



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 2R (A-level)
Question 02 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

Specimen answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 2R (A-level): Specimen question paper

02 'The Cold War developed by 1949 because of Stalin's intention to dominate post war Europe.'

Assess the validity of this view

[25 marks]

Student response

In this essay I will be discussing whether the view at the top is a valid view on whether or not the cold war developed because of Stalin's to dominate post war Europe. I will talk about why Stalin is and isn't to blame for the development of the cold war. I will talk about different areas of the topic such as war events, conferences & actions in Europe.

Some of Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe show us his plan to dominate. Firstly Stalin kept 11 million red army troops spread across Eastern Europe up until 1948 even though the war finished in 1945. Stalin kept the red army troops there to help achieve full communist control in Eastern Europe and when this was achieved in 1948 that's when he started to move them out. Stalin took over countries such as Czechoslovakia (Czech coup). Czechoslovakia was taken over in 5 days. Stalin would not allow them to accept Marshall Aid from America. The soviet government were no longer happy with Czechoslovakia/ so that turned it into a communist government by taking over the police force and arrested non communists in government. This shows Stalin's intentions to dominate post war Europe as he has been able to take over a government in 5 days. The soviet government rigged elections so that the communists would win for example: Romania in 1946. This shows how Stalin wanted to spread his ideology across Europe and dominate. It is evident that Stalin wanted to dominate post war Europe. He banned political parties other than communist parties in countries in Eastern Europe such as Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia. BY 1949 all governments in Eastern Europe apart from Yugoslavia were under Stalin's control. Having other political parties erased meant that Stalin could influence other countries on his ideology. Stalin showed his intention to dominate post war Europe by asset stripping East Germany; they took resources and industrial plants. Stalin wanted to take as much as he could from Germany to make them suffer like he thought Russia did. Really he was trying to ensure that Germany remained weak so Russia could be strong and dominate. Stalin also created a buffer zone which stretched across the countries neighbouring Russia. Stalin built this buffer zone to expand his position throughout Europe and by having the buffer zone already put into place they would easily fall under his control and invade. Stalin also set up Cominform in 1947 which allowed Stalin to easily control communist parties across Eastern Europe. Stalin would remove leaders of the European countries if they did not follow Cominform.

Stalin was also to blame for the Cold War because of his actions during World War 2. The fact that Stalin kept the red army in countries after the war showed that Stalin wanted to take control over post war Europe soon after the war. Also Stalin did not intervene in the Warsaw uprising where 250,000 poles were killed and he and the Russian army were responsible for events such as the Katyn massacre in which 15,000 polish army officers were murdered. This shows

that Stalin's intentions were to weaken those around him so he could dominate post war Europe after the war had ended. Also the Nazi-Soviet pact (a deal between Russia and the Nazi's which they agreed not to go to war with each other and a promise to invade and split Poland between them) showed Stalin's intention to dominate post war Europe as it meant he could keep control of Poland after the Nazi's were defeated. The rape of 2 million German women is another example of Russian brutality. This reveals to us Stalin's disregard for Europe so it gave other countries such as America the role of protectors.

Stalin was also in the wrong for breaking deals made at the conferences. There were 3 main conferences: Yalta, Potsdam and Moscow. At Yalta Stalin promised Churchill and Roosevelt that he would hold free elections in Eastern Europe. However Stalin did not stand by his agreement and in countries such as Poland elections were rigged or didn't happen so the communists came to power. Stalin never had the intention to hold free elections in Eastern Europe. This allowed Stalin to dominate by 1949 as he had Communist governments set up. At Potsdam Stalin refused to limit the size of the red army which he had 11 million of spread over Europe by 1948, he actually increased the size of the red army. This shows that Stalin knew he had the power to stand up to the other leading powers and try to dominate Europe. At the Potsdam conference in July 1945 Atlee, Truman & Stalin agreed that the USSR should receive reparations for the impact of war on the country but no exact figure was agreed so Stalin took as much as he could out of East Germany (asset stripping). It was also harder to decide on how many reparations to give when Germany had been split into different areas so it was often difficult to come to a conclusion. The USSR tried to weaken East Germany and keep them weak so that they could easily advance and dominate over Europe. Finally at Yalta in February 1945 Stalin, Churchill & Roosevelt agreed to move Poland west (Oder-Neisse line) however the moving of 5 million Polish people west which was not agreed at the Yalta conference.

