

Chronology of Events

1949

April 4: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is established.

1950

February 14: The Soviet Union and China sign the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in Moscow.

1954

October 20–23: Western foreign ministers meeting in Paris agree to end West Germany's occupation status, and invite it to become a part of NATO.

November 29: The Soviets convene a meeting in Moscow to discuss establishing an all-European security system. The Western governments decline to attend, leaving eight communist countries which would eventually form the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

1955

May 9: West Germany joins NATO.

May 14: Eight Soviet bloc states sign the Warsaw Treaty. The signatories—Albania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union—are joined by China, North Korea and North Vietnam as observers.

May 15: The Soviet Union and the Western powers sign the Austrian State Treaty providing for Austrian neutrality.

July 18–23: The USSR, France, Great Britain and the United States hold a summit in Geneva. Soviet Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin presents the draft of an all-European security treaty.

1956

January 18: The East German army is created.

January 27–28: The first meeting of the Political Consultative Committee (PCC) takes place in Prague. The group approves a Soviet-designed Statute of the Unified Command. It decides to create a commission on foreign policy coordination as well as a Secretariat but does not implement the decision.

February 25: At the CPSU XXth Congress, Khrushchev delivers the “secret speech” in which he denounces Stalin and his crimes.

October 19: Khrushchev and several Soviet Politburo members confront the Polish leadership led Władysław Gomułka over its “national communist” course, but Soviet military intervention is averted.

October 23: Street demonstrations in Budapest lead to the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution. Reform communist leader Imre Nagy is brought in to try to stem the revolt but anti-communist sentiment is too powerful.

October 30: As popular unrest mounts in Poland and Hungary, a Soviet declaration proclaims readiness to respect the sovereignty of Warsaw Pact allies.

November 1: Premier Imre Nagy announces that Hungary will leave the Warsaw Pact and become a neutral country after learning that Soviet troops are preparing to invade the country.

November 4: Soviet forces invade Hungary to crush the growing anti-communist revolutionary uprising.

1957

January 1–5: A meeting of party and government representatives, excluding Poles, takes place in Moscow to discuss military matters—arming of the East European armies, and improvement and organization of air defenses.

October 2: In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki calls for the creation of a denuclearized zone in Central Europe. The idea becomes known as the Rapacki Plan.

October 4: The Soviet Union launches Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth, unofficially marking the start of the space race between the United States and Soviet Union, and fueling a parallel effort in the broader area of high technology, especially in the military sphere.

November 14–19: A Moscow meeting of communist party leaders codifies relations based on the Soviet model and experiences—strengthening the Warsaw Pact and Comecon. A declaration affirms the unity of the camp and the results of the XXth party congress of February 1956.

1958

January 6: The Soviets, after breaking up the U.N. disarmament subcommittee, announce a unilateral reduction of 300,000 troops.

January 8: The Soviets propose reducing international tensions by replacing military groupings with a collective security system, by having the West reduce military forces as Moscow had done, by creating a nuclear-free zone in the two Germanys, Poland and the ČSSR, and other measures.

May 5: The Soviet Union proposes a non-aggression treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

May 24: The second PCC meeting is held in Moscow. The group approves withdrawing Soviet troops from Romania and planning for unilateral reductions of all Warsaw Pact forces, as well drafting an appeal for a non-aggression treaty between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. The group's declaration calls for an end to nuclear tests, the creation of nuclear-free zones in Europe, the solution of the German question, and a summit meeting.

November 10: In a speech delivered in Moscow (followed on November 27 by notes to the Western powers), Khrushchev sparks the second Berlin crisis by threatening to conclude a separate peace treaty with East Germany, which would terminate the Western powers' right to access to West Berlin.

1959

April 27–28: A meeting of the Warsaw Pact's ministers of foreign affairs takes place in Warsaw. It presses for an East–West summit that would result in a peace treaty with Germany and elimination of the occupation regime in West Berlin.

September 15–27: Khrushchev visits the United States. His meeting with Eisenhower encourages his belief in the possibility of achieving a solution to the Berlin question on Soviet terms.

1960

January 14: Khrushchev in speech to the Supreme Soviet announces his intention to reduce Soviet troop levels by 1.2 million.

February 4: At a PCC meeting in Moscow, Khrushchev's optimistic assessment of the likelihood of Western concessions on Germany elicits criticism from the Chinese observer of what he sees as a Soviet policy of conciliation toward the West.

May 1: U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers is shot down over the Soviet Union. The discovery of the spy mission leads to Khrushchev's cancellation of the Paris Summit with Eisenhower set for May 15–19.

June 2: The Soviet Union makes a proposal for general and complete disarmament.

June 20–25: During a Soviet–Chinese row at the Romanian party congress, Albania sides with China.

July 25: Soviet Marshal Andrei Grechko replaces Marshal Ivan Konev as Warsaw Pact supreme commander.

September 27: At the United Nations, Romania, with Soviet support, proposes a Balkan collective security treaty, and a nuclear- and foreign base-free zone.

September 28: Bulgarian party chief Todor Zhivkov urges a reduction of forces in the Balkans to the level of border guards, and calls for the Balkans to be the first area of general and complete disarmament.

1961

March 28–29: A PCC meeting is convened in Moscow to deal with the deteriorating problem of East German refugees and SED leader Walter Ulbricht's pressure for the closing of crossings into West Berlin. It also deals with the growing crisis over the Vlorë naval base in Albania. The Committee condemns Albania for its harassment of Soviet sailors, but the subsequent worsening of the situation leads Moscow to withdraw its ships from the port.

April 19: A separate Polish Front within the Warsaw Pact established.

June 3–4: President John F. Kennedy and Khrushchev meet in Vienna. The U.S. president refuses to yield to Soviet demands on Berlin. The Soviet Union directs the Warsaw Pact to prepare for a possible military confrontation.

July 25: President Kennedy announces a troop buildup in Europe.

August 3–4: At a Warsaw Pact summit in Moscow, the Soviets agree to the closing of the borders between East and West Berlin. They also prepare for the signing of a separate peace treaty with East Germany and a possible military confrontation with the Western powers over access to West Berlin.

August 13: Construction of the Berlin Wall begins.

September 8: The Warsaw Pact's ministers of defense meet and agree to increase military preparedness and to proceed with "Buria," the first military exercise to involve all the Warsaw Pact armies as a coalition.

September 28–October 10: The "Buria" exercise takes place, the first of its kind to model a massive invasion of Western Europe.

October 17: Khrushchev at the XXIIInd party congress rescinds his decision to sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany.

October 27–28: A confrontation between U.S. and Soviet tanks at the Checkpoint Charlie crossing into West Berlin takes place.

October 31: Chinese observers are excluded from Warsaw Pact meetings.

December 19: The Soviet Union and Albania sever diplomatic relations after a stormy period that included disputes with China, a covert Soviet attempt to oust Albanian leader Enver Hoxha, and the expulsion of Soviet vessels from the Vlorë naval base.

1962

March 8: The Soviets make a proposal for general and complete disarmament.

June 6–7: At a Comecon meeting in Moscow, a Soviet proposal is discussed for a division of labor within the economic grouping; it is opposed by Romania and the dispute later contributes to Bucharest's taking a dissident position within the Warsaw Pact.

June 7: A PCC meeting in Moscow publicly urges the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany although Khrushchev has already given up on the idea.

