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:

In 1939, the Nonaggression pact was signed, later in 1945, World War II ended. Using contextualization the end of the World War II left Europe, especially Germany, in shambles as there was an expensive amount of serious damage. This led to many poor countries turning to communism, which they thought would be better since everyone would share and be on a level playing field. The Cold War was essentially about the containment versus spread of Communism. The causes of the Cold War were economic downfall, negative social relations, and international politics.

The economic downfall centered in Europe was a cause of the Cold War. The losing side of World War II had to pay war reparations to the winning side. On the losing side, it was Germany who caused most damage and therefore was the most in debt after the war. Other nations such as Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania were poor as a result of the War and were seen as targets for communism. President Harry Truman spent hundreds of millions of dollars to aid free countries like Greece. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are examples of America giving European countries vast amounts of money so they don’t have to resort to communism because of their economic downfall. The Soviet Union also rejected the new International Ban for reconstruction and Development which had a purpose to help fund places destroyed by the war. Based on these economic reasons the Cold War started.

There were also negative social relations that led to the Cold War. For instance there was negative propaganda as shown in David Low cartoon in the London Evening Standard which depicts Joseph Stalin choosing which country he will next “liberate from freedom”. The purpose of this cartoon is to show Stalin and Russia as the enemy since they are trying to take away freedom as replace it with communism. Other forms of propaganda are the trials held concerning espionage cases. One of these trials included Alger Hiss and another trial included the Rosenberg family both cases, or trials, let to their conviction and both were probably communist spies. The Testimony of Whitaker Chambers had a purpose of explaining the purpose of the underground Communist Party, which is to overthrow American government at the opportune moment. The Gallup Poll showed how the citizens of America felt about the Cold War and mainly Russia. The majority are in favor of this war against Russia which has a purpose of persuading those against the war to join the majority. The Cold War is known as the Cold War because there was no fighting. During the Cold War America joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, this was established to protect other countries. Since Russia was not allowed to join, they responded with the Warsaw Pact. These are the negative social relations that caused the Cold War.

There were causes among international politics as well. For instance Joseph Stalin at the Yalta Conference showed that Stalin had a much different opinion on the matter of Poland compared to President Truman and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The purpose was to show on what grounds the Soviet Union broke the agreement from the Yalta Conference. This led to further conflict about the “iron curtain” and the Berlin airlift. Winston Churchill’s speech on the “iron curtain” which divided East and West Europe. The Berlin Airlift was meant to keep America out of Berlin. Also America used the containment policy to limit communism and stop it from spreading. As seem in George Kennan, State Department official, september 1946 where the purpose is to explain the containment policy. Also President Truman in his speech to Joint Session of Congress explained how totalitarian regimes are attempting to coerce and intimidate other countries to give up their free will. The purpose of this is to make it seem as though communism is the same as a totalitarian regime. These are examples of how politics between nations caused the Cold War.

In summation, the Cold War was caused by the economic downfall in many countries, the negative social relations, and international politics. Using Synthesis, America won the war and therefore Communism declined as the Soviet Union declined as a world power.

SCORING

Thesis – 1 point available

The essay receives 1 point for thesis. The student argues that the cause of the Cold War was a fight between containment and communist expansion, as seen within the areas of social relations, economic issues, and international politics.

Analysis of documents – 3 points available

This essay receives 2 points for analysis of documents. The student analyzes five of the documents for content and extending their analysis of five documents. Document 4 is explained with the introduction of the poor eastern European countries needing help and the extended analysis is the historical context involving the US aid given to them in an attempt to stop communism from spreading into their countries. The student also explicitly cites this document in the last paragraph as well. The contents and purpose of Document 6 are accurately brought forth with the discussion of Stalin attempting to “liberate” Eastern Europe with the purpose of establishing communist states there. Document 7 presents Chambers’s perspective concerning communism’s purpose within the United States and receives credit for extended analysis by establishing the historical context of the document by discussing the fears taking place with communist espionage trials. The content of the public opinion poll, Document 2, is accurately discussed and the purpose, to influence the public to join the majority, can be seen as accurate, considering that the point of the paragraph is propaganda and the nature of the questions would lead a student to believe that this is a push poll. Document 1, Stalin’s difference of opinion with Great Britain as regards Poland, is introduced, but the extended analysis is misguided: the purpose for Stalin’s statements must involve his purpose at the time of the Conference, not two years later. The purpose of Document 3, Kennan’s statement helping to establish the containment policy is accurate; however, the content of the document itself is not explained.

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

This essay receives 1 point for outside examples in support of a thesis. The essay explains numerous pieces of outside historical evidence, and ties them well to the thesis. Examples include the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the International Bank for Reconstruction, Alger Hiss, NATO, and the Warsaw Pact.

Contextualization – 1 point available

The essay receives 1 point for contextualization. It establishes the connection between the massive destruction caused by World War II and its impact on the need for European countries to look for help from the Soviet Union, thus establishing the context from which the Cold War will escalate.

Synthesis – 1 point available

This essay receives 0 points for synthesis. The student does not extend or modify their thesis or explain a valid connection to another time and place.

Score – 5/7