Period 8: Document Based Quesetion

**Directions:** This question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. You are advised to spend 15 minutes reading and planning and 40 minutes writing your answer.

Write your responses on the lined pages that follow the question.

In your response you should do the following:

* State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
* Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
* Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.
* Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.
* Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
* Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
* Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay that extends your argument, connects it to a different historical context, or accounts for contradictory evidence on the topic.

**Question:**Evaluate the causes of the beginning of the Cold War between the US and the USSR from 1945 to 1950.

**Documents:**

Document 1

Joseph Stalin, February 6, 1945

Prime Minister [Churchill] has said that for Great Britain the question of Poland is a question of honor. For Russia it is not only a question of honor but of security. . . . During the last 30 years, our German enemy has passed through this corridor twice.

Document 2

Gallup Polls conducted in the United States

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **August 1945** |  |
| Do you think Russia can be trusted to cooperate with us after the war? |  |
| Yes | 54% |
| No | 3 |
| No opinion | 16 |
| **March 1946** |  |
| Do you think Russia will cooperate with us in world affairs? |  |
| Yes | 35% |
| No | 52 |
| No opinion | 13 |
| **July 1946** |  |
| As you hear and read about Russia these days, do you believe Russia is trying to build herself up to be the ruling power of the world, or is Russia just building up protection against being attacked in another war? |  |
| Ruling power | 60% |
| Protection | 26 |
| No opinion | 14 |
| **May 1948** |  |
| Do you think the United States is too soft or too tough . . . in its policy toward Russia? |  |
| Too soft | 69% |
| Too tough | 6 |
| About right | 14 |
| No opinion | 11 |

Document 3

George Kennan, State Department official, September 1946

I don’t think that we can influence them [the Soviets] by reasoning with them, by arguing with them, by going to them and saying, “Look here, this is the way things are.” I don’t believe that is possible. . . . If we can keep them maneuvered into a position where it is always hard and unprofitable for them to take action contrary to the principles of the United Nations and to our policies and where there is always an open door and an easy road to collaboration . . . I personally am quite convinced that . . . sooner or later the logic of it will penetrate their government and will force changes there.

Document 4

President Harry Truman, Speech to Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments. . . . At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

Document 5

V. M. Molotov, Soviet foreign minister, “The Task of Our Time: Unite Against the Enslavement of the People,” broadcast to the Russian people, November 6, 1947

Today the ruling circles of the United States and Great Britain head one international grouping which has as its aim the consolidation of capitalism and the achievement of the domination of these countries over other peoples. . . . Take, for example, the German question. If in the postwar period America and Britain had adhered to all the principles-let us say, for example, the democratic principles-of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences on the German question, which made possible and fruitful the collaboration of the great allies against Hitlerite Germany, with the aim of liquidating the remnants of fascism, then collaboration between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain would also today produce good results. But the United States and Britain have departed from these democratic principles and have violated the decisions jointly taken.

Document 6

David Low cartoon in the London Evening Standard, March 1948

Document 7

Testimony of Whitaker Chambers before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, August 3, 1948

For a number of years I had myself served in . . . an underground organization of the United States Communist Party. . . . Later . . . a member of this group . . . was Alger Hiss, who, as a member of the State Department, later organized the conferences at Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, and the United States side of the Yalta Conference. . . . The Communist Party exists for the specific purpose of overthrowing the Government; at the opportune time, by any and all means; and each of its members, by the fact that he is a member, is dedicated to this purpose. . . . Americans [must] recognize at last that they are at grips with a secret, sinister, and enormously powerful force whose tireless purpose is their enslavement.

Student Sample Response:

World War 2 came to an end in 1945 which left Germany upset because they were last to get invaded by Western Allies & the Soviet Union for the capture of Berlin. Through contextualization it can be seen that WWII led to the Cold War from the years 1945-1950, Germany is now more likely to become communist due to being in ruins after the war. The main causes of the Cold War were social discords, an struggling economy and a distorted political system. For example many countries were struggling economically which caused tem to resort to communism.

