This is a Class 3 exam

Lebanon Evangelical School for Boys and Girls

Lebanon Evangelical School
for Boys and Girls Loueizeh - Baabda

Stage Exam 05
27APR2026

Do NOT write in this box. Your MARK will be placed here.

Subject :	History	
Class :	12A	
Teacher :	Dr. Mark Woolmer	
Duration :	2 hours	
Your name :		*Time taken to complete exam*
Your Class :		
Exam Room :		
How many sheets, including cover sheet :		

- Do not open this paper until the teacher in charge instructs you to do so.
- The most important thing to remember in taking an exam is NEVER PANIC.
- If you are caught cheating in this exam, you will be awarded zero for ALL exams that are taken on this day.

Superpower Relations, 1943-90

Section A

You MUST Answer Question 1.

***** Study Extracts 1 and 2 before you answer this question. *****

1) How far do you agree with the view that the Cold War policies of the USA, in the years 1945–53, were motivated by an ideological mission to defend 'liberty against the forces of darkness' (Extract 1, line 3)?

   Explain your answer using Extracts 1 and 2 and your knowledge of the issues related to this controversy.

   (25)

Extract 1: From E Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, published in 1998.

The Truman Doctrine created the language through which most Americans came to understand the post-war world. It involved a vision of America's mission as defending liberty against the forces of darkness. More than any other statement, Senator Fulbright later wrote, the Truman Doctrine established 'the guiding spirit of American foreign policy.' As the Cold War intensified in the next few years, with the Berlin blockade, a Communist government in China, the establishment of NATO, and the Korean War, so did the rhetoric. *Life* magazine declared in 1950, the aim of the Soviet Union was 'slavery for all the world, including the people of the United States.' In that year, another influential Cold War document NSC 68, issued a call for a permanent military build-up to enable the United States to engage in a global crusade against communism. Drafted for the National Security Council, NSC 68 described the Cold War as a conflict between 'the idea of freedom' and the 'idea of slavery under the grim control of the Kremlin.' This rhetoric established the framework within which Truman understood his presidency. 'I have hardly had a day in office,' he observed on retiring in 1953, 'that has not been dominated by this all-embracing struggle between those who love freedom and those who wanted to lead the world back into slavery and darkness.'

***** Exam continues next page *****

Extract 2: From J and G Kolko, *American Capitalist Expansion*, published in 1999.

Surrounded by vast post-war upheaval, the United States found itself immeasurably enriched and, without rival, the strongest nation on the globe. It emerged from the war self-conscious of its new strength and confident of its ability to direct world reconstruction along lines compatible with its goals. And these objectives, carefully formulated during the war, were deceptively simple: Essentially, the United States' aim was to restructure the world so that American business could trade, operate, and profit without restrictions everywhere. On this there was absolute unanimity amongst the American leaders, and it was around these core objectives that they elaborated their policies and programs.

The United States' ultimate objective at the end of World War II was both to sustain and to reform world capitalism.

From the outset, Washington set the entire question of post-war American aid and foreign economic policy in the context that 'our objective has as its background the needs and interests of the people of the United States.'

The question of foreign economic policy was not the containment of communism, but rather more directly the extension and expansion of American capitalism according to its new economic power and needs.

Section B

Answer ONE question in Section B.

EITHER

2. How far do you agree that the period of détente between the superpowers, in the years 1963–79, was primarily motivated by a fear of nuclear warfare?

(Total for Question 2 = 25 marks)

OR

3. How far do you agree that ideological differences were mainly responsible for the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations in the years 1953–64?

(Total for Question 3 = 25 marks)

END

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2. How far do you agree that the period of détente between the superpowers, in the years 1963–79, was primarily motivated by a fear of nuclear warfare?

