

63-1074

OGC 63-0372

7 February 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Senatorial Positions on U-2 Flights

1. We have reviewed the transcripts of the various hearings before congressional committees, both at the time Powers went down in May 1960 and those that took place after Powers was released. No congressmen expressed either moral or policy objection to the principle of overflights by the U-2. Several expressed regret that they were not recommenced after the President's decision to stand down on overflights over Russia after the Powers incident. Several expressed doubt as to the wisdom of dispatching the particular flight that Powers was sent on. When you briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 6 March 1962, Senator Sparkman said, "There remains the question of the wisdom of sending the flight at all. The Committee was told that the flight was after information of well above average importance, but it was not told what this information was." Sparkman was referring to the earlier briefing of 25 June 1960, after which a Committee report was issued which emphasized that the Committee was not told what was so important about the flight. In the 1962 hearing, Senator Fulbright also said, "In any event it appears that there was something very special about the May 1st flight, although the Committee has been unable to determine exactly what." You then described that special importance had to do with the reconnaissance in the northern portion of Russia which had not been adequately covered and about which we had an urgent need for information.

2. Several portions of these briefings were off the record, but none of us has any recollection of any objection to the U-2 program as a whole being voiced in these sessions.

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LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

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