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ABSTRACT

The article begins with a summary of the events concerned with the invasion of Czechoslovakia by troops of the Soviet Union in August 1968 and places these events in the general context of East-West relations at that time. The author then uses the response to this crisis in foreign relations as an illustration of the function of international broadcasting in providing free flow of information across national borders. He describes the functions of the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe; then, he analyzes the responses of these three systems to the Czech situation as well as the resultant Soviet attempt to prevent the free flow of information. One justification for international broadcasting is to stimulate individual decision-making by broadening access to information and expression of controversy. The author contends that the governmental reforms in Czechoslovakia, which included freer flow of information, caused the Soviets to fear a lessening of their influence and thus prompted the 1968 invasion. (RN)

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# The Federal Communications Bar Association

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Federal Communications Bar Journal, Volume XXIII, No. 1, 1969



# THE CZECH CRISIS AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IN PERSPECTIVE

JON T. POWELL*

Czechoslovakia, less than one-fifth the size of Texas, lies in the heart of the East European bloc of nations. Like the other members of the Warsaw Pact, it exists in the shadow of Soviet might. Unlike the other bloc countries, Czechoslovakia, with a prominent middle class, had been experimenting with new freedoms which at once proclaimed a Czech change of attitude toward traditional Communist philosophy and posed a threat to the dominance of the Soviet Union by inserting a wedge of national independence into the tightly controlled socialist camp. Dubcek, the new liberal leader of the Czech peoples, was guiding his constituents to a freer, more independent role in East Europe. Soviet foreign policy, exemplified by the Warsaw Pact nations, stood challenged.

On August 21, 1968, Prague Radio announced to "all the people of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic" that:

> Yesterday, on 20th August, 1968 around 23:00 hours (as broadcast) troops of the Soviet Union, Polish People's Republic, the GDR, the Hungarian People's Republic and the Bulgarian People's Republic crossed the state frontiers of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.[1]

This same radio broadcast went on to emphasize that the invasion of troops took place without the knowledge of the President of the Republic, the Chairman of the National Assembly, the Premier, or the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee. The broadcast message urged all citizens to remain calm, not to offer any

* Associate Professor, Department of Speech, Northern Illinios University, DeKalb, Illinois. B.A. (magna cum laude), St. Martin's College (1954); M.S., University of Oregon (1956); Ph. D., University of Oregon (1963).

[1] "Occupation of Czechoslovakia," *Summary of World Broadcasts Part 2 Eastern Europe* (Reading, England: BBC Monitoring Service, August 22, 1968) 1 (Corrigendum).

resistance to the advancing troops even though the Praesidium of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee regarded this act of aggression as not only in violation of the "fundamental principles of relations between Socialist states, but also as a denial of the basic norms of international law."[2]

The U.S.S.R., utilizing its own military forces and the leverage of the Warsaw Pact to involve forces of its East European satellite nations in a display of "unity," took a forceful step to assure that Czechoslovakia would not continue on a path of political liberalization which threatened the solidarity of the socialist camp and the stability of Communist ideology in East Europe. The invasion was the latest overt act to result from Soviet disenchantment with the liberal philosophy of the Dubcek government since its rise to power early in 1968. The action had all the earmarks of an earlier tragedy in 1956 in which Russian tanks effectively crushed the Hungarian revolution.

The West was angered by this blatant use of force even though Czechoslovakia was considered a Communist nation. The issue, as far as the Western powers were concerned, was the illegal armed intervention by a stronger power in the national life of a small socialist nation independently experimenting with programs and policies designed to liberalize basic human freedoms heretofore denied.

Basic to an appreciation of the role of international broadcasting in this crisis is an understanding of the general context within which East-West relations exist. The conditions of stress and strain which characterize current international relations are responsible in great part for the importance given to broadcasting across national boundaries. Though admittedly simplified, the following section will endeavor to place the issue of the Soviet invasion within the context of East-West relations.

[2] Ibid.

