Below are all the past Question 25’s on Paper 2 which essentially focus on the period 1945 - 53. However, the date range within this range will vary according to the question - therefore make sure you know your dates.

**MAY 2015**

**Evaluate the successes and failures of the Marshall Plan.**

Candidates should demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of the question and effectively deploy knowledge of the key issues raised by the question. The main focus of responses should be an appraisal of the Marshall Plan with a focused discussion of its successes and failures. Discussion should not be focused on the causes of the Cold War; however it would be reasonable to place the plan into its context, that is, the post-war conditions and rising Cold War tensions. It would also be reasonable to mention that the policy of containment, of which the Marshall Plan was a part, formed the basis of United States foreign policy – preventing the spread of Communism.

In 1947 the Truman Doctrine emerged, linking financial and military aid to containment of communism. The Marshall Plan may be considered to have been the economic expression of containment, aimed at fostering European economic recovery and unity. Economic assistance tended to favour nations outside the Soviet sphere of influence but was not enough to facilitate full reconstruction and economic recovery. Initially it was aimed towards “all countries west of Asia” but Soviet participation was never likely and the Soviet Union applied pressure to Eastern European nations not to participate.

Note: Do not expect equal treatment, but both successes and failures should be considered.

Successes could include: the weakening of the political left in countries such as France and Italy as a consequence of the beginnings of recovery; the beginnings of economic growth and stabilization in the western zones of Germany; close economic links between the western European democracies and the United States, which benefitted the US economy; it helped fulfil the goal of containment.

Failures could include: only western European and some southern states benefitted from the Marshall Plan; it increased tension with the Eastern Bloc as the Marshall Plan was labelled, “dollar imperialism”; it contributed to the long-term division of Germany.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

**Examine the reasons for, and the impact in Europe of, the formation of NATO.**

Candidates should demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of the question and effectively deploy knowledge of the key issues raised by the question. There should be a detailed consideration of the rationale for the formation of NATO as well as an analysis of the consequences of its formation on Europe.

This should not be an essay on the origins of the Cold War.

The short term circumstances in which NATO was formed are likely to be well known and should be addressed. They include: the alliance was an extension of the Brussels Defence Pact (1947); it was formed in the aftermath of the Berlin Blockade and the establishment of the West German state; member nations included the major powers and other smaller nations such as Portugal, Denmark and Norway; a joint NATO military command was formed and the founding treaty stated that an attack on one member was an attack on all NATO members. West Germany joined in 1954 and it could be argued that it formed part of the policy of Containment.

The NATO alliance was very clearly a defensive alliance; however it was also a very public confirmation to Europe that in the longer term the US would not revert to isolationism (the Marshall Plan had been temporary). It had the effect of reassuring various nations (for example the French were reassured that a rearmed West German state would not be a threat). In the short term NATO contributed to the notion of a unified Europe. Economic benefits also resulted from the alliance: trade between member nations increased; it stimulated economic recovery (for example the alliance led to orders for West German machine tools). It also helped to maintain the influence of the US on European affairs. As such, although the alliance was primarily a defensive one, it was also a means to maintain and extend US influence in Europe.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to use.

**“Stalin and Truman were equally responsible for the outbreak of the Cold War”. To what extent do you agree?**

Candidates should demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of the question and effectively deploy knowledge of the key issue raised by the question. They should critically assess the merits (or otherwise) of the given statement and provide a well-supported and consistent argument about whether or not Stalin and Truman were equally responsible for the emergence of the Cold War.

In their responses some candidates may consider longer term tensions dating back to 1917. They may refer to the establishment of Comintern; the Riga Axioms; Soviet support for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War; wartime tensions over the delay in the opening of the Second Front; and Soviet actions in liberated nations.

The immediate causes of tension were events in Germany between 1945 and 1949; tensions over reparations; the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan; the establishment of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers’ Parties (Cominform) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON); the Sovietization of Eastern Europe; the formation of Bizonia and Trizonia; and the Berlin Blockade.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

Examine the reasons for, and impact in Europe of, the formation of NATO.

