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~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

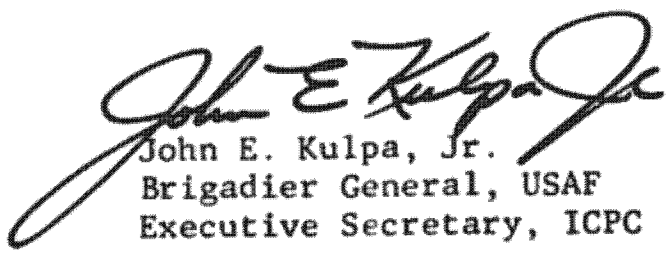
THE NRO STAFF

1 FEB 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL CONTINGENCY
PLANNING COMMITTEE (ICPC)

SUBJECT: SR-71 Reconnaissance Aircraft Contingency Plan

Attached for implementation is the revised SR-71
Reconnaissance Aircraft Contingency Plan which was approved
by the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, on
22 January 1974.


John E. Kulpa, Jr.
Brigadier General, USAF
Executive Secretary, ICPC

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SR-71 Contingency Plan
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SR-71 RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT
CONTINGENCY PLAN

I. AUTHORITY:

This contingency plan was approved by the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, as Chairman, Interdepartmental Contingency Planning Committee, upon advice and guidance of the committee membership on 22 January 1974.

II. OBJECTIVE:

Through the Interdepartmental Contingency Planning Committee (ICPC), to establish a preplanned coordinated U.S. Government response to contingencies relating to SR-71 reconnaissance aircraft missions conducted over denied areas, inclusive of areas where overflight clearances are or would be denied and exclusive of those conducted peripherally or within theater of operations where U.S. forces are engaged in combat.

III. GENERAL:

A. In addition to taking specific action prescribed herein, personnel in receipt of information concerning formal protest, public denunciation, and/or circumstances surrounding an actual or alleged incident will expeditiously route all such information, through their own appropriate department or agency ICPC representative, to the Chairman, ICPC. The Chairman, in turn, will decide upon one or more of the following courses of action:

1. To take no further action because the provisions of current contingency plans adequately cover the situation.
2. To call a meeting of the ICPC for the purpose of developing and coordinating an additional U.S. Government response.
3. To refer the matter to higher authority.

B. News releases and response to news media inquiry will be handled as follows:

1. No news release will be made regarding the deployment of SR-71 aircraft; however, in the event of aircraft loss in undenied territory or in international waters, the Director of Information, USAF (SAFOI), through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs (OASD/PA), will effect a timely release advising of the loss of a USAF SR-71 aircraft during training operations. SAFOI may state: "The crew was recovered," or "The crew was lost, but identification will be withheld pending notification of next of kin." SAFOI will defer the answers to all other questions pending "completion of investigation."

2. In response to press inquiries, no comment will be made except in the event that an SR-71 aircraft is forced to make an emergency landing at an alternate base. If such an emergency occurs, the local USAF Information Officer, if queried, may acknowledge the presence of an SR-71 aircraft and state that the aircraft was forced to land at an alternate base because of mechanical difficulty, deteriorating weather conditions, or navigational equipment failure, as appropriate. Requests for additional details will be referred through official channels to OASD/PA.

C. Except as specifically prescribed herein, no initial or follow-up action or statements will be made without the approval of the Chairman, ICPC.

IV. POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES:

A. Formal protest or public denunciation of an operationally successful overflight:

1. In the event that an operationally successful overflight results in formal protest or public denunciation, the initial U.S. Government response will be one of "no comment." News media queries will normally be referred to the Department of State.

2. Depending upon the circumstances (flight path, origination of the protest, degree and extent of public denunciation), the Chairman, ICPC, or higher authority, may consider the following courses of action:

a. Acknowledging the use of unarmed reconnaissance aircraft for essential surveillance of military activity which is a threat to the security of the U.S. and the Free World.

b. Acknowledging that, because of mechanical or navigational difficulties, an unarmed reconnaissance aircraft had strayed from its scheduled flight path which was well outside of the protesting country's territorial boundaries.

c. Other responses that are appropriate for the circumstances.

