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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE History 6HI03 E

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates in this first session of the new 6HI03 E examination. Indeed, at the end of two years of modular study, many candidates wrote with sophistication and insight.

The paper requires candidates to answer two questions (a Depth Study question and an Associated Historical Controversy question) in 120 minutes. Predictably, some candidates were able to write at considerable length in this time but their responses sometimes lacked focus on the question. Relevance rather than length is the key to high marks as 'kitchen sink' responses will take a candidate only so far. Examiners want to see that candidates can use the sources and their own material effectively to answer the questions set.

Centres should note that the amount of space provided in the booklet for answers is more than we would expect any answer to take. It should not be seen as a recommendation of the amount candidates should write.

Although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on Option E of students having insufficient time to answer both questions. There were also very few rubric errors. The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss the impact of the accelerating European arms race and weigh its importance against other key factors such as the rival alliance systems and the impact of international crises between 1905 and 1914. Weaker responses tended to focus only on the Anglo-German naval rivalry and offered little or no analysis of (1) other military developments and/or (2) other contributory factors. The very weakest candidates often relied on a patchy narrative account of the 1900-14 period which did not address the question at all. Conversely, the best responses offered a sustained evaluation of the relative importance of the accelerating arms race and showed how the latter interacted with other key factors in the years up to 1914.

The arms race also effectively meant that all countries were preparing for war. As well as doubling the size of her navy, Germany also

(Section A continued) began strengthening her army in order to match those of the other European powers. In France, the "Three Year Service Law" was introduced in 1913 which improved her army and created more weapons. In Russia, "The Great Programme" was launched in 1913, again in order to keep up with France, Germany and Britain. All countries also introduced compulsory military conscription in the period 1900-1914 which again highlighted Europe's preparation for war. This mixture of suspicion, the need to compete with arms and military capability for war all ~~was~~ encouraged a sort of expectance for the outbreak of conflict.

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Examiner Comments

This Level 5 response, after dealing with the Anglo-German naval rivalry, now considers other aspects of the accelerating arms race to give range and depth to the developing argument. The candidate later goes on to assess the impact of the alliance systems, German foreign policy and the international crises after 1905 to provide a well developed analysis.

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Examiner Tip

When answering a 'stated factor' question, make sure you consider the role of other factors as well to give your response range.

Question 2

Quite a few candidates who attempted this question were let down by a lack of detailed knowledge about interwar disarmament. Many responses offered sketchy or inaccurate accounts of the relevant provisions of the Versailles Treaty, the Washington Naval Treaties (1921-22), the London Naval Treaty (1929) and the Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932-33). Once again, some of the weakest responses relied on a simple narrative approach. The strongest candidates, however, were able to link the success or failure of disarmament initiatives during the interwar years to key factors such as war-weariness, the 'never again' mentality, economic constraints, security issues, national self-interest and great power rivalry.

Question 3

This proved to be a very popular question. Most candidates were aware of the main features of, and the major developments under, peaceful coexistence. Consequently, the majority of responses offered some assessment of the extent to which peaceful coexistence eased cold war tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the strongest candidates demonstrated impressive range and depth. Having said this, a number of responses mistakenly treated this as a 'stated factor' question by also offering other explanations for improved US-Soviet relations (such as the death of Stalin and the consolidation of 'spheres of influence'). Some weaker candidates went outside the date range, typically producing lengthy accounts of US-Soviet relations under Stalin or the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. A few confused peaceful coexistence with 1970s détente.

The tensions at first were eased. Both sides had helped out in the Korean War and other than that hadn't fought much. Both sides had nuclear weapons and both were afraid to start a war simply because either side

(Section A continued) may be forced to use nuclear weapons. In the Korean War, Truman issued the order to roll back communism. This would seem to go completely against peaceful ~~co~~ co-existence. After the Korean War, Truman, an anti-communist leader, was sacked and replaced by John F. Kennedy. He was a firm anti-communist but wanted to work with the USSR. In the USSR, 1953 they all had a change of leadership as Stalin died.

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Examiner Comments

This is a weak Level 1 answer which lacks accurate, relevant and detailed evidence about peaceful coexistence. It later goes on to provide a sketchy account of the Cuban missile crisis which lies outside the time frame of the question.

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Examiner Tip

To gain high marks on the Depth Study question, you must have a sound subject knowledge. Check the specification for the key topics.

