

This exam consists of
3 numbered pages

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ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM
Colloquium doctum Engels
Maandag 17 mei 2010, 09:30–12:30 uur

For DUTCH students:

Translate text 1 into acceptable Dutch AND **make a summary of text 2**, in Dutch, of not longer than one-third of the original text, using your own words as much as possible (so do **NOT** merely translate part(s) of the text!)

For FOREIGN students:

Write a summary of text 2 in acceptable English of not longer than one-third of the original text, using your own words as much as possible (so do **NOT** give direct quotes!) AND
write an essay of approximately 250 words, commenting on the text.

Please note:

You **CANNOT** take any part of the exam home. All questions and answers have to be returned to the supervisor.

Please write your number of correspondence on each sheet of the exam (this number is mentioned in the letter you have received from the exam administration).

TEXT I:

OBAMA HAS TAKEN A BOLD STEP TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Anyone old enough to remember the Cold War will recall also how normal it felt to worry about nuclear confrontation resulting in the end of the world.

It takes time for the kind of suspicion built up over that period to dissipate. Last week, US President Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev agreed to the deepest- ever cuts in their countries' nuclear arsenals – a mere 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Even then, each side will retain 1,550 warheads, enough to unleash apocalypse many times over.

The deal is a foreign policy triumph for President Obama, who has invested heavily in repairing relations with Russia. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow has suspected the US of conspiring to undermine its global status. The Kremlin has been especially assertive in trying to maintain influence in eastern Europe, which has been interpreted in Washington as a kind of neo-Soviet ambition.

One of President Obama's first moves was to scrap a planned missile defence shield based on Russia's doorstep, a gesture of reconciliation decried by US hawks as appeasement.

Without anything to show for such a concession, President Obama would have looked weak, so the nuclear deal gives him some much needed kudos. But the real quid pro quo was signalled in a statement by President Medvedev, striking a more than usually stern tone in relation to Iran's ambitions to become a nuclear power.

President Obama will this week host a nuclear security summit in Washington, where he will hope to build some momentum for wider disarmament. That is a daunting project that has to involve such unpliant states as India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel and Iran. Given the scale of the task, President Obama is wise to have inaugurated a thaw with Russia. With a new generation of nuclear threats needing attention, defusing Cold War bombs is a task long overdue.

From: The Observer, 11 – 04 - 10

TEXT II :

CAMERON'S TAX PLANS FOR COUPLES ARE BOTH PATRONISING AND WRONG

David Cameron claims to be the modern, caring face of Conservatism, but his party's plans for a tax break on marriage show him in his true colours. Trading on his own status as a smug married, and using his prettily pregnant wife Samantha as a campaign tool, he wants to bring in a fiscal measure that will leave the widowed, the divorced and the single relatively worse off.

The Tories have waved a figleaf by saying the deal will be available to gay couples in civil partnerships, but don't be fooled: it promotes traditional, 1950s-style unions. The proposal is that one spouse should be able to transfer £ 750 of their personal tax allowance to their partner to reduce their income tax bill. In the vast majority of cases, this would act as an incentive for wives to stay at home.

It not only runs counter to 40 years of women struggling to win equality in the workplace, but also assumes husbands and wives should not have autonomy when it comes to their own tax affairs.

How dare the Conservatives use the tax system to stigmatise whole sections of society who do not conform to their retrograde marital model? And how dare they brand single parents with no choice but to work outside the home as inferior and undeserving, while granting mums with breadwinner husbands their approval and an additional bounty from the taxman?

The Tories want to promote marriage because they believe it leads to a more stable environment and better prospects for children. I'd say that is a flawed assumption in itself. Plenty of dysfunctional kids emerge from lawfully wedded nuclear families and plenty of divorced or single mothers and fathers do a fantastic job. Governments have no business casting aspersions on how good people are as parents or using tax policy to telegraph diktats on how they ought to live their lives. In a practical sense, the measure is likely to be pointless, since it has little chance of influencing behaviour. I'm not cynical enough to believe that many people would get married for tax reasons, but even if they did, with a maximum benefit of £150, the allowance is unlikely to coax couples down the aisle.

This isn't about giving realistic and fair help to the families of Britain in all their diverse shapes and sizes. It is about the fact that a few privileged, married Tory men think society would be much better if only every one were just like them. Well, we're not - and this tax break is incredibly judgmental, incredibly patronising and incredibly stupid.

From: The Observer, 11 – 04 - 10