October 14: The discovery of Soviet nuclear-capable missiles on Cuba marks the start of the Cuban missile crisis.

October 22: Marshal Grechko informs Warsaw Pact representatives about the Cuban situation and the Warsaw Pact orders an alert that lasts until November 21.

1963

February 20: The Soviets propose a NATO–Warsaw Pact nonaggression pact at the ENDC.

April 18–22: The Warsaw Pact exercise "Mazowsze" in Poland prepares for possible nuclear war with NATO that would result in the likely destruction of most Polish cities.

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May 5: Khrushchev at a meeting with Castro rules out Cuban membership in the Warsaw Pact or a Soviet–Cuban military alliance.

July 5–20: Inconclusive Soviet–Chinese discussions in Moscow fail to repair the rift between the two countries.

July 15: Mongolia applies for admission to the Warsaw Pact.

July 25: The limited nuclear test-ban treaty is concluded between the United States, Soviet Union and United Kingdom.

July 26: A PCC meeting in Moscow supports the test-ban treaty, fails to consider Mongolian membership in the Warsaw Pact, and rallies the Warsaw Pact allies behind Moscow in its dispute with Beijing.

October 4: Romanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Mănescu secretly informs Secretary of State Dean Rusk that in the event of a nuclear confrontation between East and West Romania would remain neutral.

December 28: In a speech, Gomulka proposes freezing nuclear armaments in Central Europe. The proposal becomes known as the Gomulka Plan when it is formally offered on February 29, 1964.

December 31: In a message to world leaders, Khrushchev proposes an international agreement on nonuse of force in territorial and border disputes.

1964

January 2: A GDR proposal for the denuclearization of both German states preempts the Gomulka Plan.

January 8–9: Warsaw Pact consultations in Moscow about the Gomulka Plan are subsequently sidetracked by the Soviet Union.

January 10–14: At a confrontational meeting with Khrushchev, Gomulka accuses Khrushchev of pursuing Soviet interests in Germany at Poland's expense and urges reconciliation with China.

February 29: The Gomulka Plan is submitted but the USSR opposes the verification measures proposed in the plan.

April 22: Romania publicly affirms its independent course in foreign policy.

June 12: The GDR and Soviet Union sign a treaty on friendship and mutual assistance.

September 14: During a demonstration of new armaments, Khrushchev expresses doubts about their utility since war between the superpowers has been ruled out because of the danger of nuclear arms.

October 14: The Warsaw Pact plan for the Czechoslovak army's offensive into Western Europe is approved.

October 14: Khrushchev is dismissed as first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party.

October 16: China tests its first nuclear device.

October 20: East German leader Ulbricht takes the initiative in proposing a long-delayed PCC meeting.

December 10: A meeting of Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers is held in Warsaw to prepare for a PCC meeting. Romania urges that Albania be invited. Because of a wide range of disagreements, the meeting ends without a joint communiqué.

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1965

- January 19–20:* At a contentious PCC Meeting in Warsaw, opposition to NATO's Multilateral Force project (MLF) and a draft of the nonproliferation treaty provoke disagreements, especially with Romania. The PCC excludes Albania from further participation, Poland proposes a European security conference, and Hungary urges creation of a committee to discuss common foreign policy, but does not succeed.
- April:* An abortive coup by Bulgarian generals aims at a more independent foreign policy.
- December 15:* Soviet and Czechoslovak officials agree to allow the future stationing of Soviet nuclear-armed missiles at three Czechoslovak sites.

1966

- January 7:* Brezhnev proposes to Eastern European leaders consultations about reorganizing the Warsaw Pact.
- February 4–9:* A special meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff in Moscow, convened to discuss the Statute of Unified Command and the creation of new military bodies, ends inconclusively.
- February 10–12:* A meeting of Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers in Berlin discusses strengthening the PCC and creating additional institutions, but ends without an agreement, mainly because of Romanian obstruction.
- May 27–28:* A conference of Warsaw Pact defense ministers in Moscow approves a draft Statute of Unified Command, with Romanian reservations; it is to be forwarded to the PCC and the national governments for approval but makes little progress toward creation of new military institutions.
- June 6–17:* A conference of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers reaches no consensus on measures for organizational improvement of the alliance.
- July 4:* Meeting in Bucharest, the PCC does not act on the draft Statute of Unified Command.
- July 5–7:* An informal meeting of Warsaw Pact party secretaries and heads of governments includes a contentious discussion over a proposed declaration on Vietnam, but its main result is to issue the "Bucharest Declaration" calling for a conference on European security. The reorganization of the Warsaw Pact is postponed.
- October 21:* A meeting of Warsaw Pact party chiefs with Brezhnev agrees to press the campaign against the Vietnam War and convene a conference of European communist parties on issues of security.

1967

- January 31:* Romania establishes diplomatic relations with West Germany without consulting East Germany.
- February 8–10:* A foreign ministers conference in Warsaw, convened in response to Romania's diplomatic recognition of West Germany, agrees to step up a campaign for the international recognition of East Germany and for a European security conference to isolate West Germany and promote divisions within NATO.
- April 24–26:* At a conference of communist parties in Karlovy Vary, without Romanian and Yugoslav representation, participants call for the dissolution of NATO and ejection of the United States from participation in the security of Europe.
- June 5–11:* The Six-Day War takes place in the Middle East.
- July 11–12:* A conference of party chiefs, including Tito but not Ceaușescu, takes place in Budapest to discuss common action with regard to the Middle East; Romania alone fails to sever diplomatic relations with Israel.
- November 9:* A meeting of Warsaw Pact party leaders is held concerning preparations for a conference of world communist parties in 1968.
- November 16:* A meeting of chiefs of general staff in Dresden urges creation of a staff of the Unified Command and a committee on technology as a first step toward reorganization of the Warsaw Pact Romania opposes it.
- December 14:* NATO adopts the Harmel Report defining the organization's goals as both defense and détente.

1968

- January 5:* Alexander Dubček replaces Antonín Novotný as leader of the Czechoslovak communist party. The Prague Spring ensues, eventually prompting the Soviet-led invasion of August 1968.
- February 26–27:* Deputy foreign ministers meeting in Berlin reach no agreements because of Romanian opposition to the Soviet draft of a nonproliferation treaty.
- February 29–March 1:* A meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff in Prague is held to resume the project of reorganizing the alliance. The group agrees to create a Military Council despite Romanian opposition.
- March 6–7:* A PCC meeting held in Sofia agrees, with Romanian abstention, to create a Warsaw Pact staff and a Military Council. The Romanians present amendments to the nonproliferation treaty but no agreement on it is reached.
- March 23:* A Dresden meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders warns against alleged deterioration in the combat readiness of the Czechoslovak army and urges acceleration of the reform of the alliance.
- June 4:* A memorandum to Dubček by 30 research associates of the Military Political and Military Technical Academies outlines principles of Czechoslovakia's military doctrine. On July 2, it is published in the press.

June 18–July 2: The “Šumava” exercise of Warsaw Pact armies is carried out on Czechoslovak territory to pressure the Czechoslovak leadership into rolling back its reform program.

July 1: The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is signed by 61 nations, including Romania.

July 9–11: A Czechoslovak army conference in Bratislava urges elaboration of a national doctrine within the Warsaw Pact framework and “internationalization” of the alliance’s command.

