

shows Booth was in high demand. She was asked to compile a bibliography of poems written about Abe Lincoln for the centennial of Lincoln's birth in 1908.⁸ Booth was, in fact, so well known in the library community that she felt confident enough to apply for the editorship at the H.W. Windsor company, a prestigious publishing house in New York.

Among all these examples of Booth's persistence, the biggest accomplishment in her life was the building of the Mary J. Booth Library on Eastern's campus. From 1900 to 1948, the library at Eastern Illinois State College increased from 2,500 books to over 67,000 books. The library was located in Old Main and sprawled over six classrooms before the new library was built. Books were stored in the "lower" which made them highly inaccessible. Reading space was also inadequate as the student population rose year after year. In 1953, limited space and a growing student body caused the stacks to be closed to students.⁹ In the 1930 *Warbler* yearbook, Miss Booth outlined the type of building that was needed.¹⁰ Finally, after much insistence on the matter of the new library, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$2,010,092 for the building and another \$80,000 to furnish it in October 1947.¹¹ The library building, named after Booth, was the first major building erected at Eastern since 1940. An article in the Illinois State Register said about Booth: "She has the distinction of being one of the first living woman academic leaders in Illinois for whom a college building was named."¹² This was quite an accomplishment for a woman at that time.

Mary Booth received an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from Beloit College on June 5 of the same year as the grand opening of the new library. When Booth died on January 2, 1965 at the age of 88, the local newspaper produced a lengthy tribute.¹³ Mary Booth's early contributions to the University and her persistence and dedication were the inspiration for and prompted construction of the much needed library facility in use today.

⁸Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois to Mary J. Booth, Charleston, Illinois, 5 December 1908, Mary J. Booth Collection.

⁹Coleman, *Fifty Years of Service*, 279.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 281.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 277.

¹²*Illinois State Register* (Springfield), 22 May 1950.

¹³*Charleston Courier News*, 2 January 1965.

The U-2 Incident

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In November 1954, John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and several other advisors approached President Dwight D. Eisenhower about proceeding with a program for a special high-performance aircraft possibly to be used for reconnaissance. They wanted to produce about thirty planes for around \$35 million. Lockheed had developed, under tight security, a lightweight plane called the U-2, which could maintain altitudes over 60,000 feet for a long period of time. Eisenhower later said that "any leak of information either at home or abroad could compel abandonment of the entire idea of such a reconnaissance plane."¹ The name U-2 or a utility plane, cloaked its reconnaissance capabilities. Since the government could not deny the existence of the plane, it was said to be used for gathering climate information around the world. The President approved the plan because of the need for intelligence information about the Soviet Union, and, consequently flights began in 1956. Pilots from the Air Force, including Francis Gary Powers, were chosen based on their experience and rigorously trained.

On 1 May 1960, Powers's plane crashed near Sverdlovsk, nearly 1,500 miles into the heart of Russia, sparking a possible international crisis. The President was informed when it was certain that the plane was missing. The President was also told that the possibility that the pilot lived was slim to none. He had been "assured that if a plane were to go down it would be

¹Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1955-1961* (New York, 1965), 544.

destroyed either in the air or on impact, that proof of espionage would be lacking.¹⁶

On May 3 NASA issued a statement saying that a U-2 research plane flying over Turkey on a Air Weather Service mission had gone down in the Lake Van, Turkey area on Sunday, May 1. NASA was told to issue this statement, and really did not know about the U-2 program or what had happened on May 1. The Soviets did not issue a statement until May 5, boasting that they had shot down a United States reconnaissance plane. At this point, the President, upon the recommendation of his advisors, decided to continue to maintain the cover story suggesting that the pilot had difficulty with his oxygen equipment and may have strayed into Soviet air space, and that this was the plane that Khrushchev announced had been shot down. They felt it was important to issue a statement in response to Khrushchev in order to maintain the "credibility" of the "explanation."¹⁷

Then, on May 6, Khrushchev announced that the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was "alive and kicking." A State Department statement acknowledged the need for "intelligence-collecting activities," but more or less still clung to the false cover story. The next morning, the President, again upon the advice of his aides, issued a statement "admitting the essential truth of the Soviet allegations," and accepting full responsibility.¹⁸

At the Paris Summit on May 16, Khrushchev demanded an apology, an end to all U-2 flights, and punishment of the responsible parties. Eisenhower had already said that the flights would be ended, but he would not apologize. He did not feel it was necessary to "permanently tie the hands of the United States government for the single purpose of saving a conference."¹⁹ Khrushchev refused to believe that the President was behind the flights, and wanted someone, Dulles or Nixon preferably, punished for sending the U-2 over Soviet airspace. Khrushchev was also dissatisfied with Eisenhower's word that the flights would not be resumed. De Gaulle, Macmillan, and Eisenhower made several attempts to get Khrushchev to come to the meetings,

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 547.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 549.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 550.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 554.

but he continued to insist that Eisenhower apologize. The Summit concluded before it ever really started.