**NOV 2014**

**To what extent did decisions about post-war Germany contribute to the breakdown of East–West relations between 1945 and 1949?**

With regard to decisions made about post-war Germany, candidates may begin with those discussed and finalized at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. Following on from 1945, reference may be made to the following: the policies outlined in Secretary Byrnes’s speech at Stuttgart; the mutual support of the US and Chancellor Adenauer making reunification less likely; the pillaging of their zone by the USSR; the friction caused by the failure to support agreements on the exchange of food and goods; the Marshall Plan and its impact on currency reform; the breakdown of the Allied Control Council; the Berlin Blockade; the establishment of the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) and the GDR (German Democratic Republic).

Candidates may consider the following as reasons why such decisions affected East–West relations: post-war Germany had to be occupied and governed, at least temporarily, as the call for “unconditional surrender” had removed all vestiges of the Nazi regime. Furthermore, Germany’s geopolitical importance meant that all of the Allied Powers wanted to have influence over its post-war developments. The US and Britain rapidly came to support the economic revival of Germany whilst the USSR was concerned about the revival of Germany as a military power, as, indeed, was France. Both countries, but especially the USSR, were also concerned about security and feared another invasion. There was a growing divergence of views about the future of Germany and suspicion was reflected in the pragmatic union of British and American zones into Bizonia and the adoption of the Truman Doctrine by the US and, later the Marshall Plan.

Along with the Marshall Plan (ERP or European Recovery Program), came the need for a stable currency and, with France now on board, the emergence of Trizonia. The adoption of the Deutschmark in the West was a major reason for the Berlin Blockade. Re-unification was now unlikely to happen and candidates may discuss Stalin’s argument that the Yalta agreement had been ignored by the US that moved ahead with plans for the establishment of the FRG, rather than the reunited, but neutral, Germany favoured by Stalin.

“To what extent” invites candidates to consider other factors that may have contributed to the breakdown of East–West relations. These may include: ideology; mutual fear over expansion of influence; issues of security; the nuclear arms race etc.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to use.

**MAY 2014**

**Evaluate the reasons for the change in East–West relations from the Yalta conference to the end of the Potsdam conference.**

Candidates have an opportunity here to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the issues discussed at both conferences. They should not simply provide a general “origins of the Cold War” or a “description of Cold War historiography” response.

At Yalta (February 1945), with the defeat of Germany imminent, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill reached agreement on: the establishment of the United Nations Organization; the temporary division of a defeated Germany (and Austria) into zones of occupation, with similar arrangements for sectors in Berlin and Vienna, the intention being to demilitarize, denazify, disarm and democratize defeated Germany; reparation arrangements that would entitle the Soviet Union to half of a sum set at $20 billion dollars; the Declaration on Liberated Europe, which was intended to provide for free elections in the states of Central and Eastern Europe that had been freed from Nazi occupation; the formation of a Polish government, which would consist of “London” and “Lublin” Poles; and the entry of the USSR into the war against Japan after Germany’s surrender, in exchange for the South Sakhalin and Kurile Islands.

At Potsdam (July–August, 1945) circumstances had changed. The death of Roosevelt (April) and his replacement by Truman, Germany’s defeat (May), the defeat of Churchill in a general election in Britain and his replacement by Attlee, and the news of a successful atomic bomb test formed the background for a less harmonious meeting.

Issues arising (and producing grounds for potential conflict) at Potsdam included further discussion and disagreement over details concerning reparations to be extracted from Germany (including the agreement that the USSR would receive 25 per cent of the reparations from the western zones in exchange for providing food supplies to these zones), Western reluctance to permanently impoverish and weaken Germany was a source of disagreement with the Soviets, Western disquiet over Soviet policies in Poland (border changes and the failure to carry out democratic elections), the increasing sovietization of Central and Eastern European states, which was felt by Truman to be a breach of the Declaration on Liberated Europe agreement made at Yalta, the revelation that atomic tests had been successful and the dropping of two bombs on Japan in August increased Soviet suspicions of Western intentions. Truman’s decision to take a harder line with the Soviets than Roosevelt had, changed the atmosphere at the Potsdam Conference.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, the list is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

