

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE FLIGHTS OVER THE SOVIET UNION: THE U-2 INCIDENT

- (1) United States Note to the U.S.S.R., May 6, 1960.
- (2) State Department Statement, May 7, 1960.
- (3) Statement by Secretary of State Herter, May 9, 1960.
- (4) Soviet Note to the United States, May 10, 1960
- (5) News Conference Statement by the President, May 11, 1960
- (6) United States Note to the U.S.S.R., May 11, 1960.

-
- (1) United States Note to the U.S.S.R., May 6, 1960.
(Dept. of State Bulletin, May 23, 1960, p 818.)

The Embassy of the United States of America by instruction of its Government has the honor to state the following:

The United States Government has noted the statement of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, N. S. Khrushchev, in his speech before the Supreme Soviet on May 5 that a foreign aircraft crossed the border of the Soviet Union on May 1 and that on orders of the Soviet Government, this aircraft was shoot down. In this same statement it was said that investigation showed that it was a United States plane.

As already announced on May 3, a United States National Aeronautical Space Agency unarmed weather research plane based at Adana, Turkey, and piloted by a civilian American has been missing since May 1. The name of the American civilian pilot is Francis Gary Powers, born on August 17, 1929, at Jenkins, Kentucky.

In the light of the above the United States Government requests the Soviet Government to provide it with full facts of the Soviet investigation of this incident and to inform it of the fate of the pilot.

-
- (2) State Department Statement, May 7, 1960.
(Department of State Bulletin, May 23, 1960, p. 818-819)

The Department has received the text of Mr. Khrushchev's further remarks about the unarmed plane which is reported to have been shot down in the Soviet Union. As previously announced, it was known that a U-2 plane was missing. As a result of the inquiry ordered by the President it has been established that insofar as the authorities in Washington are concerned there was no authorization for any such flight as described by Mr. Khrushchev.

Nevertheless it appears that in endeavoring to obtain information now concealed behind the Iron Curtain a flight over Soviet territory was probably undertaken by an unarmed civilian U-2 plane.

It is certainly no secret that, given the state of the world today, intelligence collection activities are practiced by all countries, and postwar history certainly reveals that the Soviet Union has not been lagging behind in this field.

The necessity for such activities as measures for legitimate national defense is enhanced by the excessive secrecy practiced by the Soviet Union in contrast to the free world.

One of the things creating tension in the world today is apprehension over surprise attack with weapon of mass destruction.

To reduce mutual suspicion and to give a measure of protection against surprise attack the United States in 1955 offered its open-skies proposal - a proposal which was rejected out of hand by the Soviet Union. It is in relation to the danger of surprise attack that planes of the type of unarmed civilian U-2 aircraft have made flights along the frontiers of the free world for the past 4 years.

(3) Statement by Secretary of State Herter, May 9, 1960.

(Dept. of State Bulletin, May 23, 1960, pp. 816-817.)

On May 7 the Department of State spokesman made a statement with respect to the alleged shooting down of an unarmed American civilian aircraft of the U-2 type over the Soviet Union. The following supplements and clarifies this statement as respects the position of the United States Government.

Ever since Marshal Stalin shifted the policy of the Soviet Union from wartime cooperation to postwar conflict in 1946 and particularly since the Berlin blockade, the forceful takeover of Czechoslovakia, and the Communist aggressions in Korea and Vietnam the world has lived in a state of apprehension with respect to Soviet intentions. The Soviet leaders have almost complete access to the open societies of the free world and supplement this with vast espionage networks. However, they keep their own society tightly closed and rigorously controlled. With the development of modern weapons carrying tremendously destructive nuclear warheads, the threat of surprise attack and aggression presents a constant danger. This menace is enhanced by the threats of mass destruction frequently voiced by the Soviet leadership.

