

U-2 Developmental and Operational Chronology

Aviation Week, May 16, 1960

Following is what the media knew and reported about the U-2 up to the Powers incident

In the following, this publication indicates the effectiveness of the cover story re NACA as it relates to the U-2.

Following is a chronology of the developmental and operational cycles of the Lockheed U-2:

- Mid-1954– Lockheed began the design of the U-2.
- Late 1955– After flight tests had proven the capabilities of the U-2, the Air Force purchased several of the aircraft for a joint USAF-Atomic Energy Commission high-altitude research program.
- Early 1956– National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which had assisted Lockheed in the original design, began planning a high altitude meteorological research program around the U-2 and other aircraft. U-2s operated by NACA were owned by the Air Force and bailed to the civil agency under the arrangement used for the majority of its research aircraft.
- Early 1956– Air Force formed its first U-2 squadron, the Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. Provisional (1st). It first operated from Watertown Strip, Nev.. and assisted the USAF-AEC and NACA research programs which occupied the same airfield but were separate.

- Feb. 16, 1956-U-2 crashed in Arizona after fire started in cockpit. Pilot Robert f. Everett bailed out at about 30.000 ft. Everett was a Lockheed employe flying for NACA with NACA pilot number 357.
- May 7, 1956-NACA announces start of its high altitude gust-meteorological research program.
- May 22. 1956-NACA announces it is making preparations to begin the portion of its research program covering the Enropcan area. First U-2 operations in Europe were to be from USAF bases in England with the .Air Force Air Weather Service providing logistical support. All planes were civilian with civilian contract pilots.
- July 9, 1956-NACA reported that the initial high-altitude weather data gathered by the U-2 had been processed and that it had proved the value of the aircraft as a research tool.
- Sept. 17. 1956- U-2 crashed near Kaisrlautcm. West Ger-many. Pilot was Howard Carey, a Lockheed employe.
- February, 1957 – NACA released first U-2 pictures.
- Mar. 27, 1957- NACA published Research Memorandum RM L57A11 entitled "Preliminary Measurements of Atmos-pheric Turbulence at High Altitude os Determined From Ac-celeration Measurements on a Lockheed U-2 Airplane." This report was unclassified, as arc all other reports concerning the high-altihidc weather program.
- April, 1957-U-2 crashed in isolated region of northwest Nevada killing Lockheed engineering test pilot Robert L.

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- July 2, 1957– NACA report RM L57G02 was written entitled "Airplane Measurements of Atmospheric Turbulence at Altitudes from 20,000 to 55,000 ft. over the Western Part of the United States," which contained more data taken by a U-2.

- May, 1958– Articles published in the Soviet air force newspaper Soviet Aviation indicated that Red Air Force intelligence was concerned over U. S. operations with the U-2. One article complained that the U-2 "lacks all identification marks indicating its mission." The Soviet writer then suggested that strategic reconnaissance was included among the high-altitude research activities of U-2s based at Wiesbaden, West Germany.

- March, 1958– Japanese magazine Air Review' ran pictures of

U-2s landing in Japan reportedly taken by a 16-year-old boy-standing at the end of the runway.

- Apr. 17, 1959– NASA personnel finished third report on U-2 weather research data. This paper, NASA Memo 41759L, was entitled "Airplane Measurement of Atmospheric Turbulence at Altitudes From 20,000 to 55,000 ft. for Four Geographic Areas." These areas were Western Europe and England, Turkey, U. S. and Japan.

- Sept. 24, 1959– U-2 made an emergency belly-landing with slight damage at Fugisawa airfield while it was attempting to land at its base at Atsugi Airport near Tokyo. Six U-2s were based in Japan at the time, and it was reported that at least some of them flew almost every day.

- Nov. 28, 1959– New York Journal-American published an article by George Carroll on U. S. reconnaissance over Russia which suggested that U-2 flights were used for this purpose.
- Dec. 12, 1959– Article in Soviet Aviation discussed U. S. strategic reconnaissance activity with the U-2 and gave some of the design details of the aircraft. The Soviet newspaper quoted Carroll's article and other material which had appeared in Model Airplane News in March, 1958.
- May 3, 1960– U-2 based at Adana, Turkey, reported missing since May 1 on weather mission in Lake Van region near the eastern border of Turkey by U. S. officials in Adana. Report says the civilian, Lockheed-employed pilot had radioed he was experiencing trouble with his oxygen equipment. Missing plane was officially assigned to NASA.
- May 5, 1960– Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev tells the Supreme Soviet that a U. S. aircraft has been shot down over Russia. NASA's Washington headquarters reports that it had been told the U-2 missing in the Lake Van region may have strayed over the Soviet border while the pilot was unconscious because of lack of oxygen.
- May 6, 1960– State Department said, "There was no deliberate attempt to violate Soviet airspace and there has never
- May 7, 1960– Khrushchev retorts that the aircraft was downed near Sverdlovsk well inside the Soviet Union, that the pilot had been captured alive and admitted attempting a photo-reconnaissance mission across the Soviet Union from Pakistan to Norway. U. S. State Department then issued a statement

acknowledging that “an unarmed civilian” aircraft probably had made an information-gathering flight over Soviet territory. It denied that authorization came from Washington.

- May 9, 1960-Secretary of State Christian Hrcrtr admits that U. S. reconnaissance planes have collected information on the Soviet Union by flying along its borders and "on occasion by penetration." Hrcrtr indicates the U. S. will continue such flights, which, lie says, arc conducted under broad directives from President Eisenhower.
- May 10, 1960- Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko issues a formal note of protest over the U-2 incident to the U. S. Embassy in Moscow.
- May 11. 1960- President Eisenhower at his weekly press conference gives tacit approval to reconnaissance flights over the Soviet Union and the reasons the U. S. believes they arc necessary.