The U-2 episode poses several important questions: first, was the decision to start the U-2 program the best way to overcome the problems created by the secrecy of the Soviet Union? Second, was a flight over the Soviet Union so close to the Paris Summit necessary? Third, was the initial cover-up the best way to deal with the incident? And fourth, could something have been done to save the Paris Summit? To establish a case, this paper will make use of Eisenhower's memoirs and papers, but will also consider Khrushchev's, Powers's, and the media's role in the U-2 incident.

—I—

Was the decision to start the U-2 program the best alternative to cracking the secrecy of the Soviet Union? President Eisenhower hesitated to have American pilots fly over Soviet territory. He knew he had to respond to Soviet secrecy. Border pilots and spy balloons had been used in the past with little success. Of course, the Americans also had spies in the Soviet Union. Yet, information from these spies took a long time to reach the United States, and involved great risks. Eisenhower and his advisors saw the need to develop some other way to extract information from the Soviet Union. The President was extremely "intelligence-minded," so the idea of the U-2 appealed to him even though he had serious doubts.⁶ Eisenhower's advisors noted that the Soviets spied from their satellite, and that technically there were no international laws against sending planes over other countries. Besides, the advisors said, the Soviets would take advantage of this technology if they had it. The President approved the program, but there was always the matter of continuing the flights, and the President's advisors were quick with reasons why the U-2 had the best reconnaissance capabilities.

Eisenhower felt that a viable alternative to the overflights was a satellite. The Soviets had their own satellite which could take pictures of the United States. In 1959, about three years after the

⁶Michael R. Beschloss, *Maverick*, (New York, 1986), 363.

beginning of the overflights, Eisenhower suggested in a meeting that the U-2 overflights should be curbed and more advanced technology developed to replace them. One of his advisors "pointed out that the new equipment will not be available for eighteen months to two years."⁷⁷ Thus, the President believed that U-2 overflights were his only option for probably the next two years. Eisenhower also said that he was hesitant to authorize more flights because nothing would make him "declare war more quickly than violation of our air space by Soviet aircraft."⁷⁸ It was for those reasons that the President was against an extensive U-2 program. Reconnaissance satellites would not violate anyone's airspace, so Eisenhower felt that "the satellite represents the greatest future in this reconnaissance area."⁷⁹ Even though Eisenhower expressed this opinion, his advisors kept insisting on the importance of carrying out U-2 missions immediately. Eisenhower's advisors took the role of salesmen. To keep business going, they had to convince their boss that it was the best course of action. The President could develop all the satellites that he wanted, as long as he kept approving the U-2 flights.

The President was also hesitant to use the U-2 during the continuing Berlin crisis. Eisenhower said that "it would be most unwise to have world tensions exacerbated by our pursuit of a program of extensive reconnaissance flights over the territory of the Soviet Union."⁸⁰ The President had clear concerns about how the U-2 would effect international relations in the event of a mishap. Why was this not a major concern to his advisors? Again, they seem only to be interested in keeping the program and the information provided alive. In another meeting the President worried "over the terrible propaganda impact that would be occasioned if a reconnaissance plane were to fail."⁸¹

⁷⁷Memorandum For the Record, 12 February 1959, in Glenn W. LaFantasie, et al., eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, Vol. X, Part 1, *Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union; Cyprus* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1992), 261.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 261.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 262.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 7 April 1959, in FRUS, X, 1, 265.

His advisors responded by telling the President of the important sites that might have long-range missile capabilities. Once again, the advisors pushed the President's concerns aside.

