Who’s to Blame for the Cold War?

Supporting Questions

1. What tensions were visible during and immediately after WWII?
2. How did these tensions turn into actions by the U.S. and Soviet Union?
3. What arguments do historians make about who started the Cold War?
4. Does it matter who is to blame for the Cold War?
### 11th Grade Cold War Inquiry

**Who’s to Blame for the Cold War?**

**Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies**

- **HS1.HT.13 Historical Understanding: Contextualization and Perspectives:** Analyze complex and interactive factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras and explain how perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.
- **HS1.HT.14 Historical Arguments:** Categorize and prioritize various arguments obtained from historical sources to help build a valid argument, including counterclaims, after considering change over time, historical perspectives and relevance of sources.

**Staging the Compelling Question**

Read *The Atlantic* article “Can containment work against modern Russia?” and discuss how modern-day tensions between Russia and America are in many ways a continuation of Cold War aggressions by both sides.

**Supporting Question 1**

What tensions were visible during and immediately after WWII?

**Supporting Question 2**

How did these tensions turn into actions by the U.S. and Soviet Union?

**Supporting Question 3**

What arguments do historians make about who started the Cold War?

**Supporting Question 4**

Does it matter who is to blame for the Cold War?

**Formative Performance Task**

List and describe the ways in which tensions emerged during and after the war.

**Featured Sources**

**Source A:** Excerpt from *Specter of Communism*, 1994

**Source B:** Excerpt from *The Global Cold War*, 2005

**Source C:** Excerpt from *Origins of Containment*, 1985

**Source A:** “Postwar Politics and the Cold War: Timeline and Terms”

**Source B:** Letter from Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes

**Source C:** Excerpt from *At Stalin’s Side*, 1994

**Source A:** Excerpt from *America Faces Russia*, 1950.

**Source B:** Excerpt from *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, 1972.

**Source C:** Excerpt from *From Colony to Superpower*, 2008.

**Source A:** Excerpt from “The Blame Game,” 2010

### Summative Performance Task

**ARGUMENT** Who’s to blame for the Cold War? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.

**EXTENSION** Conduct a mock trial where students put the United States and/or the Soviet Union on trial for starting the Cold War and decide whether there should be a consequence if either party is deemed “guilty.”

### Taking Informed Action

**UNDERSTAND** Research the current state of the relationship between Russia and the United States, including their respective influence on world affairs.

**ASSESS** Assess the concerns expressed by both powers in terms of their economic and geopolitical role.

**ACT** Write a letter to a government official (e.g., ambassador, representative) that makes suggestions for improving diplomatic relations between the US and Russia.
Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the causes of the Cold War by examining events through the perspective of both the Soviet Union and the United States. By investigating the compelling question “Who’s to blame for the Cold War?” students evaluate these events in consideration of the historiography, using the work of several preeminent Cold War historians, and the consequences of assigning blame to either country. The formative performance tasks build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and help students recognize different perspectives in order to better understand the ways in which mutual concerns and fears culminated in global tensions. Students create an evidence-based argument about whether anyone should be assigned blame in starting the Cold War after considering the tensions that emerged during and after World War II, perception of the actions taken by the United States and Soviet Union, assessing historiographical viewpoints, and considering how assigning blame affects perceptions of the actions of others.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understandings:

- **HS1-HT.13 Historical Understanding: Contextualization and Perspectives** Analyze complex and interactive factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras and explain how perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

- **HS1-HT.14 Historical Arguments** Categorize and prioritize various arguments obtained from historical sources to help build a valid argument, including counterclaims, after considering change over time, historical perspectives and relevance of sources.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take three to five 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Who’s to blame for the Cold War?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

Staging the Compelling Question

The compelling question could be staged by having students read an article from *The Atlantic* concerning Cold War strategies as they connect to diplomatic relations with modern Russia. Students can discuss how both parties
would perceive the suggested actions if taken. This discussion should include consideration of what it means to conduct a war that is “cold,” in historical and modern contexts.

**Supporting Question 1**

The first supporting question—“What tensions were visible during and immediately after WWII?”—asks students to consider how tensions between the United States and Soviet Union began to emerge while still allied during World War II. This formative performance task asks students to list and describe the ways in which tensions were emerging during and immediately after the war. Featured Source A, an excerpt from Melvyn Leffler's *The Specter of Communism*, looks specifically at the concerns raised by WWII of the Soviet Union for their post-war conditions and safety. In Featured Source B, an excerpt from *The Global Cold War*, Odd Arne Westad discusses both countries' mutual fears of the other attempting to gain influence in world affairs, thereby putting their respective country at risk. Featured Source C, an excerpt from Deborah Welch Larson’s *Origins of Containment*, discusses the progression of increased tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, with attention to change in leadership from Roosevelt to Truman.

**Supporting Question 2**

For the second supporting question—“How did these tensions turn into actions by the U.S. and Soviet Union?”—students build on their knowledge of events leading to tension between the former allies by summarizing acts perceived as aggressive by both the United States and Soviet Union in the post-war era. Featured Source A is an interactive timeline from *Gilder-Lehrman*, which includes both national and international events that impacted the development of the Cold War. Featured Source B is a letter from President Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes, discussing his view of the Soviet government’s actions and his subsequent growing impatience. Featured Source C, an excerpt from the recollections of Stalin’s personal translator, provides the Soviet perspective of American actions.

**Supporting Question 3**

The third supporting question—“What arguments do historians make about who started the Cold War?”—builds on students’ assessment of how events were perceived by the two countries. It tasks them with evaluating historiographical viewpoints concerning responsibility for the Cold War’s development. In addition to the previous featured sources, the third supporting question’s featured sources will present prominent historiographical trends on the subject. Featured Source A is an excerpt from Thomas Bailey’s *America Faces Russia*, representing the orthodox view of the Cold War, whereby the Soviets are seen as the aggressor nation. In Featured Source B, an excerpt from *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, John Lewis Gaddis typifies the post-revisionist perspective, whereby he sees neither side as wholly guilty or innocent. Featured Source C, *From Colony to Superpower*, George C. Herring describes the defensiveness and aggression of both countries. After reading the various viewpoints, students will create a graphic organizer comparing and contrasting the arguments concerning responsibility for starting the Cold War.
Supporting Question 4

In the final supporting question—“Does it matter who is to blame for the Cold War?”—students are asked to consider the consequences of assigning blame when interpreting historical events. The Featured Source, an excerpt from Charles Tilly's article, “The Blame Game,” provides an assessment of the implications of blame in interpreting historical events. Building on the previous formative tasks, students should consider the power of blame in informing perspectives. The formative performance task asks students to develop a claim supported by evidence that explains the implications of assigning blame to either country in starting the Cold War.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have been introduced to several actions and perspectives of said actions taken by the Soviet Union and the United States, while also considering the implications for assigning either country blame for starting the Cold War. Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and the ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students are asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “Who’s to blame for the Cold War?”