B. Loss of the SR-71 aircraft in denied areas:

1. In the event that an SR-71 aircraft is lost in hostile territory, no statement whatsoever shall be volunteered until there is a full evaluation by the Chairman, ICPC, or higher authority, of the circumstances surrounding the incident and the political ramifications.

2. News media queries will be referred to the Department of State. The latter, through a properly designated spokesman, initially will state only that the alleged incident is under investigation.

3. Crew conduct in the event of aircraft loss over Communist Bloc countries is covered in SAC OPLAN 60-FY, SAC Giant Scale OPORDER, and SACM 200-7. These publications specify that the aircrew will comply with the code of military conduct if captured in hostile areas; giving no information other than name, rank, serial number, and date of birth. In the event of an aircraft forced down in friendly or neutral countries, the crew members will be instructed to make no statement and to contact friendly diplomatic officials for return to U.S. custody.

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4. After evaluation, the Chairman, ICPC, or higher authority, will authorize an appropriately worded statement. The sole spokesman for the U.S. Government will be the Department of State. The Chairman, ICPC, with the advice and guidance of the committee membership, will initially consider the adequacy of the following suggested responses in light of the circumstances:

a. Loss of aircraft in hostile areas:

(1) In the event that crew members are known to be dead, and depending upon the position at which the aircraft was forced down, one of the following responses may be applicable:

"An SR-71 aircraft was lost during a reconnaissance mission off the coast of (appropriate country). It appears that the aircraft strayed off course because of mechanical or navigational difficulties. The SR-71 aircraft was unarmed and did not represent a military threat to the (appropriate government). Crew members are known to be dead, but names will be withheld until notification of next of kin."

"An SR-71 aircraft was lost during a reconnaissance mission over (appropriate country). The mission was directed by the U.S. Government in view of hostile and provocative action on the part of the (appropriate government) which poses a threat to the security of (U.S. or U.N. Forces, or other appropriate contingent) and the (nation being threatened). The primary purpose of the mission was to guard against a surprise buildup of (threatening nation) forces along the (DMZ, cease-fire line, or threatened area). The SR-71 aircraft was unarmed and did not represent a threat to the (appropriate government). Crew members are known to be dead, but names will be withheld pending notification of next of kin."

(2) In the event that crew members are alive or their fate is uncertain, the following response may be applicable:

"The crew of an unarmed U.S. reconnaissance aircraft is presently being detained by the Government of (nation holding crew members). Identification is being withheld pending notification of next of kin. In order that safe return will not be jeopardized, no additional information will be released pending negotiations with the Government of (nation holding crew members)."

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b. Loss of aircraft in other denied territory:

"A U.S. reconnaissance aircraft and its crew has been lost (or is missing). It now appears possible that the aircraft strayed off course because of mechanical or navigational difficulties and was forced down in (Communist Bloc) (other denied area). Identification will be withheld pending notification of next of kin. No further details are available at this time."

V. COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following named individuals are responsible for the proper coordination and implementation within their respective department or agency, and, where appropriate, within contractor facilities under their control:

Mr. James W. Plummer, Director, National Reconnaissance Office

Mr. Rob Roy Ratliff, Executive Office of the President
[redacted], Department of State

MGEN Robert Ginsburgh, USAF, Director of Information, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force

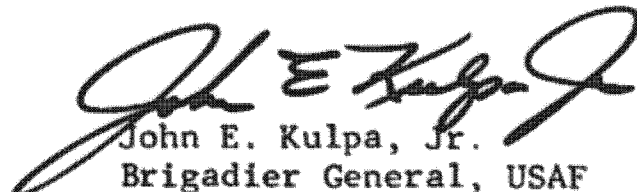
BGEN Wendell L. Bevan, Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Jerry W. Friedheim, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs

BGEN Harry M. Chapman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

[redacted], Defense Intelligence Agency

(b)(3)



John E. Kulpa, Jr.
Brigadier General, USAF
Executive Secretary
Interdepartmental Contingency
Planning Committee

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