Power After Moscow

Trace how Soviet decline changed political choices and global influence.

MWH.C.7.6.D "Analyze the effect of the collapse of the Soviet Union on global power dynamics, including the emergence of new democracies in Eastern Europe."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two statements about changes in global power, then number three sentences that show how the end of Soviet control changed political choices in Eastern Europe.

A New Balance of Power

1. In November 1989, crowds crossed the newly opened Berlin Wall. The Soviet Union still existed, but its leaders had stopped using force to keep communist governments in power across Eastern Europe. Protests and negotiations helped bring down those governments. In Poland, opposition groups including Solidarity won seats in partially free elections in 1989, and the country held fully free parliamentary elections in 1991. Hungary held competitive multiparty elections in 1990. These changes began before the Soviet Union dissolved. They show how weakening Soviet control opened space for voters and new parties to challenge one-party rule.

2. In December 1991, the Soviet Union broke apart into fifteen independent states. Its former republics faced different paths, and not all became stable democracies. For Eastern European countries once tied to Moscow, the breakup made a return to Soviet military control far less likely. Poland and Hungary could make foreign-policy choices without taking orders from a Soviet superpower. Both later joined NATO in 1999, turning former Soviet allies into members of a Western security alliance. These changes did not mean that every problem disappeared. Economic hardship and disputes over how quickly to reform still tested the new democracies.

3. The collapse also changed the balance of power beyond Europe. During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union had led rival blocs with worldwide military reach. After 1991, the United States had no comparable superpower rival, giving it greater freedom to shape international actions. Russia inherited the Soviet Union's seat on the United Nations Security Council and most of its nuclear arsenal, so it remained influential, but it no longer led the same network of allied communist governments. Power did not become equal everywhere: the United States gained relative influence, while Eastern European governments gained room to choose their own paths.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Soviet decision not to use force before 1991 help change government in Poland or Hungary?

2. Why would it be inaccurate to say that Eastern European democratization began when the Soviet Union broke apart?

3. How did the Soviet breakup affect the security alliance choices of Poland and Hungary?

4. Why did the United States gain relative global influence after 1991 even though Russia remained powerful?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 105 word museum label explaining two ways power shifted after the Soviet collapse: one involving global influence and one involving political choices in Eastern Europe. Use Poland or Hungary as an example, and include one detail that complicates a simple victory story.

Power After Moscow

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two statements about changes in global power, then number three sentences that show how the end of Soviet control changed political choices in Eastern Europe. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Soviet decision not to use force before 1991 help change government in Poland or Hungary?	**Without Soviet force protecting communist governments, opposition groups could challenge one-party rule. Poland's opposition won seats in 1989, and Hungary held competitive multiparty elections in 1990.**
2	Why would it be inaccurate to say that Eastern European democratization began when the Soviet Union broke apart?	**Political change began earlier: Poland held partially free elections in 1989, and Hungary held competitive multiparty elections in 1990. The Soviet Union dissolved in 1991.**
3	How did the Soviet breakup affect the security alliance choices of Poland and Hungary?	**With a return to Soviet military control far less likely, both countries could choose a new alliance. They joined NATO in 1999.**
4	Why did the United States gain relative global influence after 1991 even though Russia remained powerful?	**The United States no longer faced a comparable superpower rival. Russia retained a UN Security Council seat and most Soviet nuclear weapons but no longer led the same network of allied communist governments.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, power shifted in two different ways. The United States faced no comparable superpower rival and gained more influence over international actions. In Eastern Europe, countries also gained power to make their own political and security choices. Poland's fully free parliamentary elections in 1991 showed voters choosing among parties, and its entry into NATO in 1999 showed a new foreign-policy direction. Yet the change was not a simple victory everywhere. Economic hardship tested new democracies, and some former Soviet republics did not become stable democracies.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect explanations grounded in the passage. For Part 3, look for both a shift in global influence and increased Eastern European choice, supported by an example and a qualification.