influence in all of Europe. In fact given the geography of the countries where Soviet influence was high is considered it appears Stalin could merely have been creating a protective buffer zone. Yet, the USA still perceived it as expansionist which made them wary of Stalin leading to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance.

Secondly, we should consider the counter argument that it was not Stalin’s desire to expand in Europe which caused the breakdown of the Grand Alliance. Source A states that Truman ‘abruptly terminated lend-lease aid’ after the German surrender. This would have resulted in friction within the Alliance as the USSR were still helping America fight Japan and had been devastated in the war, meaning that it required aid. Aid was stopped so quickly that boats turned round mid-ocean showing how little warning the USSR had. Whilst this caused tension the USA also stopped the aid to Britain so cannot be seen as an attack on the USSR.

Again, source A suggests that Truman’s approach led to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance with the mention of ‘atomic diplomacy at Potsdam’. The view that the USA was trying to threaten the USSR angered Stalin, causing yet more friction on the Alliance. Moreover, as allies the Soviets felt the USA should have told the USSR of their developments. However, the USSR was also creating an atomic bomb without telling the USA so they can be seen as equally guilty in the matter.

The final quote from source A to consider is that the Americans ‘lost’ the Soviet application for a loan. The inverted commas on ‘lost’ suggest that the Soviets did not really believe the loan application was lost and felt their allies did not want to help them causing a breakdown in the Alliance. Some evidence does suggest that the loan application was as if it had been lost having been ignored in January 1945. The fact remains that the Soviets did not recover as and as the truth and so it led to the breakdown in the Alliance.

Source B can be seen to suggest Truman was at fault for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance because Stalin was ‘flexible’ in Hungary, Finland and Czechoslovakia’. As Stalin was flexible in these countries it implies that to some extent he was sticking to the Declaration of Liberated Europe and so there was no need for Truman’s hard line approach as already outlined. Even in Bulgaria the revolution was slowed to appease Western reactions. However, as the essay has already considered Stalin did not allow for self-determination in key states such as Poland. Over all it could be argued Truman’s policy as advised by Harriman was excessive though.

Finally, source C also supports the view that Stalin was not to blame for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance and it was America’s fault. The view can be thought as the USA as well as the USSR can be seen as expansionist. The US desire for ‘economic integration’ meant that all countries needed to be capitalist in their vision of the ‘post-war world’. This is supported by the USA’s later aid programme such as Marshall Aid available to all and promoted capitalism. As the USSR was naturally against the spread of capitalism to Stalin these policies were threatening to communism. It may be said these economic policies were a way in which to rebuild and improve life in Europe though. However, the sense of threat created made Stalin keener to act protectively resulting in the breakdown of the alliance.

In conclusion, after considering all evidence concerning the breakdown of the Grand Alliance it can be said that the breakdown was not essentially due to Stalin’s desire to expand Soviet influence. Whilst it remains true that the expansion of the USSR led to tension in the Grand Alliance,