## The Context

The Dubcek regime, in the few months it had come to power, initiated a series of reforms which opened the door to greater individual freedom. Along with economic and other reforms, the new government acted to lessen censorship. Such a move corresponded exactly to the basic philosophy underlying the activities of the BBC, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe—that the healthy evolution of national independence rests upon individual decision-making free of imposed censorship. For that very reason the Soviets feared the possibility of a general breakdown in the East European bloc. The Director of Public Affairs for Free Europe Inc. assessed the situation in summary form as follows:

> The change offered by the new leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party involved economic reform with less centralization and more modernization; rehabilitation of those illegally imprisoned; and participation of all citizens in the work of the Communist Party by permitting uncensored communication. It was this last point which really bothered the Soviets. The Soviet concern was two-fold; a superficial feeling that Czechoslovakia was getting into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries and a real fear that the type of freedom offered by Czechoslovakia could lead to a complete change in the system and would spread to other countries.[3]

The invasion seemed to be a political miscalculation since the Soviets had the impression they would be welcomed in Czechoslovakia. Numerous incidents arising from the meeting of Soviet soldiers and Czech civilians, as described in such newspapers as the *New York Times*[4] illustrated the con-

[3] Letter from Gene P. Mater, Director of Public Affairs, Free Europe Inc., to Jon T. Powell dated November 6, 1968, p. 2.

[4] "People of Prague Screamed Defiance of Tank," *New York Times*, August 22, 1968, p. 1, col. 6.

fusion. Many of the armed forces expected to meet a counter-revolution, but none appeared. They were not at all sure why their presence was needed. As part of their passive line of resistance, the Czechs did little to relieve this uncertainty.

No one appeared to collaborate with the Soviets in imposing a new government and a return to the more severe restrictions of previous regimes. The people openly but with great restraint displayed their support for the Dubcek government. There was no open sign that the Czechs agreed with the Soviet invasion and there were many indications to the contrary.

In their efforts to control the flow of information, the Soviets had the Czech leaders removed to Moscow. They attempted to close down press, radio and television activities. What was at first a military and political action became a conflict in the field of communications:

> The people completely backed the existing regime. And, although the country's leaders were removed to Moscow, communication was maintained with the people. There was no communication gap. The Czechoslovak radio operated from 18 to 20 different locations and centrally directed, four channels of Czechoslovak TV were in operation clandestinely, and many publications continued to appear. The Soviets did not understand what was going on in the country and still do not understand the results of their invasion.
>
> Soviet attempts at moving into the communications field in Czechoslovakia failed. People did not listen to the Soviet-run radio station and did not read the Soviet-issued publications.[5]

Although the invasion may have caused the Soviets much embarrassment, it also clearly emphasized the contrasting role of the Western powers—led by the United States—in the con-

[5] Note 3, supra.

trol of Europe. "The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia has strikingly demonstrated the limits of the United States' ability to expand its influence in Eastern Europe and pursue a policy of 'building bridges' to the East."[6] The Soviet Union enjoys a physical continental relevance in Europe that the United States, separated by three thousand miles of ocean, does not have.

Western tolerance of Soviet dominance of this group of small, separated East European nations, caught between two major powers, still must rest on three key assumptions, each stressing an awareness of forces external to that geographical area. The first is that

> . . . Soviet policy in Eastern Europe is governed by parameters of changing political, military and economic factors outside Eastern Europe (i.e., within the Soviet Union and beyond the bloc).
>
> Second, lest there be any confusion about cause and effect in Soviet-East European relations or any tendency to overestimate the degree of Eastern Europe's freedom of action, it should be noted that the Soviets can—if they choose to ignore factors external to Eastern Europe and are willing to pay the price—reimpose their one-time harsh control over these states.
>
> And, third, the United States, in developing an effective policy toward the area, must take into account these broader external factors shaping Soviet policy.[7]

The Soviet invasion, surprising and upsetting as it was, reinforced the specific reasons by which the Western powers have continuously justified broadcasting across national boundaries into this sphere of political rule which is clearly hostile to such radio communication. These reasons are: (1)

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[6] Thomas, "U.S. - East European Relations: Strategic Issues," Orbis, XII, No. 3 (Fall, 1968) 754.

[7] Ibid.

East Europe is in a state of change, slow or accelerated, depending on the political leadership and the population of each nation; (2) this change, when reflected in greater political freedom and economic reform, can represent a clear and present danger to Soviet domination; (3) the Soviet Union is willing to exert military power in this limited area to maintain her dominance and to restrict threatening economic and political reforms; (4) the Western powers, realizing the primacy of Soviet rule based on territorial proximity, the results of former agreements (tacit and otherwise), and the advantages of a buffer zone to absorb direct East-West confrontation, cannot resort to military force. Under these imposed conditions, international broadcasting offers a means of an encouraging freedom and stability in the area without the threat of direct military repraisal.