July 14–15: The leaders of the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, East Germany and Bulgaria, meeting in Warsaw, warn Czechoslovakia to reverse its reformist course.

July 18: Warsaw Pact Supreme Commander Marshal Ivan Iakubovskii accuses Gen. Václav Prchlík, head of the Czechoslovak army’s political administration, of revealing Warsaw Pact secrets in a conversation with journalists.

July 20: A Soviet note to the Czechoslovak government criticizes it for allegedly insufficient protection of the country’s Western borders and for tolerating activities that undermine the alliance.

July 29–August 1: At a meeting with Czechoslovak leaders at Čierna nad Tisou, the Soviet leadership alleges a NATO threat to Czechoslovak borders, and claims a common Warsaw Pact responsibility for their defense.

August 3: At a high-level Soviet–Czechoslovak meeting in Bratislava, the Soviet side asserts that it is the duty of all socialist countries to uphold socialist achievements.

August 20: The invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet, Polish, East German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian armies begins.

September 2: Marshal Grechko, at a meeting with four other Warsaw Pact defense ministers in Legnica, Poland, discusses options for occupation forces in Czechoslovakia.

September 12–17: At a Moscow meeting, deputy chiefs of staff prepare final documents for the reorganization of the Warsaw Pact.

September 13: Albania formally withdraws from the Warsaw Pact in protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

October 16: The Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia reach agreement on the stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia.

October 18: A meeting of five Warsaw Pact defense ministers in Moscow decides to withdraw non-Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia.

October 29–30: Warsaw Pact defense ministers meeting in Moscow approve agreements on new alliance structures. Romania signs on, but reserves the right to examine the provision allowing the supreme commander to deploy forces on member-states’ territories in peace time.

March 14–15: After an incident on March 2, armed clashes peak between Soviet and Chinese troops along disputed border on the Ussuri River.

March 17: Meeting in Budapest, the PCC strengthens the unified command and establishes a committee of defense ministers, a military council, and a committee on technology. It adopts the statute on unified command in peace time and issues an appeal for convocation of a European security conference.

May 12–16: Warsaw Pact defense ministers and chiefs of staff meet in the Polish capital to discuss mobilization readiness.

May 21–22: Deputy foreign ministers from the Warsaw Pact countries meet in Berlin to discuss a common strategy with regard to the European security conference.

June 15–17: A conference of 75 communist parties, meeting in Moscow but boycotted by China, Yugoslavia, North Korea, Vietnam, and Albania, calls for a new European security system and the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and Warsaw Pact.

July 11: A report by four Chinese marshals considers a U.S. attack against China unlikely, noting that the USSR poses a greater threat.

September 11: Kosygin and Zhou Enlai meet at the Beijing airport to try to defuse Sino-Soviet tension, but their discussion ends inconclusively.

October 6: The Polish Foreign Ministry prepares a proposal for a European collective security treaty and a draft charter for a European security organization.

October 21: Following West German elections on September 28, Willy Brandt becomes chancellor and soon initiates a new policy toward the East (*Ostpolitik*).

October 22–28: The Warsaw Pact conducts the “Oder–Neisse 69” exercise. It is the largest joint military exercise to date. The USSR, GDR, PPR, and ČSSR armies, except for strategic missile units, participate.

October 30–31: Warsaw Pact foreign ministers meet in Prague to discuss coordination of preparations for an all-European security conference. They call for bilateral and multilateral preparatory meetings, accept U.S. and Canadian participation, and draft agreements on the renunciation of force and expanded cooperation.

October 30–November 3: Meetings of deputy defense ministers take place in Prague on the subject of armed forces development in 1970.

November 17–December 22: The United States and Soviet Union hold preliminary Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in Helsinki, Finland.

December 2–4: A meeting of Warsaw Pact heads of state takes place in Moscow to assess West Germany’s new *Ostpolitik* and decide on common responses to it.

December 9–10: The first meeting of the Warsaw Pact Military Council in Moscow discusses shortening the alarm times needed to achieve combat readiness.

December 22–23: The first meeting of the Warsaw Pact committee of defense ministers takes place in Moscow. The group calls for an increase in both conventional and nuclear capabilities because of the uncertainty of détente.

- January 26–27:* A conference of Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers in Sofia welcomes the Western response to the European security conference. The group anticipates holding it before mid-1970 but their discussion reveals differences in tactics among the different countries.
- March 19:* The first high-level meeting between West German and East German leaders, Chancellor Willy Brandt and Premier Willi Stoph, takes place in Erfurt, East Germany. The enthusiastic popular welcome given to Brandt shows the effects of *Ostpolitik*.
- April 3:* At a meeting with Warsaw Pact party chiefs (minus Romania) in Budapest, Brezhnev solicits their views on talks between the state secretary in West Germany's Chancellery, Egon Bahr, and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko before proceeding with further negotiations with Bonn.
- April 5:* Albania offers military assistance to Yugoslavia and Romania in case of a Soviet attack.
- April 27:* A meeting of the Warsaw Pact Military Council in Budapest stresses the importance of training for the forcing of nuclear mines barriers, and provides for the appointment of representatives of the supreme commander to the national commands.
- May 6:* New Soviet–Czechoslovak and Soviet–Hungarian treaties include obligation to assist USSR against any attack, implying one by China.
- May 18–19:* A Brezhnev–Ceaușescu meeting in Moscow fails to resolve policy disagreements between the two governments.
- June 19–20:* At a deputy foreign ministers' meeting in Budapest, Soviet representative Leonid Ilichev cautions against an East German demand for “enhancing” the GDR's international position and boosting GDR–FRG relations.
- May 21–22:* A meeting of the committee of defense ministers in Sofia discusses unified air defense and naval cooperation in view of NATO's alleged ability to conduct a surprise air strike without mobilization or displacement of aircraft.
- June 21–22:* A foreign ministers' meeting in Budapest proposes to expand the agenda of a European security conference by creating a permanent organ to deal with questions of security and cooperation. All countries would be represented in such an entity, and decide issues by consensus. The ministers oppose discussing mutual reductions of conventional forces at the conference.
- August 12:* The Soviet–West German treaty and declaration of intentions, signed in Moscow, rules out the use or threat of force and proclaims the inviolability of existing borders while leaving open the possibility of their peaceful change. It also opens the way to agreements on normalization of relations between West Germany and Poland as well as between the two German states.
- August 20:* At a PCC meeting in Moscow, Brezhnev defends the Soviet–West German treaty as a compromise favorable to the East, but Polish and Czechoslovak leaders fear an increased West German influence in their countries.

- October 27:* At the Military Council meeting in Varna, Soviet Marshal Iakubovskii justifies recent large-scale maneuvers by persisting international tensions, despite certain recent improvements.
- December 2:* A PCC meeting in Berlin welcomes the recently negotiated Polish–West German treaty providing for Bonn's effective recognition of the Oder–Neisse Line as Poland's western border. The treaty, signed on December 7, opens the door for the establishment of diplomatic relations between all Warsaw Pact countries and West Germany after the ratification of the treaties by the Bonn parliament, and calls for the continued coordination of policies on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).
- December 21–23:* The committee of defense ministers' meeting in Budapest agrees on a plan for the development of armies, with an emphasis on improving communications systems.

