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Authority ND 009031  
By BKA NARA Date 8/9

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

16 SEP 1974

*S/S - FBI*

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, 40 Committee  
SUBJECT : Re-institution of Airborne Reconnaissance of Cuba

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to advise you of an upcoming opportunity to re-institute overflight of Cuba.

Background

2. My memorandum of 6 September alerted you to the fact that there had been no US overflights of Cuba since the end of May and that peripheral reconnaissance of the island had also decreased significantly since then. The point of that memorandum was that resumption of overflights - especially with the SR-71 in place of the U-2 - could be viewed by the Cubans as a "negative signal" with regard to US policy toward Cuba.

3. For years, the presence of Soviet naval units in Cuban waters has generated an increased frequency of US overflights in response to intelligence requirements to monitor the activity of these units. The most recent such visit in May of this year called for one U-2 overflight immediately before their arrival and two subsequent flights during their 30 day visit. Similar practices were followed during the previous ten Soviet deployments. Thus, the Cubans have become accustomed to increased overflights coincident with the presence of Soviet naval units.

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4. Two Soviet cruisers currently appear to be on their way to Cuba. As they approach the Caribbean, they will be subjected to increased surveillance by US ships and aircraft. Since the Cubans will most likely be aware of this increased US activity, it is probable that they will be anticipating an overflight once the Soviet units arrive in Cuban ports.

Recommendation

5. I recommend that we avail ourselves of this opportunity and schedule the first SR-71 overflight after the Soviet naval units arrive - currently estimated on or about September 22. The Cubans could rationalize the resumption of overflights then in terms of our concern about the Soviet visit.

6. The Joint Reconnaissance Center/JCS has been informed of this recommendation so that, if approved, the normal 96 hour alert period for the SR-71 can be instituted at the proper time for a mission.

/s/ W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby

cc: 40 Committee Members