Such communication may take the form of broadcasting protests voiced within the United Nations, Presidential messages, ambassadorial statements, policy statements, news, entertainment, etc. In most cases, these communications are relayed to the peoples of East Europe by the Western international broadcast services for two purposes: in order that such broadcasts will encourage the individual nations to evolve their own freedoms, and to let the captive peoples know that the rest of the world is aware of their situation. In a manner of speaking, the international broadcaster serves as the "feint" in the "feint and parry" manipulation of political and military power. His efforts are at once a safety valve for the expression of strong feeling, a medium for the exchange of information, and an agent in evolving national and international trends.

In this context of Soviet-West relations, polarized by the Czech crisis, the response of the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe to the first thrust of Soviet military power into Czechoslovakia in the latter part of August, 1968, illustrates the limitations of Western military power, the emphatic verbal response of free

nations, and the adaptability of international broadcasting to world crises.

## The Systems

### *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

The BBC External Services broadcast to overseas listeners in 39 languages a total of 100 hours of programming each day. These programs originate in Bush House, headquarters for the BBC External Services, and are broadcast by 60 transmitters in the United Kingdom and overseas. The staff members number approximately 3,700.[8] The main objective of BBC External broadcasts is to give unbiased news, to reflect British opinion, and to project British life, institutions and culture.[9]

The news department of the BBC External Services produces 170 news programs each day. World news bulletins, particularly, are widely rebroadcast by other radio stations overseas. The emphasis in reporting "is to give the facts objectively and with the greatest accuracy that careful checking can ensure."[10] The next separate stage is to provide coverage of British viewpoints:

> In this the External Services aim to give the British point of view as vigorously as possible. At the same time the BBC believes it necessary that where differences of opinion exist this should also be reflected. It is laid on the External Services to speak in the national interest as a whole and this is interpreted to include the opposition as well as the Government. A former Director of External Broadcasting wrote: "There are times when the expression of responsible but different views seems to us to be absolutely

[8] "London Calls the World" (Press Release, BBC Press Service, January, 1969) 1.

[9] Id. at 2.

[10] Ibid.

> inherent in the British way of life." The BBC holds to the principle that facts and opinions should not be suppressed and believes that in the long run this policy has been and will continue to be the best for the reputation of this country, and best also for promoting understanding in the world.[11]

That part of the BBC External Services which has the most to do with East Europe includes the Central European and the East European services. The Central European Service broadcasts about 72 hours weekly in Czech (Czech and Slovak), Hungarian, Polish and Finnish. The East European Service broadcasts approximately 77 hours in Bulgarian, Rumanian, Russian and Yugoslav (Serbo-Croat and Slovene).[12]

*The Voice of America*

The Voice of America, as a radio arm of the U.S. Information Agency, acts as the official government spokesman for the United States. VOA broadcasts 24 hours a day, in 36 languages, with more added for important events—a total of more than 800 program-hours weekly. Programs transmitted from 102 transmitters reach an estimated audience of 43 million each week, of which 40 per cent live in the Soviet Union and countries of East Europe. The VOA staff includes nearly 2,400.[13]

The U.S. Information Agency historically follows a policy recently reaffirmed by the late President Kennedy in 1963: "The mission of the United States Information Agency is to help achieve United States foreign policy objectives."[14] In its day-to-day operations, the Voice of America is directed by the following basic tenets to which all broadcasts adhere:

> The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peo-

[11] Id. at 3.
[12] Id. at 4.
[13] The Voice of America (Washington: U.S. Information Agency, 1968).
[14] History of the Voice of America (Washington: U.S. Information Agency, October 1968) 1.

ples of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will govern VOA broadcasts:

1. VOA will establish itself as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective and comprehensive.
2. VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society. It will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.
3. As an official radio, VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively. VOA will also present responsible discussion and opinion on these policies.[15]

VOA broadcasts to East Europe and to the Soviet Union in the following languages: English, Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech and Slovak, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Georgian, Armenian, Ukrainain, and Russian.[16]

*Radio Free Europe*

Radio Free Europe, operating as a non-profit, privately managed American organization, consists of a network of five stations broadcasting daily to an estimated 30 million listeners in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.[17] The RFE staff numbers 1,500, with one-third of that total representing nationals of the target countries.[18] The fundamental purposes of Radio Free Europe are summed up as follows:

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[15] Id. at 2.