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- Neither should be held responsible as their actions were not meant to be aggressive, but rather should be interpreted as defensive in nature.

- Both countries should be blamed as their actions should be interpreted as aggressive, thereby both have responsibility in perpetuating Cold War tensions.

- The Soviet Union should be blamed. Their actions were rightly interpreted as aggressive, thereby justifying the United States’ efforts to limit the growth of the Soviet sphere of influence.

- The United States should be blamed. Their actions were rightly interpreted as aggressive attempts to maintain their supremacy by limiting the influence of the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet Union’s actions were justified as they were trying to defend themselves from the growing American sphere of influence.

Students could extend these arguments by conducting a mock trial where the United States and/or the Soviet Union are put on trial for starting the Cold War. This can include a deliberation concerning an appropriate consequence if either party is deemed “guilty.”

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by researching the current state of the relationship between Russia and the United States, as it is often described as being a second Cold War. Students demonstrate they understand by exploring different actions and perspectives of the respective countries. They will show their capacity to assess the concerns expressed by both powers in terms of their economic and geopolitical role. And they show that they can act by writing a letter to a government official that addresses the mutual concerns of the US and Russia and makes suggestions concerning improving diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Russia.
Staging the Compelling Question

**Featured Source**


The signs of the times are everywhere. Estonia is erecting a 2.5-meter-high metal mesh fence reinforced with barbed wire along much of its border with Russia—and backing it up with high-tech drones, sensors, radars, and cameras. Neighboring Latvia has announced plans to build fences along its eastern frontier. Poland plans to build new state-of-the-art watchtowers on its border with Russia’s Kaliningrad exclave.

And, of course, Ukraine has floated plans to build a wall along its Russian frontier. A new era of containment, it appears, has begun. Russia’s neighbors, wary of polite little green men appearing to stir up new non-declared hybrid wars, are building walls and becoming vigilant.

And some leading Western commentators are calling for a revival of the spirit of George Kennan’s Long Telegram and Mr. X article, which comprised the philosophical basis for the Western policy of containing an expansionist Soviet Union. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in November 2014, Rutgers University-Newark professor Alexander Motyl called on the West to “develop a serious, steady, long-term policy response to Russian expansionism. And that, of course, means containment.”

Likewise, James Goldgeier, dean of the School of International Service at American University, wrote in *Slate* that “a revived strategy of containment is necessary to counter Russian aggression.” Soviet-era defector Aleksandr Goldfarb made a similar argument in a recent blog post.

So, to paraphrase Kennan, can a newly aggressive Moscow “be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers” of Russian policy?

NATO’s moves at last year’s summit in Wales—setting up military facilities in the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania, rotating troops through countries on the alliance’s eastern flank, and establishing a new rapid-response force that could assist endangered members within two days—certainly seem like steps in that direction. In a speech this week, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Washington “will take all necessary steps to deter Russia’s malign and destabilizing influence, coercion, and aggression.”

But 1947 this isn’t. And any serious attempt to contain Vladimir Putin’s Russia—which unlike the Soviet Union is deeply integrated into the global economy—will bear scant resemblance to its Cold War antecedent. This is because unlike the Cold War, when the world was divided into two hermetically sealed systems, today’s conflict between Moscow and the West comes at a time when Russia is very much embedded in the West and has proven adept at exploiting its transparency for nontransparent ends.

And unlike the Soviet Union, today’s Russia isn’t an ideological power seeking global hegemony through military expansion. It is essentially a crime syndicate masquerading as a state. Putin and the made men who make up his inner circle deploy corruption as a tool of statecraft in order to perpetuate their rule, expand their reach, and enrich themselves.

In a 2012 report for Chatham House, James Greene noted how Putin used “the corrupt transnational schemes that flowed seamlessly from Russia into the rest of the former Soviet space—and oozed beyond it” to extend his “shadow influence beyond Russia’s borders and develop a natural, ‘captured’ constituency.”

Toward this end, Moscow has used everything from shady energy deals, to webs of shell companies, to hot money in the City of London, to the financing of extremist political parties in Europe. Its success in doing so raises the
economic cost of conflict, reduces resolve to resist Moscow, and gives Russia a ready-made lobby in Western capitals. The Kremlin has effectively weaponized globalization.

Rather than an Iron Curtain with armies facing off across the Fulda Gap, the main fault line of the current conflict is between a Western zone of transparency and a Moscow-dominated sphere of corruption. Any containment policy, therefore, needs first and foremost to limit Russia’s sphere of corruption and extend the Western zone of transparency.

“The front lines of containment are the non-Russian states in the potential path of Russian expansion. Seen in this light, a divided Ukraine occupies the same role in today’s containment strategy as a divided Germany did in yesterday’s,” Motyl wrote in *Foreign Affairs*. “Ukraine should therefore be the recipient of similar financial, political, and military assistance.”

Georgia and Moldova, likewise, fall into this category. But any true containment of today’s Russia must go beyond this. It also needs to include a rollback of Russia’s ability to exploit and abuse the dynamism and transparency of Western economies.

Part of this is in place with sanctions that deny Russia access to credit from Western banks. Part of it would require shedding light on the web of shadowy shell companies and structures Russia has established in Europe to launder money and stealthily buy influence, as well as bringing more transparency to things like London’s property market.

It would also involve, as Motyl notes, “constraining Russia’s ability to use energy as a weapon.” This reducing Europe’s dependency on Russian natural gas, and strict enforcement of EU antitrust legislation vis-a-vis Gazprom.

And a key weapon in reserve, of course, includes banning Russia from the SWIFT network, which manages secure financial transactions worldwide. The thing about a crime syndicate is that it needs a legitimate economy to feed off of. And denying Putin & Co. this would go a long way toward containing them.

“The war, [Stalin] now said, was a great patriotic war. The invader had to be repulsed, the fatherland defended. He ceased talking about revolutionary upheaval and cast ideology aside. This was not hard for Stalin, because he had long insisted that the international movement’s overriding priority was to safeguard the interests of Soviet Russia. [...] Ideology served primarily as a lens through which Stalin interpreted threats and opportunities; revolutionary fervor rarely motivated his foreign policy.

