Materials: 5 sheets of writing paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

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

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Section A

Answer **all parts** of Question 1.

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

Hand in the Question Paper, Section A and Section B separately.

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

Section A		30 marks
Section B Qn. No: () Qn. No: ()		20 marks
TOTAL:		50 marks

This document consists of 6 printed pages.

Section A (Source-Based Case Study)

Question 1 is **compulsory** for all candidates

Study the background information and all 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 learn from this source about the Cold War? Explain your answer. [5]

(b) Study Source B.

Why was this cartoon published? Explain your answer. [5]

(c) Study Source C.

How useful is Source C as evidence about the start of the Cold War? Explain your answer. [6]

(d) Study Sources D and E.

After reading Source D, does it make Source E surprising? Explain your answer. [6]

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

“The Cold War was caused by American actions.” How far do these sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. [8]

The Outbreak of the Cold War

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you answer some of the questions.

The Cold War spanned four decades and defined worldwide political alignments. Western hostility towards the USSR existed at its founding, as the Soviets sought to spread Communism worldwide. However, up till 1945 the USA and USSR were still largely cooperating as allies. As Europe transited to a postwar era, relations between them began to deteriorate. By 1949, the whole of Europe was clearly divided into two blocs, each led by a superpower.

Some have blamed the Cold War on the personalities of the leaders involved, noting that there was a change in US leadership in April 1945 following Roosevelt's death. Others point to the difference in ideologies which had generated tension long before World War II. The release of previously secret documents after the end of the Cold War continues to provide new perspectives on this topic.

Were American actions after World War II the main reason for the conflict?

Source A: *Adapted from an American historian's account of Truman's first meeting on 23 April 1945 with Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister.*

Truman's top advisers were split. Some warned him that Poland was a sensitive issue of Russian security. Others insisted that this was the time to draw the line.

At the meeting, Truman told Molotov that the Soviets were not carrying out their agreements on Poland.

Molotov said, "We are."

Truman explained to him in very tough language exactly why they were not.

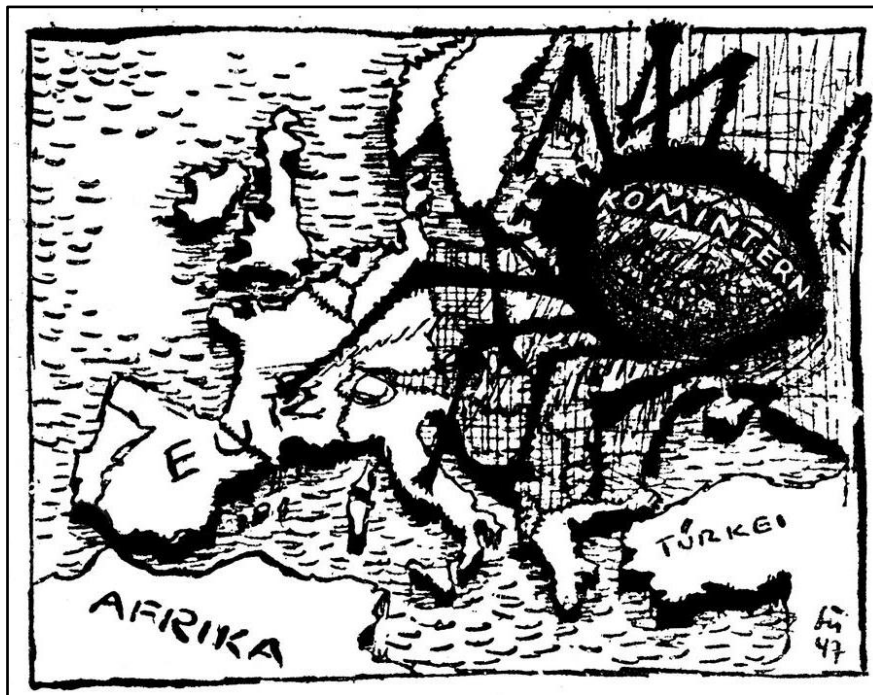
Molotov said, "I have never been talked to like that in my life!"

Truman said, "Carry out your agreements and you won't be talked to like that."

Truman walked out of the room, saw a staff member and said, "I just showed him who was boss... Do you think I did right?"