**NOV 2013**

**“The claim that the breakdown of superpower relations between 1945 and 1950 was the result of mutual fear and suspicion has been greatly exaggerated.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

This is likely to be a popular question and candidates may be expected to demonstrate sound knowledge of events up to 1950. Some may attribute the breakdown of wartime relations to the defeat of the common enemy and a return to the pre-war status quo, and so may refer to the Western involvement in the Russian civil war, citing this as the beginning of a “breakdown” that was temporarily interrupted by the Second World War. Others may choose to mention the Teheran Conference (1943) and/or the Moscow Conference (1944) as demonstrating underlying disagreements. These starting points are quite acceptable, as long as there is also good coverage of the period 1945–1950.

The focus of the question needs to be on the importance (or not) of “mutual fear and suspicion”, a reference to the post-revisionist interpretation and one that candidates are likely to identify. Events to be mentioned could include: the growing disagreements over post-war Europe that were simmering at Yalta and Potsdam; the A bomb; the Long Telegram; the Iron Curtain Speech; the Stuttgart Speech of 1946. These could be used to demonstrate how rhetoric contributed to worsening relations, possibly fuelling fear. Similarly, the Marshall Plan and the Molotov Plan (COMECON) could be seen as evidence of “mutual fear and suspicion”, although both could also be seen as pragmatic efforts to secure markets and resources (or, indeed, as a reflection of fear by one superpower but not, necessarily, by the other).

Candidates will need to consider other possible reasons for the “breakdown of relations” such as: ideology; Great Power rivalry; the need for economic expansion by securing resources and markets; imperialism; a clash of personalities. They will need to assess if such factors were of greater (or lesser) importance than “mutual fear and suspicion” in causing the breakdown of relations. Some candidates may argue that fear may have been a motivating factor for the USSR, with its badly damaged infrastructure and population loss, but that the US, with its economic and military capacity, had no such concerns. Alternatively, it may be argued that the USSR, with its domination of Central and Eastern Europe had little to fear whereas the US saw its economy and ideology to be under threat.

The question asks candidates to go up to 1950, so references to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, as well as the outbreak of the Korean War, would be appropriate. A narrative of events would probably not score well, unless links are made to the question. Historiography could be used very effectively here, but expect more than a mere recounting of the orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist interpretations.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to use.

**MAY 2013**

“Post-war enmity was the product of longer term ideological differences.” To what extent do you agree with this statement on the origins of the Cold War up to 1949?

The differences in ideology of the protagonists in the Cold War could be defined/explained at the outset: the belief systems associated with the East and West represented by the USSR and the USA. Without clear identification and awareness of what constituted “differences” answers are unlikely to prove effective. Candidates may refer to the issues of political pluralism (or lack thereof), economic organization, the question of what constituted civil liberties, etc.

The division between the capitalist/democratic and the socialist worldview which was evident during the years following the Second World War existed earlier – though the intensity of struggle and confrontation was less marked. Candidates are required to examine when and why enmity, resulting in the Cold War, originated.

Some candidates may trace the enmity back to 1917 and the Bolshevik Revolution which produced a state whose ideology was antithetical to that of Western nations, noting the levels of mutual suspicion which characterized the relationship from then up until the Second World War where mutual suspicion was replaced by a “marriage of convenience” to defeat a greater enemy. Apart from ideology, candidates may argue that it was the power vacuum established by the defeat of Germany which led to what became known as the Cold War. The vacuum produced, and the prospect of rewards in economic and strategic terms, could be seen as setting the scene for confrontation. The issues of changing attitudes due to leadership change in 1945, mutual fear in the new atomic age, and the search for security could all be examined.

Regurgitation of historiography: that is summarizing of historians’ interpretations (Traditionalist/Revisionist/Post Revisionist views, etc) is not what is required. Such views should be used to supplement historical detail, not to replace it.