“When American and British emissaries arrived in Moscow during the summer and fall of 1941, they found Stalin recovered from his depression and indecision. He told them what types of assistance he needed for the protracted war he now envisioned. Even more than aid, Stalin said, he required a second front in Western Europe to divert the Nazi war machine and lift the pressure on his armies.

[...]

“The second front and the definition of boundaries would be the issues most frequently discussed at the great wartime meetings. But these matters always remained linked in Stalin’s mind to still more important concerns: the defeat of Germany and the postwar control of German power. [...]”

“In Stalin’s view, Germany was the great enemy—not only a perennial menace to his country but a threat to his regime. After the battle of Stalingrad at the end of 1942, it seemed likely that Germany must be vanquished. But in Stalin’s mind, Germany would rise again, just as it had after World War I. In November 1943, at the Teheran Conference, Stalin said he wanted to occupy, disarm, and dismember Germany, liquidate its officer corps, and force it to pay reparations. Even after the war, Stalin believed the Germans would ‘recover...very quickly. Give them twelve to fifteen years and they’ll be on their feet again.’ Throughout the late 1940s, he thought a new war would come and that Germany would instigate it.

“Stalin was also deeply concerned about Japan. Japan had intervened against the Bolsheviks during World War I and had been the last of the Allies to evacuate Soviet territory. During the late 1930s, Japanese and Soviet troops skirmished along the Manchurian border and fought several major battles. Stalin sought to neutralize the Japanese by signing a nonaggression pact in 1941. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945 he promised Roosevelt that he would declare war on Japan within three months after the end of the European conflict. [...] In July 1945, he told Nationalist Chinese Foreign Minister T.V. Soong that he wanted an alliance in order ‘to curb Japan.’

“At the end of World War II Stalin realized that the achievement of his goals—territorial gains, national reconstruction, and control over the revival of German and Japanese power—depended on cooperation with the Allies, especially with the United States. He was inclined to be agreeable because in the short run he was operating from a position of weakness, and he was altogether aware of it.

“Stalin had a great deal to gain from a policy of cooperation. Postwar aid would expedite Soviet economic rehabilitation. [...] Most of all, mutual collaboration would mean that he could share in the control of German and Japanese power. At the end of the war, Germany was divided into four occupation zones. Although the Kremlin had a large zone in the east, the core of Germany’s potential power—its coal, steel, metallurgy, and chemical industries—was in in the western zones, especially in the Ruhr. Stalin wanted to share in some form of international control of the Ruhr. He also sought a real stake in the occupation of Japan.

“Of course, Stalin’s desire for cooperation had to be balanced against his other goals. He would not compromise his basic territorial demands, that is, the restoration of the 1941 borders. Nor would he forsake a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. In this region, governments amenable to the Kremlin’s influence were vitally important to Stalin. [...] Soviet security requirements mandated a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. It would serve as a buffer zone against future invasions, a means to facilitate and control the evolution of German power, and a source of raw materials and reparations for reconstruction.
"Most of the new evidence emanating from the recently opened archives in Moscow and especially from the archives of Eastern Europe demonstrates that Soviet policies were confused and contradictory...."

"Stalin's approach to international affairs at the end of the war was relatively cautious. He wanted a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and control of German and Japanese power, but at the same time he wished to sustain the wartime alliance upon which Soviet security and reconstruction depended. To the great dismay of the Communists in France, Italy, Spain, and Greece, Stalin discouraged revolutionary action in 1944 and 1945, just when they felt their prominent role in wartime resistance movements and their people's genuine desire for thoroughgoing reforms afforded them a unique opportunity to gain power.

"Stalin knew that Communist seizures of power would provoke the British and the Americans. To the extent that he communicated with Communists abroad, he insisted that they behave prudently, cooperate with democratic groups, and form coalition or 'new type' governments. [...]

"Safeguarding his periphery was critical to Stalin. Peace was desirable in the short run, because his country had been devastated; but war was likely in the long run, so the Soviet Union needed to be prepared for every eventuality. [...]

"Stalin had to consider whether his allies wanted to preserve the coalition and, if so, whether on terms compatible with his own minimum security requirements. In his view, the atomic monopoly boosted American self-confidence and made the United States more determined to seek cooperation on its own terms. At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, when President Harry S Truman intimated the existence of a powerful new weapon, Stalin already sensed that the United States was hardening its position. 'They want to force us,' Stalin told his associates, 'to accept their plans on questions affecting Europe and the world. Well, that's not going to happen.'

"The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put the Kremlin on the defensive. [...]"

"Stalin never laid out a clear approach to any of the problems before him. He was chiefly occupied with safeguarding his own power, his regime, and his country's security and influence. Beyond these fundamental concerns, Stalin's ideas were confused and contradictory. He possessed no distinct strategy on how to pursue his ambitions while retaining Allied support. He acted expeditiously, zigged and zagged, and uttered pious clichés. Neither his comrades in Moscow nor foreign Communists nor Allied statesmen could discern clear policies, because there weren't any."

"Inside the Soviet Union there was a renewed emphasis on ideological purification. But the meaning of this for Soviet foreign policy was ambiguous. In his famous election speech of February 1946, for example, Stalin said that the war had arisen as 'the inevitable result of the development of world economic and political forces on the basis of monopoly capitalism.' This sounded like the resurrection of ideological cant, but when the speech was widely interpreted in the West as a challenge, Stalin sought to correct the impression. In carefully orchestrated meetings with Western reporters, he reaffirmed his desire for peaceful coexistence. He was not hinting at a war between Communists and capitalists, he said, but suggesting the inevitability of conflict between the capitalists themselves, especially the British and the Americans. Although Stalin hoped to take advantage of these rivalries, he also wanted to cooperate with his former allies. And precisely how he could do both at the same time he did not know.

