

In accordance with the National Security Act of 1947, the President has put into effect since the beginning of his Administration directives to gather by every possible means the information required to protect the United States and the Free World against surprise attack and to enable them to make effective preparations for their defense. Under these directives programs have been developed and put into operation which have included extensive aerial surveillance by unarmed civilian aircraft, normally of a peripheral character but on occasion by penetration. Specific missions of these unarmed civilian aircraft have not been subject to Presidential authorization. The fact that such surveillance was taking place has apparently not been a secret to the Soviet leadership and the question indeed arises as to why at this particular juncture they should seek to exploit the present incident as a propaganda battle in the cold war.

This government had sincerely hoped and continues to hope that in the coming meeting of the Heads of Government in Paris Chairman Khrushchev would be prepared to cooperate in agreeing to effective measures which would remove this fear of sudden mass destruction from the minds of peoples everywhere. Far from being damaging to the forthcoming meeting in Paris, this incident should serve to underline the importance to the world of an earnest attempt there to achieve agreed and effective safeguards against surprise attack and aggression.

At my request and with the authority of the President, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Honorable Allen W. Dulles, is today briefing members of the Congress fully along the foregoing lines.

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State--RD, Wash., D.C.