The President also considered the Soviet perception of the U-2 program. The Soviets had detected the overflights very early on in the program, and knew about each one even though they could do nothing about them. Each time the Americans sent a U-2 over Soviet territory it led the Soviet leaders to be "more inclined to distrust the Americans."⁸² The Soviets felt that the Americans surely knew the kinds of problems they were causing by sending the U-2's over the Soviet Union, but "Soviet secrecy was so great that the President, State Department and CIA could not precisely gauge the impact of the flights on internal Kremlin politics."⁸³

When laboring over the decision of whether to authorize more flights, he said that the United States was "getting to the point where we must decide if we are trying to prepare to fight a war, or to prevent one."⁸⁴ In this case, the President decided to go ahead with this flight since his advisors provided him with an "unanimous recommendation." The advisors once again had powerful influence over the President's better judgement.

Although several of these examples did not deal specifically with the very beginnings of the U-2 program, they were important factors when considering the continuance of the program. In each case the President's advisors played an important role in the decision making process.

—II—

Was a flight over the Soviet Union so close to the Paris Summit necessary? The United States and the Soviet Union had been enjoying what had been dubbed the "Spirit of Camp David." In 1959, Khrushchev had visited the United States and had made some serious progress in negotiating with President Eisenhower. It was during this visit that Khrushchev agreed to a Summit to be held the following spring in Paris to be attended by the Soviet

⁸²Beschloss, *Mayday*, 365.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, in FRUS, X, 1, 307.

Union, the United States, France, and Great Britain. Both Eisenhower and Khrushchev had been looking forward to further negotiations in Paris. The "Spirit of Camp David" ended with the downing of the U-2 on 1 May 1960, just before the Summit opened.

U-2 missions had been canceled when Eisenhower felt the international situation too tense. He had previously considered "whether the intelligence which we receive from this source is worth the exacerbation of international tension that results."¹⁵ For example, the President had canceled flights when there was problems with the Suez Canal and Berlin because he was afraid that the flights would chill the Cold War.

Another example of this policy of canceling flights when the international situation was tense was a meeting between the President and his advisors on 7 April 1959. He had scheduled the meeting to tell them that he was not going to approve certain overflights. Eisenhower gave several reasons for this decision:

first, we now have the power to destroy the Soviets without need for detailed targeting; second, as the world is going now, there seems no hope for the future unless we can make some progress in negotiation; third, we cannot in the present circumstances afford the revulsion of world opinion against the United States that might occur—the U.S. being the only nation that could conduct this activity; and fourth, we are putting several hundred million dollars into programs for more advanced capabilities.¹⁶

Overall, the President felt that the U-2 program could potentially be a political problem worldwide.

And yet he reversed his decision and authorized the May flights. Secretary of State Herter, Secretary of Defense Gates, CIA Director Dulles, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Twining "all argued that the flights were important; information on a first Soviet ICBM and other targets might be impossible to get until

¹⁵Beschloss, *Mayday*, 366.

¹⁶Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 7 April 1959, in FRUS, X, 1, 264.

months after May 1960."¹⁷ The advisors pointed to "technical factors" for the timing of the flight such as the angle of the sun's rays and the weather.¹⁸ They pointed out that the intelligence information the flights provided was invaluable, and without this information the military would have to be put on alert since the United States would have to be ready for a surprise attack at all times, something which the U-2 flights could warn against. Besides, one advisor asserted, "the intelligence objective in his view outweighs the danger of getting trapped."¹⁹ The President even felt confident "with a record of many successful flights behind us," and perhaps because of the success of other missions they had become careless in proposing future flights.²⁰ Besides, Eisenhower felt no reason to go against his advisors who were so confident in the program. But his advisors failed to mention the U-2 flight over Japan that had crash landed in September of 1959. There were also problems with other planes in Japan, one of which, number 360, was transferred to Turkey just in time for Powers's May 1 flight.²¹

This proves historian Michael Beschloss's argument that there was a "fatal weakness in the system Eisenhower had created to manage the U-2 program." Eisenhower had taken the main role in assessing the importance of each flight and the possible consequences in the event of a mishap. Almost all of Eisenhower's advisors "had a stake in pressing for flights." In almost all cases, Eisenhower was the only one to discuss the down side to each flight, with his advisors assuring him that he had nothing to worry about. The advisors feared that if the President and Khrushchev come to some sort of agreement at Paris that Eisenhower "might not approve a flight into the Soviet Union again, causing an intelligence blackout until spy satellites were in full operation." Thus, the President's advisors had other

¹⁷Beschloss, *Mayday*, 370.

¹⁸Memorandum of Discussion at the 445th Meeting of the National Security Council, 24 May 1960, in FRUS, X, 1, 525.

¹⁹Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 8 July 1959, in FRUS, X, 1, 306.

²⁰Eisenhower, *White House Years*, 547.

