

NEW YORK TIMES

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Letters to The Times

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Overflights Opposed

TO THE EDITOR:

To admirers of The New York Times nothing has been more disconcerting than your casual endorsement [Editorial May 3] of American reconnaissance flights over Cuba even though these may be in violation of international law. "Nations tend to be jealous of their sovereign control over their airspace," you say; indeed they do. We have only to ask ourselves two questions to determine the real character of our policy.

Would we tolerate Cuban reconnaissance flights over Florida and the Gulf Coast to discover the presence of offensive installations or of preparations for a possible invasion? If not, we have one standard for ourselves and another for the Cubans.

Would we persist in reconnaissance flights over a great power like Russia after it had threatened retaliation? Again, the answer is clear: we did not and would not. This means that we have another double

standard, one for a powerful nation like Russia, another for a weak na-

tion like Cuba.

Some months ago President Johnson assured Panama that the United States would never take advantage of its superior size and strength. Surely it is unworthy of us to do so with Cuba.

HENRY STEELE, COMMAGER.
Amherst, Mass., May 4, 1964.