"Stalin may have believed that in the long run conflict with the West was inevitable. He retained vivid memories of Western intervention in behalf of the Whites during the Civil War; he believed the capitalist democracies had encouraged the Nazis to attack Bolshevik Russia in the mid- and late 1930s; he was embittered by the delay in the second front; he was infuriated by Western denunciations of his efforts to establish 'friendly' governments on his periphery; he was equally exasperated by their attempts to limit the postwar flow of reparations from Germany to Russia; and he was agitated by thoughts that Americans would use their atomic monopoly to extract concessions and endanger Soviet security."
“But knowing that for the indefinite future he was in a weak position in relation to the United States and realizing that there was something to gain from cooperation with the West, Stalin moved cautiously. In Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria he continued to help the Communists consolidate their power. Elsewhere, Soviet policy was restrained. Stalin urged Tito to act prudently in the Balkans. The Kremlin did not give arms to the Greek Communists and offered limited aid to the Chinese Communists. Under pressure from the West, Stalin withdrew Soviet troops from Manchuria and Iran.

“Throughout 1946 and early 1947, Stalin still beckoned for cooperation both through his rhetoric and through many (albeit not all) of his actions. The Soviets negotiated seriously over the German question at the Moscow foreign ministers’ conference in the spring of 1947, and they also agreed to resume talks regarding the unification of Korea. New evidence from the archives in Moscow and the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) also suggests that the Kremlin was thinking about permitting more pluralist politics inside their zone in Germany and of dismissing some of the hard-line administrators who were seeking to Sovietize it. And when no agreement was reached at the Moscow conference, Stalin talked privately to George Marshall, the American secretary of state, and reiterated his desire to reach an accord. […]

“Stalin did not want an all-out rift to occur” (pp. 34-40).
“Although many historians have exaggerated the domestic pressures President Truman faced after World War II for an American withdrawal form an evil world, it is clear that the support many Americans gave to permanent military engagements abroad and to a policy of intervention in the Third World could only come as a result of the rivalry with Soviet Communism. The immense rise in Soviet power as a result of World War II – in which it was the other major victorious state – would have posed a challenge to any great power engaged in Europe or Asia. But it was the American ideological insistence that a global spread of Communism would, if not checked, result from the postwar extension of Soviet might that made the rivalry between the two powers into a Cold War. To elites in the United States, the rise of the Soviet Union as a world power also meant the rise of an alternative form of modernity that American had been combating since 1917. Any compromise with the great power that embodied Communist ideals would have been unlikely in the late 1940s. But the Soviet form of messianic modernism was particularly unfortunate in reaching the peak of its influence just as the United States removed the last limits to its global mission. ‘What indeed,’ asked the State Department official Joseph Jones in 1955, ‘are the limits of United States foreign policy?’ (p. 25).

“Soviet planning for the postwar world began as soon as the German offensive ground to a halt in 1942. Stalin wanted to extend Soviet influence in Europe—crucially, along its western borders, but also, if possible, into Central Europe and Germany itself. But the Soviet leader had to be very carefully with predicting the precise outcome of the war. While convinced from 1942 on that Germany could not win, Stalin expected the capitalist powers to seek peace with Germany after the collapse of Hitler’s regime. Fearful that such a separate peace would leave Germany free to continue its war against the Soviet Union, Stalin needed, on the one hand to minimize friction with his allies and thereby reduce their temptation to throw him to the wolves, while, on the other hand, also to minimize the chances for a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union in the east, an attack that Stalin knew would mean the end of the Soviet state. [....]

Toward the end of the war—and finally convinced that his allies were not aiming for a separate peace—Stalin began choosing between the different Marxist perspectives that had been offered to him through Soviet wartime planning. His appetite increased by the Soviet victories on the Eastern Front, the Soviet leader now foresaw a security belt along its western border consisting of states whose foreign policies depended on the Soviet Union. But he also expected postwar Germany—the big prize in terms of Europe’s future development—to move toward socialism and an alliance with Moscow. Through attacking a weakened Japan, the Soviet Union would secure its influence on the postwar settlements in China and Korea. Elsewhere in the colonies, the Soviet Union would also stake its claims in the redivision that would follow the war. Stalin based these optimistic perspectives on the continued competition among the main imperialist powers—Britain and the United States—in the coming battle for spoils. While the imperialists continued their rivalry, the Soviets could—through a mix of diplomacy and force—become a socialist world power.

Only gradually, between 1944 and 1947, did it become clear to Stalin that the prediction of intense imperialist rivalries for the redivision of the postwar world war wrong. Instead of powers competing, the weak European states, including Britain, sought protection of their security and the interests of world capitalism as such from the United States. To see this new, unipolar capitalist world was a hard-won realization for the Soviet leaders. It did not fit any of the Marxist maps that had been offered during the war, and it had to be explained as a temporary phenomenon, brought about by the West European capitalists’ need to import American capital and technology. What was clear to Stalin was that a world dominated by the United States was much more dangerous for the Soviet Union than a system in which one could play imperialist powers off against each other. The advent of
a capitalist hegemony meant that a concerted strategy for strangling the socialist state was in the making, Stalin thought.

“The imposition of Communist regimes in the Eastern European countries under Soviet military control, carried out between 1945 and 1948, was to a great extent a response to these new and more pessimistic perspectives on what the postwar world would look like” (pp. 57-58).
“FDR believed that the Russians’ distrust of the outside world was a product of their experience, and could be overcome by maintaining a consistent posture of patience, generosity, and friendliness toward them. Specifically, by refraining from public criticism of Soviet actions, providing them with generous lend-lease aid, occasionally siding with Stalin against Churchill, and avoiding retaliatory actions when the Russians engaged in provocative behavior, Roosevelt hoped to convince the Soviets that America could be trusted. Once Soviet suspicions had been undermined, Roosevelt felt, as [Ambassador] Harriman did, that he could persuade the Soviets that their security and legitimate foreign policy objects could be most easily achieved through cooperation with the United States; thus, collaboration was in their own objective best interests” (p. 75).

“Soviet foot-dragging on projects of military collaboration [during World War II] was caused by a number of factors—long standing Soviet suspicion of foreigners, insistence by the Soviets on the principle of reciprocity in all joint military operations, the high degree of centralization of authority in the Soviet bureaucracy—none of which would have been affected by a ‘tougher’ U.S. negotiating stance or implied threats to withhold lend-lease assistance.

“According to one Soviet expert, the almost pathological suspicion exhibited by the Soviets toward foreigners during the war was prompted by Stalin’s recognition that after hostilities ended, the USSR would be exhausted and vulnerable to exploitation by hostile capitalist powers. Every U.S. proposal for military collaboration was carefully examined for ulterior motives, with the result that by the time approval was granted, the proposed project was ineffective” (p. 86).

“If the Soviets had intended to establish a one-party, monolithic communist regime in any Eastern European country, Rumania would have been the logical choice. [...] Yet the Soviets did not try to replace [anti-Russian Rumanian government] with a communist government” (p. 120).

