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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

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 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 interfere in its internal 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 undertaken in the UN. Ambassador Ball has been instructed to join with others 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.

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