[16] Voice of America Program Schedule (Washington: U.S. Information Agency, November, December, January, 1968-69) 1-2.

[17] Radio Free Europe and East Europe (New York: Free Europe, Inc., January, 1969, 32 pp.) 1.

[18] Id. at 18.

To support the aspiration of the Communist ruled people in East Europe for the restoration of their individual rights, political liberties and national independence;

To serve as a free press and radio and to provide public discussion of important issues which the captive people are denied by their Communist regimes;

To maintain pressure on the Communist regimes to correct the conditions under which their subjects are forced to live;

To report and analyze significant developments, such as the growth of the European Community, which—by shifting the balance of power—may lead ultimately to the regaining of national independence for the eighty million people in the captive countries.[19]

## The Response

### *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

The following is an account of the British Broadcasting Corporation's External Services' reaction to the Soviet intrusion into Czechoslovakia as excerpted from the *BBC Record 61*.[20]

The first announcement of the Czech invasion by Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces was monitored from Czechoslovakia by the BBC Monitoring Service at 2:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 21st. The news was immediately sent to the BBC newsroom where all three output services of the BBC (radio, television and external services) took action. The key staff involved were telephoned at home and by 2:05 a.m. all needed staff members were beginning to organize, alerting home and

[19] The Radio Free Europe Story (New York: Radio Free Europe Fund, Inc., 1962) 3.

[20] BBC Record 61 (London: The British Broadcasting Corporation, September 1968) 1-3.

foreign correspondents, camera crews and others throughout the night.

The Vienna correspondent, Robert Elphick, was alerted from London at 2:30 a.m. and ordered to Prague. He went immediately to the Czech border, filing his first story for the 8:00 a.m. radio news. He was turned back from the border and could not get into the country until Sunday morning. The BBC's diplomatic correspondent, as well as the Bonn, Moscow, and Washington correspondents, filed stories in time for the 7:00 a.m. news.

While this flurry of activity was developing, the BBC's External Services, particularly the Central European and East European Services, quickly took upon themselves the task of informing the Czechoslovak people, the peoples of the Soviet Union, and the other member nations of the Warsaw Pact, about the events in Prague and other Czech cities. The World Service was the first of the External Services to transmit the invasion news at 2:22 a.m. on August 21st.

By 4:00 a.m. the Head of the East European Service was in the headquarters of the External Services writing a commentary on the aggression which was broadcast on the Russian Service in Russian forty-five minutes later. This same commentary in English was transmitted by the World Service at 5:00 a.m. and to the Czech people at 6:15 a.m.

BBC broadcasting to Czechoslovakia was increased from the usual two hours and fifteen minutes daily to three hours. This stretched staff resources to the limit. The possibility of further extending broadcast time was kept under constant consideration. Later, more time was given to the Czechoslovakian, Russian, Polish and Bulgarian Services.

Normal programming unrelated to the invasion was cancelled for all East and Central Europe services, while the schedules of the other services were radically altered to allow full and free coverage. The news programs were lengthened and extensive coverage was given to the reactions of the British press and analyses of British and world reaction. Expressions of sympathy by British organizations were broadcast to the

Czech and Slovak peoples. Many protest demonstrations and individual protesting letters to the press were fully reported. News announcements and reviews of the British press transmitted by the Czechoslovak section were rebroadcast by Free Czechoslovak Radio with credit given the BBC. There is evidence that the BBC broadcasts were an important source of information to the Czech broadcasters during the crisis.

*The Voice of America*

The Voice of America responded by increasing its broadcasts in English, Russian and Czechoslovakian. Three additional frequencies were added to the nine already in use for the broadcasts to the Soviet Union. Medium wave broadcasts in Romanian were also increased.[21]

Programming during this early period was based on "hard source" news, such as the President's message and the speech of Ambassador Ball to the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council proceedings were also carried live in Russian and English to Europe.

In addition, VOA carried in the U.S.S.R. languages world reaction to the Czech invasion along with statements by U.S. leaders, U.S. editorial excerpts, and a chronology of events preceeding and including the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Included were reports from VOA correspondents both at home and abroad, as well as commentary on the developments.[22]

The attitudes and motives expressed by the Voice were reflected in such broadcasts as the one carrying President Johnson's August 21st condemnation of the Soviets:

> The tragic news from Czechoslovakia shocks the conscience of the world. The Soviet Union and its allies have invaded a defenseless country to stamp out a resurgence of ordinary human freedom. It is a

[21] Letter from Eugene Rosenfeld, Assistant Director Office of Public Information, U.S. Information Agency, to Jon T. Powell dated November 7, 1968.
[22] Ibid.

sad commentary on the Communist mind that a sign of liberty in Czechoslovakia is deemed a fundamental threat to the security of the Soviet system.

