

RENMUN VII

Peace in Permanence



March 5-6, 2022

Chair Report

Chair Introduction

Dear delegates,

We are Coleman and Thomas, and we're honoured to be your chairs for the 7th iteration of RENMUN. The UN Security Council has a long history of resolving conflicts globally, having successfully intervened in conflicts across different continents since the council's creation in 1945. Being one of the main organs of the United Nations, the UN Security Council looks to maintain international peace and security, and the Historical Security Council is no different in this regard. While the topics of discussion and debate are set in the past, the principles of peace and settling disputes between countries should still be closely adhered to.

However, with HSC being set in the past, it does come with a few caveats. Delegates should be always mindful about the cut-off dates for each topic and ensure that research and information they find on the topics be within the dates provided. This is a feature wholly unique to HSC, and while it might seem like a hindrance, it only serves to enhance discussion and debate by putting delegates directly into the shoes of those who need to deal with the immediate fallout of the topic at hand.

We look forward to seeing the fruits of your research and preparation. If you have any questions regarding the council or its procedures, please feel free to contact any one of us. Best of luck and hope to see all of you soon.

Best Regards,

Head Chair Thomas Ng (thomasng2023@cdnis.edu.hk)

Deputy Chair Coleman Hong (colemanhong.dbs@gmail.com)

Cutoff Date: August 21, 1968

The Prague Spring

The Prague Spring was a period of liberalisation and reformation by the Czechoslovak government that started on January 5, 1968, and ended with the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and countries of the Warsaw Pact on August 20, 1968. While the invasion itself was unprovoked, Soviet leadership had been dissatisfied with the reforms introduced by the Czechoslovak government. After the Czechoslovak government refused to back down after negotiations, the Soviets decided on military intervention.

After being elected the first secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Alexander Dubček introduced many reforms in the Czechoslovak government which saw the country moving away from socialism, which included the decentralisation of the economy and emergence of other, non-communist political parties among other reforms. Among the Czechoslovak populace, the reforms were popular and well-received as it allowed political discourse and increased freedoms for Czechoslovak citizens. However, other communist hardliners in the government spoke out against the reforms, and the Soviet Union grew more concerned for the reforms as time went on, attempting on several occasions to convince the Czechoslovak government to curb the reforms.

With Czechoslovakia being a member of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet leadership attempted negotiations with Czechoslovak over fears that Czechoslovakia's reforms might weaken the position of the Soviet bloc. When these negotiations proved unsatisfactory to the Soviets, they resorted to military action, invading Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Brezhnev Doctrine	A foreign policy put forth by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on August 3, 1968, that proclaimed that any threat to socialist rule in socialist states justifies the Soviet Union to intervene, even militarily.

Political Liberalisation	The loosening of government control over laws and economic systems, which includes the relaxation of certain laws and restrictions of freedom.
Socialism	An economic and political system based on public ownership, in which all legal production and distribution decisions are made by the government, and individuals rely on the state for goods and services.
Warsaw Pact	The Warsaw Pact (formally the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance), is a treaty establishing a mutual-defence organisation which includes the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Signed on May 14, 1955 it was made in response to the western NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation).

Background Information

Through a parliamentary election in 1946, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia took power by winning 38% of the votes. However, support from the Czechoslovak populace quickly eroded due to unpopular policies such as the nationalisation of industries and continuously allowing the Soviet Union to interfere with local Czechoslovak politics. This caused the Czechoslovak Communist Party to, with the help of the Soviet Union, stage a coup d'état in 1948, the outcome of which was the mass censorship of the media and the banning of all other political parties.

In the early 1960s, Czechoslovakia attempted to adopt the model of industrialization used by other Soviet satellite states. However, this caused a severe economic downturn as Czechoslovakia was already heavily industrialised before World War II. In response, the government adopted a set of economic reforms in 1965 titled the "New Economic Model", which saw the adoption of more capitalist economic policies like the abolishment of price and wage controls. These economic reforms were one of the catalysts for further political reforms during the Prague Spring.