- January 15:* The Soviet Union makes a proposal to China on the nonuse of force, including nuclear weapons, but it is later rejected.
- February 18–19:* A meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Bucharest concludes there has been a slowing down of progress toward the CSCE and calls on member-states to activate their diplomatic channels to accelerate the process.
- March 2–4:* Defense ministers meeting in Budapest hear Soviet Marshal Grechko say that the international situation has deteriorated and call for strengthening the alliance's offensive capacity.
- March 30–April 4:* At the 24th CPSU Congress, Brezhnev favors a reduction of both nuclear and conventional forces, especially in central Europe.
- May 12–15:* At a meeting of the Military Council in Berlin, Marshal Iakubovskii describes the situation as extremely tense and calls for the introduction of a common alert system.
- August 2:* At the first of his annual meetings with Warsaw Pact leaders in the Crimea, Brezhnev gives an optimistic assessment of the international situation, but Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov warns against a Beijing–Bucharest–Tirana–Belgrade axis threatening the alliance.
- September 1:* A Warsaw conference of foreign ministers approves the holding of experts' meetings on problems relating to convocation of the CSCE.
- September 3:* The United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain and France sign the Quadripartite Agreement securing access to West Berlin and clarifying its status in relation to West Germany.
- September 13–18:* An East German–Polish–Soviet command exercise, “Herbststurm 71,” envisages offensive operations against Denmark in cooperation with the Warsaw Pact's Baltic navies, aimed at the destruction of reserves of NATO's Baltic Straits Command and the occupation of the Jutland Peninsula.
- October 26–29:* A meeting of the Military Council in Warsaw decides to hold exercises with tactical missiles involving all member-states except Romania, which criticizes the holding of too many exercises by the Pact.

November 30–December 1: A Warsaw meeting of foreign ministers appeals for accelerated preparations for a security conference, aiming to convene it in 1972.

1972

January 25–26: Addressing a PCC meeting in Prague, Brezhnev praises the results of West German *Ostpolitik*, anticipates the possibility of a largely peaceful future relationship between the two major alliances, and stresses the importance of the CSCE as the foundation for a new European security system.

February 9–10: At a defense ministers' meeting in Berlin, Warsaw Pact Chief of Staff Sergei M. Shtemenko says that despite "some détente," NATO remains a threat; the Romanians balk at the idea of joint air defense measures.

February 21–27: President Nixon makes a historic first visit to China.

February 22–24: Brezhnev, in Prague, calls for military détente through the reduction of forces and armaments in Europe, or at least a part of Europe.

April 10–12: A meeting of the Military Council takes place in Bucharest, dealing with routine matters.

May 22–26: During a state visit to the USSR, Nixon and Brezhnev sign the SALT I treaty, which limits the growth of strategic nuclear weapons, and an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty limiting strategic defense systems.

May 29: The United States and Soviet Union sign an agreement on "basic principles" of peaceful coexistence and the right to "equal security."

July 31: At a meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders in the Crimea, Brezhnev stresses the need for military détente, improved relations with the United States, and the problem of growing Chinese hostility.

September 4–11: The "Shield-72" exercise starts with a Western attack through Poland in direction of Lvov, Ukraine. The plan envisions nuclear weapons being used, a counterattack by Warsaw Pact forces through West Germany, also using nuclear weapons, but at a slower rate of advance than in the plans from the 1960s.

October 17–20: At a meeting of the Military Council in Minsk, Gen. Shtemenko announces that the annual Shield exercise for 1973 has been cancelled without giving reasons.

November 15: At a Moscow meeting of deputy foreign ministers, in advance of the Helsinki preparatory talks on the CSCE, agreement is reached to resist Western attempts to go beyond the framework of these talks by raising political issues, particularly the free movement of people, ideas, and information. These issues would later be part of Basket III in the final agreement at Helsinki.

November 22: The Multilateral Preparatory Talks for the CSCE begin in Helsinki.

1973

January 15–16: A conference of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Moscow discusses forthcoming preparatory talks between the two alliances on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR).

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January 31–June 23: Preparatory negotiations for the MBFR take place in Vienna.

February 6–8: At a committee of defense ministers' meeting in Warsaw, Grechko warns that the growth of détente increases the danger of Western ideological subversion.

April 16–19: The "Kraj" exercise is held, designed to practice territorial defense for Poland in case of a nuclear war; it was to be held every five years but was never repeated.

April 24: The "Convention on Legal Competences, Privileges and Immunities" for Warsaw Pact staff and agencies is signed at the deputy foreign minister level, and published.

May 16–17: A meeting of the Military Council in Sofia discusses NATO's "Reforger-4" exercise as a demonstration of the growing U.S. ability to swiftly intervene in the European theater. Soviet Gen. Shtemenko emphasizes the need to counter NATO's increased emphasis on electronic warfare, while Marshal Iakubovskii sees the current situation as not permitting reductions in Warsaw Pact armed forces.

May 21–22: A Moscow meeting of deputy foreign ministers agrees to speed up the CSCE process now that the final stage of the preparatory conference has been reached. They further agree not to allow the inviolability of borders to be linked with other issues, to reject the demand for advance notice of troop movements, and to consider human rights issues only if this is in the interests of the socialist states.

June 8: The Helsinki preparatory meeting ends with a call for convening the CSCE. The Warsaw Pact regards the negotiations as a success.

June 12–15: A meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of general staff in Sofia proposes preparation of a statute on the command of unified forces in war time.

June 18–25: Brezhnev visits the United States for talks with Nixon.

June 23: A US–Soviet agreement is signed on the prevention of nuclear war.

July 3: The CSCE opens in Helsinki to discuss aspects of security, human relations, and economic and scientific affairs. Talks continue in Geneva over the next two years.

July 30–31: At a Crimea meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders, Brezhnev gives an upbeat assessment of Soviet global ascendancy in view of a perceived U.S. retreat, and a lasting, rather than temporary, American interest in détente. He is confident of the West's acceptance of the CSCE on Soviet terms, and anticipates mutual force reductions, starting in Central Europe.

October 6–22: The Yom Kippur War in the Middle East exposes Warsaw Pact deficiencies, primarily in electronic warfare and communications.

October 23–25: Representatives of Warsaw Pact ministries of foreign affairs and defense, minus Romania, meet in Moscow to prepare for the forthcoming MBFR negotiations in Vienna. The Soviet Union favors downsizing while preserving "the existing balance of power."

October 30–31: A meeting of deputy foreign ministers is held in Berlin to counter the FRG's effort to represent Berlin at the United Nations, following the admission of both German states as members of the body.

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October 30–November 1: A meeting of the Military Council in Prague provides no evaluation of the development of individual Warsaw Pact armies, as called for in the 1971–1975 plan, presumably because the plan was being reviewed.
October 31: An amended version of the Polish defense doctrine is adopted by Poland's Committee for the Defense of the Homeland.

