A. Ideological and Historical Differences

**Context**
The wartime alliance between the Communist USSR and the Capitalist West was never likely to survive the defeat of Nazi Germany. In ideas and in actions the two sides had a long history of tension and conflict that quickly re-emerged after Hitler’s death.

<table>
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<th>Source A: Ideological Differences - Speech by President Truman, March 1947</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Source B: Historical Differences - From <a href="http://www.activehistory.co.uk">www.activehistory.co.uk</a></th>
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| One cause of the Cold War was historical differences between the Western Powers and the USSR. The West distrusted the USSR for several reasons. For example, the USSR pulled Russia out of the First World War in 1918. Lenin (the first communist leader) set up the Comintern to promote revolution around the world, and Stalin (his successor) later signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact with Germany in 1939.  

The USSR distrusted the West too for several reasons. For example, the West sent troops to attack the communists during the Russian Civil War (1918-1920), Churchill described Lenin as a "plague virus" and Chamberlain didn’t even invite Stalin to the Munich Conference in 1938, when the Sudetenland was handed over to Hitler. |

**Questions**

1. **Study Source A.**  
   How reliable is this source to the historian studying the differences between Capitalism and Communism?

2. **Study Source B.**  
   Does this source prove that the wartime alliance would definitely collapse after the defeat of Hitler in 1945?
B. The Yalta Conference, February 1945

Context
The meeting of the “Big Three” at Yalta took place when it became clear that Germany was on the verge of defeat. The future of Germany and Poland dominated discussions: Churchill (a lifelong anti-communist) was alarmed at the advance of Stalin’s Red Army into Europe. Roosevelt did his best to compromise between the two of them.

Source A: The start of the Yalta Conference
I am talking as an old man, that is why I am talking so much, but I want to drink to our alliance, that it should not lose its character of intimacy, its free expression of views. In the history of diplomacy I know of no such close alliance of the three Great Powers as this, when allies had the opportunity of so frankly expressing their views…I propose a toast to the frankness of the three-power alliance. May it be strong and stable, may we be as frank as possible.

Stalin’s toast to Churchill and Roosevelt at the start of Yalta

Source B: The issue of Germany
Stalin was adamant that unless the Allies dealt forcefully with Germany, in fifteen or twenty years, the Germans would start another war. Only two conditions would prevent this: the execution of 50,000 to 100,000 German officers; and the Big Three’s retaining control of certain strategic points around Germany. This suddenly bothered Churchill, who said that the liquidation of 50,000 German officers would sully his honour as well as the honour of his country. "I would rather be taken out into the garden here and now and be shot myself," Churchill declared. Roosevelt tried to calm Churchill down by suggesting that only 49,000 be executed. When Churchill finally stormed out of the room, Stalin had to go and get him; putting his arm around the prime minister, Stalin assured him it was all a joke. But the mass murder of potential enemies was nothing new for Stalin. In 1940, he had ordered the execution of 14,000 captured Polish officers in the Katyn Forest.

Professor Richard M. Ebeling, writing in July 1995

Source C: The issue of Poland
Britain went to war so that "Poland could be free" said Churchill. Britain’s only interest was “one of honour because we drew the sword for Poland against Hitler’s brutal attack”. Stalin, however, was still interested in practicalities. “For Russia it is not only a question of honour but of security…Not only because we are on Poland’s frontier but also because throughout history Poland has always been a corridor of attack on Russia. Twice in the last 30 years our German enemy has passed through this corridor”

D Yergin – Shattered Peace (1977)

Questions
1. Study Sources A and B.
Does Source B prove that Stalin was lying in Source A?

2. Study Sources B and C.
Do these two sources prove that the wartime alliance had already collapsed by the end of the Yalta conference?
C. Between Yalta and Potsdam (March-July 1945)

Context
By the time the “Big Three” met again in Potsdam (July 1945) things had changed. Hitler had been defeated, Roosevelt was dead, and Stalin had failed to honour his promise to allow “free elections” in Poland. The new President, Harry Truman, was much more aggressive – especially since the USA had by now successfully detonated the world’s first atomic bomb…

Source A: Truman’s attitude to the USSR [1]
At Postdam we were faced with an accomplished fact and were by circumstances almost forced to agree to Russian occupation of Eastern Poland and the occupation of that part of Germany east of the Oder River by Poland. It was high-handed outrage…Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another was is in the making. Only one language do they understand: “How many divisions have you got?”…I’m tired of babying the Soviets.

Letter from Truman to Secretary of State Byrnes, 5th January 1946

Source B: Truman’s attitude to the USSR [2]
Truman presented the USSR as not just a rival but an immediate threat. He established a climate of hysteria about communism which would steeply escalate the military budget and stimulate the economy with orders for war materials. This would permit more aggressive actions abroad.