Question 4

On this question, the majority of candidates were able to offer an explanation for the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations which examined the impact of personal rivalries and other key factors, such as ideological differences and competing national interests. The strongest candidates also paid close attention to the date range (1958-69). Lower scoring responses tended to exhibit three main weaknesses - (1) an over-concentration on the Khrushchev-Mao rivalry which ignored Sino-Soviet relations after 1964 (2) extensive accounts of Sino-Soviet relations between 1949 and 1957 (particularly Stalin's relationship with Mao) which went far beyond setting the context (3) extensive accounts of Sino-US 'ping-pong' diplomacy in the early 1970s which ignored the 1969 cut-off point.

It can be argued ideological clashes contributed significantly more to the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations. Mao had been happy to assume the mantle of Stalinism and dogmatic Stalinist Marxist principles since the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Khrushchev's policy of 'peaceful coexistence', an acceptance of the two superpowers and desire for peace was seen as unacceptable Soviet Revisionism. Evidence to support serious Chinese Communist concerns over this divergence was that in Beijing the street outside the Soviet embassy was renamed "Anti-Revisionist Road". Mao was not the only one disgruntled by ideological differences. Khrushchev discouraged the Great Leap Forward of Mao as being too similar to Stalin's modernization through industrialization of raw materials and collectivization of agriculture, evidence from him criticizing the creation of 'backyard steel furnaces'. This clearly damaged relations.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has produced a good Level 4 answer by offering detailed knowledge within a focused analytical structure. Care has been taken to develop the argument in terms of three relevant categories - personal rivalries, ideological differences and competing national interests. Given the question, this is a very sensible approach.

Question 5

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to discuss the impact of the League's flawed constitution and weigh its importance against other key factors such as the USA's lack of involvement, Anglo-French indecision and great power politics. Better responses integrated source material and candidates' own knowledge to develop an argument about the League's failure based on the issues raised by the extracts. These responses cross-referenced the sources extensively to support or challenge particular viewpoints in the process of reaching a judgement. Weaker candidates often relied almost exclusively on the source material and introduced very little own knowledge to develop a line of argument. In addition, some low-scoring responses merely offered 'potted' summaries of each source (often with a little own knowledge included) which prevented cross-referencing and the development of a support/challenge approach.

Question 6

On this question, the majority of responses were able to offer an explanation for the outbreak of war in 1939 based on the competing views set out in the three sources. Most candidates could also draw on a sound knowledge of the key events leading to the Second World War. Once again, stronger candidates integrated cross-referenced source material with their own knowledge to put forward a substantiated judgement. Lower scoring responses typically adopted the 'potted' summary approach to the sources or else included little or no own knowledge. A few of the weaker candidates uncritically accepted the intentionalist viewpoint outlined in Source 5 (Joachim Fest) and failed to consider properly the arguments set out in the other extracts. One or two of these responses made no explicit reference to Source 6 (R.J. Overy).

Source 6 argues that the Second World War began as a result of diplomatic blunders on both sides. Firstly, R.J. Overy argues that it was Britain and France who declared war on Germany first. From knowledge, on 31st March 1939, France and Britain stated they would support Poland against an attack from Germany. Source 5 reiterates the view that the crisis of 1938-1939 shaped the beginning of World War II. Source 6 highlights this view when Overy states that France and Britain had "complex interests and motives for war."

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Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response illustrates two common limitations in answers to an Associated Historical Controversy question. Although the candidate attempts to cross-reference Sources 5 and 6, the links are superficial and little own knowledge is added to develop the argument. The extracts need to be more rigorously cross-referenced and more detailed own knowledge included.

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Examiner Tip

When planning your answer read through the sources carefully and list all the support and challenge points you can. This will help you to cross-reference effectively in your answer.

Question 7

Most candidates found this question very accessible. Overall, the sources were used effectively and appropriate own knowledge was included to develop the argument. Having said this, candidates were generally more confident when discussing the case for Soviet expansionism than for US economic interests. Stronger responses offered a sustained analysis based on the cross-referencing of the extracts and the integration of source material and own knowledge. The best responses used the sources to go beyond the anti-US and anti-Soviet arguments and consider how far the cold war was the product of misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Low-scoring candidates tended to exhibit three main weaknesses - (1) relying on a memorised 'perspectives' essay (covering the orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist interpretations) which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) extensive and unnecessary accounts of the provenance of each source (3) poor or non-existent integration of source material and own knowledge.