1974

February 5–7: Warsaw Pact defense ministers meet in Bucharest where Nicolae Ceaușescu, who is opposed to a unified communications system for the alliance, criticizes the building of a regional command post in Bulgaria.
March 26–29: A session of the Military Council in Budapest draws lessons from the Yom Kippur War, and calls for new air defense missiles and automated command systems.
March 26–April 4: The “Elektronik-74” exercise shows that GDR telecommunications capabilities are not ready for wartime conditions.
April 17–18: At a meeting of the PCC in Warsaw, East Germany criticizes Romania for playing into NATO's hands; the PCC makes abortive preparations to celebrate the Warsaw Pact's 20th anniversary in 1975.
April 26: At a meeting of the Military Council, the USSR urges better preparation of all Warsaw Pact territory in the event of war.
July 2–5: A meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff takes place in Prague.
December 5: At the MBFR talks, the Warsaw Pact proposes a freeze on troop levels while negotiations are in progress, but NATO is opposed since this would block its efforts to redress force imbalances.

1975

January 7–8: At a defense ministers' meeting in Moscow, the GDR representative explains NATO's modernization process in detail and discusses NATO's new electronic warfare capabilities that are mainly sponsored by the FRG and United States.
January 29–30: At a Moscow meeting of deputy foreign ministers, preparations are made to celebrate the Warsaw Pact's 20th anniversary in the Polish capital in May and to hold a PCC meeting in 1975, neither of which materializes.
March 18: Brezhnev at meeting with Warsaw Pact party secretaries in Moscow singles out the conclusion of the CSCE as the common highest foreign policy priority.
March 19–20: Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers meet in the Polish capital to step up coordination of policies toward the Nordic countries, considered of particular importance “to promote positive tendencies in international relations.”
May 21–24: The GDR holds its first annual exercises designed to prepare both state and society for war.
August 1: The Final Act of the CSCE is signed in Helsinki by 35 countries. They pledge to resolve conflicts peacefully and agree to respect human rights and basic freedoms.

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October 7: A new Soviet–GDR treaty provides for mutual defense of borders in addition to guarantees provided by the Warsaw Pact.
October 28–30: A Military Council meeting in Bucharest approves the shortening of alert times. Romania joins a common air defense plan as well a plan for joint counterintelligence, but balks on other points such as allowing transit of Warsaw Pact forces across the territories of member-states.
November 18–19: A committee of defense ministers' meeting in Prague calls for increased use of helicopters, automation of troop command and improvement of transportation.
1975: Soviet planning for coalition warfare reaches its peak this year; 20–40 percent of forces assigned for offensive action against NATO are East European.

1976

February 19: At the MBFR talks, the Warsaw Pact proposes proportional reductions on the assumption that a rough equilibrium exists. It also accepts the Western idea of reductions in stages, but opposes an asymmetrical approach, as favored by the West.
May 25–27: A meeting of the Military Council in Kiev hears a report on increases in NATO's capabilities.
September 9–16: “Shield-76” maneuvers in Poland, with participation of Western observers as well as defense minister Raúl Castro of Cuba.
November 25–26: PCC meeting in Bucharest submits draft of treaty for an all-European security conference against first use of nuclear weapons, decides to create a committee of foreign ministers and Unified Secretariat as PCC organs (only the former implemented), and approves creation of special forces equipped with up-to-date weapons. East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria urge closer coordination in view of the disruptive internal effects of Helsinki.
December 10–11: Defense ministers meet in Prague and discuss NATO's modernization of intelligence, command, and fighting capabilities which they regard as the most crucial transformation since the “equipment of NATO forces with nuclear weapons.” Romania opposes the creation of a Warsaw Pact agency for the standardization of equipment.

1977

January 18: Brezhnev in a speech at Tula, south of Moscow, denies any Soviet desire for strategic superiority.
March 21–29: The “Soiuz-77” exercise is held in Hungary and ČSSR, including Soviet forces. It presumes a NATO attack involving use of Austrian territory, but presupposes that by the second day the Warsaw Pact will already begin a counteroffensive that pushes the enemy back.
May 25–26: The first meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs takes place in Moscow, to prepare a common position for the upcoming CSCE Belgrade conference.

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May 30–June 9: The “Zapad” exercise in the GDR, which is intended to take into account NATO’s progress in combat readiness, shows that the Warsaw Pact’s response is not fast enough.

September 5: Warsaw Pact Supreme Commander Marshal Viktor G. Kulikov creates new administrative bodies to enhance the organizational structure of the Warsaw Pact command.

October 20: At a meeting of the Military Council in Sofia, Romania refuses to participate in forthcoming Warsaw Pact staff training because of a lack of clarity on the principles of unified command in war time.

November 29–December 3: A meeting of defense ministers in Budapest deals with preparation of the statute for Warsaw Pact command in war time.

December 1977: The deployment of the SS-20 Soviet intermediate-range missiles in Europe begins.

1978

February 12–18: The “Druzhiba” exercise takes place. It presumes a NATO attack, then a counterattack with conventional weapons escalating to use of nuclear weapons.

April 24–25: Warsaw Pact foreign ministers meet in Sofia to discuss political and military détente and disarmament measures. Romania sees détente endangered by the global competition of the superpowers over spheres of influence.

May 16–19: A meeting of the Warsaw Pact Military Council in Budapest is concerned with the rise in NATO’s budgets and military issues such as the West’s capability to destroy aircraft on the ground.

June 12–14: A meeting of chiefs of general staffs in Sofia discusses the development of Warsaw Pact forces in 1981–1985, and presses for finalization of a statute on command in war time over Romanian opposition.

July 10: Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Dmitrii Ustinov in Helsinki demands joint military exercises with Finland, but the Finns sidetrack the demand.

November 22–23: A PCC meeting in Moscow agrees to prepare a statute on command in war time for the November 1979 meeting of the committee of defense ministers. The group calls for the qualitative development of forces and creation of state-of-the-art special units within each national army.

December 4–7: A committee of defense ministers meeting in Berlin concludes that NATO’s May 1978 program aims at the attainment of military superiority over the Warsaw Pact.

1979

May 12–19: The “Shield” exercise takes place in Hungary, with Soviet, Czechoslovak and Bulgarian participation. It includes only an offensive, not a defensive, stage.

May 14–15: A meeting of foreign ministers takes place in Budapest to prepare a common policy at the forthcoming CSCE conference in Madrid, with an emphasis

on military détente. The ministers call for an agreement that would prohibit the first use of nuclear weapons.

June 15–18: U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Brezhnev meet in Vienna to sign the SALT II treaty.

October 6: Brezhnev in East Berlin announces the unilateral withdrawal of 1,000 tanks and 20,000 troops from the GDR.

November 21–27: Discussions within the Supreme Command working group in Bucharest reveal fundamental differences over the statute on wartime command between Romania and other Warsaw Pact countries.

December 3–6: A meeting of defense ministers in Warsaw discusses a Soviet draft of principles of command in war time, a proposal for creating a unified early warning system against nuclear strikes, and other issues. The Romanians advocate unilateral reductions of military budgets.

December 5–6: Warsaw Pact foreign ministers meet in Berlin to discuss the 25th anniversary of the alliance, the forthcoming CSCE conference in Madrid, and NATO’s imminent “dual track” decision that would provide for preparing for the deployment of intermediate-range missiles while negotiating for their mutual abolition.

December 12: NATO adopts its dual track decision regarding the deployment of intermediate-range missiles and talks over their elimination.

December 25: The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan and installs a new government.

1980

March 18: Warsaw Pact party chiefs meeting in Moscow approve a statute on unified forces and command in war time. However, Ceaușescu demurs, leaving the document binding only for those who signed it.

April 11: Warsaw Pact governments agree on principles of military assistance to developing countries.