For many years the United States in company with its allies has sought to lessen or even to eliminate this threat from the life of man so that he can go about his peaceful business without fear. Many proposals to this end have been put up to the Soviet Union. The President's open-skies proposal of 1955 was followed in 1957 by the offer of an exchange of ground observers between agreed military in the U.S., the U.S.S.R., and other nations that might wish to participate. For several years we have been seeking the mutual abolition of the restrictions on travel imposed by the Soviet Union and those which the United States felt obliged to institute on a reciprocal basis. More recently at the Geneva disarmament conference the United States has proposed far-reaching new measure of controlled disarmament. It is possible that the Soviet leaders have a different version and that, however unjustifiedly, they fear attack from the West. But this is hard to reconcile with their continual rejection of our repeated proposal for effective measures against surprise attack and for effective inspection of disarmament measures.

I will say frankly that it is unacceptable that the Soviet political system should be given an opportunity to make secret preparations to face the free world with the choice of abject surrender or nuclear destruction. The Government of the United States would be derelict to its responsibility not

only to the American people but to free peoples everywhere if it did not, in the absence of Soviet cooperation, take such measures as are possible unilaterally to lessen and to overcome this danger of surprise attack. In fact the United States has not and does not shirk this responsibility.

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 people 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.

(4) Soviet Note to the United States, May 10, 1960

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considers it necessary to state the following to the Government of the United States of America.

On May 1 of this year at 5 hour 36 minutes, Moscow time, a military aircraft violated the boundary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and intruded across the borders of the Soviet Union for a distance of more than 2,000 kilometers. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics naturally could not leave unpunished such a flagrant violation of Soviet state boundaries. When the intentions of the violating aircraft became apparent, it was shot down by Soviet rocket troops in the area of Sverdlovsk.

Upon examination by experts of all data at the disposal of the Soviet side, it was incontrovertibly established that the intruder aircraft belonged to the United States of America, was permanently based in Turkey and was sent through Pakistan into the Soviet Union with hostile purposes.

As Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers N. S. Khrushchev made public on May 7 at the final session of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, exact data from the investigation leave no doubts with respect to the purpose of the flight of the American aircraft which violated the U.S.S.R. border on May 1. This aircraft was specially equipped for reconnaissance and diversionary flight over the territory of the Soviet Union. It had on board apparatus for aerial photography for detecting the Soviet radar network and other special radio-technical equipment which form part of U.S.S.R. anti-aircraft defenses. At the disposal of the Soviet expert commission which carried out the investigation, there is indisputable proof of the espionage- reconnaissance mission of the American

aircraft: films of Soviet defense and industrial establishments, a tape recording of signals of Soviet radar stations and other data.

Pilot Powers, about whose fate the Embassy of the United States of America inquired in its note of May 6, is alive and, as indicated in the aforementioned speech of Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers N. S. Khrushchev, will be brought to account under the laws of the Soviet state. The pilot has indicated that he did everything in full accordance with the assignment given him. On the flight map taken from him there was clearly and accurately marked the entire route he was assigned after take-off from the city of Adana (Turkey): Peshwar (Pakistan) - the Ural Sea - Sverdlovsk - Archangel - Murmansk, followed by a landing at the Norwegian airfield at Bude. The pilot also stated that he served in subunit number 10-10 which under cover of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is engaged in high altitude military reconnaissance.

This and other information revealed in speeches of the head of the Soviet Government completely refuted the U.S. State Department's concocted and hurriedly fabricated version, released May 5 in the official announcement for the press, to the effect that the aircraft was allegedly carrying out meteorological observations in the upper strata of the atmosphere along the Turkish-Soviet border.

After the complete absurdity of the aforementioned version had been shown and it had been incontrovertibly proven that the American aircraft intruded across the borders of the Soviet Union for aggressive reconnaissance purposes, a new announcement was made by the U.S. State Department on May 7 which contained the forced admission that the aircraft was sent into the Soviet Union for military reconnaissance and, by the very fact, it was admitted that the flight was pursuing aggressive purposes.