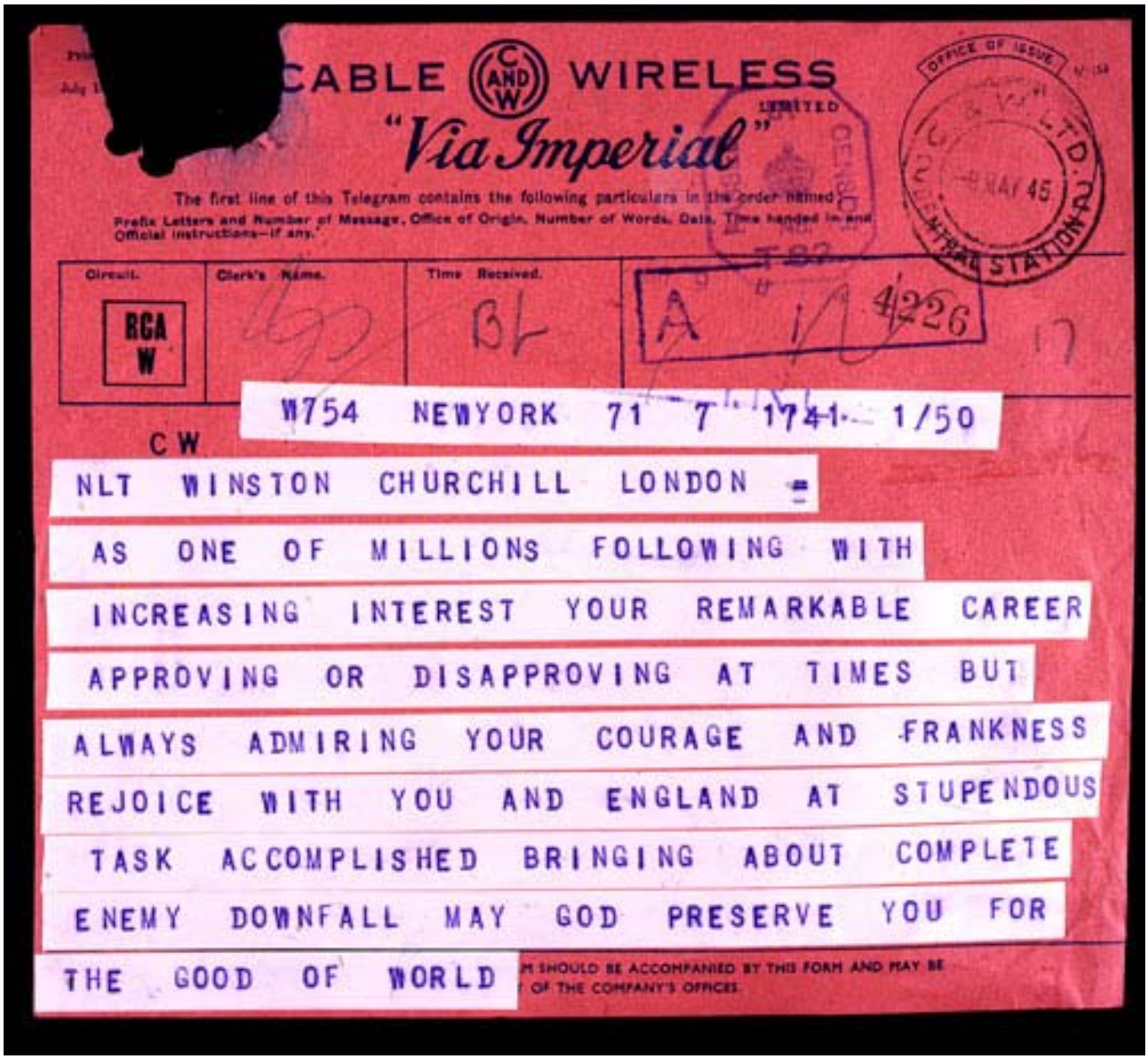
HOW MIGHT CHURCHILL HAVE REPLIED TO THIS TELEGRAM: TASK INSTRUCTIONS

The key question: How might Churchill have replied to this telegram?

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill received this telegram on May 9th 1945. This was when the surrender of Germany was officially announced.

Your task
The impression given by the telegram is that the job has been done. In fact there were still many challenges ahead and Churchill would have known this. Your task is to write a reply to the writer of this telegram. The sources in the source box provide a snapshot of some of these challenges.
You could use the framework for Churchill's reply.

A telegram sent to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1945


CABLE WIRELESS LIMITED
"Via Imperial"
The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named:
Prefix Letters and Number of Message, Office of Origin, Number of Words, Date, Time handed in and Official instructions—if any.

Circuit.	Clerk's Name.	Time Received.	
RCA W		BL	A 4226

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NLT WINSTON CHURCHILL LONDON =

AS ONE OF MILLIONS FOLLOWING WITH INCREASING INTEREST YOUR REMARKABLE CAREER APPROVING OR DISAPPROVING AT TIMES BUT ALWAYS ADMIRING YOUR COURAGE AND FRANKNESS REJOICE WITH YOU AND ENGLAND AT STUPENDOUS TASK ACCOMPLISHED BRINGING ABOUT COMPLETE ENEMY DOWNFALL MAY GOD PRESERVE YOU FOR THE GOOD OF WORLD

M SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THIS FORM AND MAY BE
OF THE COMPANY'S OFFICES

What is this source?

This source is a telegram sent to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on May 9th 1945 from New York.

The date is important. It was the day after VE-Day, the surrender of Germany. Churchill received millions of cards, letters and telegrams congratulating him on the end of the war in Europe.

What's the background to this source?

The Second World War began in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. By the summer of 1940 it looked as though Germany would overrun all of Europe. In 1941 matters got worse for Britain as Japan invaded her possessions in the Far East. However, in 1942 the tide gradually turned, especially after the Soviet Union and the USA entered the war in 1941. By 1945 Germany was defeated and Japan surrendered early in September 1945.

A vital part of Britain's war effort was the contribution of the Empire and Commonwealth countries. South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Canada all contributed forces. So did the Caribbean islands and African colonies. The largest contribution of manpower came from India.

It's worth knowing that...

Winston Churchill had an extremely varied career as a politician. He was responsible for some important successes but also some disastrous failures (such as the Gallipoli Campaign in WW1). He also changed from the Conservative to the Liberal party and then rejoined the Conservatives. By the 1930s he was an isolated figure and many leading political figures distrusted him. However, the crisis of 1940 was perfectly suited to his abilities and he became a legend as a result of his war leadership. He has often been voted Greatest Briton.

It may be that one of the reasons why Churchill has such a formidable reputation is that he wrote the history books about the Second World War! He more or less admitted that one of the aims of his writing was to safeguard his reputation. In other parts of the world he is less well regarded. He was very anti-Communist and so Soviet historians disliked him. He also had a reputation for brutality and treachery in his dealings with Ireland. This is why many in Ireland disliked him, and many Irish Americans had mixed feelings about him.

How will you use this source?

1. Does the writer of the telegram admire Churchill?
2. Is the writer critical of Churchill in any way?
3. What was the 'stupendous task' that has been achieved?
4. Do you agree that this telegram suggests that Churchill's work is now accomplished (finished)?

You could use the framework for Churchill's reply.