

IBSBMUN 2022



Study Guide Historical Security Council

The Warsaw Pact Invasion of
Czechoslovakia (1968)





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Welcoming Letter

Dear delegates,

We are truly honored to welcome you to the Historical Security Council of IBSBMUN 2022! We are confident that this committee will exceed your expectations; and that by the end of the conference, you will have a more in-depth understanding of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. As your chairpersons, we take onto ourselves the responsibility of making this experience a pleasant and memorable one for you.

Remember that the Study Guide is only the first step in your research process. Knowing your country's stance will help you during the heated debate and give you a holistic understanding of the matters at hand. Also, make sure to read about other countries' involvement and do not be afraid to bring up your findings during the committee sessions. We also recommend that you familiarize yourself with the historical terms described in this document and the suggested further research questions and reading placed at the end of the Study Guide.

When giving speeches, be mindful of the time constraints and use the allocated minutes to communicate relevant proposals. Try to participate as much as you can by raising your placards enthusiastically, asking for Points of Information, and interacting with the other delegations - both during the formal and informal sessions!

We cannot wait to meet all of you. Our goal is to make each one of you feel comfortable and supported in this exciting HSC. If you have any questions or simply wish to say hello, do not hesitate to contact us via email or Whatsapp. See you there!

All the best,

Ana Aronescu (Cat), Rafael Duque, and Ruxanda Rusu (Ruxi)

Chairpersons of the HSC, IBSBMUN 2022

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Committee Outline

The Security Council is one of the six main United Nations organs, entrusted with upkeeping international peace and security. The Council was established immediately as the UN was set up following the Second World War and its powers include establishing peacekeeping operations, enacting international sanctions, and authorizing military action.

Unlike other UN organs, the UNSC is empowered to impose binding resolutions on all of the 193 members of the organization.

While Chapter VI of the UN Charter encourages state parties to seek solutions to international threats, such as negotiation, arbitration, and other peaceful means, under Chapter VIII, the UNSC can impose sanctions or authorize the use of force “to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

The Security Council consists of 15 member countries, five of those being permanent states (the P5) with veto power: the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the French Republic, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom. Veto power allows permanent members to block any resolution or decision, whatever the majority opinion within the Council. However, the other ten of the member countries are re-elected every two years.

It is important to note that, while the general manner of voting remains unchanged, some aspects of the regular voting procedure are different in the Security Council compared to a General Assembly committee: all procedural and substantive matters require a 60% majority to pass, rather than a simple majority, and the P5 members hold veto power. Thus, for all substantive votes, all the P5 states must either vote “in favour” or abstain for it to pass, since an “against” vote would make the vote automatically fail.

Within this edition of IBSBMUN, the Historical Security Council will essentially function like the Security Council. However, instead of tackling current issues, the delegates are tasked with dealing with the sudden invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968.

Topic Introduction



Soviet tanks in central Prague, on August 21, 1968. Source: Libor Hajsky / Reuters

By 1968 the Soviet Union had built up and was working tirelessly to maintain the Iron Curtain following their expansion in the Second World War. As a satellite state on the western border of the Union, Czechoslovakia was meant to remain an *authoritarian* communist-led country, just like the rest of the Eastern Bloc to uphold the integrity and security of the USSR.

However, in early 1968 the country went astray from this objective. The new Czech government began a process of reform known as the “Prague Spring”, and the Soviet Union quickly became concerned.

Following failed negotiations between the new Czechoslovakian Leader Alexander Dubček and the Kremlin, the USSR decided to take drastic action. In hopes of quelling these new liberating reform efforts, the Soviets reached out to their Warsaw Pact allies to plan an invasion into Czechoslovakia and intervene. Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Hungary subsequently threw their support behind this Soviet plan - but two nations refused to do so: Albania and Romania.



Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts

Terms and concepts	Definition
Warsaw Pact	“A treaty establishing a mutual-defense organization (Warsaw Treaty Organization) signed in 1955 and composed originally of the Soviet Union and Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The treaty provided for a unified military command and for the presence of Soviet military units on the territories of the other participating states.” ¹
Prague Spring	“A brief period of liberalization in Czechoslovakia under Alexander Dubček in 1968.” ²
Brezhnev Doctrine	“A Soviet foreign policy outlined in 1968 which called for the use of Warsaw Pact (but Russian-dominated) troops to intervene in any Eastern Bloc nation which was seen to compromise communist rule and Soviet domination.” ³

¹ Warsaw Pact | Summary, History, Countries, Map, Significance, & Facts. (n.d.). Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved January 6, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Warsaw-Pa>

² Prague Spring | Czechoslovak history. (n.d.). Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Prague-Spring>

³ The Soviets Managed Eastern Bloc Affairs With the Brezhnev Doctrine. (2019, February 25). ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-brezhnev-doctrine-1221487>



Historical Timeline

May 1965: On the 14th, the formerly known, Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, or simply the Warsaw Pact was signed in the aftermath of West Germany affiliating with the Alliance. It completed the USSR's Council for Mutual Economic Acceptance, imposed on communist states in Central and Eastern Europe.

January 1968: On the 5th, Alexander Dubcek succeeded Antonin Novotny as the Communist Party leader in Czechoslovakia, pledging to continue with major reforms. Party liberals and intellectuals rebuked Novotny for his administration's poor economic performance and anti-Slovak bias. Dubcek is seen as the excellent compromise candidate, satisfactory to both the orthodox party members and reform wing.

February: The Communist Party's leadership supports a broadening of the 1967 financial reform agenda. Reporters, academics, and authors demand that the Press Censorship Act of 1966 be repealed.

March: Pro-reform marches take place in Prague and other districts, with mounting opposition of Novotny's administration. After being pressured by party liberals, Novotny resigned as president on March 22. Generál Ludvík Svoboda gets elected President of Czechoslovakia on March 30th. Svoboda was a war hero who served in the Czechoslovak army when the Russian Civil War broke out in 1918.

April: The Communist Party's Action Program is published on the 5th, as part of an effort to give "socialism a human face." It demands that the economic and political systems be "democratized." The paper refers to a "one-of-a-kind democratic communism experiment." In elections, the Socialist Party would then have to compete with other parties. Over a 10-year period, the document envisions a progressive reorganization of the political system. Oldrich Cernik, a Dubcek loyalist and reformer, created a single government on the 18th. The liberalization is well underway. The media has become increasingly vocal in its sympathy for freedoms.

May: The new cause receives a lot of support on May Day (the 1st of May). Czechoslovak leaders visit Moscow on the 4th and 5th and the Soviet leadership is disappointed with the situation in Czechoslovakia. On the 29th, a group of top Soviet military personnel travel to Czechoslovakia to prepare the framework for future Soviet military operations.

June: Censorship is formally lifted on 26th. On the 27th, the Two Thousand Words manifesto was issued in Literarni Listy as well as other newspapers, signed by reformers including some Central Committee members. It advocates for "democratization," and also the re-establishment of the Social Democratic Party and the formation of citizen committees. The declaration offers a more extreme alternative to the April Action Program of the Communist Party. The manifesto is opposed by the political leadership, which includes Dubcek.

July: The Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and Bulgaria assemble in Warsaw on the 15th. They send a diplomatic message to the new Czechoslovak government, warning them that "the situation in Czechoslovakia jeopardizes the collective critical interests of all socialist countries." The presidiums of the Czechoslovak and Soviet communist parties meet in Cierna-nad-Tisou from July 29 to August 1. Reforms, according to Dubcek, did not jeopardize the party's function, but rather strengthened public support. These arguments are rejected by the Soviets, who harshly criticize Czechoslovak actions. Invasion threats are made. East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union announce military exercises along the Czechoslovak border on July 31.