“Had Harriman considered the actions which the Soviets did not take in Eastern Europe, he might have inferred that Stalin’s principal aim was not the promotion of communist dictatorships in neighboring countries, but the establishment of broadly based coalition governments ‘friendly’ to the Soviet Union” (p. 121).

“Confronted with Soviet rudeness and arrogance on Poland and other issues, Harriman did not weight evidence according to normative criteria. Had he been more dispassionate and analytical, Harriman would have realized that Soviet policies in Eastern Europe, although often barbaric by American standards, nevertheless were a complex tapestry in which the thread of national security appeared throughout. He might also have realized the contradiction inherent in arguing that Soviet policy was motivated by ideological goals of communist revolution, yet at the same time asserting that the Soviets were reasonable men who would abandon their cause in return for dollars to rebuild their country. If the Soviets’ aims was to promote communist dictatorships around the world, then how could the United States ever develop a collaborative relationship with the Soviet Union, no matter how many times we retaliated by cutting off aid or playing tit for tat?” (p. 122-3).

“The ambassador to Moscow as motivated by no other goal than to provide the most accurate interpretation of Soviet foreign policy aims and intentions. He formulated hypotheses about Soviet aims
in Eastern Europe, and revised them as the Red Army advanced on the continent. [...] Harriman did not try to distort, reinterpre 

t, or ignore evidence to preserve his estimate that the Soviets were concerned above all else with having 'friendly governments' and preventing the restoration of the cordon sanitaire; nor did he try to maintain his earlier judgment that the Soviets genuinely wanted Poland to be independent and would allow the Poles to choose their own domestic political system. [...] Because of his disillusioning and disturbing quarrels with Soviet diplomats... he leaped to the conclusion that the Soviets were determined to impose totalitarian governments in the shadow of the Red Army” (p. 123).

“Ill-informed about the important foreign policy issues impinging on the presidency, bewildered by the conflicting advice thrust on him, yet anxious to avoid appearing hesitant or indecisive, Truman quickly seized on Harriman’s concrete, common-sensical suggestions. In succeeding weeks, Truman sought to implement Harriman’s ‘firm but friendly’ quid pro quo policy in such areas as lend-lease policy, the Soviet loan, and the Polish problem” (pp. 124-125).

“The results of appeasement in the thirties had convinced Truman that only willingness to use preponderant forced could deter aggressors. ‘Who can say what the results would have been if France had prevented Hitler from occupying the Rhineland as she could have done—or if England had gone along with us in preventing Japan’s grab in Manchuria,’ Truman asked rhetorically in a 1944 speech. Very little concerted action might have deterred Italy's conquest of Ethiopia. ‘Timely action might have made unnecessary the cost in lives and resources now being expended by the United Nations to restore to the world peace among men,’ Truman declared. To prevent the rise of Germany and Japan militarism, Truman supported the unconditional surrender policy and forced disarmament” (p. 141).

“Yet, in diplomacy, style and nuance can convey substantial meaning. The Russians must have interpreted Truman’s bluntness and unwillingness to accept Soviet prerogatives in Poland as evidence that he had decided to abandon the policy of collaboration now that the Russians were no longer needed to defeat Germany. Before his meeting with Truman, [Soviet minister] Molotov had confessed to [US ambassador] Davies that the Soviets were worried that ‘differences of interpretation’ and ‘complications’ might arise because Truman lacked full information on the Yalta agreements. With Roosevelt alive, Molotov explained, the Soviets had felt that any difference could be worked out because they had ‘full confidence’ in his sincerity and willingness to cooperate. The Soviets did not know Truman as they did Roosevelt” (p. 158).
Supporting Question 2

| Featured Source | Source A: Gilder-Lehrman, “Postwar Politics and the Cold War: Timeline and Terms” |

Letter to James Byrnes  
*Harry S. Truman*  
January 05, 1946

My dear Jim:

I have been considering some of our difficulties. As you know I would like to pursue a policy of delegating authority to the members of the cabinet in their various fields and then back them up in the results. But in doing that and in carrying out that policy I do not intend to turn over the complete authority of the President nor to forgo the President’s prerogative to make the final decision.

Therefore it is absolutely necessary that the President should be kept fully informed on what is taking place. This is vitally necessary when negotiations are taking place in a foreign capital, or even in another city than Washington. This procedure is necessary in domestic affairs and it is vital in foreign affairs.

At San Francisco no agreements or compromises were ever agreed to without my approval. At London you were in constant touch with me and communication was established daily if necessary.

That procedure did not take place at this last conference. I only saw you for a possible thirty minutes the night before you left after your interview with the Senate Committee.

I received no communication from you directly while you were in Moscow. The only message I had from you came as a reply to one which I had Under Secretary Acheson send to you about my interview with the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy.

The protocol was not submitted to me, nor was the communiqué. I was completely in the dark on the whole conference until I requested you to come to the Williamsburg and inform me. The communiqué was released before I even saw it.

Now I have the utmost confidence in you and in your ability but there should be a complete understanding between us on procedure. Hence this memorandum.

For the first time I read the Ethridge letter this morning. It is full of information on Rumania & Bulgaria and confirms our previous information on those two police states. I am not going to agree to the recognition of those governments unless they are radically changed.

I think we ought to protest with all the vigor of which we are capable [against] the Russian program in Iran. There is no justification for it. It is a parallel to the program of Russia in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. It is also in line with the high handed and arbitrary manner in which Russia acted in Poland.

At Potsdam 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 a high handed outrage.

At the time we were anxious for Russian entry into the Japanese War. Of course we found later that we didn’t need Russia there and the Russians have been a head ache to us ever since.

When you went to Moscow you were faced with another accomplished fact in Iran. Another outrage if ever I saw one.
Iran was our ally in the war. Iran was Russia’s ally in the war. Iran agreed to the free passage of arms, ammunition and other supplies running into millions of tons across her territory from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. Without these supplies, furnished by the United States, Russia would have been ignominiously defeated. Yet now Russia stirs up rebellion and keeps troops on the soil of her friend and ally, Iran.

There isn’t a doubt in my mind that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand—"How many divisions have you?"

I do not think we should play compromise any longer. We should refuse to recognize Rumania and Bulgaria until they comply with our requirements; we should let our position on Iran be known in no uncertain terms and we should continue to insist on the internationalization of the Kiel Canal, the Rhine-Danube waterway and the Black Sea Straits and we should maintain complete control of Japan and the Pacific. We should rehabilitate China and create a strong central government there. We should do the same for Korea.

