After Victory, What Next?

Trace how the consequences of World War II shaped U.S. foreign policy.

SS24.US2.7e "Explain how key consequences of World War II shaped United States foreign policy after the war."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least three problems the United States faced after World War II, circle a U.S. policy response to each one, and write matching numbers beside each problem and response.

A New Role After the War

1. In 1945, Europe faced shattered railways, damaged factories, and severe food shortages. American leaders feared that hunger and unemployment would destabilize governments and give communist parties more support. A European collapse could also hurt American trade. Instead of withdrawing after victory, the United States took a larger role in recovery. In 1948, it launched the Marshall Plan, which supplied economic aid to European countries willing to cooperate on rebuilding. The aid helped restore production and trade. It also served a political purpose: leaders hoped that more stable societies would be less likely to turn toward Soviet influence.

2. Wartime cooperation with the Soviet Union gave way to rivalry as Soviet-backed governments tightened control in Eastern Europe. American officials concluded that Soviet power should be contained, rather than allowed to spread. In 1948, the Soviet Union blocked land routes into West Berlin, a city surrounded by Soviet-controlled territory. The United States and its allies responded by flying supplies into the city instead of abandoning it or fighting their way through. The crisis strengthened arguments for a lasting alliance. In 1949, the United States joined NATO, promising to help defend its members if they were attacked.

3. The war also ended with the first use of atomic bombs, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their destructive power changed the stakes of any future conflict. After the Soviet Union tested its own atomic bomb in 1949, a direct clash between the superpowers carried growing risks of nuclear war. American leaders did not abandon competition with the Soviet Union, but they sought ways to limit the chance that a crisis would become a world war. During the Korean War, the United States fought under a United Nations command but avoided attacking the Soviet Union itself. Resisting expansion now required careful limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did conditions in Europe after the war lead the United States to launch the Marshall Plan?

2. How did the blockade of West Berlin shape the U.S. response there?

3. Why did growing rivalry with the Soviet Union help lead the United States to join NATO?

4. How did the development of atomic weapons affect U.S. choices during the Korean War?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose European factories and trade had recovered quickly by 1948. In one paragraph of about 80 to 100 words, explain how that change might have affected the Marshall Plan and whether joining NATO would still have made sense. Use evidence from two different paragraphs of the passage.

ANSWER KEY

After Victory, What Next?

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.7e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least three problems the United States faced after World War II, circle a U.S. policy response to each one, and write matching numbers beside each problem and response. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did conditions in Europe after the war lead the United States to launch the Marshall Plan?	**Damage, shortages, and unemployment threatened Europe's stability and American trade. The United States offered aid to support recovery and reduce the appeal of communist parties.**
2	How did the blockade of West Berlin shape the U.S. response there?	**Because the Soviet Union blocked land routes, the United States and its allies flew in supplies rather than abandon the city or fight through the blockade.**
3	Why did growing rivalry with the Soviet Union help lead the United States to join NATO?	**Soviet control in Eastern Europe and the Berlin crisis strengthened the case for an alliance whose members would help defend one another.**
4	How did the development of atomic weapons affect U.S. choices during the Korean War?	**The risk of a wider nuclear war made a direct clash with the Soviet Union more dangerous. The United States fought in Korea but avoided attacking the Soviet Union itself.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If Europe's factories and trade had recovered quickly by 1948, the United States might have offered a smaller Marshall Plan because economic collapse would pose less danger to political stability and American trade. NATO could still make sense. Soviet-backed governments had tightened control in Eastern Europe, and the blockade of West Berlin showed that military pressure remained a concern. Faster economic recovery would not erase that rivalry. The United States might therefore spend less on rebuilding while still promising to help defend its allies.

Accept other plausible changes to the Marshall Plan if students explain how faster recovery changes the need for aid. Responses should also use evidence about Soviet rivalry to support a separate judgment about NATO.