**Analysis activity 6.3: Defining the Cold War**

Understanding the Cold War is vital to understanding the world today. Read the following explanations by historians of the Cold War. Then write your own definition.

**Explanation 1**

*After 1945 the USSR and the USA were rivals, locked in a struggle which became known as the Cold War. The basis of the Cold War was fear … the two powers carried out a dangerous war of words which sometimes turned into armed conflict on a limited scale.*

V. Dixon and S. Greer, *Understanding the Modern World, 1998*

**Explanation 2**

*The Cold War was not just a clash of military empires, but of economies, of cultures, of rival ways of life.*

J. Isaacs and T. Downing, *Cold War, 1998*

**Explanation 3**

*At no stage however was there direct and open warfare between the two rivals although often conflict was played out between third parties and allies, hence the name Cold War as opposed to a ‘hot war’ involving direct confrontation.*

G. Engwerda and J. Oakes, *International Studies, 2002*

**Explanation 4**

*The story of the Cold War begins in the ruins of Berlin and the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and ends not with a bang but with a whimper. No shots were fired, no bombs were dropped … In the end the Cold War stumbled to the finish line of 1991 due to the determination of ordinary individuals who became the ‘vehicles of power’, whether at the ballot box, in street protests, in strikes or on the political podium.*

Justin Briggs, *Contested Spaces, 2010*