Then we should insist on the return of our ships from Russia and force a settlement of the Lend-Lease Debt of Russia.

I’m tired of babying the Soviets.
“At the Potsdam conference Stalin felt that President Truman, who made no secret of his hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union, had found a like-minded ally in Churchill. Stalin became especially worried when in Potsdam the two attempted to blackmail Moscow with the atom bomb. Stalin’s response to that threat was increased pressure on the Eastern European countries, which, in turn, provoked a hostile reaction from the Western powers. When Churchill made his Fulton speech, applauded by Truman, it became clear to Stalin that his hopes for postwar cooperation with Britain had all along been nothing but an illusion” (p. 315).

[Stalin, speaking with the Deputy editor in chief for the *War and the Working Class* Lev Abramovich Leontiev:] “We won the war. The enemy has been defeated. Friends are all around us. New times have come.” [...]

“Did Stalin really believe at that time that a new era had begun, that cooperation with the Western countries could be preserved, that there would be no more witch-hunts in our country, and that better times had indeed arrived for the Soviet Union and the rest of the world? Vast stretches of our land lay in ruins. Millions of people lived in the squalor of dugout huts, lacking the essentials. The Soviet Union had yet to make good on its promise to join the war against Japan. But that was regarded as a short-term operation. The priority task on the national agenda was to create conditions of life worthy of human dignity and to rehabilitate the devastated countryside. It is possible that at the time Stalin still believed that the Americans would help in this. Maybe he was even prepared to curb his appetite and to work out a compromise? After all, hadn’t President Truman, after his recent move into the White House, provided assurances that he would continue Roosevelt’s policies in international affairs?

“Who was to blame that the relations between yesterday’s allies deteriorated so quickly? Some Western scholars believe that the leaders of all three of the principal countries in the anti-Hitler coalition were equally interested in not keeping up good relations. In my opinion, right after the end of the war, the Soviet leadership tried to preserve an atmosphere of trust, while undermining it in a number of cases by its actions. Part of the blame is attributable to Stalin’s suspiciousness, his tendency to think in terms of the past war, his preoccupation with creating around the Soviet Union a zone of buffer states with regimes he could totally rely on.

“All that, of course, provoked an appropriate reaction from the United States and Britain. But then those countries didn’t go out of their way to preserve a favorable climate, either. Truman’s rude outbursts in conversation with Molotov, who was on his way to San Francisco to sign the United Nations charter, gave Stalin reason to believe that the new U.S. administration was departing from Roosevelt’s political course. When later, at the Potsdam conference, Truman attempted to blackmail the Soviet Union with the A-bomb, Moscow perceived this as a serious threat. In turn, Stalin’s subsequent moves were interpreted as a Soviet threat to the West. The level of confrontation heightened and the Cold War broke out. There was even danger that the situation could escalate into armed conflict.

“The United States mounted an internal campaign against communism. The Soviet Union responded with no less virulent anti-imperialist drive. Both sides were readying their nations for a confrontation, while their people still preserved the warm feelings of friendship forged over the years of their joint fight against the common enemy. In the second half of the 1940s, a campaign to condemn ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘foreign lifestyles’ was launched in our country. I believe that it had two objectives:
to promote hostility toward the ‘new aggressor,’ the United States, and to revive an atmosphere of fear at home.”
“When the conflict crashed to a close in Europe, we still cherished a substantial reservoir of good will for the stout-hearted Russians who had saved our skins while saving their own. If the Kremlin had chosen to conciliate rather than alienate us, we no doubt would have been willing to contribute generously to technicians, materials, and money to the rehabilitation of war-ravaged Russia. But within a few months our worst fears were aroused, and the reservoir of good will cracked wide open” (pp. 319-320).

“The myth has somehow gained currency that, if Roosevelt had not been stricken in the hour of victory, co-operation between Russia and America would have been brought to the high level of which he had dreamed. The view is held by many admirers of the late President, and is also voiced by Communists and other Soviet apologists, especially those who seek an excuse for deteriorating relations. But, whatever the views of Soviet spokesmen, the Russian masses, knowing vaguely of Roosevelt’s friendliness and openhanded generosity with lend-lease largesse, held—and perhaps still hold—their benefactor in considerable esteem. The proof is convincing [...] that Roosevelt died knowing or strongly suspecting that his bold bid for conciliation had failed. The sharp shift in Soviet policy was clearly discernible by mid-March, 1945...” (pp. 321-322).

“Why did the Kremlin so rudely slap aside the proffered hand of co-operation and fellowship? The Soviets had never allied themselves with the western democracies in spirit, and when the fighting stopped there was a natural tendency for the Russian mind to return to—or remain in—the old grooves of antiwestern distrust. Secretary Hull concluded that Moscow started to launch out on its independent course as early as 1944, when it scented final victory and felt less dependent upon the democracies for aid. About the same time, and presumably for the same reason, Soviet spokesmen began to stress once more the orthodox Communist ideals of internationalism and world revolution, quite in contrast to their emphasis on nationalism during the wartime crisis.

“This disquieting development was entirely natural. Communism, which openly proclaims warfare on capitalism, could not trust the democratic world, and Moscow’s policy was no doubt permeated by anticapitalist fears. Soviet misgivings were further fed by the irresponsible utterances of certain American newspapers and political leaders....To cooperate [with the United States] would kill a substantial part of [the Soviet Union’s] reason for existence. Not only was it to their personal advantage to harp on western aggression, whether they really feared it or not, but an outside bogey would prove useful in quieting disunity at home and in arousing an already exhausted people to greater sacrifices.

“The Soviet leaders at first were inclined to belittle the atomic bomb, but gradually they began to promote a fear psychosis among their people. Rich and powerful Uncle Sam had this horrible new weapon, loaded and ticking, and the Russians did not have it in 1945, and did not get it, according to our information, until four years later. The alarm of large segments of the Russian people over the so-called ‘rattling of the atomic bomb’ was unquestionably real, especially when no less a figure than Governor George H. Earle of Pennsylvania, among others, could proclaim in 1946 that we should attack the Russians with the bomb ‘while we have it and before they get it.’