²¹Francis Gary Powers, *Operation Overflight: The U-2 Spy Pilot Tells His Story for the First Time*. (New York, 1970), 76.

priorities, namely saving their beloved U-2 program, and because of this their recommendations were not always sound.²²

As for the timing of the U-2 flights in the spring of 1960, "the President said that there was no good time for failure."²³ This was a different attitude than the year before when the President questioned the timing of flights in relation to international events. Also, there had been a flight in April 1960, so another flight that spring seemed out of place.²⁴ The President's advisors were so enthusiastic about the flight that the President felt he had no choice but to agree. But Eisenhower had the final say, and he had refused to authorize flights in the past.

What if Eisenhower had consulted other advisors? Would the flights have been resumed? The President could have consulted several specialists in Soviet affairs, and they might have advised him that "resuming the U-2 flights in the spring of 1960 might send Moscow a hostile signal he did not mean." But the President could only consult the select few who had known of the program from the very beginning. The secrecy of the program might have been the problem when making the decision about the spring 1960 flights.²⁵ The Soviets had known about the flights for some time, and they had, as Nikita Khrushchev once put it, "protested its violations of our airspace, but each time the U.S. brushed our protest aside, saying none of their planes were overflying our territory."²⁶ The President took pride in the way he handled his foreign policy; his "institutional decision-making, understanding his rivals' point of view and relating tactics to strategy," but these policies "failed him in his decision to resume the U-2 flights."²⁷

—III—

Was the initial cover-up the best way to deal with the incident? The President said that the "big error we made was, of

²²Beschloss, *Mayday*, 370.

²³Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 8 July 1959, FRUS, X, 1, 523.

²⁴Beschloss, *Mayday*, 370.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 372.

²⁶Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston, 1974), 444.

²⁷Beschloss, *Mayday*, 372.

course, in the issuance of a premature and erroneous cover story." Allowing himself to be persuaded on this issue was his "principal personal regret—except for the U-2 failure itself—regarding the whole affair."²⁸ The President had voiced his opinion that he did not want to issue the immediate cover story.

Eisenhower's advisors had told him, however, over and over that if a plane went down the United States had nothing to worry about because the Soviets would not admit that it had happened. Khrushchev might be "unwilling to admit that United States planes had been for years penetrating deep into his territory," and "suppress the facts."²⁹ The President's advisors assured him that it would embarrass the Soviets far too much to reveal that a plane had gone down.

Eisenhower had also been told that the plane would be destroyed if it went down, and the destructive charge would eliminate proof of espionage. Based on these two assumptions from his advisors, Eisenhower agreed to issue the NASA statement without knowing of any reaction from within the Soviet Union. His advisors had been wrong on both accounts, though, because on May 5 Khrushchev announced that they had downed a plane over Soviet territory. The President's advisors wanted to issue an immediate statement, but the President himself "voiced serious doubts." His suggestion was to "remain silent until we knew what Khrushchev's follow-up was to be."³⁰ His aides argued that they must make an immediate statement so that the initial cover story did not lose credibility. It was upon this unanimous recommendation of his advisors that Eisenhower agreed to issue the next cover story. This once again proves the influence that the President's advisors had on dictating policy.

Eisenhower was astonished when Khrushchev announced on May 6 that the pilot was alive. Eisenhower had "no system to show him the full range of options and contingencies," and because of this he had "hastily approved the false cover story" that caused so many problems.³¹ The President and his advisors now had no choice but to admit to engaging in espionage

²⁸Eisenhower, *White House Years*, 558.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 547.

³⁰Eisenhower, *White House Years*, 549.

³¹Beschloss, *Mayday*, 372.

activities and reveal the essential truth. Had the original cover story not been issued, the President and his advisors could have dealt with the situation in a much more informed manner.