April 30: Warsaw Pact members, except Romania, agree on the appointment of Brezhnev as commander-in-chief of the alliance.

May 14–15: The PCC 25th anniversary meeting takes place in Warsaw. The group issues a declaration against Western armament programs. The Romanians condemn the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and urge withdrawal of Soviet forces from the country.

May 22: At a Military Council meeting in Moscow, Marshal Kulikov praises the functioning of the system of military collaboration among Warsaw Pact armies.

July 9: In preparing for next session of the Madrid CSCE conference, Warsaw Pact deputy foreign ministers meeting in Prague agree to pursue military détente by trying to exploit Western disunity.

August 14: Workers’ strikes break out at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdańsk, Poland, leading to the creation of the “Solidarity” trade union and a prolonged political crisis in Poland.

October 19–20: At a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in

Warsaw, participants agree on a strategy for the Madrid talks while keeping their agenda separate from the Polish developments.

October 22: Polish Defense Minister Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski secretly creates a special group within the army command to prepare a proclamation of martial law.

October 27–30: The Warsaw Pact Military Council meets in Hungary

December 1: Plans for the invasion of Poland, prepared in the Soviet general staff and envisaging a supporting role for the Polish army, are handed to Polish Defense Ministry representatives in Moscow.

December 1–3: Warsaw Pact defense ministers meet in Bucharest, but do not discuss ways to resolve the Polish crisis.

December 4–5: An emergency meeting of Warsaw Pact party secretaries either reaches or confirms a decision not to intervene militarily in Poland but to allow the Polish party leadership another chance to restore full communist authority.

December 8–10: The “Soiuz-80” exercise involving Soviet, Czechoslovak, and East German troops gets underway, but does not extend into Poland.

1981

January 13: A closed meeting of the Warsaw Pact Supreme Command, chaired by Marshal Viktor Kulikov, decides that the Polish crisis must be resolved by the Polish communists themselves. Polish Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski is entrusted with finding the solution.

January 19–20: A deputy foreign ministers’ meeting takes place in Berlin with the participation of Mongolia and Cuba. They decide to strengthen the presence of Warsaw Pact representatives in West Berlin.

March 16: The “Soiuz-81” and “Druzhiba-80” maneuvers are held on the territory of the GDR and Poland.

March 19: The Bydgoszcz crisis occurs in Poland, marking another high-tension point in the Polish crisis.

April 2: Brezhnev and Defense Minister Dmitrii Ustinov indicate at a Soviet Politburo meeting the decision to shelve plans for military intervention in Poland and to put pressure on Polish party leaders to crack down on the Solidarity opposition forces themselves.

April 21–23: At a meeting of the Warsaw Pact’s Military Council in Sofia, Kulikov reports that Polish party leader Stanisław Kania and Prime Minister Jaruzelski had requested the establishment of a collective Warsaw Pact command center at Legnica.

June 13: Marshal Kulikov, on a visit to Dresden, asks East German generals to be prepared for “all eventualities” in regard to Poland.

September 4–12: The “Zapad-81” exercises take place in the Baltic and Belorussia. They are the first to practice the Operational Group Maneuver concept of deep conventional thrusts into NATO territory to destroy its military infrastructure.

October 27–30: A Warsaw Pact Military Council meeting concludes it is high time for the Polish leadership to use force against Solidarity.

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December 1–2: A meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Bucharest, convened after a one-year interval, discusses arms control issues rather than Poland.

December 1–4: During a defense ministers’ meeting in Moscow, where Poland is not the main item on the agenda, Polish Defense Minister Florian Siwicki attempts vainly to obtain the Warsaw Pact’s support for the imposition of martial law.

December 10: A Soviet Politburo meeting rules out military intervention in Poland.

December 13: Jaruzelski declares martial law in Poland.

1982

March 29: Jaruzelski, at a meeting with Honecker in Berlin, proclaims martial law a success and welcomes recent Warsaw Pact maneuvers in Poland, where the East German army was present “both politically and in combat.”

Mary 17–27: The Warsaw Pact’s “Dukla-82” exercise is held in Czechoslovakia in response to the U.S. strategy to win a war in Europe by conventional means only.

June 18: The Soviet exercise—“seven-hour nuclear war”—simulates an all-out first strike against the United States and Western Europe.

September 8–10: A meeting of chiefs of staffs in Minsk demonstrates the use of the first automatic field command system. The Romanians were not invited to attend.

September 24–October 1: The Warsaw Pact “Shield” exercise takes place in Bulgaria without Romanian participation.

October 21–22: The committee of foreign ministers meets in Moscow to prepare strategy for the Madrid CSCE conference in order to “save” détente.

November 10: Leonid Brezhnev dies; Iurii Andropov becomes the new general secretary of the Soviet communist party two days later.

1983

January 4–5: At a PCC meeting, recently appointed Soviet leader Iurii Andropov maintains that under the Reagan administration the threat of war has increased dramatically. Romania, Poland, and East Germany debate differing concepts of the Warsaw Pact.

January 11–13: A committee of defense ministers meeting in Prague criticizes what it perceives as NATO’s striving for superiority and attempts to draw lessons from the recent Iran–Iraq and Falklands wars.

March 23: President Ronald Reagan proposes the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or Star Wars.

April 6–7: Foreign ministers at their meeting in Prague agree to streamline the Warsaw Pact’s consultative mechanism and urge the conclusion of a Warsaw Pact–NATO nonaggression treaty, while Romania presses for a reduction of military outlays.

April 26–28: At a meeting of the Military Council in Bucharest, Marshal Kulikov urges modernization of armaments and equipment in order to keep up with NATO, whereas Ceaușescu insists that prospective Western deployments of

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medium-range missiles ought to be answered not by counter-deployments but by removal of all nuclear missiles from Europe.

May 30–June 9: The joint “Soiuz-83” exercise envisages the occupation of Denmark, the FRG, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France by the 35th–40th day of the war. Kulikov stresses the need to be able to start hostilities immediately, not only after mobilization, as was the case before.

May 31: The Soviet Politburo, meeting in Moscow in anticipation of NATO’s “Euro-missile” deployments, stresses the need to consolidate the Warsaw Pact in view of its lack of unity and growing national divergences.

June 28: An extraordinary meeting of top Warsaw Pact leaders discusses measures in response to the likely deployment of Euromissiles; East Germany and Czechoslovakia reluctantly agree to counter-deployments of Soviet missiles on their territories.

September 1: Soviet fighters shoot down a South Korean civilian airliner, KAL 007, that mistakenly entered Soviet airspace.

October 13–14: A committee of foreign ministers meeting in Sofia warns NATO against precipitating another arms race and threatens the deployment of additional weapons systems as well as the strengthening of Warsaw Pact conventional forces. Romania opposes the idea and demands the creation of a commission of experts to deal with all arms control issues.

October 20: The committee of defense ministers holds an extraordinary meeting in Berlin to prepare for the Western governments’ impending approval of the Euromissile deployment.

October 29: The Warsaw Pact Military Council meets in Lvov, Ukraine.

November 9–10: The Warsaw Pact heads of parliament issue an appeal against the deployment of Euromissiles.

November 22: Approval by West Germany’s Bundestag opens the way for the deployment of Euromissiles.

December 5–7: A meeting of the committee of defense ministers in Sofia takes note of the Soviet withdrawal from the Geneva arms control talks but takes no other measures in response to the Euromissile deployments.