However, some may think Stalin was not to blame for development of the Cold War and you may think he had no intention of dominating post war Europe. Stalin did hold free elections in Czechoslovakia until 1948 and he held free elections in Hungary until He only stopped when America were trying spread Capitalism over Europe through the offering of Marshall aid which was sent to countries to attempt to prevent the spread of communism. This shows that he was not trying to dominate and he was only trying to defend his people. The Marshall aid seemed aggressive to Stalin. Secondly, you may think Stalin was not to blame for the development of the cold war as he honoured the percentages deal set at Moscow in 1944. He didn't intervene in the Greek civil war as he only had 10% rule over Greece. This shows us he was not trying to dominate post war Europe. Stalin argues that the Buffer Zone was created to defend the people of Russia which is understandable as they have been attacked by the Germans twice in 20 years so he wasn't trying to dominate he was just expanding for the defence of the USSR with the people at mind. Finally, Russia suffered much heavier casualties in the war than America and any other country did. They suffered 27million casualties so shouldn't they be allowed to take assets from East Germany to repair themselves? So based on the amount of deaths from the USSR isn't the asset stripping justified as oppose to trying to dominate.

The US could be to blame for causing the Cold War because of the events in World War 2. For instance they purposely delayed the attack on the second front which resulted in a lot of Soviet losses. This made a lot of extra tension between the US and USSR. Also the atomic diplomacy was provocative. Dropping the bomb and the development of the bomb was intimidating towards the Soviets which made them get anxious about their own safety/security. Furthermore, America took a lot of credit for the end of War result in relation to the amount of fighting they did

in comparison with countries such as the USSR and Britain. Finally, the US was paranoid about the buffer zone. Stalin had the buffer zone but he hadn't used it to attack anyone or invade anywhere in Western Europe. This shows that Stalin's intentions were not to dominate in post war Europe they were to protect the Soviets.

The US could be seen to blame for the development of the Cold War due to the conferences. The US broke the deals of Yalta & Potsdam in Germany. The deal was that Germany would be split into 4 separate zones however the US broke that deal by joining up their zone with Britain to create 'Bizonia'. They also set up a new currency although Germany was supposed to be a single economic state. The fact that America didn't honour the deals at Yalta & Potsdam tells us why Stalin was not very trusting of America although they were supposedly allies. Secondly, America agreed on the percentages deal so they can't say that Stalin was trying to take over and dominate Europe post war. Stalin wasn't going to dominate in countries such as Romania where he is given 90% ruling. When America tried to use Atomic diplomacy at Potsdam to show off to the soviets about this big new weapon they had gave Stalin reason to be slightly hostile about it. Why would you show off this great new weapon to your Allies? The fact that America are flashing this new weapon gives Stalin every right to be concerned for his countries safety so he feels the need to start developing an atomic bomb as well.

The actions of the US in Europe post War could be seen as aggressive from Stalin, for instance the Marshall Plan & Truman doctrine. These were ways of containing communism through economic aid to countries vulnerable to communism. The USSR sees this as an expansion of capitalism which Stalin will act defensively towards. It would be naive of the US to think that the USSR would be happy with this money, although it was offered to them too. Secondly, Kennan's long telegram describes people's perceptions of communism as a 'malignant parasite'. The telegram gives a very negative look on communism to encourage the people of the US to want to act against communism. Finally, the creation of NATO was to reassure western states in face of possible aggression that they had allies. If one was attacked they'd all get involved. Stalin saw this as a very threatening move by the US and thought it was the west trying to expand their capitalist views across Europe.

Overall, I think that the cold war was developed by 1949 because of Stalin's intentions to dominate post war Europe. This is shown by the Actions in Europe like keeping the Red Army there, Stalin's behaviour in World war 2 such as the Katyn Massacre to weaken his opposition so that the soviets are in a better position to dominate after the war and Stalin not honouring deals at conferences such as not holding free elections across Eastern Europe as promised. But to an extent the US did have a key part in actions leading to the beginning of the Cold War, For instance: delaying the second front which punished the soviets heavily, breaking Yalta & Potsdam by creating Bizonia and a new currency and the aggressive approaches to expand capitalism across Europe such as the Marshall aid. I don't think that the US was as much to blame as the USSR for the development of the Cold War by 1949 because they were not as forceful in trying to establish capitalism in countries in post war Europe. Yes they offered Marshall Aid but they didn't take over countries like Stalin did. Finally, I think the USSR was more responsible for the development of the Cold War by 1949 as Stalin never really trusted his Allies. We know this as he was spying on America even in the War and when America was developing the A-bomb this tells us that Stalin saw America as an enemy rather than allies.

Commentary – Level 3/4

The answer has balance in that it looks carefully at the issue of responsibility for the Cold War and has

adequate supporting information to support the arguments advanced. It does not, however, cover the Berlin Blockade which is central development in the period. There are a number of weaknesses in the answer. The introduction is poor: instead of setting out the argument to be advanced, it tells the examiner what needs to be done and such introductions add nothing to the response. It is not always well-structured or developed; the first full paragraph contains several points which need greater development and be less assertive. Some points, such as the references to what happened during the war, are somewhat tangential and there is a considerable amount of assertive repetition. It is a borderline Level 3 or Level 4 response.