

~~TOP SECRET~~

August 10, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
August 9, 1960, 11 AM

Others present: Mr. Allen Dulles, Secretary Merchant,
General Twining, General Persons, General
Breitweiser, General Goodpaster, Colonel
Eisenhower

General Twining mentioned that he had studied in detail the matter
of resumption of General
Breitweiser has been in the middle of the whole thing and the JCS
would like to continue some of these flights. If permission is
granted he would like to bring the JCS into more direct super-
vision and probably cut down the frequency of these flights.



The President expressed agreement with the objective of the
flights and said he would like to do it as much as they would. He
asked, however, what we would do if the Soviets were to shoot
down He does not want to get into the position
that President Wilson did in 1916 in which he responded to every
incident by writing a new note. Also, he dislikes the idea of
sending air crews out to take risks of magnitudes such as this.
Should be shot down, he feels we will be close to
war. He mentioned the confidence formerly shared by the State
Department and the late Secretary Dulles that a U-2 incident could
have very little repercussion. Secretary Dulles had felt that the
Soviets would probably never mention shooting down one of these
aircraft. As a matter of fact, the U-2 incident has become such
a major issue that we are not over it yet. We will be hearing about
it throughout this political campaign. The President reiterated his
question as to what the group would like him to do in the event of
a disaster. Should we break diplomatic relations or declare war?
General Twining mentioned the principle of freedom of the seas,
and the President mentioned that a situation could develop where
we could get into an undeclared war with the Soviets similar to
that between the Soviets and the Japanese in Mukden in the 1930's.

DECLASSIFIED WITH DELETIONS
E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.6(b)
CIA E 95-0340 NSA MOD-97-115
Agency Case 95-M-0233/L
NLE Case 95-117-1
By *[Signature]* NLE Date 8/1/96

General Twining mentioned the desire of our Defense authorities to learn more about improved Soviet radar and surface-to-air missile sites.

Discussion then turned to possible safety measures which could be observed. These include: (1) aborting the mission on the first sign of any enemy fighters; (2) performing the bulk of the mission at low level, coming up only for the intelligence run; (3) announcing the aircraft's position on the radio at such time as fighters are sighted. This latter measure is effective since the Soviets will know that the pilot has announced his position. Normally, under these circumstances, they depart the scene.



The President mentioned the political aspects of such a disaster. During an election year the opposition party is willing to take advantage of any measures short of treason. General Twining agreed. Further discussion indicated that fighter escort is not practical, and that there has been some thought of using the U-2. Regarding the measure of announcing the route ahead of time, Mr. Merchant reacted strongly to this. General Breitweiser mentioned the technique of having accompany the operational aircraft to serve as a witness of its location. The U-2 has also been considered for this purpose.

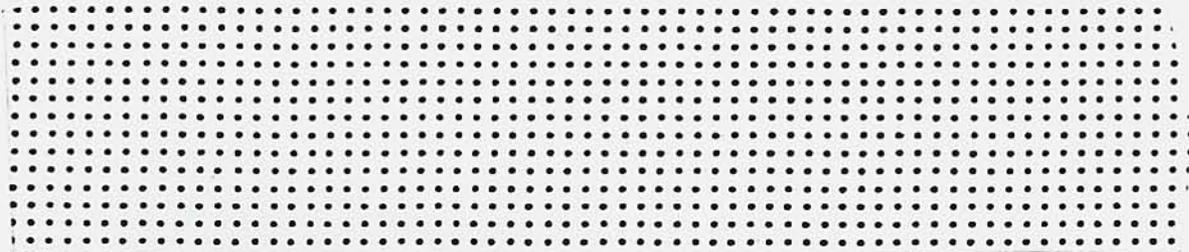
Mr. Dulles mentioned that the Soviets have run missions in the Alaskan region but have kept out of range of our fighters. The President went back to the delicate situation internally and externally that this entire project represents. He quoted his Navy friends at Newport as being most concerned over the internal political situation in the United States, being anxious to do nothing to effect a change of political parties in this election. The President's concern primarily is what we do even if we prove the Soviets illegal in destroying a plane.