1984

February 9: Iurii Andropov dies; two days later Konstantin U. Chernenko assumes the post of Soviet party general secretary.

April 19–20: During a meeting in Budapest, Warsaw Pact foreign ministers, with the exception of Romania, endorse the Soviet position that a return to conditions that held prior to the deployment of Euromissiles is a precondition for resumption of negotiations on intermediate-range missiles.

April 24–27: At a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Military Council in Prague, the Czechoslovak government for the first time requests training for defense, in addition to offensive warfare.

September 5–14: The “Shield-84” exercise prepares for both defensive and offensive operations.

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December 3–4: A meeting of the committee of foreign ministers in Berlin prepares material for a Warsaw Pact summit.

December 3–5: At a defense ministers’ meeting in Budapest, Marshal Sergei F. Akhromeev urges “permanently increased combat readiness” in response to the results of NATO’s 1979 long-term development program

1985

March 11: Following the death of Chernenko, Mikhail Gorbachev is appointed general secretary of the Soviet communist party.

April 26: As the Warsaw Pact’s 30th anniversary approaches, the alliance is extended for another 20 years.

May 20–23: The Warsaw Pact Military Council meets in Budapest.

May 22: A conference celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact is held in Moscow.

October 22–23: At a PCC meeting in Sofia, Gorbachev justifies the Soviet Union’s return to the Geneva arms control talks. East Germany and Czechoslovakia propose the creation of a chemical-weapons-free zone in Europe.

November 18–21: The first summit between Reagan and Gorbachev takes place in Geneva. They agree to accelerate arms reduction talks.

November 21: At a meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders in Prague, Gorbachev reports about the Geneva summit.

December 2–5: At a defense ministers’ meeting in Berlin, Marshal Kulikov and Gen. Anatolii Gribkov express bleak views about NATO intentions, arguing that NATO’s operational training is increasingly being shaped by an offensive U.S. military doctrine aimed at launching a surprise attack.

1986

January 15: Gorbachev outlines a plan for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000.

January 28–29: A deputy foreign ministers’ meeting is held in Berlin. The delegates stress the need for mutual consultations about questions concerning developing countries.

February 25: Addressing the XXVIIth Soviet party congress, Gorbachev calls for Warsaw Pact unity but says that “unity has nothing in common with conformity.” He says that security cannot depend on defense or deterrence but must be found by political means.

March 7: At a conference of deputy foreign ministers in Budapest, the Soviets inform the delegates on the progress of negotiations in Geneva.

March 19–20: A Warsaw Pact committee of foreign ministers meeting in Warsaw supports as its main goal the general abolition of weapons of mass destruction, and provides for participation of Warsaw Pact member-states in international arms control negotiations

April 23–25: A Warsaw Pact Military Council session in Warsaw, held after the U.S. air strike against Libya, calls for measures to overcome the increase in NATO’s defensive and offensive capabilities.

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April 26: The Chernobyl nuclear disaster occurs, demonstrating to Warsaw Pact leaders the potential effects of nuclear war.

June 10–11: Meeting in Budapest, the PCC appeals for reductions of conventional forces by 25 percent. Gorbachev urges more emphasis on political and economic collaboration within the alliance.

September 8–12: The “Druzhiba-86” exercise envisages an attack by Western conventional forces, under the guise of exercises, which would likewise be repelled by conventional means.

September 11–12: A Bucharest meeting of Warsaw Pact experts discusses a Romanian proposal for a unilateral freeze and reduction of armed forces and defense expenditures.

October 14–15: At a foreign ministers’ meeting in Bucharest, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze reports on the recent Gorbachev–Reagan summit in Reykjavik.

November 11–20: A meeting of the Warsaw Pact’s leading general staff officers takes place in Bratislava.

November 12–14: At the Warsaw Pact Military Council, Kulikov warns of an increased danger of war because of NATO’s growing potential, especially after the installation of Euromissiles.

December 1–3: At a Warsaw Pact committee of ministers of defense meeting in Warsaw, Soviet Defense Minister Sokolov dwells on the continuing danger of unpredictable U.S. actions that may lead to war.

1987

February: “Group 23,” comprising the NATO and Warsaw Pact states, begins informal consultations in Vienna that eventually lead to the 1990 signing of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

March 24–25: A meeting of foreign ministers in Moscow supports the Soviet effort to remove intermediate-range nuclear forces and seeks common positions on the CSCE negotiations in Vienna.

May 28–29: At a PCC meeting in Berlin, the Warsaw Pact officially abandons its offensive strategy in favor of a strictly defensive one.

July 3: A meeting of the main political administrations of the Warsaw Pact countries in Moscow reaches agreement to create a coordinating political organ of the Supreme Command and an information office for the unified forces.

July: The so-called Jaruzelski Plan for “Nuclear and Conventional Arms Disengagement in Central Europe” is promulgated.

August 5: Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff meeting in Moscow agree to, but are skeptical of, forthcoming negotiations with NATO on cuts in conventional forces.

September 6–14: The “Soiuz-87” exercise features strategic defense for the first time, and provides for a gradual transition from a peace to a wartime footing.

October 14: A meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff in Moscow deals with military doctrine.

November 24–26: Defense ministers meeting in Bucharest discusses new troop pos-

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tures in view of the adoption of a defensive doctrine and the outcome of the Stockholm conference on confidence-building measures.

December 8–10: At the Washington summit, Reagan and Gorbachev sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).

1988

February 8: Gorbachev announces that a withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan will take place within a year.

February 23: At a foreign ministers’ meeting in Prague, Shevardnadze informs the delegates about a recent visit by Secretary of State George Shultz, and notes a wide convergence of views between the United States and the USSR.

March 29–30: At a conference of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers in Sofia, Shevardnadze is optimistic about the positive effects of the reduction of conventional forces while East German Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer is concerned about being on the losing side. Shevardnadze proposes the creation of inter-parliamentary organizations within the Warsaw Pact countries.

May 13: At a foreign ministers’ meeting in Berlin, Shevardnadze notes a “visible weakening of anti-Soviet tendencies of U.S. policy,” and thanks the Warsaw Pact partners for helping the USSR to gain U.S. confidence.

May 17: A meeting in Moscow, hosted jointly by the Soviet General Staff and Foreign Ministry, discusses the preparation of data exchanges between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

July 4: Romania offers a proposal for the reorganization and “democratization” of Warsaw Pact organs.

July 5–8: At a meeting of the committee of defense ministers in Moscow concerning perspectives on the development of NATO and the Warsaw Pact up to 2000, Gorbachev notes the Warsaw Pact’s new dynamism, and observes that all its member-states have become “independently active.”

July 15–16: The PCC meets in Warsaw to prepare for negotiations on reducing conventional weapons and on confidence-building measures within the framework of the Vienna CSCE talks. The Romanians stress the negative tendencies of recent developments, while others welcome a reduction of tensions.

October 3–5: The Warsaw Pact Military Council, meeting in Budapest, decides that combat training must reflect the new defensive doctrine.

October 17–18: An extraordinary meeting of defense ministers in Prague, concerning problems resulting from the disclosure of data about troop strength and armaments, rejects a Romanian proposal for reform of the alliance.