“To Americans, Soviet charges of aggression seemed ludicrous. [...] All we wanted was peace and a return to prewar days. Soviet fears of capitalistic aggression were further deepened by our attitude toward Moscow’s dealings with its weaker neighbors, notably Poland, whose democratic status had presumably been guaranteed at Yalta. The protests of the western Allies against Soviet encroachments merely confirmed the Kremlin’s suspicions, and provided the Russians with justification for building up
anti-capitalistic puppets in neighboring countries before the democracies could foster anti-Communist regimes” (pp. 323-325).

“Within the United Nations organization the Soviet delegates further antagonized the American public. They did not welcome investigations of Communist-supported guerrilla activity in Greece. They pressed for the ostracism of Franco’s Spain, which our people at first favored. But Spain, as a potential dike against the Russians, rose in respectability with the democratic nations as the Communist menace became more threatening. The vicious circle was again at work. The Russians, having driven us toward Franco, found in our action proof of their charges that we were essentially ‘reactionary.’ The Soviets also vigorously opposed the admission of new ‘fascist’ members into the United Nations, such as Eire and Portugal.

“Underscoring the split between the Communist and non-Communst world, the Russians persistently declined to join many of the organizations set up by the United Nations, except those few from which they derived direct benefit. [...] The conclusion gradually forced itself upon many thoughtful Americans that the Russians had not joined the United Nations in good faith, but for the purpose of shaping it or deadlock it in such a way as to safeguard Soviet interests. Moscow may well have had in mind exploiting the organization as an espionage center and a global sounding board for Communist propaganda” (p. 329).

“The opinion was rather generally held in the United States that no one could quarrel with the desire of the war-racked Russians to have well-disposed neighbors. But there is a world of difference between a friendly neighbor and a vassal state whose liberties have been subverted, whose parliamentary institutions (where they existed) have been swept aside, whose sovereignty had been extinguished, and whose foreign policy is dictated by the Kremlin.

“And where does defense end and aggression begin? If one must have a ‘friendly state’ (say Poland) on one’s flank, one must also have a ‘friendly state’ (say Germany) on Poland’s flank, and one must have a ‘friendly state’ (say France) on Germany’s flank. If this line of reasoning were pursued relentlessly, there would be only Communist states, and the Marxian dream of global conquest would come true. The situation had become so ominous by the middle of 1946 that approximately half our people were prepared to say that the Soviet aim was not local defense but world domination. [...]”

“The grim fact was that if Italy and France succumbed to the Communists, Soviet power would sweep to the English Channel, and all Europe would fall under the Hammer and Sickle. The western democracies, notably Britain and America, would then be thrown back where they had been in the dismal days of Dunkirk in 1940, only in some respects their plight would be worse. If anything was to be done, it had to be done quickly” (p. 334).
“Historians have debated at length the question of who caused the Cold War, but without shedding much light on the subject. Too often they view that event exclusively as a series of actions by one side and reactions by the other. In fact, policy-makers in both the United States and the Soviet Union were constantly weighing each other’s intentions, as they perceived them, and modifying their own courses of action accordingly. In addition, officials in Washington and Moscow brought to the task of policy formulation a variety of preconceptions, shaped by personality, ideology, political pressures, even ignorance and irrationality, all of which influenced their behavior. Once this complex interaction of stimulus and response is taken into account, it becomes clear that neither side can bear sole responsibility for the onset of the Cold War.

“But neither should the conflict be seen as irrepressible, if for no other reason than the methodological impossibility of ‘proving’ inevitability in history. The power vacuum in central Europe caused by Germany’s collapse made a Russian-American confrontation likely; it did not make it inevitable. Men as well as circumstances make foreign policy, and through such drastic expedients as war, appeasement, or resignation, policy-makers can always alter difficult situations in which they find themselves. One may legitimately ask why they do not choose to go this far, but to view their actions as predetermined by blind, impersonal ‘forces’ is to deny the complexity and particularity of human behavior, not to mention the ever-present possibility of accident. The Cold War is too complicated an event to be discussed in terms of either national guilt or the determinism of inevitability.

“If one must assign responsibility for the Cold War, the most meaningful way to proceed is to ask which side had the greater opportunity to accommodate itself, at least in part, to the other’s position, given the range of alternatives as they appeared at the time. Revisionists have argued that American policy-makers possessed greater freedom of action, but their view ignores the constraints imposed by domestic politics. Little is known even today about how Stalin defined his options, but it does seem safe to say that the very nature of the Soviet system afforded him a larger selection of alternatives than were open to leaders of the United States. The Russian dictator was immune from pressures of Congress, public opinion, or the press. Even ideology did not restrict him: Stalin was the master of communist doctrine, not a prisoner of it, and could modify or suspend Marxism-Leninism whenever it suited him to do so. This is not to say that Stalin wanted a Cold War—he had every reason to avoid one. But his absolute powers did give him more chances to surmount the internal restraints on his policy than were available to his democratic counterparts in the West.

“The Cold War grew out of a complicated interaction of external and internal developments inside both the United States and the Soviet Union. The external situation—circumstances beyond the control of either power—left Americans and Russians facing one another across prostrated Europe at the end of World War II. Internal influences in the Soviet Union—the search for security, the role of ideology, massive postwar reconstruction needs, the personality of Stalin—together with those in the United States—the ideal of self-determination, fear of communism, the illusion of omnipotence fostered by American economic strength and the atomic bomb—made the resulting confrontation a hostile one. Leaders of both superpowers sought peace, but in doing so yielded to considerations which, while they did not precipitate war, made a resolution of differences impossible.”
“Policymaking changed dramatically under Truman’s very different leadership style. Understandably insecure in an office of huge responsibility in a time of stunning change, the new president was especially ill at ease in the unfamiliar world of foreign relations. Where FDR had been comfortable with the ambiguities of diplomacy, Truman saw a complex world in black-and-white terms. He shared the parochialism of most Americans of his generation, viewed people, races, and nations through the crudest of stereotypes, and sometimes used ethnic slurs. He assumed that American ways of doing things were the correct way and that the peace should be based on American principles. An avid student of history, he drew simple lessons from complicated events. He preferred blunt talk to the silky tones of diplomacy, but his toughness on occasion masked deep uncertainties and sometimes got him in trouble. His courage in facing huge challenges and his ‘buck stops here’ decisiveness—a sharp contrast with his predecessor’s annoying refusal to make commitments—have won him deserved praise. But decisiveness could also reflect his lack of experience and sometimes profound insecurity. An orderly administrator, again in marked contrast to FDR, he gave greater responsibility to his subordinates and insisted upon their loyalty” (p. 599)

“The United States’ power was at its pinnacle, but it brought uncertainty instead of security, and Americans felt threatened, as [Secretary of State James F.] Byrnes put it, by events from ‘Korea to Timbuktoo.’ They worried about instability in Western Europe and the strategically vital Mediterranean region. Not ready to scrap wartime cooperation with the USSR, they were increasingly alarmed by Soviet behavior. They especially feared that an aggressive Stalin might exploit global instability. Truman and Byrnes thus veered between tough talk and continued efforts to negotiate. By the end of the year, the administration had branded the onetime ally as an enemy.