On January 5, 1968, Alexander Dubček was elected as the first secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia after his predecessor, Antonín Novotný, resigned due to internal pressure from within the party and lack of support from the Soviet Union. After gaining power, Dubček and other reformers sought to liberalise the government, instigating the Prague Spring. Under an "Action Plan" of liberizations launched in April of 1968, Dubček abolished censorship in Czechoslovakia and opened the possibility of a multiparty government. The

“Action Plan” also called for the federalization of Czechoslovakia into two equal nations. These reforms caused the media to be able to discuss political matters, as well as opening up Czechoslovakia's history to its people.

The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries were concerned and displeased with the reforms in Czechoslovakia, believing them to be a threat to socialism in other states, weakening the Soviet bloc. Thus, efforts were made to limit the effect of the Czechoslovak reforms. On July 29, 1968, bilateral talks were held with Soviet and Czechoslovak leadership at Čierna nad Tisou, however both sides could only agree on minor compromises, with Dubček defending the reform, stating that they were an internal Czechoslovak matter.

After dissatisfactory talks, the Soviets looked to military intervention to curb the reforms. On August 3, 1968, in a meeting with other Warsaw Pact countries, the Brezhnev Doctrine was proclaimed, which called for Soviet intervention, even militarily, if any country's socialist rule is deemed under threat. Not all communist factions agreed with the Brezhnev Doctrine, with the Chinese Communist Party in particular heavily objecting to it, believing it to be a basis for the Soviet Union to invade other countries.

With such a proclamation, the Soviets decided on July 18, 1968 to invade Czechoslovakia. On the night of July 20, armies from 4 of the Warsaw Pact countries, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary, invaded Czechoslovakia. 200,000 troops and 2,000 tanks entered the country and faced little armed resistance, although non-violent resistance by citizens persisted. Dubček and other reformers were quickly arrested and taken to Moscow.

Timeline

Date	Event
26 May 1946	The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia wins the parliamentary election
June 1966	The “New Economic Mode”, a set of economic reforms is approved
5 January 1968	Alexander Dubcek replaces Antonin Novotny as Party leader
5 April 1968	The Czechoslovak “Action Plan” is implemented, marking the start of reforms
4-5 May 1968	Czechoslovak leaders visit Moscow, with Soviet leadership expressing dissatisfaction with reforms in Czechoslovakia.
26 June 1968	Censorship is officially abolished in Czechoslovakia

15 July 1968	Representatives of the Warsaw Pact countries, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, meet in Warsaw and sends "The Warsaw Letter" to Czechoslovakia expressing concern for the reforms
19 July - 1 August 1968	Negotiations are held between Soviet and Czechoslovak leadership in Cierna-nad-Tisou, With the Czechoslovak government defending the reforms, leaving Soviet leadership dissatisfied
31 July 1968	Warsaw Pact countries announce military exercises near Czechoslovakia
3 August 1968	The Brezhnev Doctrine is proclaimed by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in a meeting in Bratislava with other Warsaw Pact countries
18 August 1968	Soviet leadership decide on the invasion of Czechoslovakia
20 August 1968	Soviet Union invades Czechoslovakia with troops from other Warsaw Pact countries
21 August 1968	Czechoslovak leadership is arrested and airlifted to Moscow

Potential Clashes

Clashes regarding the Prague Spring revolve around the views on the reforms made during that period, and the proclamation of the Brezhnev Doctrine as justification for the invasion. Views on both matters culminate in countries' different views and responses regarding the invasion of Czechoslovakia. However, ideological differences aside, other international happenings may cause some countries to be less outspoken on certain clashes.

Political Liberalisation in Czechoslovakia

Some countries might seek to halt or at least limit the effect of the reforms in Czechoslovakia, especially those with a socialist or communist ideology. With Czechoslovakia being an Eastern European country, its democratisation vastly weakens the Soviet bloc, as the reforms focus on moving away from the Soviet model of socialism. The reforms also have the potential to influence other Soviet satellites and their ideologies as they look to implement similar reforms, affecting both the security and stability of the Soviet bloc as a whole.

On the other hand, some capitalist countries might see the reforms as beneficial to their agenda. While still part of the Warsaw Pact, through the reforms, Czechoslovakia slowly underwent democratisation and adopted capitalist ideas, especially in the economy. During this time, Czechoslovakia also sought to

maintain good relations with western nations, and increased trade with West Germany. Western countries might seek to allow Czechoslovakia to continue their reforms as they slowly move away from Soviet socialism.