“Mutual fears and the search for security were the reasons for the breakdown of East–West relations between 1945 and 1949.” With specific reference to developments in this period, to what extent do you agree with this statement?

**NOV 2012**

**Evaluate the importance of each of the following in the breakdown of East–West relations, 1945–1949: the Potsdam Conference; the sovietization of Eastern and Central Europe; the Marshall Plan.**

The invitation to “evaluate” invites candidates to comment upon the relative importance of the given issues and candidates who do so should be rewarded.

Often candidates provide “template”, learned responses which outline the origins of the Cold War from 1917 and then launch into descriptions of schools of historiographical interpretation. This is not the focus of the task.

Accurate details of each of the issues are important as the basis for successful consideration of the importance/significance of the issues/factors.

Potsdam occurred in July/August 1945 – after the unconditional surrender of Germany, but before the end of the war against Japan. It followed on from the earlier Yalta Conference of February 1945. Issues raised at Yalta were to prove contentious at the Potsdam meeting. The question of what to do with Germany (politically and economically), the growing antagonism over arrangements for Poland – and indeed conflicting interpretations of the Declaration on Liberated Europe – led to mutual suspicion, especially with the new line up of leaders at Potsdam. News of the successful testing of the atomic weapon arguably led Truman to take a more uncompromising stance than his presidential predecessor. The failure of US leaders to collaborate with the USSR in the development of such a weapon and the manner in which its existence was revealed at Potsdam has led to claims that the Soviet Union saw such a weapon (and its subsequent use against Japan) as a veiled threat. Relations at Potsdam marked a deterioration in the relationship among members of the Grand Alliance, whose raison d’être had been called into question after Germany’s defeat.

The sovietisation of Central and Eastern Europe from 1945 onwards (specific examples of such states should be included) led to claims and counter-claims by both East and West. Whether the “liberation” of these states was followed by a deliberate policy of Soviet expansionism in order to fulfil an ideological goal on the part of Moscow – or whether the motive behind such expansion was defensive in nature could be examined. The assumptions behind the “Long Telegram” of Kennan, the significance of the Riga Axioms, the reality of the claims made by Churchill in his “Iron Curtain” speech (as compared to the rhetoric) etc. could be considered.

The Marshall Plan, mooted in June 1947, was one “half of the walnut” of Containment espoused by Truman. Candidates could examine the reasons for the credits provided by the US and comment upon the overt purpose stated by Marshall, how the Plan was perceived by Moscow and the results of the Plan for Western Europe as well as the Soviet reaction (politically and economically: Cominform, Comecon etc.).

Candidates should show knowledge of the issues/factors and apply such knowledge to evaluate their role in the breakdown of East–West relations.

**MAY 2012**

**Assess the role of Truman and Stalin in the origins and development of the Cold War.**

Truman’s presidential period extends from 1945 till 1952. Stalin died in 1953 but was ruler of the USSR from 1928/9 arguably. The period under discussion in the question is likely, for most candidates, to be interpreted as the years 1945–1953. There is much material available for consideration in this period, which should allow for answers to go beyond the “historiographical” responses which are still produced by too many candidates. \*(See comment below in italics)

Origins

Could refer to the events of the year 1945: Yalta Conference (and Roosevelt), Germany’s surrender; Potsdam Conference (the differing stance of Truman – and why); the contrasting views as to what constituted “security” for the members of the Grand Alliance; issues relating to Germany, Poland etc. Some candidates will doubtless go back to 1917 and the Bolshevik revolution as their starting point, then work through the interwar years up to 1945. While this may be acceptable, the focus should be on Truman and Stalin and the period 1945 onwards should be the main focus.

Development

Could deal with the course of events from 1945/6 up till the Korean War as the conflict between East and West moved from Europe to East Asia. The flashpoints and issues in this period are numerous and provide sufficient detail for selection and deployment to support arguments: possession of atomic capability and arms race; the clash over the future of “liberated Europe”; confrontation over Iran; Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan and Soviet reactions; Germany and the Berlin crisis of 1948/9; Korea etc.