The fatal weakness in the process for which the U-2 program was managed comes out again when dealing with the cover story. The President suffered "from the exclusive, ad hoc procedure he had fashioned to run the U-2 program."³² If the President had been able to consult with advisors other than those who were so close to the U-2 program, such as an expert on the Soviet Union, he might have acted differently in the days immediately following the downing of the plane. The secrecy of the program would not allow Eisenhower to consult outside sources, though, so he was forced to act upon the unanimous recommendations of his advisors even if that meant ignoring his own instincts. Powers was astonished when shown the cover story in a United States newspaper. He was held in a Soviet prison and being questioned rigorously. He said that he had been given no formal training on what to do if captured, or any information on what kind of a cover story would be issued. Eisenhower's advisors said that Powers had been "told to reveal whatever he himself knew, including the fact that he worked for the CIA."³³

The President could have "cut his losses and told the world the truth" after the initial NASA statement and before Khrushchev announced that the pilot was alive. This would have restored his credibility, and he had reason to believe that this was the right thing to do. On May 5, after the NASA statement and after Khrushchev had announced that a plane had been downed over Soviet territory, the President received a telegram from the United States Ambassador in Moscow, Llewellyn E. Thompson. Thompson had overheard Deputy Foreign Minister Jacob Malik tell someone at a function that night that "they were still questioning the pilot who had parachuted to safety."³⁴ Here the President had evidence that there was a possibility the pilot was alive, and yet he still agreed to continue with the cover story. Eisenhower had the chance to take advice from a source other

³²Ibid.

³³Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 8 July 1959, FRUS, X, 1, 525.

³⁴Quoted from telegram 2715 from Ambassador Thompson to Department of State, 5 May 1960, in Editorial Note, FRUS, X, 1, 511.

than his close advisors and he chose to ignore it. Thompson's telegram should have been the red flag when considering what move to make, but it was not. This mistake was by far the most critical in the whole affair.

Even after Khrushchev had revealed that the pilot was alive, the advisors decided that it would not be best to involve the President in the program directly. The statement gave a more truthful version than the previous two statements, but only said that the "pilot had 'probably' invaded Soviet airspace but that the flight had not been authorized by Washington."³⁵ This statement shocked Powers since he waited in his plane for nearly thirty minutes for "approval from the White House."³⁶ By not admitting that Eisenhower had control over the flight "ignited the international scare that some American officer could start a war without the President's knowledge."³⁷ Now Eisenhower had put himself in the position where he had to accept responsibility for the flight.

This fiasco with the cover stories led the American people and press to be increasingly distrustful of their government. Some Americans were proud that their country could handle such a secret operation for so long without being discovered, but others feared that this might start a war.³⁸ Eisenhower made a prime-time speech on television several days after the truth came out in order to inform the American people about the U-2 program and talk about the events of the previous days. What if the American people had been told about the program back when it started? Certainly the Soviets had known about it for almost that long, and if they already knew about it then there was no reason why the American people could not have known about it as well. If this had been the case, if the Eisenhower administration had been truthful from the very beginning, then the false cover story would not have been needed. The people knew that the U-2 was used for gathering weather information, and being good Cold Warriors, they might have overwhelmingly approved of the flights over Russia. The American people would have been disappointed that

³⁵Beschloss, *Mayday*, 373.

³⁶Powers, *Operation*, 78.

³⁷Beschloss, *Mayday*, 373.

³⁸Eisenhower, *White House Years*, 550.

territory; third, the possibility that the Soviet military hierarchy was unhappy over the demobilization measures recently announced by Khrushchev and has consequently insisted that Khrushchev take a strong stand in the plane case; and fourth, a possible desire to embarrass the President at the outset of the Summit Conference.⁴¹

Economic difficulties, opposition to Khrushchev's policy of relaxation, and a political power struggle were also influences on the Soviets at this time.

Khrushchev himself did not feel these factors influenced his decisions in Paris. He hoped that there would be an agreement reached at Paris up to the time the U-2 was downed. Khrushchev said that he decided on the plane Paris there could be no agreement at the Summit because the "Americans had deliberately tried to place a time bomb under the meeting," and hence the conference "was doomed before it began."⁴² Khrushchev points to the role of Eisenhower's advisors. Khrushchev notes that the President wanted to apologize, but that one of his advisors said no "in such a way, with such a grimace on his face, that he left no room for argument on the issue."⁴³ Khrushchev even said that the President "let himself be pushed around by his Secretaries of State, first Dulles and now Herter."⁴⁴

The British and the French supported the United States at Paris and were even somewhat disgusted at the way Khrushchev handled events. Both delegations, though, admitting the U-2 flight was ill-timed, noted that President Eisenhower admitted that he had made a mistake. Charles de Gaulle informed the Soviets on May 16, that, considering that the U-2 was shot down on May 1, they had time to make amends with the United States or they should have "let it be known that he [Khrushchev] would not be coming to the conference."⁴⁵ Both the British and the French agreed that the Soviets needed to come to terms with what

⁴¹Memorandum of the Discussion at the 444th Meeting of the National Security Council, 9 May 1960, in FRUS, X, 1, 518.