The excuses offered by the Soviet Union are patently contrived. The Czechoslovakian Government did not request its allies to intervene in its international affairs. No external aggression threatened Czechoslovakia.

The action of the Warsaw Pact allies is in flat violation of the United Nations Charter. We are consulting urgently with others to consider what steps should be taken in the United Nations. Ambassador George Ball has been instructed to join with the other nations in the Security Council to insist upon the Charter rights of Czechoslovakia and its people.

Meanwhile, in the name of mankind's hope for peace, I call on the Soviet Union and its associates to withdraw their troops from Czechoslovakia. I hope responsible spokesmen for governments and people throughout the world will support this appeal. It is never too late for reason to prevail.[23]

Ambassador Ball, reflecting the official U.S. stand, made a very strong appeal to the U.N. Security Council on August 21st condemning the Soviet action in unmistakeable terms. The following excerpts were typical of his presentation carried by VOA:

Rarely has a situation come before the council where the ugly facts of aggression have been written so large and in such unmistakeable characters.

The Soviet Union and its Eastern European accomplices have not even tried to conceal the fact of this invasion. How could they?

[23] "President Johnson's Statement on the Czech Crisis" 6 *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* 457-58 (Fall 1968).

> Last night, as the invading forces poured into Prague, the embassy of a respected neutral country found itself surrounded. When the embassy official protested by telephone to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, they were told that the officials of the Foreign Ministry could do nothing to help, and I quote, "since they were prisoners themselves."[24]

*Radio Free Europe*

The reaction of Radio Free Europe to the invasion was similar to the other services. Round-the-clock broadcasting to all five East European countries began immediately after the invasion. Special broadcasts were directed to the Bulgarian, Hungarian and Polish occupation troops, telling them in their native languages about the true state of the "counter-revolution."

RFE adopted a general broadcast policy to all countries which maintained: (a) that the Prague government was the only legal one in Czechoslovakia; (b) that the Czech government had not called for outside assistance; and (c) that the invasion was unnecessary and illegal.[25] The message and the language of the broadcasts were carefully couched to avoid inciting any kind of rebellion. Further, the Czech people were specifically urged to heed their government's request to remain calm. Gene Mater, Director of Public Affairs for Free Europe Inc., the parent organization for Radio Free Europe, emphasized that

> [e]xtreme caution was used to avoid material or language that might incite the people or imply in any way that the West would help. We aimed at maintaining the unity of the people—and the country.[26]

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[24] "U.N. Security Debate on Czech Crisis," id. at 460-61.
[25] Note 3, supra, at 1.
[26] Ibid.

*Jamming*

The Soviet Union, faced with this onslaught of adamant and outraged Western opinion, quickly resumed its jamming activities. The jamming began so quickly in fact, that one might be led to speculate that this activity constitutes part of the Soviet standard operational procedures for any international crisis where the flow of information is deemed critical to Soviet aims.

The BBC reported that on Wednesday, August 21st, jamming began of the Russian and Bulgarian broadcasts of the External Services. While the first BBC Russian broadcast at 4:45 a.m. was free, the news at noon was jammed. Sporadic jamming of the other BBC language services followed with most activity coming from within the Soviet Union except for the Bulgarian service which was jammed from Bulgaria. To counteract the jamming, the BBC increased the number and power of the transmitters carrying its broadcasts to Central and Eastern Europe, and changed its broadcast style so that news and commentary were read slowly and very distinctly.[27]

The Soviet Union resumed jamming Voice of America broadcasts in Russian and Ukrainian on August 21, about seven hours after the invasion. Subsequent jamming flared up on the Armenian and Georgian broadcasts.[28] Ruth Walter, of the Public Information Division of VOA, noted that the U.S.S.R. had not jammed its programs since June 19, 1963. Jamming of VOA programs broadcast into Rumania ceased in 1963, and into Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1964. Poland had stopped jamming in 1956.[29]

The U.S. Information Agency Director, Leonard H. Marks, reacted to the Soviet jamming activities. Referring to the live broadcasting of the session of the United Nations Security Council relative to the Czech crisis, he expressed

