# 2.4 Paper 2: the Cold War, origins and crises, 1945–1962

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

**KEY WORDS** Cold War • containment • arms race • proxy war • orthodox view • revisionist view • post-revisionist view

## Objective

Build the Paper 2 skills for **the Cold War**, 1945–1962: why the wartime alliance broke down, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, Berlin, Korea and Cuba, the **arms race**, and the historians' debate on who was responsible.

**You must be able to:**

- explain why the wartime alliance broke down, 1945–1947
- explain the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and Soviet responses
- explain the causes and results of the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis
- compare orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist views
- write an essay on the origins of the Cold War

## 1 Key knowledge and worked examples

### ■ Timeline

| date | event |
|---|---|
| Feb 1945 | Yalta Conference: free elections promised in Eastern Europe |
| Jul–Aug 1945 | Potsdam Conference; atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki |
| Mar 1946 | Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech |
| Mar 1947 | the Truman Doctrine: support for "free peoples" against outside pressure (**containment** ) |
| 1948 | the Marshall Plan begins: about US$13 billion to rebuild Western Europe \lvert |
| Jun 1948 – May 1949 | the Berlin Blockade and airlift |
| Apr 1949 | NATO founded; Aug 1949 the first Soviet atomic bomb; Oct 1949 the People's Republic of China |
| 1950–53 | the Korean War |
| 1955 | the Warsaw Pact |
| Aug 1961 | the Berlin Wall |
| Oct 1962 | the Cuban Missile Crisis: 13 days close to nuclear war |

The rivals never fought each other directly; they competed through alliances, the arms race and **proxy wars** .

### ■ Who was responsible?

| view | argument |
|---|---|
| **orthodox** (1940s–50s) | Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe forced the US to respond |
| **revisionist** (1960s–70s) | US economic interests (open markets, the Marshall Plan) and the atomic bomb threatened the USSR |
| **post-revisionist** (from the 1970s) | fear, misunderstanding and security needs on both sides |

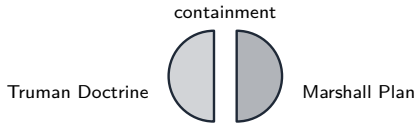
**Worked judgement.** "Both sides acted from fear for their security, but Stalin's control of Eastern Europe after 1945 made the first move that turned rivalry into Cold War."


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## 2 Practice

**2.1** Define a **proxy war**, and give **one** example from the Cold War. [2]

**2.2** President Truman called the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan "two halves of the same walnut". Explain what he meant. [3]




**2.3** Explain **two** reasons why Stalin began the Berlin Blockade in June 1948. [4]

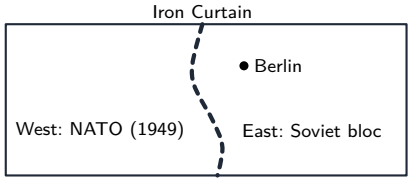
**2.4** Compare the **orthodox**, **revisionist** and **post-revisionist** views on the origins of the Cold War, and explain **one** reason why historians' views changed over time. [6]



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## 3 Exam-style questions

**3.1** *(Paper 2 style.)* Evaluate the reasons for the outbreak of the Cold War, 1945–1949. [15]






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## Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

**2.1**

a war in which the superpowers support opposite sides instead of fighting each other directly; e.g. the Korean War (1950–53) / the Vietnam War / the Soviet war in Afghanistan

**2.2**

the Truman Doctrine (1947) promised political and military support to countries resisting communism; the Marshall Plan gave economic aid (about US$13 billion) so that poverty would not make communism attractive; both aimed at the same goal: containment of Soviet influence in Europe

**2.3**

any two, explained: the Western powers introduced a new currency, the Deutschmark, in their zones, which Stalin saw as a step to a separate West German state; the Western zones were being joined, threatening Soviet influence over Germany; Stalin wanted to force the West out of Berlin, which lay deep inside the Soviet zone; Soviet fear of a strong, rebuilt Germany allied to the US

**2.4**

orthodox: Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe caused the Cold War; the US only responded; revisionist: US economic aims, the Marshall Plan and the atomic bomb threatened the USSR; post-revisionist: fear and misunderstanding on both sides; shared responsibility; comparison: the views differ on who started it, but all see Europe after 1945 as the centre; reason for change: new events, e.g. the Vietnam War made some historians critical of US policy; new sources, e.g. Soviet archives opened after 1991

**3.1**

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, accurate and relevant knowledge used as evidence, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: ideology: capitalism against communism; mutual suspicion from 1917; Soviet control of Eastern Europe: promised free elections at Yalta, but communist governments by 1948, e.g. Poland, Czechoslovakia (1948); US policy: the Truman Doctrine (1947) and Marshall Plan (1948) seen in Moscow as economic imperialism; the atomic bomb (1945) increased Soviet fear; Germany: disagreement over its future; the Berlin Blockade (1948–49) and the creation of two German states (1949); NATO (1949) made the division military; historians: orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist views; new evidence from Soviet archives since 1991 suggests Stalin was cautious but determined to keep Eastern Europe; interaction: each side's defensive moves looked aggressive to the other; conclusion: a judgement on the most important reason, e.g. the clash over Eastern Europe and Germany, made worse by mutual fear



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