Alliances and Influence

How Cold War alliances shaped choices across Europe

USH.C.6.1.E "Describe the roles and consequences of the spheres of influence created by the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each alliance did for its members, and circle consequences of the two spheres of influence for European countries.

Two Alliances, Two Spheres

1. Imagine standing at a Berlin crossing in the 1960s. On one side, West Berlin was closely tied to democratic West Germany; on the other, East Berlin was governed by communist East Germany. The city made Europe's Cold War division visible, although Berlin itself was not simply a border between two alliances. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union competed for influence over European governments. A sphere of influence is an area where a powerful country strongly shapes other countries' choices. Military alliances helped define two such spheres, shaping who offered protection and who held power.

2. In 1949, the United States, Canada, and several Western European countries formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. Members pledged collective defense: an attack on one would be treated as an attack on all. For governments in Western Europe, NATO offered US military backing against possible Soviet aggression. It also strengthened the United States' influence in the West, while member countries kept their own governments and could debate alliance decisions. West Germany joined NATO in 1955. For the Soviet Union, that step placed a rearmed former enemy within the Western alliance and sharpened fears about security.

3. In 1955, the Soviet Union and seven Eastern European states formed the Warsaw Pact, partly in response to West Germany's entry into NATO. It promised mutual defense, but Soviet leaders exercised far more control over these allies than the United States did over NATO members. The pact reinforced Soviet influence over Eastern Europe and kept Soviet forces stationed there. In 1968, Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia to crush reforms that Soviet leaders viewed as a threat to their control. The competing spheres divided Europe, and each side built up forces, fueling an arms race. Direct war also became risky because fighting one alliance could bring in the other.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did NATO's defense pledge shape the Western sphere of influence?

2. How did the Warsaw Pact strengthen Soviet control in its sphere? Use the event in the passage as evidence.

3. How did West Germany's entry into NATO affect the Soviet Union and the formation of the Warsaw Pact?

4. Describe one consequence of the two spheres for Europe as a whole. How did the alliances contribute to it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence briefing for a student in 1968 who asks whether alliance membership always means losing control of national decisions. Compare NATO and the Warsaw Pact, give a consequence for a member country, and explain a consequence for Europe.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.1.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each alliance did for its members, and circle consequences of the two spheres of influence for European countries. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did NATO's defense pledge shape the Western sphere of influence?	**Collective defense gave Western European members US military backing against possible Soviet aggression and strengthened US influence.**
2	How did the Warsaw Pact strengthen Soviet control in its sphere? Use the event in the passage as evidence.	**The pact kept Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 to crush reforms Soviet leaders saw as a threat.**
3	How did West Germany's entry into NATO affect the Soviet Union and the formation of the Warsaw Pact?	**It heightened Soviet security fears because a rearmed former enemy had joined NATO. The Warsaw Pact formed partly in response.**
4	Describe one consequence of the two spheres for Europe as a whole. How did the alliances contribute to it?	**The spheres fueled an arms race as each side built up forces to compete with the other. Also accept that they divided Europe or made direct war risky because fighting one alliance could involve the other.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

No, membership did not always mean losing control of national decisions. NATO members could debate alliance decisions while relying on collective defense. A Warsaw Pact country that challenged Soviet control could face intervention, as Czechoslovakia did in 1968. These different power relationships divided Europe and helped fuel an arms race.

Accept other passage-supported consequences, including the risk that a conflict could draw in both alliances. Responses should distinguish NATO members' ability to debate decisions from the Soviet Union's greater control over Warsaw Pact members.