(Total for Question 2 = 25 marks)

Argument: Fear of nuclear war was the primary motivation (Agree)

Cuban Missile Crisis as a turning point

- Brought the USA and USSR to the brink of nuclear war
- Shocked leaders (e.g. John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev) into recognising the risks of escalation
- Created urgency for improved communication and arms control
- Introduction of direct communication

1963 “Hotline Agreement” to prevent accidental war

- Demonstrates desire to avoid miscalculation leading to nuclear conflict

Arms control agreements

- Nuclear Test Ban Treaty limited nuclear testing
- Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (especially SALT I, 1972) aimed to cap nuclear arsenals
- Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty reduced risk of a first-strike advantage

Doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

- Recognition that nuclear war would mean total destruction for both sides
- Encouraged stability and cooperation rather than confrontation
- Nuclear parity by late 1960s
- USSR caught up with US nuclear capability
- Made war unwinnable → strengthened incentives for détente

Counter-Argument: Other factors were equally or more important (Disagree / Partial agreement)

Economic pressures

- USSR economy stagnating; military spending unsustainable
- USA burdened by Vietnam War
- Détente allowed both sides to redirect resources to domestic issues

Desire for political and diplomatic stability

- Need to manage global tensions and avoid constant crises
- Helsinki Accords
- Focused on cooperation, borders, and human rights
- Shows détente went beyond nuclear concerns

Sino-Soviet split and triangular diplomacy

- Growing hostility between USSR and China
- USA under Richard Nixon exploited this
- Détente partly about gaining strategic advantage rather than just avoiding nuclear war

Domestic political motives

- Leaders used détente to boost prestige and legitimacy
- Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev both gained politically from easing tensions

Continued conflict despite détente

- Proxy wars continued (e.g. Middle East, Africa)
- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan effectively ended détente
- Suggests limits of fear of nuclear war as a controlling factor

Judgement / Conclusion

- Fear of nuclear war was a crucial trigger, especially after 1962
- However, détente was multi-causal, with economic, political, and strategic motives equally significant
- Nuclear fear = foundation and catalyst
- Other factors = drivers sustaining and shaping détente

OR

3. How far do you agree that ideological differences were mainly responsible for the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations in the years 1953–64?

(Total for Question 3 = 25 marks)

Argument: Ideological differences were the main cause (Agree)

De-Stalinisation under Nikita Khrushchev
- 1956 Secret Speech criticised Stalin
- Undermined Mao's leadership style and authority
- Mao Zedong saw this as a betrayal of orthodox communism

Different interpretations of Marxism-Leninism
- USSR promoted "peaceful coexistence" with the West
- China believed in continued revolutionary struggle
- Mao viewed Khrushchev as ideologically weak and revisionist

Disagreements over global communist leadership
- Both USSR and China claimed to be the true leader of world communism
- China criticised Soviet dominance over the communist bloc

Criticism during key crises
- USSR unwilling to fully support China in conflicts (e.g. Taiwan Strait crises)
- China criticised Soviet "softness" towards the USA

Public ideological split
- Open criticism by early 1960s (propaganda attacks, publications)
- Split formalised by 1960–63 ideological disputes

Counter-Argument: Other factors were equally or more important (Disagree / Partial agreement)

Personal rivalry between leaders
- Mao and Khrushchev had a poor personal relationship
- Khrushchev viewed Mao as reckless; Mao saw Khrushchev as weak
- Clashes during meetings (e.g. 1959 visit) worsened tensions

National interests and security concerns
- China felt USSR did not support it sufficiently against the USA
- USSR prioritised its own security and relations with the West
- Withdrawal of Soviet advisors from China in 1960 damaged relations

Economic disagreements
- Disputes over Soviet aid and development models
- USSR cancelled economic agreements and nuclear assistance
- China resented dependence and Soviet control

Foreign policy conflicts
- USSR pursued détente with the West (e.g. after Cuban Missile Crisis)
- China opposed compromise with capitalist states
- Differing responses to crises highlighted conflicting priorities

Strategic and military tensions

- Disagreements over nuclear weapons development
- USSR refused to share nuclear technology with China
- Border tensions (though escalating later) had early roots
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Judgement / Conclusion

- Ideological differences were important and highly visible, especially in propaganda and rhetoric
- However, they were often a cover for deeper issues, including power rivalry and national interests
- Ideology = key factor in escalating and justifying the split
- Personal, strategic, and economic factors = more fundamental causes of deterioration

END