In response to a question by Mr. Dulles, General Breitweiser pointed out that over the years we have hadaircraft attacked, The Soviets had paid indemnity in one case just before the 1955 Geneva Summit. Mr. Merchant pointed out that the Soviets had come out badly in the recent UN discussions on the July 1 incident. Even our weakest allies had accused the Soviets of piracy, once it had been established that the airplane had stayed thirty miles away from shore. He recognized that our relations with the American people regarding something like this are not good. The President said that the rest of the world would also question what we are doing by continually probing in this area and we cannot explain the full and real purpose of the flights.

Mr. Dulles volunteered that he had briefed both Senators Kennedy and Johnson on this program and that they had both taken a very positive attitude, to the extent of asking about plans for the future. General Persons said this is an old trick -- that the candidates themselves will say nothing but the second and third echelon assistants will do the undercutting and attacking.



General Twining pointed out to the President that many of these flights are being carried out by the Navy in other areas and mentioned that these flights should perhaps also be examined in the same context. In answer to a question from the President, he said crews are ready and willing to perform more missions. In answer to another question, he and General Breitweiser



Mr. Dulles mentioned our doubt as to whether the Soviets actually shot down the plane, and the President said it is impossible to know without talking to the survivors.



The President mentioned the type of equipment. He asked about the possibility of using B-52s.

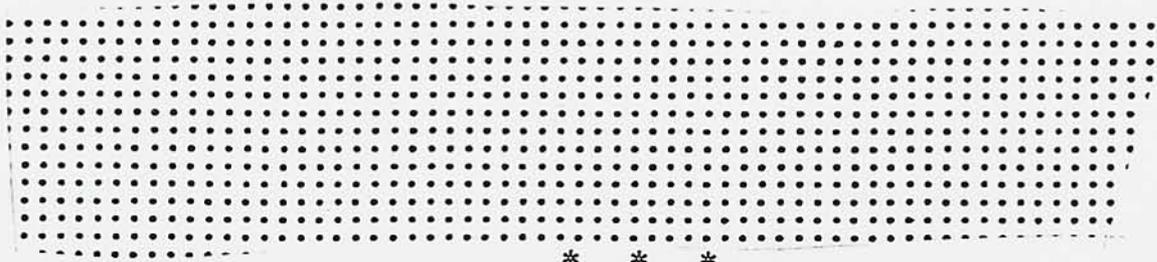
This increases the concern of the public over sending crews in the vicinity of the Soviet Union in these planes. The President asked as to the feasibility of using the B-58. General Twining thought it might be possible in the space of a couple of months to equip a B-58 properly, although it may be that the B-58 cannot carry the necessary equipment. General Breitweiser agreed.

The President noted that if the schedule is reduced, these missions can perhaps be performed by only one B-58. He reiterated his experience regarding everybody's views before the U-2 disaster and reviewed its dire results on world opinion, to the extent of its use by the Japanese to cancel his visit. He concluded that if these missions are important, we must not spare the expense.



The President therefore directed:

- (1) That the Navy flights in the Far East continue without change.
- (2) That General Twining examine the B-58 for performance of this mission and come back to see him.



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I then reminded the President of his desire to discuss the military missions. General Twining assured the President that we get a lot of good out of these missions. Mr. Dulles was even more emphatic and stressed their value in gathering order of battle intelligence. He pointed out that the Soviets have a similar mission from which they gather far less value. The British have sustained more serious incidents than have we.

Mr. Merchant cited the State Department position that it would be a serious mistake to pull these military missions out. He recommends instead that we take comparable retaliatory measures against Soviet military missions whenever trouble arises. Parenthetically General Twining pointed out that these missions

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The President agreed with Mr. Merchant's position that we take no action other than to retaliate against the Soviets by taking measures comparable to those which they take against ours.

John S D Eisenhower
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