⁴²Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 451.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 454.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 455.

⁴⁵Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor* (New York, 1970), 251.

the plane had been shot down, but at least they would have known that their government had been honest with them.

—IV—

Could something have been done to save the Paris Summit? Khrushchev had gone to Paris early hoping that Eisenhower would do the same so they could talk privately. Eisenhower did not come until the day before the meetings were supposed to start, and by that time Khrushchev had decided to make three demands: the U.S. must publicly apologize, promise never to send flights over the Soviet Union again, and punish those responsible. Eisenhower had already stopped the flights, but refused to apologize.

Eisenhower wondered why Khrushchev had not said anything about the flights at Camp David the year before when relations were good. What Khrushchev did say was that he was cutting back his own espionage against the United States, and he presumed that when the flights stopped for a time after the Camp David meetings that the Americans had curtailed their espionage as well. So when the flights were resumed in the spring of 1960, Khrushchev thought this was a sign that relations were turning for the worse. Khrushchev now felt that Americans were "following a two-faced policy" since they were so friendly at Camp David but were now sending more U-2's over Russia.⁴⁶

Khrushchev might have been exploiting the U-2 affair for his own reasons. In a telegram, Ambassador Thompson said that "Khrushchev is having some internal difficulties and this incident affords him a convenient diversion."⁴⁷ Eisenhower's advisors mention several reasons why Khrushchev would want to exploit the incident:

first, deep conviction, which appears common among Soviet leaders, that secrecy is a major asset of the USSR; second, anxiety with respect to any violation of Soviet

⁴⁶Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 511.

⁴⁷Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, 7 May 1960, in FRUS, X, 1, 515.

had happened. After all, espionage was not unique to the United States, so in that sense the Soviets had nothing to complain about.

The American public reacted badly to the events in Paris. After the President returned from Paris, he went on a tour of the Pacific, and found the overseas reaction to his recent foreign policy was also negative. Thus, Eisenhower left office on a sour note. Had he not been so distrustful of public opinion, he could have prevented the events in May 1960 from heightening the Cold War. Eisenhower did not want the American public's hope for peace at Paris to influence his decisions there so greatly that he would have appeared "to have been taken in by the Russians." This was a flaw of his "hidden-hand leadership." Without involving the public, his foreign policy seemed weak. Eisenhower could have prevented this perception by having the backing of American public opinion integrated in his policy.⁴⁶

Eisenhower's decision-making process before and after the U-2 incident was not entirely effective. There are a number of examples that show his advisors' opinions taking precedence. Not only is this not the best way to make decisions about any policy, it certainly is not the best way to make decisions about a vital security and diplomatic issue. The President himself seemed to have the right idea about what should have been done: develop other methods of information gathering, curb flights during critical international periods, wait for a response from the Soviets before issuing a false cover story, and apologize to the Soviets to save the Paris Summit. His advisors frowned upon these ideas, and tossed them aside. The role of the American public was also marginalized, but this was the President's fault for not trusting in the people he was leading. This U-2 incident was a turning point in the way the American people and media viewed the President of the United States. Americans were increasingly distrustful of presidents, starting with the false U-2 story and continuing with events like Watergate and Vietnam.

Eisenhower only regret that the false cover story had been issued, but as far as the U-2 program was concerned he did not think that he would make any decisions differently, "given the

same set of facts as they confronted us at the time."⁴⁷ The information gathered from the flights had proved invaluable. Eisenhower, looking back, thought that the Paris Summit probably would have been a failure even if it had not been for the U-2 because nothing would have been accomplished except bringing the world "further disillusionment."⁴⁸ Besides, Khrushchev had known about the flights for some time and only now had made a fuss about them. This led Eisenhower to believe that Khrushchev was only using this as an excuse to wreck the Summit because he had other issues pressing at home.⁴⁹

Overall, it was the President who had the final say in the course of events. He may have been influenced by his advisors, but he still could have halted events. The problem was that he did not. He let his advisors influence his final decision, and his excuse was that since they agreed unanimously that he would go along with it. This decision showed bad judgement on Eisenhower's part. If Eisenhower had the backbone to stand up for what he thought was right, then the U-2 incident might not have been "a supreme humiliation for Eisenhower."⁵⁰

⁴⁷Eisenhower, *White House Years*, 558.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 559.

⁵⁰Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace, Prosperity, and Prime-Time TV* (Chapel Hill, 1993), 172.