

CHAPTER 5

The U-2 Crisis

The decisions concerning the Soviet downing of the U-2 were dramatic because they represented the first time that the U.S. government publicly admitted to conducting state-sponsored espionage. More importantly, the U-2 crisis was the first time that an American president was openly caught engaging in deception concerning such policies. As atavistic as it may seem in the wake of Vietnam, Watergate, and their resulting pandemic of cynicism, public exposure of such a governmental cover-up genuinely shocked the American public in 1960.

The Eisenhower administration decisions concerning the Soviet downing of Francis Gary Powers's flight over Sverdlovsk (now Ekaterinberg) on May 1, 1960, were made in a domain of losses. The administration's response included the instigation of the cover-up of American deep-penetration surveillance operations over the Soviet Union in the wake of the public accusation of spying by then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, on May 5, 1960.

In the U-2 case, Eisenhower engaged in risk-seeking behavior by lying to the American public in his official pronouncements following the Soviet downing of the U-2.

The U-2 affair appears as a curious case in Eisenhower's foreign policy decision making. Why did Eisenhower take an apparently unnecessary risk in this situation? The administration did not need to speak out as early as it did; it could have kept quiet until more information was released by the Soviet Union on the status of the plane and the pilot. Moreover, once the administration decided to engage in a cover-up of its spying activities, it need not have issued such a specific, and thus easily refutable, lie; certainly more time and thought could have been devoted to creating a more credible and consistent cover story. The incongruities demonstrated by the administration's erratic handling of the cover-up make the decisions surrounding the U-2 incident a good case for investigation from the perspective of prospect theory.

Prospect Theory

Eisenhower was an enormously popular president of the United States, which was the undisputed hegemonic world power in 1960. As such, Eisen-

hower had a lot of authority and much freedom to exercise his influence on world opinion. There appears to be no good reason why Eisenhower should have risked his reputation and his aspirations for world peace by injudicious behavior such as lying, and, even worse, getting caught doing so and having to openly admit his mistake.

Prior to the downing of the U-2 in May, Eisenhower was in an enviable situation. Throughout the duration of the U-2 program that began in 1956, Eisenhower remained quite risk averse. He understood the risks he was taking by engaging in the overflights, but he felt the benefits justified the potential risks of discovery and subsequent embarrassment. Eisenhower could have rejected the idea of U-2 overflights, but only by succumbing to pressure for additional military expenditures in response to widespread perceptions of massive Soviet military buildups in the wake of the successful Soviet Sputnik launch. Only by using the information that could be obtained by U-2 surveillance was Eisenhower able to resist domestic opposition and adhere to a restrained military budget. Eisenhower made the calculation that the risk of overflights was justified because he believed that the Soviet Union would not be capable of shooting down the aircraft at such high altitudes, and that even when they were able to do so, no American pilot would be able to survive such an attack, and so there would be no real evidence to tie America to an intentional program of aerial surveillance. As Eisenhower recalled:

Of those concerned, I was the only principal who consistently expressed the concern that if ever one of the planes fell in Soviet territory a wave of excitement mounting almost to panic would sweep the world, inspired by the standard Soviet claim of injustice, unfairness, aggression and ruthlessness. The others, except for my own immediate staff and Mr. Bissell, disagreed. Secretary Dulles, for instance, would say laughingly, "If the Soviets ever capture one of our planes, I'm sure they will never admit it. To do so would make it necessary for them to admit also that for years we have been carrying on flights over their territory while they, the Soviets, had been helpless to do anything about the matter." We knew that on a number of occasions Soviet fighters scrambled from nearby air bases to attempt an interception, but they could never come close enough to damage a U-2; probably the pilots never even saw one of these attempts. However, I said that while I wholeheartedly approved continuation of the program, I was convinced that in the event of an accident we must be prepared for a storm of protest, not only from the Soviets but from many people, especially from some

politicians in our own country. There would never be a good time for failure.¹

For these reasons, Eisenhower kept a close rein on the control of these flights and frequently refused to authorize them. On May 31, 1960, a memo reported on Eisenhower's comments that "he had deliberately held the matter on a tight though informal basis and that he had felt this was important from the point of view of leaks."² Thus, prior to May, Eisenhower was aware of the risks involved in aerial reconnaissance and sought to minimize them in any way possible.

Once the plane was shot down by the Soviet Union on May 1, however, Eisenhower was instantly plunged into a domain of losses. The previous status quo of silence concerning surveillance had been ruptured. The domestic and international criticism of his administration and its policies was intense. Worst of all, the Soviet response threatened to endanger the success of the long-planned Summit Meeting scheduled to commence in Paris on May 16. At this point, Eisenhower appeared to throw caution to the wind, cover one lie with another, and proceed to engage in a badly planned and poorly orchestrated cover-up. This cover-up was quickly revealed for the transparent web of lies it was and Eisenhower was forced to admit publicly to both spying and lying, thus creating the very outcome he had taken such risks to prevent.³

Before the crisis, Eisenhower was in a domain of gains, at least partly because of the intelligence information that the U-2 overflights provided, allowing him to keep track of the true status of Soviet military systems. This information allowed him to defend successfully against requests for huge budget increases for weapons procurement without being concerning about compromising American security interests. Failure to authorize these flights might have endangered his strategy.

In terms of prospect theory, Eisenhower became risk seeking once the downing of the U-2 placed him in a domain of losses. He took a risk that he would not have taken if he had perceived himself to be in a domain of gains at the time. Although Eisenhower was quite popular at the time of the incident, he felt vulnerable to public disclosure of his espionage policies because of the importance of the upcoming Summit Meeting.⁴ At this point, Eisenhower did not want to lose what he had worked so hard to attain: the possibility of positive steps toward international peace.

In the U-2 affair, the president's choices changed as the crisis evolved and as the administration's public statements incited furor and controversy. Indeed, as the crisis developed, the interaction between the adminis-

tration and the world press pushed Eisenhower further and further into the domain of losses and eventually led to his riskiest choice, that of admitting to his previous lies and accepting responsibility for systematic American aerial surveillance of Soviet territory.

