

Question 3 – International Relations 1943-1991

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This question in the exam focuses on how 'Useful' two sources are as evidence for a particular purpose.

Judgement based on (must be achieved for both sources):

the usefulness of the sources' content
(Sources A & B)

and

an evaluation of how reliable / authoritative / representative they are in regards to the difference this makes in terms of usefulness (Sources A & B). Not just reliability for its own sake.

Your answer must:

Must include some own knowledge.

How useful are Sources B and C as evidence of the reasons for the USA's blockade of Cuba in October 1962? Explain your answer using Sources B and C and your own knowledge.

Question 3

Study Sources B and C.

Source B: From a television broadcast made by President Kennedy on 22 October 1962.

The 1930s taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked, ultimately leads to war. We will not prematurely risk a world-wide war in which the cost of victory would be too high. But neither will we back down if the risk of war has to be faced. I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt this secret, reckless and provocative threat to world peace.

Source C: An aerial photograph of Cuban missile sites. This photograph was labelled and published by the American Embassy in London on 23 October 1963.



'They are both useful to a certain extent as evidence of the reasons for the USA's blockade of Cuba in October 1962, because they provide us with valuable information about the event. Source B tells me that the Americans were very worried about what the Soviet Union was doing in Cuba. Kennedy has deliberately selected the words 'secret, reckless ... threat' to describe the USSR's installation of weapons in Cuba. Additionally, we know from Source B that the Americans thought that Khrushchev was deliberately trying to upset the Americans, because it says 'provocative'. Therefore, the content of source B is useful to some extent as it shows that the US were very angry with the USSR and viewed their actions as a reason to start the blockade. Indeed, I know from my own knowledge that the US Government prepared a fleet of nuclear submarines and 156 ICBMs in response. Source C indicates that there was a degree of truth in Kennedy's claims in Source B, because we can see the missile sites in the photograph. However, Source C has deliberately included the American annotation of the alleged offensive weapons in order to validate the beginning of the Cuban blockade. This makes it less useful as it is only showing what the Americans wanted to reveal in order to support their actions. Given that Source C was produced by the American Embassy with the purpose of convincing the international community that America's action were justified, this further reduces its usefulness. However, I am not sure that I am entirely comfortable with either of these sources. Source B is a broadcast to the American nation. Obviously, Kennedy is going to use this as an opportunity to persuade listeners that his policy is right and the Soviets

Commented [PO1]: Mini Judgement included – the examiner knows that this answer will not just describe the sources – it will analyse how useful they are! Great!

Commented [PO2]: The content of Source B has been carefully analysed and supported with a carefully selected quote to support their point.

Commented [PO3]: Mini – Judgement of the content of Source B included. This makes it easy for the examiner to award marks as it directly relates to the Success Criteria!

Commented [PO4]: Precise use of own knowledge to support points – this means that the answer can move beyond the 7 mark threshold.

Commented [PO5]: Uses a specific & carefully selected element of Source C to highlight the point about the usefulness of its content.

Commented [PO6]: Mini – Judgement of the content of Source C included. This makes it easy for the examiner to award marks as it directly relates to the Success Criteria!

Commented [PO7]: Nature / Origin / Purpose of C linked to usefulness.

Commented [PO8]: Nature / Origin / Purpose of Source B analysed and linked to usefulness. Directly hits success criteria.

are wrong, limiting how useful it can be as evidence. That's why he calls the placing of the missiles 'provocative' and says the Americans are backed up by the lessons learned in the 1930s – though it is true US spy planes had photographed Soviet missiles in Cuba. So although they give us useful information, we have to be careful to consider if that information is trustworthy. Therefore, Sources B and C are useful to some extent, but the slight lack of reliability and biased content undermines this usefulness to some degree.

Commented [PO9]: Links NOP of Source B to usefulness.

Commented [PO10]: Final Judgement on usefulness. The answer has considered Content of both Sources and the Nature / Origin / Purpose of both.



Examiner Comment: This answer would score highly as it considers all the elements required of a high Level 3 answer (7-10 marks). It considers the content of both sources in relation to how useful they are, in addition to the nature / origin / purpose. All elements of CNOP are linked specifically to usefulness. Own knowledge is also included, as well as a final judgement in relation to the question.