

February 27, 1961

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NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 24

TO: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: RB-47 Reconnaissance Flights

I now wish to authorize the resumption of RB-47 reconnaissance flights on the periphery of the Sino-Soviet bloc, subject to the following specific requirements in addition to those currently in force.

First, all responsible commanders will place the highest emphasis on continuous accuracy in navigation at all times while in the neighborhood of the Soviet Union. I understand that new and stricter procedures have been devised by SAC to meet this need, and my approval of renewed flights is conditional upon the adoption of such stricter procedures.

Second, flights in extreme northern latitudes will observe a wider margin of safety, and must remain at a greater distance from Soviet territory because of the additional difficulty of navigation in this area. For the present I desire that all such flights remain at a distance of forty nautical miles from Soviet territory.

Third, I direct that the highest priority be given to the rapid acquisition and installation of the most modern and effective navigational devices in high performance aircraft assigned to peripheral operations around the Sino-Soviet bloc. I should like an early report on the progress of efforts to improve the navigational capabilities of such aircraft, and I think it may be useful if appropriate officers of the Department of Defense keep in close touch with my Special Assistant for Science and Technology on this subject.

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Fourth, I understand that there is special urgency in the mounting of a single peripheral reconnaissance mission in northern latitudes before 5 March. Subject to the conditions stated in the preceding paragraphs of this memorandum, I hereby authorize one such operation.

CC: The Secretary of State  
The Director of Central Intelligence  
Dr. Wiesner

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