The question asks about the role of two leaders so credit candidates who attempt to focus on the role of each. Stalin, given the continuity of his period of rule and his control of Soviet policy over a longer term was arguably at a greater advantage in being able to articulate Soviet foreign policy and goals. As a single-party ruler he faced few challenges to implementing domestic or foreign policy. Soviet policy was much more Stalin’s policy than US policy could be said to be Truman’s policy. Truman came into office with little experience after Roosevelt’s death: he was more reliant on foreign policy advisors – whether Kennan or those who advocated the “Riga Axioms” – upon whom Roosevelt had not been dependant.

To what extent was the conflict– in terms of origins or development– linked to the decisions arrived at by each leader, or were there other factors or individuals guiding foreign policy and determining the path pursued by US and the USSR?

\* N.B. Questions on the origins and development of the Cold War sometimes reproduce “learned” or “prepared” responses based upon a standard “historiographical” treatment: the “orthodox”, “revisionist” and “post-revisionist” interpretations

**NOV 2011**

**“The Potsdam Conference marked the end of the wartime alliance and laid the foundations for post-war hostility.” With reference to the period up to 1949, to what extent do you agree with this statement?**

Candidates are expected to address the causes of the Cold War in their answers to this question. Events up to the Potsdam Conference should be well known and it is likely that mention will be made of the introduction of Truman and Attlee (less on Attlee perhaps) to the peacemaking process as well as their relationship with Stalin. The structure of the question invites candidates to argue in favour and/or against the statement.

In agreement with the statement, candidates may argue that ideological differences were fundamental obstacles to continued cooperation once the common enemy was defeated. It may be that some candidates will go back to the 1917 revolution to support this analysis. This is acceptable as long as the focus remains firmly on the question. Candidates may also argue that Truman had a different approach from Roosevelt, which meant that US–Soviet relations were likely to worsen. Evidence for this may include Truman’s meeting with Molotov in April 1945 as well as Truman’s mention of a “new weapon” to Stalin at Potsdam. Also, disagreements over the future development of war-ravaged Germany could be mentioned, including the discussions over reparations and how these contributed to post-war tension.

Against the statement, it could be argued that by the meeting at Potsdam there was already an understanding among the Big Three that post-war Europe would be restructured along the lines of “spheres of influence”, as indicated by discussions at Teheran and Yalta. It was already clear that Stalin wanted new borders for the USSR and Poland, and the Moscow Conference of 1944 had touched upon “spheres of influence” throughout Eastern and Central Europe. The USSR had also agreed to join the United Nations and was planning to enter the war against Japan. The Allied Control Council was in place and Germany divided into zones of occupation. In this way, it could be argued that there was broad agreement on significant issues. Candidates may then go on to propose that it was not until 1946, or after, that relations worsened, and this argument could be supported by an analysis of the Long Telegram, Iron Curtain Speech, Truman Doctrine, COMECON, Berlin Blockade, etc.

Do not expect all of the above but do expect good factual supporting evidence. Historiography should complement rather than dominate the answer.

**MAY 2011**

**For what reasons, and to what extent, did the Yalta Conference of February 1945 contribute to the origins of the Cold War?**

At Yalta it was agreed to divide Germany into four zones of occupation (Berlin was also to be divided). All agreed that the United Nations was to be established. The Soviet Union agreed to enter the war against Japan in return for Sakhalin Island. It was also agreed that the Russo–Polish border would follow the Curzon line (with compensation to Poland from German territory). They also issued a Declaration On Liberated Europe.

By February 1945 it was clear that Nazi Germany would be defeated and thus the need for the unity of the wartime alliance was less urgent. The Big Three failed to agree on specific detail regarding key issues such as reparations, war crimes and the Polish–German borders. They were also not definite as to what each considered to be “free elections” and “democratic governments” in liberated states – a source of later dispute.

Yalta was the point in the relations of the Big Three when earlier tensions began to resurface and which were added to by the unresolved issues. The unresolved issue of “spheres of influence” foreshadowed the physical division of the Cold War.

Answers should focus on “reasons” and “extent”.