Study Questions for the Final Examination

1. Compare and contrast the arguments presented by John Lewis Gaddis and Melvin Leffler. Which argument do you agree with more, and why?

2. If you divide the history of the Cold War from 1945 to 1985 into two periods with the Cuban Missile crisis as the major turning point, how did the first period differ from the second, and what continuities ran through both periods?

3. What assumptions did the United States and the Soviet Union hold in pursuing détente during the 1970s? How did the differences in their perceptions affect the process of détente?

4. What did the arms control process during the 1970s accomplish? Where did they fail? Drawing from the experience of SALT I and SALT II what conditions do you consider to be essential for a successful arms control agreement?

5. To what extent was Richard Pipes correct in his approach to the Soviet military strategy?

6. Based on the selections by Fred Logevall on Vietnam and by Raymond Garthoff on Afghanistan, compare and contrast the U.S. decision to escalate the war in Vietnam and the Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan.

7. How did the policy toward China pursued by Nixon and Kissinger differ from Carter-Brzezinski’s China policy? What role did the Soviet Union play in their policy toward China?

8. How did the Reagan administration’s policy toward the Soviet Union differ from containment pursued by the previous administrations?

9. In what ways was Reagan’s SDI a fundamental departure from the past nuclear strategy? Why did the Soviet Union oppose the SDI?

10. What did Gorbachev apply his new political thinking to arms control, the Third World conflict, and the policy toward China? How did it contribute to the ending of the Cold War?