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October 30, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
October 26, 1959

Others present: Mr. Allen Dulles, General Goodpaster

Mr. Dulles came in to propose the conduct of a U-2 reconnaissance flight over a key area of northern European Russia.

The President said that, recognizing that there may be substantial intelligence values involved, there is a basic and broader question -- either the Soviets in the present circumstances would contemplate general warfare or they would not. If they would not, it does not seem necessary to him to conduct these searches for any missile sites they may have. In fact, it is in the nature of provocative pin-pricking, and it may give them the idea that we are seriously preparing plans to knock out their installations.



Mr. Dulles said that there is a high probability (about four to one) that weather will prevent the conduct of the flight. The time remaining, before the sun angle drops to low, is a matter of a couple of weeks. He said that the Defense Department has strongly urged the conduct of this mission.

The President reverted to his original point, saying that if we became convinced that we were going to get nowhere on our disarmament efforts, then he would be inclined to give approval to go ahead and do what we can to learn the location of their missile sites. He did not think we are in that position, however. Accordingly, he said he would talk to Secretary Herter about it but added that he is pretty unhappy about the suggestion and thinks that we are trying to do two incompatible things at once.

Mr. Herter later told me that he had spoken to the President about this, and in view of the President's reluctance had concurred in not conducting the exercise, which he had originally tended to favor. I spoke to the President who said he had decided against the operation. I so notified Mr. Bissell in CIA.


A. J. Goodpaster

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DECLASSIFIED E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4 (b) ml 93-172-3 BY <i>J/K</i> DATE 10/27/95
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