Historical Context

Francis Gary Powers's U-2 plane was shot down over Sverdlovsk on May 1, 1960.⁵ However, Soviet leaders did not disclose this event until several days later. Their reasoning in delaying the announcement is provided by American Ambassador to Norway Willis in a telegram to Secretary of State Christian Herter following Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan's visit to Oslo in June:

When the May 1 overflight occurred USSR waited first to see if US would ask about the plane as everyone normally does when a plane is missing. USSR put particular weight on US silence. On May 5 Khrushchev announced shooting down of plane but purposely omitting any details because he wanted to leave open possibility for Americans to make statement. Then came stupid story about pilot losing consciousness . . . Americans did this because they thought plane was lost and believed Russians had no proofs and therefore US could lie at will. There was in fact exploding mechanism under seat of pilot whereby pilot could or should have destroyed himself and plane by pressing a button. Thus Americans thought USSR had not material for proofs but pilot did not act according to instructions. . . . Khrushchev in his May 5 statement opened possibility for President to wash his hands by stating he did not know whether President was aware of this matter. Khrushchev was seeking formula but instead of using this opportunity to get out of this awkward situation Americans just then put into effect maneuvers over whole country.⁶

So, after waiting until May 5, Khrushchev announced in a speech to the Supreme Soviet that the Soviet military had downed an American espionage plane at a high altitude with a direct hit from a single rocket.⁷

In the course of his original announcement about the flight, Khrushchev had in fact proffered an easy way for Eisenhower to get out of the situation by arguing that he must have been unaware of the overflights. He suggested that these flights had been authorized by various Cold Warriors within the Pentagon, clearly referring to Allen Dulles, head of the CIA. A Department of State telegram informed Washington of Khrushchev's speech:

[P]articularly significant was Khrushchev's reference to fact he was willing believe President did not rpt [repeat] not know of this action but he added if this were true they would have all the more cause for concern since this would indicate militarists were in control.⁸

The official U.S. response to the Soviet Union concerning this May 5 disclosure reads:

The U.S. Government has noted the statement of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, N.S. Khrushchev, in his speech before the Supreme Soviet in May 5 that a foreign aircraft crossed the border of the Soviet Union on May 1 and that on orders of the Soviet Government, this aircraft was shot down. In this same statement it was said that investigation showed that it was a US plane . . . [I]n light of the above the US Government requests the Soviet Government to provide it with full facts of the Soviet investigation of this incident and to inform it of the fate of the pilot.⁹

Ironically, the event caused scarce notice in the Eisenhower administration that day. The president's personal secretary, Ann Whitman, notes in her diary for Eisenhower on May 5 that:

[White House Press Secretary] Jim Hagerty received news of the shooting [*sic*] down of a plane over Russia, as announced Mr. Khrushchev . . . One of the little highlights: Jim was furious because an hour later he had not heard from General Goodpaster and found out that General Goodpaster had not even informed the President.¹⁰

Following a routine meeting of the NSC during an evacuation exercise that day, several high-level officials in the Eisenhower administration discussed how to handle Khrushchev's accusations of American espionage. Presidential Staff Secretary Goodpaster recorded the following transcript of the meeting:

It was agreed that the State Department would have the responsibility at departmental level for handling public statements regarding the U-2. [O]n return of the President and his party to Washington, Mr. Hagerty recommended that there be a statement by the President to the Press. The President agreed to a brief statement from the White House, stating that an inquiry would be made by the State Department and NASA and the results would be made public. I so notified [Acting Secretary of State] Mr. Dillon and [NASA administrator] Mr. Glennan.¹¹

The origin of the pre-prepared cover story dated to 1956, when the U-2 program first began. This cover story was never explicitly reviewed by the president or his staff prior to its release, according to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee report:

The cover story was not discussed in the NSC that day and only in general terms at a smaller meeting which followed. . . . Gates expressed the view on May 5 that “if Mr. Khrushchev had the complete information and the pilot . . . the President should assert the truth” . . . and the “prestige of the Presidency should not be involved in an international lie particularly when it would not stand up with respect to the facts.” (p. 129) . . . There was no decision to tell the truth and “it was assumed that the cover story would be continued.” . . . [C]oncurrently, members of the State Department and CIA were meeting in Washington to decide what should be said. “As soon as we returned to Washington,” Dillon said, the statement “was finalized in agreement with CIA and the White House” was obviously kept informed of the contents.¹²

The cover story that was finalized at the Washington meeting provided the basis for the first substantive statement released by the State Department concerning the incident.

Thus, on May 5, the White House stated that the lost plane was being investigated and a report would be issued by NASA and the State Department. The State Department statement read as follows:

The Department has been informed by NASA that, as announced May 3, a U-2 weather research plane based at Adana, Turkey, piloted by a civilian, has been missing since May 1. During the flight of this plane, the pilot reported difficulty with his oxygen equipment. Mr. Khrushchev has announced that a U.S. plane has been shot down over the U.S.S.R. on that date. It may be that this was the missing plane.

It is entirely possible that, having a failure in the oxygen equipment which could result in the pilot losing consciousness, the plane continued on automatic pilot for a considerable distance and accidentally violated Soviet airspace. The United States is taking this matter up with the Soviet Government, with particular reference to the fate of the pilot.¹³

This statement failed to note that the plane had been shot down 1200 miles into Soviet airspace, a distance that was indeed “quite considerable.”

In these first days of the crisis, members of the administration felt sure that no evidence could be found proving that the U.S. government was conducting intentional aerial reconnaissance over the Soviet Union. Thus State Department spokesman Lincoln Smith felt free to elaborate on the May 5 State Department statement in the question and answer period: "There was absolutely no, N - O, no deliberate attempt to violate Soviet airspace. There never has been . . . it is ridiculous to say that we are trying to kid the world about this."¹⁴

Although White House Press Secretary Jim Hagerty stated that the White House had been informed of the event by NASA, NASA was not informed that this had been done. Thus, when the press requested a statement from NASA, Walter Bonney, NASA's information chief, generated one based on the prepared story that Richard Bissell, Dulles's special assistant for the U-2 project at the CIA, had given him several days previously. This statement was *not* cleared by the CIA, the State Department, or the White House prior to its release by NASA. At the time that NASA released their version of the cover story, they were unaware of the State Department's earlier press release.

