

COLD WAR PRACTICE DBQ

The following question is meant to illustrate the type of question that might appear in this section of the exam. Each question focuses on a particular historical thinking skill (in this case, patterns of continuity and change over time). The question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

Responses should do the following:

- State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
- Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into the argument.
- Focus the analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.
- Support the argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
- Connect historical phenomena relevant to the argument to broader events or processes.
- Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay that extends the argument, connects it to a different historical context, or accounts for contradictory evidence on the topic.

Question 1

In what ways and to what degree were the changes in American politics, economics and society from 1948 to 1961 a response to perceived threats from the Cold War?

Document 1

Source: Dwight Eisenhower, press conference, March 1954.

There is too much hysteria. You know, the world is suffering from a multiplicity of fears. We fear the men in the Kremlin, we fear what they will do to our friends around them; we are fearing what unwise investigators will do to us here at home as they try to combat subversion or bribery or deceit within. We fear depression; we fear the loss of jobs. All of these, with their impact on the human mind, makes us act almost hysterically, and you find the hysterical reactions.

Document 2

Source: John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, June 1954.

If world communism captures any American State, however small, a new and perilous front is established which will increase the danger to the entire free world and require even greater sacrifices from the American people.

This situation in Guatemala had become so dangerous that the American States could not ignore it. At Caracas last March, the American States held their Tenth Inter-American Conference. They then adopted a momentous statement. They declared that “the domination or control of the political institutions of any American State by the international Communist movement . . . would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American States, endangering the peace of America.”

Document 3

Source: Special Message to the Congress from President Eisenhower on Education, January 1958.

Because of the national security interest in the quality and scope of our educational system in the years immediately ahead, however, the Federal Government must also undertake to play an emergency role. The Administration is therefore recommending certain emergency Federal action to encourage and assist greater effort in specific areas of national concern. These recommendations place principal emphasis on our national security requirements. . . .

If we are to maintain our position of leadership, we must see to it that today's young people are prepared to contribute the maximum to our future progress. Because of the growing importance of science and technology, we must necessarily give special—but by no means exclusive—attention to education in science and engineering.

Document 4

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, Statistical Abstract of the United States, Department of Commerce.

| | 1949 | 1951 | 1953 | 1955 | 1957 | 1959 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Life expectancy at birth, in years | 68.0 | 68.4 | 68.8 | 69.6 | 69.5 | 69.6 |
| GNP per capita, in 1958 dollars | \$2,172 | \$2,495 | \$2,507 | \$2,650 | \$2,642 | \$2,688 |
| Total government spending, in billions of dollars | \$40.6 | \$45.8 | \$76.8 | \$68.5 | \$76.7 | \$92.1 |
| Surplus or (deficit), in billions of dollars | \$1.0 | \$7.6 | (\$5.3) | (\$3.0) | \$3.2 | (\$12.9) |
| Defense spending as percent of government spending | 32.7% | 51.1% | 68.1% | 63.2% | 62.9% | 57.9% |

Document 5

Source: *Saturday Evening Post*, October 1956.

On last June twenty-ninth, with President Eisenhower's signature, one of the most astounding pieces of legislation in history quietly became a law. Public Law 627 represents such a monumental conception of national public works that its accomplishment will literally dwarf any previous work of man. . . . That new title—the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways—tells the story of the road network, which will receive the major portion of the brave new effort to get this country out of its national traffic jam. The Interstate System . . . is the 40,000-mile network of existing roads which comprise our trunkline highways; it connects 209 of the 237 cities having a population of 50,000 or more and serves the country's principal industrial and defense areas.

Document 6

Source: *U.S. News and World Report*, December 1957.

MUST U.S. TAKE THE FIRST BLOW?

The Problem of "Massive Retaliation" in the Missile Age

IN TODAY'S BOMBER AGE



It's 10 hours from Soviet bases to American cities.



Warning systems can alert defenses, blunt any attack.



American bombers on bases ringing Soviet Russia, alerted, can strike in massive retaliation.

RESULT: Stalemate.

IN TOMORROW'S MISSILE AGE



It's to be 35 minutes—at most—from Soviet missile bases to any point in U.S.



Warning systems will be able to give next to no time for alert before the blow falls.



Push a button in Russia, and 35 minutes later much of U.S. could be laid waste—with power to retaliate limited.

RESULT: A growing question whether a policy of accepting the first blow may be the best one.

Document 7

Source: President John F. Kennedy, inaugural address, January 1961.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. . . .

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge, but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain that they will never be employed. But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course—both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rigidly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.