Later, Truman found out about Roosevelt and Stalin's agreement and backed down. The USA recognised the Soviet-dominated government of Poland. But by then, the relationship between the two powers had soured.

Source B: *A cartoon published on 10 October 1947 by a Western newspaper, with the caption "Comintern: It's spinning a new web over Europe."*



*Comintern: An organisation created by the USSR in 1919 to spread Communism worldwide. It was replaced in September 1947 by Cominform.

Source C: *From the memoirs of Marshal Georgii Zhukov, the top military commander of the USSR, on the Potsdam Conference (July-August 1945). His book was published in 1971.*

After one of the meetings, Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without naming it the atomic bomb. However, Stalin pretended that he saw nothing special in this. Many in the West thus assumed that Stalin had failed to understand the significance of what he had heard. In fact, right after this meeting Stalin told Molotov about the conversation. Molotov reacted almost immediately. "Let them. We'll get our scientists to speed things up." I realised that they were talking about research on the atomic bomb.

It was clear that the US intended to use the atomic weapon to achieve its imperialist goals from a position of strength in the Cold War. This was amply corroborated when, without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely populated cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Source D: *An extract from a speech given by Andrei Zhdanov, a top Soviet leader, at the founding of the Cominform in September 1947.*

The "Marshall Plan" is a scheme to create a bloc of states bound by obligations to the United States, and to grant American loans to European countries as compensation for their loss of economic and political independence.

Moreover, the cornerstone of the "Marshall Plan" is the restoration of industrial areas of Western Germany by American businesses, bringing under American control the major sources of coal and iron in Europe.

The need for mutual coordination between individual Communist parties has become particularly urgent. We have the special task of leading the resistance to America's plan for the enthrallment of Europe, and of boldly denouncing all supporters of American imperialism in their own countries. Communists must be the leaders in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans for the enslavement of Europe.

Source E: *An extract from a book about the Cold War by former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, published in 2000.*

The former allies rushed headlong into the Cold War. Each side bears its share of responsibility for this. Which side bears the greater responsibility is a question that has not yet been answered by objective historians in a convincing way.

The flaw in Soviet foreign policy consisted in the fact that all its energy came from an ideological source. A hard core of ideological constructs ultimately determined the behaviour of the USSR and nourished an atmosphere of confrontation toward the West, which was of course also partly a response to the no less confrontational policy pursued by the West toward the Soviet Union. In thinking about these problems at length, I have come to the conclusion that the policy pursued by both sides was dictated by mutual fear and was ideologically driven.

Source F: *An extract from a book by the historian John Lewis Gaddis, published in 1998 after he was able to access confidential Soviet government archives.*

We now realise how much Stalin imposed his ideas upon his country: this was a dictator whose subordinates scrutinised his every comment or gesture, and attempted to implement policies on the basis of them. The result was that every level of the government became obsessed with looking for suspected enemies. He was the ultimate narcissist who thought only about his own security.

Here was the difficulty. Western democracies sought security that would reject violence: security was to be a collective good, not a benefit denied to some in order to provide it to others. Stalin saw things very differently: security came only by eliminating potential challengers. World politics was an extension of Soviet politics, which was in turn an extension of Stalin's personal environment, in which achieving security for one meant depriving everyone else of it. This made conflict unavoidable.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

- 2 "Germany was defeated by 1945 because of ineffective leadership." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 3 "US intervention in Korea in 1950 was due to the need to stop the spread of Communism." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 4 "The French defeat in the First Indochina War was due to the strength of the Viet Minh." How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

- End of Paper -

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A: https://www.johndclare.net/cold_war5_LaFeber.htm

Source B: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/cartoon_on_the_dangers_of_soviet_expansionism_in_europe_10_october_1947-en806ea2cf-2a74-4034-b9ea-cd3bc7c0e84c.html

Source C: <https://www.dannen.com/decision/potsdam.html>

Source D: <https://educ.jmu.edu/~vannorwc/assets/ghist%20102-150/pages/readings/zhdanovspeech.html>

Source E: Gorbachev, Mikhail. On My Country and the World. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Source F: <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/first/g/gaddis-war.html?mobile-app=true&theme=false>