

## Essay Statements

*Instructions: match these numbers up with the correct place in the Essay Template. Each paragraph needs 4 numbers - one **point**, two pieces of **evidence/explanation** & one **link**.*

1. The Communists' shrewd military tactics and strategy were crucial in their victory. The use of guerrilla warfare in the face of sustained Nationalist attacks in 1946 – 47 was vital to the survival of the CCP and ensured that the Nationalists failed to capitalise on any advantages they may have had. The Communists were able to exhaust their opponents before employing ambush techniques and eventually wiping them out. The Nationalists captured Yun 'an in 1947 but the CCP had retreated already, and the Nationalists achieved little strategic gain for their resources. Such an approach severely weakened the Nationalist forces and provided a platform for the CCP's transition from attrition tactics to ones of open military confrontation in 1948, culminating in an eventual Communist victory such as the Battle of Huai-Huai in central China.
2. International intervention in China between 1937 and 1949, by both the USSR and USA, can explain the Communist victory in the Civil War.
3. Although both foreign powers advocated a united front between the GMD and CCP and both generally backed Chiang and the Nationalists, there were certainly periods where they assisted (sometimes unintentionally) the Communists' war effort. The Soviets allowed huge stockpiles of captured Japanese arms and ammunition to fall straight into Communist hands in 1945 after the Red Army's defeat of Japan. This hastened the military effectiveness of the party's armed forces, the PLA, and prepared it for the full-scale conflict with the GMD from 1946 onwards. The USSR's occupation of Manchuria from 1945 to 1946 also deprived the Nationalists of key economic resources that the GMD had been unable to access thanks to the Japanese occupation of the region since 1931.
4. The strengths the CCP showed in its handling of military campaigns against the GMD, and its ability to win over the 'hearts and minds' of the Chinese people, was a reason for the CCP's successes.
5. The weaknesses and mistakes of the GMD explains the victory of the CCP in the Civil war.
6. Whilst the international situation through the actions of the USA and the USSR from 1937 to 1949 were important issues in determining the outcome of the Civil War there were other factors. The strengths of the CCP in terms of its leadership were also very important. It will be argued that Nationalist weaknesses were the most important

factor in explaining the CCP's victory. Their poor military strategy and lack of control over China's precarious economy, and pervasive party corruption, ensured that they lost the support of the Chinese people.

7. The international situation is certainly an important aspect that explains the victory of the CCP. The US support for the GMD was not total, which contributed to the GMD's collapse in 1948/9. The USSR intervened at crucial moments, especially in 1945 – 46. However, the fact that both the USSR and the USA supported the Nationalists, expecting their victory, would indicate that their contribution was limited given that the CCP won. The CCP's strengths as a party who had the support of the peasantry and a disciplined leadership compares favourably with the GMD. However, the CCP were still largely unknown as a political force in China in 1949. They only controlled the north of China, and the Nationalists were expected to win the Civil War given that they had been the dominant force since 1927. Therefore it would be best to argue that it was the weaknesses of the GMD that explains the victory of the CCP. They won by default due to the collapse in support for the Nationalists amongst the Chinese people who were prepared to accept anything else, rather than because of their enthusiasm for Communism.
8. The USA's role as the GMD's major ally had also been very fraught. By far the largest foreign influence on the situation was the aid given by America. After the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour in 1941, the US saw Chiang's Nationalists as a key ally to help defeat the Japanese. However, the relationship between the GMD and the USA became extremely dysfunctional; due to the opposing characters of Stilwell, the American commander in China, and Chiang. This lack agreement over strategy, such as Stilwell's "Burma strategy" of 1944 eroded the difficult relationship between the two powers. Stilwell referring to Chiang as "the peanut" and believed the GMD were corrupt and incompetent. He failed to understand the enormous problems Chiang faced in persecuting the war. After Chiang insisted on Stilwell's replacement, Stilwell briefed the press who wrote damning articles about the GMD in the US. As a result during the Civil War, although the US were deeply involved e.g. the air lift carried out by US forces to move 110,000 GMD soldiers to Manchuria, the US were reluctant to completely underwrite the GMD and Congress blocked funding.
9. Therefore, the international context was important in allowing the CCP victory as it provided crucial military backing for the CCP and failed to provide enough support for the GMD, which thus allowed the balance of power to tilt towards the former.
10. The GMD's record in government lost it the support of many Chinese people. During this time China had been devastated by war and the huge losses of both manpower and industry. Hence, when the Civil War commenced, there was a genuine lack of confidence in their ability to deliver results, particularly among the urban population and the peasants who had felt the full effects of China's social and economic collapse. To fund the war Chiang had printed money, leading to hyperinflation, which destroyed

the savings of the middle classes. He had conscripted peasants into the army to make up for manpower losses. Contrary to Mao, whose leadership hadn't been tested and who was therefore able to promise radical reform within China, Chiang had already lost the support of his people.

11. What was even more problematic for Chiang was the fact that he had also lost the faith of his own party members. Corruption within the GMD had become endemic by the end of Civil War, and the Nationalists suffered heavily as growing numbers betrayed the cause and joined the PLA. The GMD's predicament was excellently summarised by America's consul general in Mukden, who, in 1947, commented on 'the apathy, resentment and defeatism' within the party, all of which was causing 'surrenders and desertions'. What was evident at this point was that the Nationalists lacked the solidarity and fighting spirit that such a war required and were generally disinterested as the conflict unfolded. Such a sudden increase in party corruption and desertion is, upon initial analysis, quite difficult to explain. However, when one comes to terms with the fact that most Nationalist troops were fighting far from home and on minimal pay, it was an inevitability that their pursuit of victory would eventually peter out.
12. Therefore, it was the CCP's strengths that allowed them to win the Civil War as they were able to overcome the considerable advantages that the GMD had, as well as the hostility of the USA and the indifference of the USSR, to comprehensively defeat the Nationalists.
13. Therefore, it was the collapse of the Nationalists in 1948 – 49 that explains the victory of the CCP. The inability to resist the CCP was caused by the exhaustion of war and Chiang's inability to revive his party, which meant that the CCP won by default.
14. The work and leadership of Chairman Mao was crucial. Lynch has rightly commented on how Mao possessed 'the strength of will that won political and military struggles'. The purging of opposition within his own party during the early 1940s during the Yun 'an period was a testament to Mao's skill as a military and political leader. Regardless of his relationship with Communist officials, Mao was never afraid to weed out corruption from within the party or to throw out those who wouldn't agree with his ideas completely. Not only did this create a unified party but it also served as a medium for intimidation, creating a clear sense of hierarchy and discipline within the party who feared punishment if they failed to conform with Mao's instructions. There is no doubt that such methods gave the respect Mao would need to encourage the PLA's shift of tactics in 1948, arguably a watershed in the Civil War.