[27] BBC Record 61, supra note 20, at 4-5.
[28] Note 21, supra.
[29] "Soviet Resumes Jamming of the Voice of America," *New York Times*, August 22, 1968, p. 20, col. 2.

hope that the peoples of the Soviet Union would be able to hear the debate:

> We are broadcasting over VOA what the Soviet delegate has to say, as well as the words of delegates of the United States and other nations. The people of the Soviet Union should have the chance to hear for themselves what is said.
>
> Freedom of information is essential if nations are to understand one another's viewpoints and if peoples of the world are to know the facts on which to base their judgments. In the United States, as in most of the rest of the world, citizens are free to tune to whatever broadcast they choose. This is as it should be, and as I hope it soon will be again in the Soviet Union.[30]

Jamming was also carried on against the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe. Typical of official reaction to international broadcasts, one Polish newspaper commented after the Czech invasion, "In these undoubtedly difficult days some Poles have been permanently sitting at the radio and listening to Radio Free Europe." The editorial went on to note that people were not merely listening, they were also turning the volume up so that their neighbors would also hear, and added, "If you listen to those barkings keep it to yourself. You are not entitled to disseminate them."[31] The dissemination of information to the listeners of Western broadcasts is bad enough. The idea that the listeners should assist in the further dissemination of news among themselves was tantamount to an act against the state!

## The Perspective

The role of the Western international broadcaster, as an agent for the free flow of information to encourage individual

[30] "USIA Director Leonard H. Marks Deplores Resumption of Soviet Jamming" (Information Agency News Release, Washington, D.C., No. 17, August 22, 1968).

[31] Radio Free Europe and East Europe, supra note 17, at 17.

decision-making, conflicts directly with one of the fundamental premises upon which rests the political activity of the U.S.S.R. Basic to a realistic understanding of the ambitions of the Soviets in East Europe is the awareness that the Communist ideology is as Paul-Henri Speak described it:

> Communism is not the program of a political party; it has the ambition of being a form of civilization, which opposed itself to the traditional civilization of the West. It is opposed to it by its concept of man, by the place which it assigns to him in society, by the fact that it refuses liberty to him—a condition, from our point of view, of his dignity—and that it makes him subservient to the almighty power of a party, which, in final analysis, is one with the State.[32]

Under Communism the individual is subservient to the state. This precept extends across national boundaries and permeates the relationship between the Soviet Union and the East European countries. Although there may be stress and strain within and among these smaller nations, their status remains that of subservient satellite powers. The force of arms continues to be the basis upon which the Soviets accomplish the unity of East Europe. To challenge this unity is to invite armed intervention. Thus a serious national experiment in individual freedom not only confounds communist philosophy but also threatens the very stability of Soviet foreign relations.

Any individual national sovereignty is allowed to exist only to the extent it serves the Soviet power structure. Any challenge deemed serious to Soviet rule, whether it be a more liberal philosophy or a rebel poet, will likely meet with repression. Russia still seems willing to resort to harsh intervention as the simplest and most effective means of implementing

[32] Speak, "The Fundamental Reality," 6 *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* 486 (Winter 1968-69).

foreign policy. There is no evidence to indicate any change in this approach to the bloc nations.

> All of this suggests that the prospects for positive evolution in Russia should be regarded with greater patience and caution; that neither technology, "prosperity" nor young people automatically produce significant political change in the short run; that the very existence of profound contradictions and rising libertarian aspirations in Russia may well (as they did a century ago) lead its rulers to repression rather than reform; and that a reassertion of police power, some form of military rule, or a new "strongman" must be considered as being at least as possible over the next decade as the "erosion from despotism" or the "violent upthrust of liberty" which Ambassador Kennan discussed at the dawn of the cold war. These may yet come to pass; but after the Czechoslovak experience it would seem prudent to err on the side of pessimism.[33]

The Czech crisis, in addition to providing proof of Soviet reliance on force, has brought renewed importance to the role of international broadcasting. While the open use of military force might be the least desirable solution to any crisis in East Europe, it is significant that the Soviet Union was forced into a position of armed intervention by a small, relatively powerless nation. However, Czechoslovakia was establishing a dangerous precedent—providing its citizens with greater access to information, to the expression of controversial issues, and most important, to the real possibility of individual decision-making. One justification for international broadcasting is to establish this exact precedent—to stimulate individual decision-making by broadening the access to information and widening the opportunity for the expression of controversy.

