

Name: _____

Period: _____

Cold War: Document Based Question

Directions: In a document-based question your task is two-fold. First, you must review a series of documents and become familiar with what each document is saying. Then, once you have a good understanding of the documents, you use them to write a 5-paragraph response to the writing prompt listed below. This writing prompt is based on the accompanying documents. It is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Therefore it is expected that you will use, reference, or cite these documents in your writing.

Cold War Beginnings Historical Context: Between 1945 and 1950, the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union broke down and the Cold War began. For the next 40 years, relations between the two superpowers swung between confrontation and détente. Each tried to increase its worldwide influence and spread its competing economic and political systems. At times during this period the competitors were at the brink of war.

Question: As you read each document consider them in the frame of this question:

Which side, the United States and its Western allies, or the Soviet Union and its allies in the East, was more responsible for starting the Cold War?

PART 1: The Documents

As you analyze the documents, take into account both the **source** of each document and any **point of view** that may be presented in the document. Take your time. You want to think of historical documents like crime scenes – you don't want to miss any piece of evidence! To help you there are a couple of basic analysis questions after each document. Answer each of these for each document before going to Part 2.

Document 1

This is an excerpt from Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, March 5, 1946:

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe... All the famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Russia."

Document 2

This is an excerpt from U.S. President Truman's speech to Congress, March 12, 1947:

"I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are attempted subjugation (domination) by armed minorities or by outside pressure. Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far-reaching to the West. The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. Therefore, I propose giving Greece and Turkey \$400 million in aid."

Document 3

This is an excerpt from U.S. Secretary of State Marshall's speech explaining his plan for European recovery, June 5 1947:

"I need to say that the world situation is very serious... Europe must have a great deal of additional help, or face heavy economic, social, and political damage. This would have a harmful effect on the world at large. There are also possibilities of disturbances because of the desperation of the people concerned. The effect on the economy of the United States should be clear to all. So the United States should do whatever it can to help restore normal economic health to the world. Without this there can be no political stability or peace. Our policy is directed ... against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos (disorder). Its purpose is to revive a working economy in the world."

Document 4

This is an excerpt from the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed by the United States, Canada, and ten nations of Western Europe in 1948:

"The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or in North America shall be considered as an attack against them all. They agree that if such an armed attack occurs, each of them will assist the party or parties so attacked. Each will immediately take whatever action it considers necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. It will, if necessary, use armed force."

Document 5

This is an excerpt from a speech by Soviet Premier (leader) Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 in which he explains his point of view on U.S. actions:

"The inspirers of the "cold war" began to establish military blocs – the North Atlantic bloc, SEATO, and the Baghdad pact. (They claim) they have united for defense against the "communist threat." But this is sheer hypocrisy! We know from history that when planning a redivision of the world, the imperialist powers have always lined up military blocs. Today the "anti-communist" slogan is being used as a smoke screen to cover up the claims of one power for world domination. The United States wants, by means of blocs and pacts, to secure a dominant position in the capitalist world. The inspirers of the "position of strength" policy assert that it makes another way impossible because it ensures a "balance of power" in the world. (They) offer the arms race as their main recipe for the preservation of peace! It is

perfectly obvious that when nations compete to increase their military might, the danger of war becomes greater, not lesser. Capitalism will find its grave in another world war, should it unleash it.”

Document 6

The threat of nuclear war was obvious in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. This excerpt, from President John F. Kennedy’s speech to the American people, explains the US position:

“... We have unmistakable evidence that a series of offensive missile sites is now being built on that island ... Cuba has been made into an important strategic base by the presence of these long-range offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction. This is an open threat to the peace and security of the Americas. Our objective must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country. We must secure their withdrawal from the Western Hemisphere ... I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this secret and reckless threat to world peace.”

Document 7

The arms race was an important part of the Cold War. Both superpowers developed technology and used their nuclear power to build as many weapons as possible. This nuclear buildup led to a “balance of terror,” which some saw as a deterrent to war. But others feared the use of these weapons. These charts show the build up of ICBM’s (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles – basically missiles that can fly from Russia to America) and long-range bombers between 1971 and 1987.