The countries were facing many problems socially due to difference in weather in weather one country should be communist or a democracy. European countries were poor and angry with the US causing them to lean communism. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was the first peacetime military alliance the US had entered outside the western hemisphere. Many Western countries participated in NATO for security against the Soviet Union. The signers of NATO were in fear of attack & this would help secure their protection. This can be seen in a chart by Gallup Polls which shows the likeliness of Russias reaction to things which proves why NATO & Warsaw pact was made. The purpose is to show how Russia cant be trusted after the war. In a testimony by Whitaker Chambers purpose is to show countries need to have good social relations. A comic by David Low purpose is to show socially all the countries are going to be taken over & turned into communist.

Economically all of the European countries were struggling due to trying to rebuild their cities after being destroyed from both world wars. Germany also owed lots of war reperations to US. The World Bank was made to help countries struggling to rebuild & to help 3rd world countries get out of poverty. In a document by George Kennan purpose is to how that countries & the UN was there to help out struggling countries economically. Even though the Soviets rejected the Baruch Plan they managed to recovery economically after the war.

Politically countries were not getting along because US was pushing for democracy while USSR was using the domino effect to get everyone on bored with Stalin and Communism. It stated with the Yalta conference when Stalin, Churchill & Roosevelt met to discuss Europes post war reorganization. Stalin discussed how he would allow for free elections but then broke his promise which would cause many politically problems. This promise break is said to the one of the leading causes of the Cold War. Kennedy was trying to use containment to contain communism as best as he could. Truman tried to help political relations with the Truman Doctrine & the Marshall Plan. Both were created to give money to countries struggling after war. The US also did the Berlin Airlift to show they wanted to help. The US lifted clothes, food, water & blankets to West Berlin since they were being blockaded. This proved the US wanted to help \* helped our relations politically. In a document by Stalin at Yalta it show that his intentions were which we would later break. The purpose is to show the uncertenty of Russia. In an article by V M Molotov whose purpose is to show how different groups are meeting to discuss political things. The end of the Cold War lead to many alliences between countries because they were in fear of war & not having back up this can be shown through synthesis.

The main causes of the war were social discord, a struggling economy & a distorted political system.

SCORING

### Thesis – 1 point available

The essay receives 1 point for thesis. The student correctly, though vaguely, identifies three causes for the Cold War as social discord, a struggling economy, and a distorted political system.

### Analysis of documents – 3 points available

This essay receives 0 points for analysis of documents. The student attempts to introduce 6 of the 7 documents, but does not accurately explain any document content, and only attempts extended analysis on 3 of the 7 documents. Document 2 is misinterpreted, though its purpose is accurately stated. Document 7 is erroneously explained. The student fails to introduce the content of Document 6, though its purpose is stated. Document 3 is misinterpreted. The content of Document 1 – Stalin’s need for protection from invasion via Poland -- is not discussed; however, its historical context is. The attempt to circle around and introduce Stalin’s purpose again from Document 1 fails to establish what that purpose was. Document 5 is not used accurately.

### Analysis of outside examples to support thesis/argument – 1 point available

The essay receives 1 point for outside examples by accurately introducing NATO and the reasons for its evolution, the World Bank and its purposes, Soviet rejection of the Baruch Plan, and introduction of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan in support of its thesis. Though there are errors (such as Germany owing the US war reparations) there is enough other accurately-tied outside information to receive the point.

### Contextualization – 1 point available

This essay receives 0 points for contextualization. The student’s attempt to establish the context of the question (by analyzing Germany at the end of the war) is misdirected and erroneous in the connections it attempts to establish.

### Synthesis – 1 point available

This essay receives 0 points for synthesis. The essay does not extend the argument, connect to a different historical context, or account for contradictory evidence on the topic.

 Score – 2/7