October 28–29: Warsaw Pact foreign ministers meet in Budapest to implement the results of negotiations on conventional arms reductions and confidence-building measures. The group notes that the transition from confrontation to détente is a “determining trend,” but different countries disagree over the desirability of compromises at the CSCE in Vienna, particularly on human rights.

November 17: A Honecker–Ceaușescu meeting in Berlin marks a rapprochement between the Warsaw Pact’s most conservative regimes.

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November 25: The GDR's National Defense Council seeks a review of the 1957 agreement on the stationing of Soviet troops.

December 7: In a landmark speech to the United Nations, Gorbachev announces drastic unilateral Soviet force reductions in Eastern Europe, and formally renounces the "Brezhnev doctrine."

December 8–9: A meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign and defense ministries' experts in Moscow opposes the Romanian proposal for reorganization of the alliance.

December 13–15: The Warsaw Pact Special Disarmament Commission in Bucharest supports the lowest possible level of troops and armaments that is needed for defense and a restructuring of forces such that neither side would have the benefits of surprise and an offensive capability.

December 17: A committee of defense ministers meeting in Sofia decides to publish figures on manpower and armaments, and discusses the specifics of defensive restructuring.

1989

February 14–15: The second meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign and defense ministries' experts in Bucharest opposes the Romanian idea of creating a PCC separate from the Warsaw Pact and replacement of the CMD by a military committee. The group further sees the need for a permanent political working body, a stronger role for the general secretary, and creation of a multilateral information group.

February 28: A meeting of the special Warsaw Pact commission on disarmament in Bucharest discusses Soviet draft documents for Vienna on the reduction of conventional forces (in which asymmetries and inequalities between the two alliances are to be abolished during the first stage).

March 27–31: A Moscow meeting of Warsaw Pact intelligence representatives concludes that the alliance's new defensive doctrine requires intensified counter-intelligence collaboration against subversion.

March 29: The third meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign and defense ministries' experts in Prague makes no progress on reform of the alliance because of obstruction by Romania, and considers the creation of a special Warsaw Pact commission on human rights.

April 10: A "closed circle" meeting of foreign ministers, at Niederschönhausen near Berlin, is established to encourage informal discussion among the principals.

April 11–12: At their meeting in Berlin, Warsaw Pact foreign ministers reveal a deepening cleavage between conservative member-states and those, such as Poland and Hungary, that are intent on accommodating Western principles.

April 28: Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff meet in Moscow to prepare for the Vienna talks on conventional force reductions.

May 16–18: A meeting of the Comecon Council in Moscow favors a reorganization that would make the council resemble more closely the European Community.

May 22–24: A Military Council meeting takes place in Berlin.

May 23: The "Vltava" maneuvers practice defensive operations.

June 4: In Poland's first largely free elections, the anti-communist opposition wins a landslide victory.

June 13–14: At the fourth meeting of defense and foreign ministry experts, convened to discuss reorganization of the Warsaw Pact, Hungary opposes expanding the PCC agenda to include political and economic cooperation and internal developments, and proposes suspension of the Military Council.

June 14: The Bulgarians offer a proposal for reform of the Warsaw Pact.

July 7–8: A PCC meeting in Bucharest approves the Soviet concept of military reductions and defensive restructuring, but supreme commander Petr Lushev fears the "destruction of the present structure of the Unified Armed Forces." Gorbachev favors a transformation into a primarily political alliance amid deepening disagreement among the partners about the extent of desirable change.

August 19: Romania demands collective Warsaw Pact action against "counter-revolution" in Poland.

September 8: Hungary presents the proposal for creating unilaterally a "security, confidence-building, and a cooperation zone" along the borders with Yugoslavia and Austria.

October 3–5: At a Military Council session in Warsaw, Jaruzelski warns that although no NATO aggression is to be expected in the near future, the Warsaw Pact must be prepared for the possibility that the situation could change quickly.

October 26–27: A foreign ministers' meeting in Warsaw is unable to agree on a common position to be taken at the CSCE negotiations in Vienna.

October 30–November 2: A meeting of Warsaw Pact chiefs of staff in Sofia discusses the development of Warsaw Pact forces up to 2000.

November 2–3: A meeting of chiefs of staff and foreign ministry representatives in Sofia discusses the latest results of the Vienna talks, and prepares further reductions of forces.

November 9: The Berlin Wall falls.

November 27–29: A committee of defense ministers' meeting in Budapest welcomes the reduction of international tensions but calls for more effort to make it irreversible.

December 1–3: U.S. President George Bush and Gorbachev meet near Malta. Gorbachev indicates his intention to remodel the Warsaw Pact along NATO lines in order to make it an instrument of political dialogue.

December 25: After the bloody overthrow of Romania's leadership, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu are executed.

December 29: Václav Havel is elected president by Czechoslovakia's parliament under the impact of a popular upheaval that forced the communist regime from power.

1990

January 29: A Warsaw Pact meeting at the Soviet General Staff discusses new proposals for the Vienna talks. The Soviets envisage keeping 275,000 troops in Central Europe, including the GDR and Poland.

February 11–13: A meeting of Warsaw Pact and NATO foreign ministers takes place in Ottawa to discuss arms control and President Bush's Open Skies plan.

February 26: Agreement is reached on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia.

February 26: A new Polish defense doctrine assumes that future wars will be a clash between coalitions, and provides for remaining in the Warsaw Pact until a new European security system has been established.

February 27–28: A meeting of the group of experts on Warsaw Pact reorganization in Budapest favors creation of an office of general secretary with headquarters in Warsaw; only Czechoslovakia dissents.

March 17: A Warsaw Pact foreign ministers' meeting in Prague agrees on the right of Germans to reunification but not on the future political and military status of Germany. The group calls for the transformation but not termination of the alliance, which it sees as a component, together with NATO, of the European security system.

March 25: Free elections take place in Hungary.

April 9: A Havel–Jaruzelski–Szűros meeting in Bratislava fails to agree on a common strategy regarding the future of the Warsaw Pact.

June 6–7: A PCC meeting in Moscow rejects the “ideological enemy image” and fails to agree on reform of the alliance amid growing doubts about its feasibility.

June 14–15: At a committee of defense ministers' meeting at Strausberg, an East German proposal to abolish all Warsaw Pact military structures fails because of Soviet opposition, but no agreement on the manner of their preservation is reached.

July 6: NATO heads of state sign the London Declaration stating that the Warsaw Pact is no longer an enemy.

July 18: Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall visits NATO Headquarters.

September 12: West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Gorbachev sign an agreement that restricts the extension of NATO into former East Germany as long as Soviet troops remain present on its territory.

September 25: The GDR formally withdraws from the Warsaw Pact.

September 30: Warsaw Pact foreign ministers meet in Vienna at Czechoslovak initiative to discuss troop and armament quotas under the CFE agreement.

November 18–21: Thirty-four members of the CSCE meet in Paris. NATO and the Warsaw Pact sign the CFE Treaty, followed by the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, formally recognizing the end of the Cold War.

1991

January 21: In response to Soviet repression in the Baltic republics, a Budapest meeting of Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian foreign ministers sets mid-March as the deadline for dissolution of the Warsaw Pact's military structures.

February 25: A meeting of Warsaw Pact foreign and defense ministers in Budapest agrees to end the military functions of the alliance by March 31

July 1: The political remnants of the Warsaw Pact are dissolved at a meeting in Prague.