In generating a response to press inquiries, NASA used a loose cover story that had been developed when the U-2 program was first begun in 1956. In so doing, NASA was attempting to respond to press inquiries resulting from Hagerty's statement that an inquiry was being undertaken by NASA as well as the State Department. This miscommunication was the result of disorganization as much as anything else, according to testimony submitted by Foster Dulles's aide William Macomber:

What actually happened is that NASA had the general cover story that had been agreed on with NASA for some time. When they realized that a large number of the press would be descending upon them, rather than to get into a give and take of a press conference, they reduced to writing this cover story which they coordinated with CIA, and which they put out. The problem was that at the time this was being done, this other decision had been taken which was that from now on the State Department was to take it over. It is not inconsistent to have the first statement out of Turkey and the earlier statement out of NASA were consistent with the cover story which in the early stages of is [*sic*] we were trying to preserve. As it became increasingly clear that it was going to be difficult to preserve this, the meeting that has just been alluded to with Secretary Gates and Mr. Dulles took place, and they made an adjustment in their plans. Prior to this point they were trying to preserve the security of the operation. They were following a pre-arranged plan.¹⁵

The problem with the NASA statement was that it was quite a bit more specific in content than the State Department release. As a result, there were many more details in this statement that the Soviet government could easily refute on an evidentiary basis. The NASA statement read as follows:

One of NASA's U-2 research airplanes, in use since 1956 in a continuing program to study gust-meteorological conditions found at high altitude, has been missing since about 9:00 Sunday morning, local time, when the pilot reported he was having oxygen difficulties over the Lake Van, Turkey area . . . About one hour after takeoff, the pilot reported difficulties with his oxygen equipment . . . The pilot . . . is a civilian employed by the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.¹⁶

This statement went on in great detail about various features, purposes, and locations of other U-2 aircraft. Acting Secretary of State Douglas Dillon was flabbergasted by the NASA statement. He believed it was disastrous because it contained so much information that could be directly disproved: "This statement was absolutely crazy because we *knew* the Russians would jump us on it."¹⁷

The president had wanted all statements to be issued by the State Department because the explicit goal of all these releases was to try to keep as much of the operation secret as possible.¹⁸ The administration assumed that the pilot would not survive a crash because the plane was judged to be fragile, but also because it contained a self-destruct mechanism that the pilot was supposed to activate after a disabling attack. Ostensibly, this self-destruct mechanism had a time delay for the pilot to eject. Many pilots questioned whether such a delay existed, believing instead that the craft was designed to kill the pilot along with destroying the plane.¹⁹

The assumptions that guided the administration's policy concerning the potential of a pilot surviving such an attack were codified into training procedures. In Senate Foreign Relations Testimony, CIA Director Dulles characterized the instructions that U-2 pilots received concerning the procedure should they be shot down in hostile territory as follows:

The pilots of these aircraft on operational missions, and this was true in the case of Powers, received the following instructions for use if downed in a hostile area.

First, it was their duty to ensure the destruction of the aircraft and its equipment to the greatest extent possible.

Second, on reaching the ground it was the pilot's first duty to attempt escape and evasion so as to avoid capture, or delay it as long as possible . . .

Third, pilots were equipped with a device for self-destruction but were not given positive instructions to make use of it . . .

Fourth, in the contingency of capture pilots were instructed to delay as long as possible the revelation of damaging information . . .

Fifth, pilots were instructed to tell the truth if faced with a situation, as apparently faced Powers, with respect to those matters which were obviously within the knowledge of his captors as a result of what fell into their hands.²⁰

On May 7, the Soviet government announced that they had the pilot and that he was alive. This information was sent by telegram from the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union to Secretary of State Herter: "Khrushchev has asserted to Supreme Soviet and thus to world at large that pilot in Moscow and is alive and well."²¹

The administration received its first indication of how this surprising turn of events came about in a telegram sent by the deputy ambassador to Moscow to Secretary Herter on May 10:

Investigation has shown that ejection capsule was last inspected in 1956, was "not in good condition", and therefore would not have worked when Powers pushed button. Explosive charge for plane was, however, in order . . . and would have destroyed both plane and pilot if button pushed. Red Star says faulty ejection seat is evidence of "Christian humaneness" of Allan [*sic*] Dulles' espionage agency, which wanted to be sure Powers did not get off alive in case of mishap. Powers "apparently understood" what might happen if he used ejection catapult, says Red Star, but paper does not explain how he actually escaped from plane except to comment that "only chance aided him remain alive."²²

Another series of meetings were held to determine how the United States should respond to the newly credible charges of espionage in the face of the pilot's survival. At the NSC, a decision was reached on May 9 that stated:

Noted and discussed a statement by the President on the subject, and the admonition by the President that all Executive Branch officials should refrain from any public or private comment upon this subject, except for authorized statements by the Department of State.²³

On that day as well, Allen Dulles, Richard Bissell, head of Air Force Intelligence Charles Cabell, General Andrew Jackson Goodpaster,

Ambassador to Moscow Charles Bohlen, Hugh Cumming, and Livingston Merchant from the State Department met at CIA headquarters. At that meeting, Dulles offered to take the heat for the president and resign. He argued that the president could accept Khrushchev's May 5 intimation that one of Eisenhower's subordinates had exceeded his authority and the incident could be resolved quickly and quietly, without implicating the president. Dulles's offer was rejected, although some consideration was given to finding a lower-level fall guy, such as Thomas Shelton, head of Powers's unit in Turkey. However, Bohlen and Cumming wanted to continue with the cover-up story and deny any governmental involvement in espionage. This was the position that was ultimately agreed upon at this meeting.²⁴

Merchant, Goodpaster, Cumming, and Bohlen then proceeded to another meeting at the State Department with Secretary Herter, Deputy Secretary Douglas Dillon, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Foy Kohler, and Richard Davis, Kohler's deputy.²⁵ Dillon began by advocating that Allen Dulles accept responsibility for the incident and resign. Herter and Kohler had just returned from a trip to Turkey and brought with them a more international perspective on the U-2 incident. They believed that the cover story was no longer credible. Kohler argued against Allen Dulles's resignation, feeling that a more honest statement needed to be issued. This position was supported by the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Llewellyn Thompson. Thompson had telegraphed Herter on May 7 with the following analysis:

It is difficult to assess Khrushchev's motives in playing this so hard. I believe he was really offended and angry, that he attaches great importance to stopping this kind of activity, and that he believes this will put him in an advantageous position at the Summit. There is no doubt that we have suffered a major loss in Soviet public opinion and probably throughout the world . . .

A more menacing interpretation is that Khrushchev realizes . . . that he cannot make progress at the Summit and . . . therefore could be exploiting this incident to prepare public opinion for an eventual crisis . . . I cannot help but think, although evidence is very slight, that Khrushchev is having some internal difficulties and this incident affords him a convenient diversion.

