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September 6, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
July 1, 1960 -- 12:00 Noon

Others present: General Twining
Secretary Merchant
Colonel H.L. Wood
Captain E.R. Hardin
General Goodpaster
Colonel Eisenhower

The meeting opened with a briefing by Captain Hardin, appended hereto.

Captain Hardin showed the President that the first mission, if resumption of the ELINT missions is authorized, would be almost totally nonprovocative in nature. In answer to a question by the President, he pointed out that the British perform missions of the same type in the European area. We work closely and share information with them.

The British Comet, along with the Canberra, flies ELINT missions at 10,000 feet.

Recent British ELINT missions have brought normal reaction from the Soviets. In one case Soviet fighters approached to a point of 30 nautical miles from the aircraft. In another case they approached to within five nautical miles. This is not the least bit unusual, and often in the past fighters have come within two nautical miles and have travelled parallel to the aircraft "pacing" it. The Swedish fighters, in order to protect their neutrality, also scramble and often pace the ELINT aircraft.

In response to another question by the President, Captain Hardin pointed out that the Soviets have flown similar ELINT missions off Alaska. He pointed out a disagreement which occurred between the Intelligence and Air Defense people as to the nature of the U.S. response to these missions. The Intelligence people had been successful in deterring the Air Defense forces from reacting more strongly than the Soviets normally do to ours.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

- 2 -

After some discussion, the President granted permission to General Twining to resume these flights on the same basis as before. He admonished General Twining to make his first missions extremely cautious. He commented that although these missions are legal, they do provide the Soviets plenty of reason to be annoyed in a worldwide psychological struggle. General Twining assured the President that the Soviet reaction to each flight would be carefully analyzed before proceeding to the next, and that great care would be taken to insure that the flights are no more provocative than necessary.

John S D Eisenhower
John S. D. Eisenhower

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