August: Bratislava hosts a Warsaw Pact conference (without Romania) on the 3rd. The encounter seemed to draw the Warsaw Pact members and the Czechoslovak authorities closer together. The so-called Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty is announced for the first time here. Five members of the Czechoslovak Presidium write a handwritten letter to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, warning that the socialist order seems to be at risk. They want the army to intervene. On the 18th, the Kremlin prepares to invade Czechoslovakia. "The invasion will take place even if it leads to a third world war," Soviet Defense Minister Andrei Grechko warned the assembled Soviet Politburo and troop commanders, according to General Aleksandr Mayorov, the commander of Soviet Central Forces.



- **01:00:** State Radio declares an invasion by soldiers from five Warsaw Pact nations (the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary) on the 21st. According to the report, the invasion occurred without the knowledge of Czechoslovak authorities. "The Presidium calls on all Republic people to

respect the peace and not confront the invading army, because defending our borders is no longer viable." The military is instructed to remain in their quarters and not to partake in any resistance.

- **03:00:** The four key reformers in Czechoslovak leadership, Oldrich Cernik, Dubcek, Jozef Smrkovsky, and Frantisek Kriegel, are arrested by Soviet airborne forces at the Communist Party's Presidium headquarters on the 21st. The forces were brought in "to come to the aid of the working class and all the people of Czechoslovakia to defend socialist gains," according to the occupying authorities' leaflets.
- **05:30:** According to Tass, Czechoslovak Party and government leaders asked the Soviet Union and other friendly countries for immediate aid.
- **06:00:** Svoboda gives a radio transmission, asking the public to be calm and return to work as usual.
- **08:00:** In Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square, civilians and Soviet troops face off. Tanks appeared at the National Museum and began to fire at neighboring buildings and the institution itself. Dubcek as well as other officeholders are transported to Moscow and forced to meet with the Kremlin's authorities. They sign a paper in which members acquiesce to the deployment of Soviet soldiers in Czechoslovakia and abandon sections of the reform program. Western governments, as well as communist and socialist groups in the West, have condemned the invasion. President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States calls on the Soviet Union to leave Czechoslovakia.



Czech demonstrate in the streets, following the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. The banner they are carrying reads: 'Never Again with the Soviet Union.' Source: Bettmann Getty



August: Svoboda, accompanied by a large team of Czechoslovak Communist leaders, flies to Moscow on the 23rd to negotiate a solution. On the 25th, Czechoslovak authorities signed a Moscow protocol, which renounces portions of the structural reforms and allows Soviet forces to remain in Czechoslovakia. Svoboda, Dubcek, and Cernik arrive in Prague on the 27th. The 14th Party Congress is proclaimed null and void, as mandated by the Moscow Protocol on the 31st, and the government reintroduces censorship.

October: Czechoslovakia is becoming a federal republic, achieving the only primary objective of the reform process on the 28th.

Jan 1969: Jan Palach, a Czechoslovak pupil, lights himself on fire in protest on the 16th.

April: Dubcek is ousted as the party's first secretary on the 17th, following riots in Stockholm and after the Czechoslovak hockey recent success over a Soviet team. With the total endorsement of the Soviet Union, Dubcek is succeeded by Gustav Husak.

Main Actors

Czechoslovakia

On January 5th 1968, Alexander Dubček was appointed First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC). After his election came the Prague Spring, broadly known as a period of political liberalization and mass dissent within the Czechoslovak Communist Republic (ČSSR).

Dubček pushed forward for democratization and a partial decentralization of the economy in Czechoslovakia – unlike other communist leaders. By relaxing restrictions on the media, speech, and movement, he attempted to grant additional rights to the citizens of Czechoslovakia.

In April, Dubček announced his “Action Programme”, which acknowledged the importance of the freedom of press and speech and the possibility of a government composed of multiple parties. Dubček was interested in cooperating with the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc nations while fostering at the same time good relations with the Western countries as well. He also rehabilitated the political victims of the

Stalin era. Furthermore, the program suggested a ten-year transition period in which Czechoslovakia could hold democratic elections under a new form of democratic socialism, a so-called “socialism with a human face”.