Judging by the display which Khrushchev made of evidence in the Supreme Soviet today, I would doubt that we can continue to deny charges of deliberate overflight. Khrushchev has himself stated the dilemma with which we are faced: should we deny that the President himself had actual knowledge of this action?²⁶

Herter was particularly adamant in his opinion that the United States had already gone too far in rejecting Soviet charges of espionage. He now felt that the United States had to admit some responsibility, although he still wanted to prevent the president from having to assume ultimate culpability.²⁷ Goodpaster agreed with this position. Dillon, who had originally endorsed the cover story with Cumming and Bohlen, was persuaded by the others and joined forces with Herter and Kohler in advocating a more truthful statement.

At this point, Cumming notified Dulles of this new decision; Dulles agreed to support the consensus, although it was not his preferred outcome. He did not want a public admission of espionage that would necessitate greater unwanted congressional oversight of his organization.²⁸

In the meantime, Herter called Eisenhower, who was at Gettysburg with Hagerty. Eisenhower opposed the idea of being absolved of personal responsibility for the overflights. He wanted to accept full responsibility. Hagerty agreed with Eisenhower's decision, at least partly because he was exquisitely sensitive to the charges of irresponsibility that had been leveled against the president during the 1956 presidential campaign.

Herter told Eisenhower that the president did not need to assume responsibility because Eisenhower had not been involved with the specific decisions about the timing of each flight, including Powers's. Goodpaster spoke to the president as well and endorsed Herter's recommendations. In the end, Herter succeeded in convincing Eisenhower not to accept responsibility for the flights. However, the president felt that the decision might be "a mistake."²⁹ Indeed, in retrospect, this decision remained Eisenhower's deepest regret about the entire incident. He wrote in his memoirs:

The big error we made was, of course, in the issuance of a premature and erroneous cover story. Allowing myself to be persuaded on this score is my principal personal regret—except for the U-2 failure itself—regarding the whole affair.³⁰

After the original "oxygen loss" cover story had been issued on May 5, Eisenhower felt that another statement at this juncture might be a mistake. Nonetheless he was persuaded by Goodpaster and Herter that a new statement was necessary to respond to Khrushchev's self-congratulatory announcement about capturing the pilot alive.

Thus, on May 7, the State Department issued the following, second cover-up statement:

The Department of State has received the text of Mr. Khrushchev's further remarks about the unarmed plane which is reported to have

been shot down in the Soviet Union. As previously announced, it was known that a U-2 plane was missing. As a result of inquiry ordered by the President, it has been established that insofar as the authorities in Washington are concerned, there was no authorization for any such flight as described by Mr. Khrushchev.

Nevertheless, it appears that in endeavoring to obtain information now concealed behind the Iron Curtain, a flight over Soviet Territory was probably taken by an unarmed civilian U-2 plane . . .

It is certainly no secret that, given the state of the world today, intelligence collection activities are practiced by all countries . . . The necessity for such activities . . . is enhanced by the excessive secrecy practiced by the Soviet Union . . .

One of the things creating tension in the world today is apprehension over surprise attack with weapons of mass destruction . . . It is in relation to the danger of surprise attack that planes of the type of unarmed civilian U-2 aircraft have made flights along the frontier of the Free World for the past four years.³¹

The statement released on May 7 admitted that the overflights had been sanctioned by the U.S. government *for the previous four years*. However, this statement still offered no official acknowledgment of the president's specific responsibility for Powers's flight. In the wake of this statement, there was a great deal of public clamoring over the president's lack of control over his policies and officials. By this time in the crisis, Eisenhower was quite depressed and commented to his secretary, Ann Whitman, "I would like to resign."³²

In his attempt at damage control after the furor caused by the revelation of state-sponsored spying, Eisenhower took a risk by engaging in a cover-up. In so doing, he ensured that actions of surveillance and cover-up were traceable directly back to him. After the pilot was acknowledged to be alive and public furor resulted, Eisenhower was faced with a choice of admitting both the espionage and the lies, or claiming to be unaware of the activities of his subordinates. This is a difficult trade-off for anyone to make. On the one hand, no president wants to tarnish his reputation, not to mention compromise the security of his intelligence organizations, by publicly admitting to espionage and cover-up. On the other hand, it can be equally damaging for a leader to appear irresponsible and unaware of the decisions made by underlings about major policy issues, and to seem incapable of controlling his administration.

For someone with a military background like Eisenhower, it was inconceivable to shirk responsibility for his actions or his subordinates'.

Eisenhower considered it ethically reprehensible to blame another for the negative consequences of his own actions. It was against his entire socialization experience to place the blame on his subordinates or to claim ignorance for the activities of those under his chain of command. Thus, he saw no choice but to accept full responsibility for his government's policies. Concerning Eisenhower's decision to accept responsibility, Deputy Secretary of State Douglas Dillon commented:

He didn't like to blame other people . . . He felt more strongly than a civilian leader might have. He had this thing about honesty and that was a military tradition.³³

In the end, Eisenhower decided to admit that the U.S. government had not only conducted systematic espionage but that his administration had publicly lied about the practice as well. His decision to accept responsibility was discussed with a group of bipartisan leaders at a breakfast on May 26:

Senator Fulbright said that he still didn't think it was wise to take full responsibility. President Eisenhower responded that he thought it was, that if he didn't take responsibility someone else would have to. He said that he agreed that Khrushchev had tried to give him an out on this, but that he looked upon it as his responsibility, and he assumed it.

"Incidentally," he said with a smile, "if anyone should be punished they should punish me first." He said that anyone sitting in his chair wouldn't want to put the CIA on the spot, and would not want to disown the CIA or its Director. He said that in addition to being President, he was also Commander in Chief, and he didn't see how he could duck his responsibility.³⁴

Eisenhower believed that he was right in taking responsibility for his actions. However, he also believed that there were some lessons to be learned from his experience with the U-2 incident. In speaking with United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge about Lodge's upcoming speech before the United Nations assembly concerning the Soviet charge of U.S. aggression, Eisenhower stated that "we should be guided by the old adage 'not to make mistakes in a hurry' . . . In referring to the U-2 Incident, the president thinks the only real mistake he sees was the statements were made too soon."³⁵

On May 9, Herter met again with Dillon, Kohler, Bohlen, Secretary

of Defense Tom Gates, and James Douglas, Acting Secretary of Defense, to discuss Eisenhower's change in position and to craft a new statement placing full responsibility in the president's hands:

The group discussed the wisdom of the President's taking responsibility for the U-2 flights and in Gates' recollection it was unanimously decided that he should. . . . Gates did not recall discussion of any real alternatives. . . . It seemed to be implicitly understood that for the President to assume personal responsibility would be a departure from precedent.³⁶

Vice-president Nixon called Herter and said that the administration must "get away from this little-boy-in-the-cookie-jar posture." He ordered that the statement not appear "apologetic."³⁷ Instead, Herter and his colleagues placed the blame on the Soviet Union for making such overflights necessary because of the Soviet penchant for excessive secrecy. There was no attempt to indicate that the flights would be discontinued, although in practice none had occurred since Powers had been shot down.³⁸

Eisenhower summed up the situation at the NSC meeting that day:

Well, we're just going to have to take a lot of beating on this—and I'm the one, rightly, who's going to have to take it . . . Of course, one had to expect that the thing would fail at one time or another. But that it had to be such a boo-boo and that we would be caught with our pants down was rather painful . . . We will just have to endure the storm.³⁹

Later that day, the revised statement acknowledging presidential responsibility was issued as a State Department release under Herter's signature and included the following justification:

In accordance with the National Security Act of 1947, the President has put into effect . . . directives to gather by every possible means the information required to protect . . . against surprise attack . . . Programs have been developed and put into operation which have included extensive aerial surveillance by unarmed civilian aircraft, normally of a peripheral character but on occasion by penetration. Specific missions . . . have not been subject to Presidential authorization.

The fact that such surveillance was taking place has apparently not been a secret to the Soviet leadership, and the question indeed arises as to why at this particular juncture they should seek to exploit the present incident as a propaganda battle in the Cold War.⁴⁰

While this statement did not admit the full extent of presidential authorization for the operation in general or for Powers's flight in particular, it did nonetheless acknowledge that such flights had been taking place for purposes of obtaining information on the Soviet Union with the president's awareness.

In a further statement released by the president himself on May 11, Eisenhower justified his activities by arguing that "no one wants another Pearl Harbor." Arguing that the Soviet "fetish" for secrecy had required the intelligence gathering operations manifested in the U-2 overflights, Eisenhower declared that he had "issued directives to gather, in every feasible way, the information required to protect the United States and the Free World against surprise attack and to enable them to make effective preparations for defense."⁴¹

The administration policy of cover-up continued, however, throughout the Congressional investigations into the matter. The concealment approach was explained in an NSC meeting which took place on May 24, 1960:

Congress could be told that overflights have been going on with the approval of the Secretary of State and our scientific advisors, who have indicated that this method of gathering intelligence is necessary. It should be made clear that basic decisions respecting reconnaissance overflights of denied territory have been made by the President. However, the impression should not be given that President had approved specific flights, precise missions, or the timing of specific flights . . .

Turning to the timing of the last U-2 flight, the President said there was no good time for failure. The question was had the risk been measurably greater at the time of the flight than it would have been at any other time? . . . The President believed that as long as a powerful government suspected the intentions of another powerful government, intelligence activities would be carried on.⁴²

The U-2 incident became the ostensible reason for the collapse of the long anticipated Summit Meeting between Eisenhower, Khrushchev, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, and French President de Gaulle which was scheduled to begin on May 16, 1960. This Summit Meeting fell apart in the wake of Khrushchev's demands that the United States apologize for its action with regard to the U-2 overflights, fire those responsible, and pledge never to engage in similar action again. While Eisenhower agreed to the last consideration, he adamantly refused to accede to the first two, and the conference abruptly ended in Paris before it even got under way.⁴³

The Soviet Union in general, and Khrushchev in particular, derived

enormous international propaganda benefit from the incident; Powers was tried in public and sentenced to ten years confinement.⁴⁴

Domain

The decisions concerning the cover-up of American aerial surveillance following the Soviet downing of Powers's plane took place in the domain of losses. Although things were going well for Eisenhower, and he was benefiting enormously from the intelligence information provided by the U-2 overflights, the downing of the plane itself immediately plummeted the administration into a different position altogether. The American public and the world were outraged by Khrushchev's substantiated revelation of American spying practices.

Prior to the U-2 being shot down by the Soviet Union, Eisenhower was criticized by many influential members in the Democratic party, the media, and the right wing of his own party for being an absentee president. He was often portrayed in the press as not being fully attentive to the affairs of his administration and letting the government be run by inferior advisors. He was depicted as too busy playing golf and relaxing at his farm in Gettysburg to attend to the business of state.⁴⁵ White House Press Secretary Jim Hagerty was particularly vexed by these charges and went to great lengths to counter them.

Attacks came from many directions, but were most eloquently and pointedly represented by two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and commentator James Reston's pieces in the *New York Times*. On May 8, James Reston wrote a stinging editorial that included the following indictment:

[T]he judgment of the United States government is bound to be questioned . . . [N]ot only the good judgment but the good faith of the government gets involved in controversy. The political fall-out from this controversy is bound to be great . . . [T]he President is not trying to ruin or manage the Summit Meeting. He is not even managing his own departments preliminary to the summit, and this, of course, is precisely the trouble.⁴⁶

Reston continued his attack on the administration in the lead story for the *New York Times* the following day:

This is a sad and perplexed capital tonight, caught in a swirl of charges of clumsy administration, bad judgment and bad faith.

It was depressed and humiliated by the United States having been

caught spying over the Soviet Union and trying to cover up its activities in a series of misleading official announcements.⁴⁷

Later in the week, Reston wrote:

The heart of the problem here is that the Presidency has been parcelled out, first to Sherman Adams, then to John Foster Dulles, and in this case to somebody else—probably to Allen Dulles, but we still don't know . . .

Institutionalized Presidency . . . disperses authority, removes the President from many key decisions, and leaves the nation, the world, and sometimes even the President himself in a state of uncertainty about who is doing what.⁴⁸

These charges supported the Democratic Party's campaign strategy, designed to portray Eisenhower as a lazy, inattentive president. Prospect theory would predict that it would be precisely under such conditions of loss that a decision maker would be likely to make more risk-seeking choices in hopes of reversing the tide of events. In this situation, loss led Eisenhower to engage in a governmental cover-up concerning the U-2 overflights in hopes of returning to the previous status quo.