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[33] Shub, "Lessons of Czechoslovakia," 47 *Foreign Affairs* 272 (1969).

By broadcasting to East Europe, the Western powers hope to participate in, if not encourage, a state of affairs leading toward a change in the relation of citizen and state. Consistently, the international broadcaster has encouraged diverse expression of opinion, and just as consistently, using force if necessary, the Communists have frustrated it as much as possible. Although the issue of Communist philosophy versus Western freedom remains, the ebb and flow of Communist power still rests on the willingness to answer any serious challenge with brute force.

> The invasion provided a sad reminder that if the Soviets choose to use force in East Europe, there is little the West can do to stop it without risking world war. The Czechoslovakians made it clear throughout the crisis that they understood this and accepted it. They also made it clear that, with the reimposition of censorship in Czechoslovakia, there is something they will continue to need and expect from the West.[34]

The Czechs will continue to look to the West for news and information which can provide them with a clearer understanding of their own position and the positions of the bloc countries, the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. The Soviets clearly recognize the danger inherent in such a free flow of information.

A little over a week after the invasion the Soviets paid indirect tribute to the threatening role played by the international broadcasters, when Soviet Radio Vltava stated in a broadcast to Czechoslovakia on August 31, 1968: "Freedom of the press is a weapon [when placed] in the hands of the international bourgeoisie. Freedom of the press is naturally an instrument of power, and power is nothing to play with..."[35] Typical is the attitude reflected by the Hungarian Supreme Court:

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[34] Radio Free Europe and East Europe, supra note 17, at 14.
[35] Id. at 15.

> In its judgment, the Supreme Court pointed out that the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe regularly contain hostile propaganda against the Socialist countries. As is generally known, Radio Free Europe is a diversionary espionage center established for action against the socialist countries, and its major goal is the disintegration of Socialist society and the overthrow of the political system.[36]

The Communist fear of change in the "socialist society" combined with the military dominance of the Soviets in East Europe and the Western hope (if not conviction) that change is inevitable, may be summed up in the form of three precepts which serve to justify the political role of the international broadcaster. First, in Europe the present state does involve a clear line of East-West demarcation. Second, rightly or wrongly, East Europe forms a sphere of Soviet influence in which the West can only marginally exert influence through conventional diplomatic, commercial and cultural exchange. Third, until the Soviets are prepared to discuss more just arrangements than presently exist, Western policy goals for Europe hinge upon preserving and perfecting the present order.[37] As Charles J. Curran, former Director of External Broadcasting and now Director-General of the BBC, recently concluded:

> To sum up, it is likely to be a period of convergence between the policies of the major developed countries, a period of pragmatic reconciliation between the two halves of Europe, of substantial disorder in the under-developed world, of efforts by the major powers to maintain broadly the *status quo*.

[36] "Listening to Foreign Radio Broadcasts (A Decision of the Hungarian Supreme Court)," Szolnok Megyei Neplap, October 16, 1968 (Translation from the daily newspaper of Szolnok County, Hungary, provided by Radio Free Europe, New York).

[37] Note 33, supra.

acting either directly or indirectly through the mediation of the minor powers.[38]

The international broadcaster is caught up in this state of convergence. If the accepted principle is that peace ultimately rests on a balance of power which is political as well as military, any activity encouraging the free flow of information could have profound effect on that political balance, that "subtle tissue composed of diverse elements including hope and will."[39] Military force alone cannot assure indefinitely tight Soviet control in East Europe. As the pressures of expanding economies, greater attention to consumer needs, and international trade increase they carry with them a deeper sense of self-awareness and independence. The political balance may indeed finally rest with the hope and will engendered by the free flow of information.

When an international crisis creates a vacuum in the exchange of information, the broadcaster can serve well to fill that void. He can cross national boundaries where military forces cannot. He can bring some measure of individual decision-making where the free flow of information would otherwise be stopped. And he can act as a regular and reliable source of information in times of international crisis. Perhaps the most succinct assessment of the significant contribution of the international broadcaster to the development of a better world community is found in a remark once made by Edward R. Murrow: "The truth may not alone make us free. But we shall never be free without knowing the truth."[40]

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[38] Curran, Broadcasting from West of Suez (London: BBC Lunch-time Lectures Seventh Series - 2, November 6, 1968) 7-8.

[39] Note 33, supra, at 276.

[40] Voice of America 20th Anniversary Commemoration (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962) 7.