Legitimacy of the Brezhnev Doctrine

The Brezhnev Doctrine is seen by the Soviet Union as the solution to prevent the destabilisation of the Soviet bloc. It ensures that socialist countries will remain socialist; and if the country's socialism is seen to be under threat, the Soviet Union can intervene accordingly. It consolidated the strong grip that the Soviet Union has on its satellite states, while justifying any potential intervention efforts.

However, communist and socialist countries outside the Soviet bloc might see the doctrine as a threat to their own national safety. Countries like China see the doctrine as a rationale that can be invoked by the Soviet Union at their discretion, that legitimises the use of unilateral force against other Communist bloc countries. The Brezhnev Doctrine has not been presented as an official document, therefore its legitimacy, and by extension the invasion of Czechoslovakia, can be called into question.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
Czechoslovakia	Reforms like the "Action Plan" introduced by the Czechoslovak government was the main driving force behind the Prague Spring as it allowed for more individual and cultural freedoms. The government's defiance towards the Soviet Union regarding the roll-back of the reforms was also the catalyst for the invasion of Czechoslovakia on July 20.
Soviet Union	The increase in freedom of press in Czechoslovakia due to the reforms caused mounting criticism against the Soviet Union and their model of socialism. The Soviet Union believed that the reforms in Czechoslovakia were a threat to the Soviet model of socialism and the security of the Soviet Union. If such liberal reforms spread to other Eastern European countries, it would cause instability and might incite rebellion against the Soviet Bloc.
China	While not particularly supportive of Dubček's government and its reforms, China saw the

	Brezhnev Doctrine as an ideological basis for the Soviet Union to interfere with Chinese communism, particularly disliking the fact that it were up to the Soviets what nations were properly Communist, invasion of Communist nations whose communism did not meet Soviet approval was justified. Thus China strongly objected to the Brezhnev Doctrine.
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Possible Solutions

Regarding the invasion of Czechoslovakia, countries could choose to officially legitimise and recognise the Brezhnev Doctrine, thus making the invasion by the Soviet Union completely justified. However, steps should be taken to either reinstate Dubček and the reformers, or transfer power to oversee the Czechoslovak government. Issues surrounding the Soviet occupying force and should also be addressed.

Alternatively, the invasion could be denounced and the Brezhnev Doctrine left unrecognised. This would paint the Soviets as the aggressors in invading Czechoslovakia. However, countries should also be aware of the wider world context, like the Cold War and the ongoing Vietnam war when considering the actions they are willing or able to take in response to the invasion.

Past Actions

Prior to the invasion, the Soviets attempted negotiations with the Czechoslovak government regarding the reforms, hoping to limit or even halt them. On July 15, 1968, representatives of the Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, East Germany and Bulgaria met in Warsaw. The product of the meeting was "The Warsaw Letter", in which the countries sent a diplomatic note to Czechoslovak leadership expressing their concern over the deteriorating situation in Czechoslovakia, and warned of the consequences of deviating from Soviet socialism.

Soviet and Czechoslovak leadership further attempted negotiations on July 29, 1968 at Čierna and Tisou, which lasted 4 days. During the meeting, Dubček was asked to remove certain reformists from the Czechoslovak government and to disband several organisations deemed as anti-socialist by the Soviets. Leonid Brezhnev also sharply criticised the freedom of speech in Czechoslovakia as it allowed Czechoslovak journalists to voice scathing criticism of the Soviet Union. Dubček responded by defending the reforms but agreeing to curb "anti-socialist" tendencies, all the while reaffirming allegiance to the Warsaw Pact.

Regarding the United Nations, no statements on their behalf have been made yet due to the sudden and unprovoked nature of the invasion. However the possibility of the Soviet Union being an aggressor in invading Czechoslovakia or Soviet interference in Czechoslovak politics could be addressed.

Guiding Questions

- Was the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union justified?
- To what extent is the Brezhnev Doctrine legitimate and recognised?
- Should the reforms made during the Prague Spring be continued, rolled back or not meddled with entirely?
- How should the aftermath of the invasion, for example the occupying Soviet force and arrested Czechoslovak leadership, be handled?

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