The Framing of Options

By the time Powers's flight was shot down by the Soviet military, the U-2 had been in operation as a surveillance aircraft since 1956.⁴⁹ Why had the original decision to undertake aerial reconnaissance, which required deep penetration into Soviet airspace, been made? Eisenhower discussed his original reasoning behind authorizing the U-2 flights in a Cabinet meeting on May 26, 1960:

The President explained that the U-2 was not the only mechanism for obtaining intelligence even though it was one of the good ones . . . He said that he had been told that the U-2 would be overtaken within a matter of months by newer methods. The President added that the U-2 had been especially valuable for building up basic information about things that don't change rapidly. Mr. Gates added that the U-2 was not an alarm clock against surprise attack, rather it provided essential knowledge as to general posture. Allen Dulles recalled that when this U-2 operation had been approved in 1954, it was thought that the Russians would catch up to it in two to three years; actually, it had been of value for much longer than ever expected.⁵⁰

Eisenhower's original decision to engage in overflights was reasonable; he could obtain valuable intelligence that could improve America's security interests at very low cost, by keeping the military industrial complex at bay, as long as the U-2 program could be kept secret.

As CIA Director Allen Dulles, who was in charge of the U-2 program, noted in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 31, 1960, these flights brought back critical information on Soviet military power:

Our main emphasis in the U-2 Program had been directed against five critical problems affecting our national security: namely, the Soviet bomber force, the Soviet missile program, the Soviet atomic energy program; the Soviet submarine program, i.e., the major elements constituting the Soviet Union's capability to launch a surprise attack. In addition a major target had been the Soviet Air Defense System with which our retaliatory forces would have to contend.⁵¹

This type of information was particularly important at this time because of the national hysteria that followed in the wake of the Soviet launching of Sputnik on October 4, 1957. The president could have rejected the idea of U-2 overflights from the outset, but only by succumbing to pressure for additional military expenditures in response to widespread perceptions of massive Soviet military buildups and strategic threat. The information provided by the U-2 served Eisenhower's larger goal of promoting peace by allowing him to keep a cap on weapons spending.

After the Soviet launching of Sputnik, a lot of pressure was placed on the administration from internal planners, as well as external opponents, to address the perceived imbalance in nuclear bombing and missile capability. As Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, noted:

In the first decade after the war we had only scant knowledge of Soviet missile progress . . . As the techniques of science were put to work, and the U-2 photographs became available after 1956, "hard" intelligence began to flow into the hands of the impatient estimators. Their impatience was understandable, for great pressure had been put on them by those in the Department of Defense concerned with our own missile programs and missile defenses. Planning in such a field takes years.⁵²

Because of the perceived risks of discovery, Eisenhower insisted on strict control over the authorization of flights. As Eisenhower recalled:

[E]ach time a new series of flights was proposed, we held a closed meeting to determine whether or not new information on developing technology might indicate the unwisdom of proceeding as before.⁵³

Nonetheless, each time a new series of flights was authorized, Eisenhower alone weighed the relative *political* benefits of the information that might result against the potential risk resulting from a mishap. Eisenhower wanted this control not only because of the secrecy of the operation, but because most of his advisors on the matter, such as Allen Dulles, had a vested interest in continuing the flights and were not in a position to evaluate negative consequences in an unbiased manner. As Eisenhower commented at the time:

Such a decision is one of the most soul-searching questions to come before a President. We've got to think about what our reaction would be if *they* were to do this to *us*.⁵⁴

One of Eisenhower's concerns here was that the Soviet government might misinterpret one of these flights as an attack, even a nuclear one. Goodpaster's response to Eisenhower's concern was clear: "It would be approaching a provocation, a probable cause of war because it was a violation of their territory."⁵⁵

Eisenhower recognized the stakes involved in approving the U-2 overflights. As Goodpaster noted:

The President said that he has one tremendous asset in a Summit Meeting, as regards effect in the free world. That is his reputation for honesty. If one of these aircraft were lost when we are engaged in apparently sincere deliberations, it could be put on display in Moscow and ruin the President's effectiveness.⁵⁶

Nonetheless, Eisenhower felt justified in authorizing the flights. As he commented to some Congressional leaders at the time: "Espionage was distasteful but vital . . . The decision was mine. One had to weigh the risks, keep the knowledge in as few hands as possible, and accept the consequences if something went wrong."⁵⁷

The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor at the outset of World War II was a very powerful analogy for Eisenhower throughout his presidency. One of his primary strategic goals was to ensure that a similar surprise attack from the Soviets never caught America unaware during his watch. Invoking this analogy to Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower explained his

original decisions concerning the U-2 to the public in a television address following the failed Summit:

I take full responsibility for approving all the various programs undertaken by our government to secure and evaluate military intelligence. It was in the prosecution of one of these intelligence programs that the widely publicized U-2 incident occurred . . .

As to the timing (so near the summit), the question was really whether to halt the program and thus forego the gathering of important information that was essential and that was likely to be unavailable at a later date. The decision was that the program should not be halted.

The plain truth is this: when a nation needs intelligence activity, there is no time when vigilance can be relaxed. Incidentally, from Pearl Harbor we learned that even negotiation itself can be used to conceal preparations for a surprise attack.⁵⁸

Even in retrospect, Eisenhower did not believe that the U-2 program itself was a mistake:

Regarding the U-2 program itself, I know of no decision that I would make differently, given the same set of facts as they confronted us at the time.⁵⁹

Framing of the Cover-Up

Given that the U-2 flights had been authorized for years and held under close scrutiny by Eisenhower, the evolution of the plans for concealment offer an excellent opportunity to examine how framing effects can influence decision making. The espionage program was bureaucratically entrenched, if not widely known. Still, no one seemed to have systematically examined the contingencies associated with failure. Success did breed complacency in this case.

The substance of the advice that President Eisenhower received from his various advisors is critical in understanding the evolution of the cover-up.