American Historian, Howard Zinn

Source C: Truman meets Molotov, 23rd April 1945
Within weeks of Roosevelt’s funeral, Truman made it clear that things had changed. On 23rd April the Russian foreign secretary, Molotov, came to Washington to meet with the President. It was a blistering encounter which he would never forget. Truman told Molotov in “plain American language” that he was angry about Soviet conduct in Poland. Molotov’s face turned white and he told Truman “I have never been spoken to like that in my life”. Truman’s blunt reply was “carry out your agreements and you won’t get talked to like that”. Those who had urged the President to “get tough” with the Soviets were delighted with this performance.


Source D: Stalin’s reply to Truman, 24th April 1945
Poland borders on the Soviet Union. I do not know whether a genuinely democratic government has been established in Greece or Belgium; the Soviet Union does not claim to interfere in those matters, because it recognises how important Greece and Belgium are to the interests of Great Britain. You evidently do not agree that the Soviet Union is entitled to seek a government in Poland which would be friendly to it. The Soviet Union cannot agree to the existence of a government in Poland which is hostile to it.

Source E: The Atomic Bomb, July 1945
On July 21st Truman learned that the newly developed atomic bomb was even more destructive than expected, and that it would be ready for combat very soon. “He was a changed man” Churchill noted of Truman after the July 21st plenary session. “He told the Russians just where they got on and off and generally bossed the whole meeting”.

D Yergin, Shattered Peace (1977)

Questions
1. Study Sources A and B.
   How do these two sources disagree about the reasons why Truman took a tough line against the USSR?

2. Study Sources C and D.
   Why did Truman and Stalin have such differing views about the future of Poland?

3. Study all the sources.
   Do you agree with the judgement of Source D that the development of the atomic bomb made Truman a “changed man”?
# D. 1946: The Soviet Takeover of Eastern Europe

## Context
After Potsdam, Stalin continued to take control of Eastern Europe slice by slice ("Salami Tactics"). This caused further alarm in the USA and in Britain, both of whom accused Stalin of aggression. Stalin responded angrily, saying his actions were defensive, not aggressive.

## Source A: Extract from George Kennan’s “Long Telegram”, Feb. 1946 (for USA)
Russian rulers have…always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between the Western world and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned truth about the outside world…They have learned to seek security only in a deadly struggle for total destruction of any rival power…soviet leaders picture the outside world as evil, hostile and menacing. This provides justification for the increase of Russian military power…World communism is like a malignant parasite, which feeds only on diseased tissue.

## Source B: Extract from Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech, March 1946 (for Britain)
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. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in some cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow...If we adhere faithfully to the Charter of the United Nations and walk forward in sedate and sober strength...the high-roads of the future will be clear, not only for us but for all, not only for our time, but for a century to come.

## Source C: Stalin’s reply in “Pravda”, March 1946 (for USSR)
**Question:** Can it be considered that Mr. Churchill’s speech is prejudicial to the cause of peace and security?
**Answer:** Yes, unquestionably...Mr. Churchill and his friends bear a striking resemblance to Hitler and his friends...Mr. Churchill sets out to unleash war with a race theory, asserting that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world...the following circumstance should not be forgotten. The Germans made their invasion of the U.S.S.R. through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The Germans were able to make their invasion through these countries because, at the time, governments hostile to the Soviet Union existed in these countries...In other words, the Soviet Union's loss of life has been several times greater than that of Britain and the United States of America put together...And so what can there be surprising about the fact that the Soviet Union, anxious for its future safety, is trying to see to it that governments loyal in their attitude to the Soviet Union should exist in these countries? How can anyone, who has not taken leave of his wits, describe these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as expansionist tendencies on the part of our State?

## Questions

1. **Study Source A.**
   What is the message of Source A?

2. **Study Sources B and C.**
   Which of these sources provides the more accurate view of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe?
E. 1947: The Truman Doctrine / The Marshall Plan

Context
Truman’s response to the perceived aggression of Stalin in Eastern Europe was to proclaim the “Truman Doctrine” and the “Marshall Plan” – schemes to provide political, economic and (if necessary) military assistance to any countries facing the threat of communist takeover.

Source A: Extract from the “Truman Doctrine”, March 1947
The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation in violation of the Yalta agreement in Poland… I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments. 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… If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world - and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Source B: Extract from the “Marshall Plan” Speech, June 1947
It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist… Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full co-operation I am sure, on the part of the United States Government. Any government which maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us.

Source C: Soviet reaction to the Marshall Plan
In a speech at Harvard University on 5th June 1947 Marshall called for a determined United States effort to promote the economic revival of Europe and thus ensure the continued prosperity of the American economy… an additional invitation was extended to the USSR although the State Department hoped that it would be refused… Nevertheless Molotov and a team of 89 economic experts turned up at the preliminary conference to discover the terms on which American aid to the Soviet Union might be available. However, he soon abandoned the meeting when it became clear that the USA was demanding detailed information about the Soviet economy. The episode does show, though, that Stalin had not finally decided to end negotiations with the USA at this time…

Michael Dockrill, The Cold War 1945-63

Questions

1. Study Source A.
   Why was this speech made in 1947?

2. Study Sources B and C.
   Why did the USA hope that the USSR would refuse the invitation to the Marshall Plan negotiations?