

H1 History Paper 1 Suggested Pointers

TJC Preliminary Examination

SBCS Success Criteria

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Students can:	
#1	identify supporting evidence and provide explanations that are clear and accurate, to answer the question directly and obviously.
#2	Ask relevant questions about a source's creation to examine it in its specific historical context e.g., By Whom? When? Why? What was going on at that time that may have influenced the content of the sources?
#3	Use other sources and contextual knowledge to reinforce or undermine a source's views.

A. Comparing and contrasting sources as evidence on an issue – Part (a)

A1. HOW are the sources' views similar? (Success Criterion #1)

(a) Compare and contrast Sources A and B as evidence of the USSR's contributions towards easing tensions between the superpowers.

Similar view: Both Sources A and B agree that the USSR contributed to the easing of tensions between the US.

- **A:** 'It is my hope that our fireside summit in Geneva and Mr. Gorbachev's upcoming visit to America can lead to a more stable relationship.' This highlights the USSR's, particularly Gorbachev's, role in improving diplomatic relations between the US and the USSR.
- **B:** Gorbachev states that the USSR 'understood that in today's world of mutual interdependence, progress is unthinkable for any society fenced off from the world by ideological barriers' and that this prompted them 'to propose an entirely new concept of

global security'. This emphasises the conciliatory role that the USSR played in transiting the US-Soviet relation from one of ideological hostility to one of cooperation.

A2. WHY are the sources' views similar? (Success Criterion #3 – Contextual Knowledge)

Both sources concur that the USSR took steps to ease tensions between the US and the USSR because it is true that from 1985 onwards, Gorbachev had pursued a foreign policy that was friendlier towards the West after he came into power, and this was due in part to how Brezhnev's era of stagnation had undermined the Soviet economy. This necessitated that the USSR reduced its competition with the US to reduce military spending. The more conciliatory approach towards the West was underscored by Gorbachev meeting with Reagan in the first of four Summits, beginning with the Geneva Summit in 1985 and the Reykjavik Summit in 1986 – when Source B was created – where the USSR expressed a willingness to negotiate and make substantial cuts to its missile production if the US was also willing to reciprocate commensurately.

A3. HOW do the sources' views differ? (Success Criterion #1)

Sources A and B differ regarding the degree to which the USSR contributed towards the easing of tensions between the US and the USSR. Source A claims that the US contributed to the easing of tensions more than the USSR. In contrast, Source B highlights the USSR played a greater role than the US.

- **A:** Reagan claimed that US negotiators in Geneva 'have proposed a radical cut in offensive forces by each side with no cheating' and that '[if] the Soviet Government wants an agreement that truly reduces nuclear arms, there will be such an agreement.' This suggests that the US had fulfilled its responsibility to de-escalate the arms race and that the onus was on the USSR to reciprocate to allow for the easing of tensions.
- **B:** In contrast, Gorbachev said that the proposal he 'made on 15 January 1986 to abolish nuclear weapons was met with mistrust' and that 'few believed at the time that we would be able to make real progress on the road towards nuclear disarmament, put an end to the Cold War, and bridge the divide separating East from West.' This hints at the radical proposals made by the USSR that were inadequately reciprocated by the US, suggesting that the Soviets had done what they could to improve relations but the US was impeding the improving of relations.

A4. WHY do the sources' views differ? (Success Criterion #2)

Sources A and B differ in their views because of the differing contexts within which the authors are espousing their respective messages.

- **A:** Reagan in 1986 still insisted on SDI, a policy that continued and even escalated the arms race. He would then want to justify how the US was more conciliatory than the US to quell criticisms of his aggressive policies. For example, in 1982, nine states, 275 city governments, and 446 town hall meetings passed pro-freeze resolutions – a deafening response towards Reagan's antagonistic overtures that increased military spending to counter the threat posed Soviet Union.

- **B:** Gorbachev in 1995 would have incentive to elevate his role as peacemaker, possibly to salvage his reputation after his ignominious ousting from power in the USSR after the August Coup of 1991. Contextually, in 1991, the hardliners in the USSR had organised a secret coup to oust Gorbachev from power while he was holidaying in his dacha in Georgia. Despite Gorbachev's reluctance to relinquish power, he was unceremoniously replaced by Yeltsin and this inglorious exit a leader of the USSR may have motivated Gorbachev to disproportionately highlight his role in ending the Cold War and the burden it was exacting upon the USSR.

B. Using all sources to evaluate a given view/hypothesis – Part (b)

(b) How far do Sources A-E support the view that the Cold War ended primarily due to nuclear disarmament? [30]

B1. Treating Sources as a Set – The Overarching and Respective Arguments of the ‘Support’ Sources (Success Criterion #1 and Success Criterion #3 – Cross-Referencing)

Sources A, B and C support the view that nuclear disarmament ended the cold war as it de-escalated the arms race, a fundamental aspect of the Cold War competition. Source A emphatically supports the view as Reagan states that US negotiators in Geneva ‘have proposed a radical cut in offensive forces by each side with no cheating’ and that, ‘If the Soviet Government wants an agreement that truly reduces nuclear arms, there will be such an agreement.’ This foregrounds the centrality of nuclear disarmament in ending the Cold War, where arms reduction agreements between the superpowers was a fundamental step towards normalising relations. Source B seemingly reinforces Source A's view where Gorbachev highlights the proposal he ‘made on 15 January 1986 to abolish nuclear weapons [that] was met with mistrust.’ This suggests that the USSR was making key concessions in the realm of nuclear disarmament to reduce tensions with the US and thus, nuclear disarmament could be seen as integral to ending the Cold War. In addition, Source C alludes to the importance of nuclear disarmament in ending the Cold War where it observes that ‘The Russians could never win the arms race, and the Americans could outspend them forever.’ This suggests that nuclear disarmament, in an indirect manner, was central to ending the Cold War where Reagan first sought to apply sustained pressure via the arms race to push the Soviets towards overspending and eventually concede to the US in this critical aspect by opting for nuclear disarmament to salvage its dire economic situation.