Some people remained consistent over the entire period of the crisis. One of these people was the president's brother, Milton, who functioned as one of Eisenhower's most trusted confidential advisors. Milton believed throughout the crisis that Eisenhower should *not* claim responsibility for the overflights. He felt that the president was pressured into approving

these flights by the CIA and had been placed in an awkward situation as a result. As Milton wrote in his memoirs:

About six months before the Powers plane came down in the Soviet Union, *the President at a meeting of the National Security Council suggested tentatively that the United States had obtained all the useful information it could and that the flights should be discontinued.* The heads of the State and Defense Departments and of CIA felt strongly the other way, so a decision for change was postponed. When the Powers plane came down a “cover” story was issued automatically. *The President did not see it or know about it in advance.* When the facts became known the President took full responsibility, something I thought he should not do. His response to me was that if he blamed the situation on a subordinate he would have no choice but to discipline, probably discharge him, and he would not be guilty of such hypocrisy.⁶⁰

John Eisenhower, the president’s son, confidante, and assistant staff secretary, took a position opposed to the one espoused by his uncle. John felt that the president had no choice but to accept full responsibility for the entire episode:

Dad has since been blamed in some quarters for assuming the responsibility. I cannot see how he could have done otherwise. For one thing, it was true; he had approved the flights for periods of a week at a time. (The plane went down on the last day of an approved week.) For another, there was no point in sticking with a discredited “cover story” with the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, in Soviet hands. Finally, the Boss [Eisenhower] instinctively would rather take the responsibility for making an error in judgment than be accused of not knowing what was going on in his administration.

The timing was bad admittedly. However, I cannot think of any good timing for such an occurrence. Our luck had simply run out.⁶¹

Other officials in the administration were not nearly as consistent in their advice to the president as his family members. The preferred positions on Eisenhower’s assumption of personal responsibility for the U-2 flights of senior administration officials ranged from complete disavowal of knowledge to total acceptance of responsibility.

It was in the best interest of many of the president’s advisors to continue the flights. Not surprisingly, those advisors with a vested interest in

the continuation of the U-2 program were not as convinced as the president that the damage from the Soviet downing of such a flight would be irreparable if discovered.

CIA officials Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell strongly believed in a set of assumptions that argued that: the Soviet military could not shoot a U-2 down; that even if they did they would never make such an event public; that even if they did, a pilot would never survive, and so the United States could plausibly deny responsibility.⁶² These assumptions are not logically tied, but they were shared by all who believed that the pilot could not have survived and that an immediate cover story was the best way to handle the initial Soviet accusations of espionage, given that there was presumably no way the surveillance would be uncovered. In short, the probability of each contingency was misjudged, and as a result the consequences of the outcome were severely underestimated.⁶³

In the event of charges leveled by the Soviet government, the plan was clear. As Bissell revealed:

We were quite prepared to say, if the Russians showed photographs of it, either that it wasn't the U-2 or that they had taken the plane and moved it. Now we felt that it would be very difficult for them to disprove that. So the whole point of the story was to explain what had happened—that a pilot had inadvertently crossed the border and been shot down and landed inside, and that they had moved the wreckage.⁶⁴

Goodpaster remembered similar assumptions:

Allen's [Dulles] approach was that we were unlikely to lose one. If we did lose one, the pilot would not survive . . . We were told—and it was part of our understanding of the situation—that it was almost certain that the plane would disintegrate and that we could take it as a certainty that no pilot would survive . . . and that although they would know where the plane came from, it would be difficult to prove it in any convincing way.⁶⁵

Both these plans assumed a dead pilot. As John Eisenhower noted, a dead pilot was “a *complete* given, a *complete* assumption as far as we were concerned” (emphasis in original).⁶⁶ In a conversation with Dulles's successor, John McCone, in 1964, Eisenhower recalled:

As I understood it, I mean, as was told to me all those years by both (Richard) Bissell and Allen (Dulles), this thing that the plane could

never be recovered . . . they assured me there was really no fear of ever getting back a live pilot if it was knocked down by hostile action in Russia. Even if damaged, they figured that at that height, if he had tried to parachute at 70,000 feet, he'd never survive . . . And the whole cover story was built on the basis that the man would never survive.

McCone: I realize that and I realized it at the time, and it was absolutely wrong. Now, there have been three pilots whose planes have performed just as his did in test flights and so forth where they lost control at 70,000 feet. The wings came off and spiraled down and the pilots ejected and lived. Now, in interrogating Powers as to exactly what happened to him, the same interrogators interrogated the other pilots—and these events happened in Louisiana and Nevada and so forth, and the planes performed and the pilots performed in just identical manners . . .

Eisenhower: . . . I don't want to accuse people of having fooled me. But I do know that they told me that the possibility of anyone surviving—matter of fact, that's the reason I argued against putting out a cover story, and they said, "You just don't have to worry, General. It is perfectly all right because there's nobody there."⁶⁷

In his decisions, Eisenhower was clearly affected by the misinformation in the framing of the options presented to him by Dulles and others.

Riskiness of Chosen Option

As with the other cases, the riskiness of the chosen option is best evaluated according to the variance in outcome it offered. Remaining silent offered a fairly small variance in outcome: at worst, the press might be angered and clamor for more information; at best, nothing would be stated that could later be disproved. Overall, there was little variance at all in outcome as a result of staying quiet; the best outcome can barely be distinguished from worst. Thus, this low variance offered by this option presents a cautious alternative.

Telling the truth offered a wider variation in potential outcome: while it is true that the press would have a field day with the revelation of state-sponsored espionage, the truth would require no cover-up. Moreover, admitting the truth would make sure that everyone knew that Eisenhower was indeed fully in charge of his administration. Given Eisenhower's military culture and training, this was a very important consideration; Eisenhower proved so unwilling to blame subordinates for the U-2 overflights that he preferred to take the brunt of the criticism himself, once the spi-

onage and cover-up were revealed. In the early stages of the crisis, however, the administration feared that admitting the truth would also mean acknowledging a long history of state-sponsored spying, which might trigger a public outcry. Thus, telling the truth, with a wider variance in outcome, was riskier than remaining silent.

The riskiest choice of all, in terms of variance in outcome, was offered by lying about the spying. A positive outcome from this option offers the best possible outcome: no one's reputation would be tarnished, the spying would remain secret, the public would be placated, and the Summit Meeting could proceed as planned. However, if the cover-up failed, the worst possible outcome would occur, as espionage was confirmed and cover-up exposed.

Under this eventuality, the public outcry would extend not only to the act of spying itself, but to the act of cover-up as well. While this option presented the best possible outcome if it worked, it also offered the worst possible outcome if it failed. Thus, from the perspective of variance in outcome, the Eisenhower administration made the riskiest decision possible. When the administration did engage in a cover-up and the plan failed, the worst possible outcome did ensue.