However, the USA had a massive advantage over the USSR because it had a lot more wealth. Marshall aid was released to stop countries going communist and because of its wealth was highly successful. It was as if the ego's of the USSR and USA were clashing and the USA was winning. Source 8 ~~describes~~ describes Marshall aid as 'limiting communist influence', this would further increase the rivalry between the two countries.



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Examiner Comments

This Level 1 response contains many weaknesses. The extract relies on basic statements rather than detailed knowledge and makes only cursory use of Source 8. The candidate made no reference at all to Source 9 in the answer.



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Examiner Tip

Plan your answer around the key issues raised by the sources and pick out useful quotations from each extract. That way, you won't overlook any of the sources when writing your response.

Question 8

This proved to be another accessible question. Many candidates made good use of the sources and their own knowledge to develop a confident line of argument about the relative importance of mounting economic pressure on the Soviet Union. The strongest candidates offered a sustained source-led analysis with impressive range and depth. Lower scoring candidates fell into four categories - (1) a memorised 'end of cold war' essay (often surveying the triumphalist, ideationist etc perspectives) which was inadequately linked to the sources provided (2) extensive and unnecessary accounts of the provenance of each source (3) poor or non-existent integration of source material and own knowledge (4) incorrectly assuming that Source 11 (Bradley Lightbody) supports the argument that Reagan successfully forced the Soviet Union into 'overspend'.

Nevertheless economic pressures in the Soviet Union

(Section B continued) can still be argued to have been really significant in bringing about the end of the Cold War. Source 12 mentions how Gorbachev 'wanted to remove Soviet troops from Afghanistan'; although McMahon mentions this as part of his general argument as to the importance of Gorbachev, we must remember that a significant motive for Gorbachev to withdraw the troops was the economic impact it had on the Soviet Union. 16 billion Tussytka had ~~went to the 1979~~ gone to the invasion, which had first started to fight against Islamic fundamentalism in 1979. When you added this to the interventions in Cuba, Laos and Angola it is estimated that the Soviet Union was losing approximately \$40 billion annually to their foreign causes. ~~Further~~ The argument of Williamson that the 'decline' of 'the whole Soviet bloc' is was 'primarily caused by its own economic inefficiencies' also

carries a lot of weight. ~~Just~~ A bad focus on heavy industry, as opposed to consumer goods and an increase in oil price and thus less motive for international investment ~~then~~ further added to the 'mounting economic pressures' of the USSR.

The way in which Williamson particularly upholds how 'Reagan challenged the USSR ... By developing the SDI' does also ~~primarily seem to~~ have weight, as certainly the USSR did find it hard to compete in the arms race with such dramatic increases in U.S. spending. On the other

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Examiner Comments

This low Level 5 response possesses several strengths. Here, the candidate uses Sources 12 and 10, together with own knowledge, to develop a case for mounting economic pressure. Elsewhere in the essay, a similar integrated approach is used to examine other factors, including the roles of Reagan and Gorbachev.

A general summary of the areas for improvement in the approach to the Depth Study question and the Associated Historical Controversy question on Option E may prove of benefit to centres.

Depth Study question

1. Candidates need to ensure that their subject knowledge conforms to the specification. Weaker responses usually lacked range and/or depth. A few discussed a period or development which was not the focus of the question.
2. Candidates need to be more aware of the time frame attached to a question. Many lower scoring responses devoted much time and space to discussing the years before and after the period targeted by the question.
3. In order to address the question effectively, candidates need to offer an analysis not a descriptive or chronological account.

Associated Historical Controversy question

1. Candidates need to treat the sources as a package to facilitate cross-referencing and advance a convincing line of argument. Many weaker candidates resorted to 'potted' summaries of each source which failed to develop a support/challenge approach.
2. Candidates need to integrate the source material and their own knowledge more effectively to substantiate a particular view. Weaker responses were frequently too reliant on the sources provided and little or no own knowledge was included.
3. Candidates should avoid memorised 'perspective' essays and base their responses on the issues raised by the sources instead. The Associated Historical Controversy question is an exercise in interpretation not historiography.
4. Candidates should not provide extensive and unnecessary accounts of the provenance of each source.

Grade boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	70	56	50	44	39	34	29
Uniform boundary mark	120	108	96	84	72	60	48

'a*' is only used in conversion from raw to uniform marks. It is not a published unit grade.'

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