Freedom of press and speech generated a mass of shifts in Czechoslovakian cultural life. With time, non-party publications started appearing, such as the trade union daily *Prace* (Labor), and editors could receive uncensored subscriptions to foreign papers; discussions on the current state of communism among people were becoming more present than ever. Additionally, television was introduced into the lives of everyday Czechoslovak citizens, and many writers and political victims were given a platform to share their ideas. By June, the Czechs were asking for real democracy.



Soldiers sitting on tanks in the streets of Prague on August 26, 1968. Source: Bettmann/Getty

Czechoslovakia did not prepare for the invasion because it was convinced neither the Soviet Union nor other Warsaw Pact members would invade due to the raised costs and international response such an intervention would generate. As such, Czechoslovakia did not raise any international support and did not prepare militarily (e.g. blocking the roads).

The Soviet Union was displeased with Czechoslovakia’s liberalization initiatives and decided to intervene militarily. Although Dubček told his people not to resist, there was some resistance in the streets. The Passive Resistance employed peaceful tactics, such as standing in front of the tanks and offering flowers to the soldiers.



The Czechs refused to cooperate by chanting anti-soviet slogans and painting out all signposts except those pointing back to Moscow.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

As previously mentioned, the Soviet Union was concerned about the reforms in Czechoslovakia, fearing it would weaken its position in the Cold War with the United States of America.

At the meeting on March 23rd, 1968 of the “Warsaw Five” (USSR, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, and East Germany), the Soviet Union criticized the new reforms, arguing that any talk about democratization was against the Soviet pre-established model. In May, the KGB began Operation Progress: Soviet-trained agents would infiltrate the Czechoslovak pro-democratic organizations.

Before resorting to military action, the Soviet leadership tried to negotiate with the ČSSR in an attempt to halt or limit the new reforms. Reaching a compromise, on 3 August, the Warsaw Five and Czechoslovakia signed the Bratislava Declaration. Here, the Soviet Union expressed its plan to intervene if the communist rule was under threat and agreed to withdraw its troops from Czechoslovakia to the borders to permit the 9 September party congress. Despite this, the talk proved ineffective, resulting in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Leonid Brezhnev was at the time the First Secretary of the Communist Party in the USSR. Brezhnev developed the Soviet foreign policy that called on military intervention where the communist rule was at risk. The Brezhnev doctrine was a response to the Prague Spring and was officially introduced in the “Sovereignty and International Obligations of Socialist Countries” document, published in 1968 in *Pravda* (the newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). This doctrine helped to finalize the Sino-Soviet split, as Beijing feared that the Soviet Union would use the doctrine as a justification to invade or interfere with Chinese communism and was also used as the primary justification for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Afraid of instability, the USSR was deeply concerned about any liberal ideas spreading to Eastern states. At the time, Czechoslovakia managed to develop the strongest industry in the whole Eastern Bloc, and as a result, the Soviet Union feared Czechoslovakia’s economic trade links with West Germany.

The ČSSR government revealed on the night of the invasion that the Warsaw Pact entered the country without their knowledge, however, the Soviet Press printed an



unsigned request from Czechoslovakian state leaders asking for "immediate assistance, including assistance with armed forces".

The United States of America

At the time, the USA was engaged in the Vietnam War. Although they condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the USA refrained from sending troops into the country. The NATO allies were interested in diminishing tensions; thus they did not intervene.



Further Research Questions

How should the UN's Security Council react to this pinnacle event in Eastern European history?

- Should the Warsaw Pact members be sanctioned for the invasion?
- What possible solutions might be implemented to prevent similar invasions in the future?
- What repercussions did the invasion and USSR's attitudes and actions have on the security and integrity of the Eastern Bloc?
- What were the initial goals and desired outcomes of the invasion?
- How did the other members of the Warsaw Pact (Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Albania, Romania) react to the invasion? What was their implication?

Further Reading

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