Origins of The Cold War:

During the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union had been allies even though they had little in common except their opposition to the axis powers. Once the war was over, tensions between the two countries surfaced. At the heart of the conflict were differences in their political and economic systems. The Soviet Union was communist, which meant that the government controlled all industry and commerce. Under communism, political opposition was not tolerated. The United States and most Western countries were capitalist. Their economies were based on private enterprise, with individuals investing in business for profit. Citizens had basic freedoms of the press and freedom of speech.

Western countries were suspicious of communism. As in the decades following the First World War, they fear that communists planned to overthrow Western societies in a world revolution. The Soviet Union, for its part, was suspicious that Western countries might try to invade Soviet territory throughout Europe. The Soviets took over the countries of Eastern Europe in the years following the Second World War and established communist governments in them. The West, particularly the United States, saw this expansion of Soviet designs on the world.

As a result, the war years were not followed by peace and cooperation, as so many had hoped. Instead hostility increased between the Soviets and the Americans. But this was not traditional warfare; it was a Cold War in which no shots were fired and no battles took place. At this time, both sides built up huge stockpiles of sophisticated arms, including the atomic bomb and other nuclear weapons and also spied on one another. The rivals became superpowers, each capable of inflicting massive destruction.

Canada aligned itself closely with U.S. interests while trying to remain true to the goals and values of Canadians – not an easy task. Through the early part of the twentieth century, Canada had achieved independence from Britain. In the latter half, Canada struggled to keep U.S. influences from weakening its national identity.

The Cold War at Home:

When the Igor Gouzenko story hit the media, the Canadian public was shocked to learn that a communist spy had been operating in Canada. During the early decades of the Cold War. Many Canadians worried that an open war between the Soviet Union and the United States would result in a rain of nuclear bombs and missiles on Canada. The federal government in Ottawa developed civil defence plans, and cities prepared to protect their populations.

Analysis Questions:

1. In what ways could a “cold war” be more frightening than a “hot war?”
2. Answer the following questions using collaboration and inference: *in what ways in modern Canada similar to the United States? In what ways is it different?*