Overall, the sources that support the view are less reliable. Source A sees Reagan plausibly overstating the importance of nuclear disarmament and the US role in it to placate critics who had become increasingly vocal about Reagan's escalation of the arms race through controversial policies such as the 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) that proposed an ambitious anti-missile defence that would render Soviet missiles useless. By 1985, Reagan's firm insistence on

SDI was a stumbling block at negotiations between Reagan and Gorbachev at the momentous Geneva Summit that saw both superpowers' leaders pursuing diplomatic negotiations at an unprecedented level – but the Geneva Summit negotiations eventually came to nought, partly because Reagan refused to abandon SDI despite Gorbachev's requests for him to do so in exchange for Soviet concessions. Source B is from Gorbachev's memoirs in 1995 and he may be incentivised to disproportionately highlight his role in taking the positive step towards removing the overhanging cloud of nuclear warfare by pursuing nuclear disarmament – this would help to salvage his reputation after this ignominious ousting from the USSR after a hardliner-led coup in August 1991 that saw Yeltsin pushing Gorbachev to the sidelines and eventually replacing him as the leader. Source C being from Reagan's advisor in 1992 may be incentivised to highlight the role that Reagan played in ending the Cold War due to Reagan's controversial legacy that saw him emerge at that time as the US president who had the largest military expenditure of any peacetime president – a fact that lent credence to critics who disagreed with Reagan's aggressive and militaristic approach towards foreign policy. When taken as a Support source, Source C would thus provide a dubious view that nuclear disarmament, in a thoroughly indirect war, ended the Cold War through Reagan's skilful manipulation of circumstances to eventually push the USSR towards nuclear disarmament. Critically, Sources B and C offer tepid support for the view at best where the main message of Source B is that the USSR had to pursue a 'fundamental reform of [their] economic and political systems' to 'alleviate the pressure from our involvement in conflicts all over the world and in the debilitating arms race'. Essentially, nuclear disarmament was thus more of an outcome of the issues plaguing the Soviet Union from within rather than the main cause of the USSR pursuing conciliatory relations. This is similarly echoed in Source C where the crux of Reagan's policy was less a laser focus on nuclear disarmament and more of a sustained application of pressure on the USSR's economy – such that 'if Western countries got together and cut off credit to it, they could bring it to its knees'.

Taking into account how Sources B and C lend weight towards challenging the view, they corroborate the views of Source D and E in highlighting that it was the internal troubles within the USSR that pushed it to pursue conciliatory relations with the West and ended the Cold War. In Source D, Gorbachev highlights how the 'country was going nowhere, and we couldn't possibly live the way we did', necessitating the 'process of renovating this country and bringing about drastic change in the international community [that] has proven to be much more complicated than anyone could imagine.' This implies that Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' that saw him pursue better relations with the West was underpinned by domestic problems, where the reduced competition was necessary for the survival of the USSR. Source E depicts Gorbachev in chains and being shackled with a lock that reads 'Soviet One Party System'. This suggests that Gorbachev was severely constrained by the internal problems of the USSR and this manifested in him having to pursue better relations with the West as the USSR could ill afford to sustain the competition with the US.

Source D and E offer reliable insights into the failings of the Soviet system that pushed Gorbachev to end the Cold War via better relations with the US. Contextual knowledge confirms what Gorbachev says in his 1995 memoirs (Source D), where years of tight control by the CPSU over the Soviet economy had resulted in an 'era of stagnation' under Brezhnev where the USSR

continued to increase military spending even when there was a severe lack of consumer goods within the USSR. The cartoon featured in the UK newspaper in 1990 (Source E) also gives a reliable view of how the hardliners shackled Gorbachev's attempts to reform the Soviet economy and political system, plunging the USSR into further turmoil by 1990. For example, Gorbachev came to the conclusion that deeper structural changes were necessary and in 1987–88 he pushed through reforms that went less than halfway to the creation of a semi-free market system, resulting in economic chaos to the country and great unpopularity to Gorbachev. Despite Gorbachev's radical economists advising that Western-style success required a true market economy, Gorbachev never succeeded in making the jump from the command economy to even a mixed economy and this was at least due in part to the strong resistance he faced from hardliners who prioritised the old Soviet system that lined their pockets more than it promoted economic efficiency.

Overall, the sources that challenge the view are to be preferred. Fundamentally, Sources D and E provide sound insights into how the internal failings of the Soviet system were the root cause of Gorbachev's conciliatory policy towards the West, where nuclear disarmament was the outcome of that rather than it being the primary cause. This sentiment is simultaneously backed up by contextual knowledge and validated by Sources B and C which nominally support the view at best. The sources that support the view have critical issues that, in turn, undermine the validity of the notion that nuclear disarmament ended the Cold War. Source A's reliability in supporting the view is greatly diluted when contextualising Reagan's message that saw him plausibly highlighting nuclear disarmament as contributing disproportionately to ending the Cold War. Sources B and C, when contextualised, similarly reveal key issues when taken as sources that support the view and upon closer reading, even Sources B and C concede that other factors – such as the USSR's dire economic situation – overshadowed the role of nuclear disarmament in ending the Cold War.