“As it had been central to the beginnings of Soviet-American conflict, so also Eastern Europe played a critical role in the postwar transformation of American attitudes towards the USSR. Haunted by memories of the depression and World War II, U.S. officials fervently believed that the Wilsonian principles of self-determination of peoples and an open world economy were essential for peace and prosperity. The United States had negligible economic interests in Eastern Europe, and U.S. officials understood poorly if at all the determination of some of its indigenous leaders to nationalize major industries. They saw the trend towards nationalization as a threat to capitalism and a healthy world economy and attributed it to the imposition of Communism from the outside. They vaguely understood Soviet concern for friendly governments but continued to call for free elections even where they might result in anti-Soviet regimes” (p. 600).

“As they looked out across an unsettled world, Americans saw other alarming signs. In the tense postwar atmosphere, they tended to ignore cases where the Soviet Union had kept its agreements and acted in a conciliatory manner and fastened on examples of uncooperative and threatening behavior” (p. 601).

“It remains impossible to determine with certainty what Stalin actually sought at this time, but Truman’s assessment appears much too simplistic. The Soviet dictator was a cruel tyrant who presided over a brutal police state. Neurotic in his suspicions and fears, he slaughtered without mercy millions of his own people during his long and bloody rule. He ruthlessly promoted his own power and the security of his state. He was determined to secure friendly—which meant compliant—governments in the crucial buffer
zone between the USSR and Germany and to guard against a renewed German threat. He was also a clever opportunist who would exploit any given him by his enemies—or friends. But he was acutely aware of Soviet weakness. He was no Communist ideologue. Especially in the immediate postwar years, when he needed breathing space, he refrained from pushing revolution in a war-torn world. His diplomacy manifested a persistent streak of realism. He did not seek war. [...] Some of his ploys were intended to secure confirmation of great-power status for the Soviet Union, others merely to gain a bargaining edge. Some commentators have claimed that this ‘battle-scared tiger,’ as Kennan called him, was as skilled at outwitting foes as he was evil. In truth, he made repeated mistakes that brought about the very circumstances he desperately sought to avoid.

“Americans could not or would not see this in early 1946, and Truman’s hard-nosed assessment of what was now presumed to be a distinct Soviet threat seemed validated from every direction. In a February 9 ‘election’ speech, Stalin warned of the renewed threat of capitalist encirclement and called for huge boosts in Soviet industrial production. The speech was probably designed to rally an exhausted people to further sacrifice. Even Truman conceded that Stalin, like U.S. politicians, might ‘demagogue a bit for elections.’ But many Americans read into the Soviet dictator’s words the most ominous implications.” [...]  

“Less than two weeks later, Kennan unleashed on the State Department his famous and influential ‘Long Telegram,’ an eight-thousand-word missive that assessed Soviet policies in the most gloomy and ominous fashion. [...] In highly alarmist tones, he delivered over the wires a lecture on Soviet behavior that decisively influenced the origins and nature of the Cold War. He conceded that the Soviet Union was weaker than the United States and acknowledged that it did not want war. But he ignored its legitimate postwar fears, and by showing how Communist ideology reinforced traditional Russian expansionism and portraying the Soviet leadership in near pathological terms, he helped destroy what little remained of American eagerness to understand its onetime ally and negotiate differences. He warned of a ‘political force committed fanatically to the belief that with [the] US there can be no permanent modus vivendi, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.’ By thus demonizing the Kremlin, he confirmed the futility and even danger of further negotiations and prepared the way for a policy he would label containment. The Long Telegram was exquisitely timed; arriving in Washing just as policymakers were edging toward similar conclusions, it gave expert confirmation to their views” (pp. 603-604).
Supporting Question 4

**Featured Source**  

“Far from public debate, we all learned credit and blame as children. From early on, parents blame their children for misdeeds, praise them for accomplishments, and take credit for their good qualities. Kids pick up the message by expecting credit when they accomplish something, but also by blaming others when they can: ‘I didn’t do it. Tommy did!’ We grow up demanding credit, avoiding blame if possible, blaming and giving credit via cell phones, blogs, online commentaries, letters, and daily conversations. A few people receive highly visible credit or blame in the form of Nobel Prizes, Academy Awards, or prison sentences. But on a smaller scale everyone plays the game of credit and blame.

“Giving credit and blame uses the universal human tendency to perceive, describe, and remember social experiences as stories: simplified cause-effect accounts in which A does X to B, with outcome Y (Tilly 2006). Credit- and blame-giving follow parallel logics. Their stories’ logics run backward from:

• Some negative or positive outcome to
• A value (large or small, negative or positive) assigned to that outcome to
• Some agent of that outcome to
• A judgment of that agent’s competence and responsibility for the action that
• Produced the outcome

This logic awards someone who deliberately kills many people (unless they happen to be their country’s official enemies) a large negative score - blame – and someone who knowingly saves many lives a large positive score - credit. The logic is a sort of justice detector.

“Most of the time, we and others are assigning lesser scores for smaller derelictions and delights: failure to meet daily obligations receives blame, unexpected generosity credit. Much the same logic applies in gossip, psychological counseling, court proceedings, responses to job performance, deliberations of prize committees, online discussions, political speeches, and public opinion polls. Look for telltale phrases such as ‘It was her fault,’ ‘He deserves the credit, but X got it instead,’ ‘We’re all grateful,’ and ‘Admit that you did it.’ Giving credit and (especially) assigning blame draw us-them boundaries: we are the worthy people, they the unworthy” (p. 383).

“Credit and blame are no mere game. In American public life and across life in general, who gets credit and blame matters. It matters retroactively and prospectively.

It matters retroactively because it becomes part of the stories we tell about good and bad people (including presidents), good and bad behavior (including political behavior), and where we came from (including the fundamentals of our political tradition). It matters prospectively because it indicates whom we can trust, and whom we should mistrust. Day after day, people spend plenty of effort assigning credit and blame. They take it seriously. So should we” (p. 389).