**Essay question:**

**To what extent were Gorbachev’s policies of Glasnost and Perestroika responsible for the end of the Cold War.**

*The 26th of December 1991 saw the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had been one of the most dominant forces in Europe in the twentieth-century and a key antagonist in the Cold-War. The Cold War refers to a state of political hostility between the U.S and U.S.S.R that saw no military aggression but brought both nations almost to the brink of nuclear war. The Soviet leader at the time Mikhael Gorbachev had introduced a policy to restructure the economy known as perestroika and a policy of being more open to the public about Soviet activities known as glasnost. Perestroika and glasnost were to be key factors in the end of the Cold War although the complexities of having various ethnic and cultural groups was to be a decisive factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union as would the crippling effect the arms race had on the Soviet economy.*

*Mikhael Gorbachev introduced the policy of perestroika in 1985 and it was designed to kick start the stagnant economy of the Soviet Union of the 1980’s. The policy would consequently result in the opening up of the Soviet economy to trade with the West which would have some impact in the end of the Cold War in 1991.*