Following the downing of Powers's plane, the administration was faced with several options. The least risky was to not say anything, or to claim that an "investigation" was under way. The administration did this initially, but only for a matter of hours. On the one hand, most officials did not want to give the Soviet accusation credence through silence. On the other, many of those same officials in the administration felt that they could not withstand pressure from the press to issue a more substantive statement. This disorganization between divisions in the administration only complicated matters. Thus, two divergent statements were produced quickly, from NASA and the State Department, before adequate information from the Soviet government became available.

One path available to Eisenhower was to follow Khrushchev's lead. Given the Soviet leader's opening in his May 5 speech, it would have been quite easy for Eisenhower to accept publicly Khrushchev's version of events, castigate and fire a subordinate, such as Allen Dulles, and pledge that similar events would not occur in the future. This course would have allowed Eisenhower to retain his popularity for probity and maximized the likelihood of a successful summit meeting. He could then quietly restate the underling in a more discreet position at a later time. Eisenhower proved unwilling to follow this path; this outcome is at least partly attributable to Eisenhower's extensive military training and socialization, which made the prospect of blaming subordinates for his own decisions anathema to him.

Alternatively, Eisenhower could have told the truth about the U-2 flights from the outset. He might have argued that since the Soviet Union had rejected his Open Skies proposal in 1955, he had been forced to undertake aerial surveillance unilaterally in order to prevent the possibility of surprise nuclear attack. He could have seized the diplomatic initiative and invited the Russians to overfly the United States whenever they chose. This kind of initiative would have resulted in disproportionate advantage accruing to America not only because of the tremendous discrepancies between the two societies in terms of their relative openness, but also in terms of their relative technological advances.

Eisenhower was unwilling to pursue either of these paths. Eisenhower believed that the cover-up presented a reasonable possibility of success because of assurances he had received from Dulles and others that the Soviet government would never be able to prove their allegations without a pilot, and that a pilot could never survive. As noted, before the May 7 Soviet announcement, it never occurred to anyone in the administration that Powers might have survived. Eisenhower never requested a probability estimate on the likelihood that a pilot could survive; that possibility was assumed to be zero.⁶⁸ As with all probabilities judged to be either certain or impossible, this estimate was given more weight than it normatively deserved.⁶⁹ Pseudo-certainty effects in prospect theory demonstrate that highly likely events are often treated as though they were certain, even if that is not objectively the case.⁷⁰ Yet every aspect of the initial three cover stories (NASA and State, May 5; State, May 7) was predicated on the faulty and unchallenged assumption that the pilot must be dead, and that therefore U.S. responsibility for the flight could be credibly disavowed.

Faulty and unchallenged assumptions concerning the probability of the pilot's survival encouraged the Eisenhower administration to issue a plethora of cover-up stories. Rather than keep quiet or tell the truth, the administration pursued the path of telling an increasingly intricate series of lies, which were ultimately disproven by the evidence marshaled by the Soviet Union. In short, the risk was more in the lying, and less in the spying.

The Decisions

Prospect theory predicts that people in the domain of losses are more likely to take greater risks than those acting in a domain of gains. Eisenhower might not have so easily agreed to a cover-up statement about the overflights if he had not been in a domain of losses. As mentioned, Eisenhower was relatively cautious concerning the flights themselves. However, once a plane was shot down, Eisenhower faced a much more dangerous

situation. He recognized that he would sustain even more serious losses unless he did something to limit the damage. It is in this context that Eisenhower decided to lie. He took a risk that failed. However, had the risk succeeded, Eisenhower stood to recoup all the losses he had sustained after the U-2 was shot down by the Soviet government. Had the risk succeeded, Eisenhower would have ended up with the best outcome possible: continued secrecy surrounding U.S. intelligence programs; and the possibility for a successful summit meeting. In a domain of losses, Eisenhower took a risk to recoup one loss and prevent another. Unfortunately, Eisenhower merely plunged himself further into a morass of deceit and exposure.

More importantly, however, he was influenced by the situation he confronted: an environment in which he was under attack. He thought that by taking a risk, he might be able to recoup the political losses he had sustained to his public credibility.

In the U-2 incident, Eisenhower made some risky choices concerning the cover-up of American aerial surveillance of the Soviet Union. More specifically, Eisenhower was in a domain of losses due to the attacks he had undergone for various charges of incompetence, laziness, and irresponsibility from the Democrats and the press alike. He became more susceptible to taking the kind of risk that eventually forced him to admit responsibility for authorizing state-sponsored espionage and for lying about it. As a result of this susceptibility, the president's best political instincts failed him during the U-2 crisis. All the advice he accepted from his advisors steered him in the wrong direction.

The Outcome

The international ramifications of the U-2 incident were myriad.⁷¹ The Soviet downing of Powers's U-2, and the U.S. admission for the first time not only of systematic state-sponsored espionage, but of lying about this activity, had severe consequences for the president and the country in a number of areas.

Most immediately, it was the putative reason behind the collapse of the summit in Paris that was scheduled to begin on May 16. The meeting never made it past the opening session. It is important to note that the administration itself did not believe that the U-2 incident was the sole reason for the Soviets canceling the summit. In the debriefing following the collapse of the summit, the discussion concerning the Soviet reasoning behind the cancellation of the Summit proceeded as follows:

Mr. Bohlen, as a preface to his remarks, emphasized how everything had to be guesswork as far as the Russian thinking was concerned . . . it was clear during March and April that Khrushchev realized he would not get at the Summit what he wanted regarding Berlin . . . and that the U-2 incident was probably a catalytic agent in view of the traditional great sensitivity of the Russians to any violation of their air space . . . Mr. Bohlen said that these things could not quite be sorted out, but it could be concluded that the Russians had seized upon the U-2 as a reason for sabotaging the conference.⁷²

In addition, Khrushchev rescinded his preexisting invitation for Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union later in the year; this visit had been planned for quite some time in order to reciprocate Khrushchev's visit to the United States the previous September. Moreover, the Soviet Union proceeded to walk out of the Geneva test ban talks on June 27.

Another international consequence of this episode was the cancellation of the president's trip to Japan. The president had been scheduled to tour Japan following his trip to the Soviet Union, but a surge of anti-American violence in Tokyo in the wake of the U-2 incident led Prime Minister Kishi to cancel his invitation to Eisenhower and resign his post.

In the end, Eisenhower's participation in the cover-up precipitated the very domestic criticisms that he had taken such pains to prevent. As James Reston commented in the *New York Times* on May 11, Eisenhower's handling of the U-2 crisis had wrought

. . . almost all the things he feared most. He wanted to reduce international tension and he has increased it . . . He glorified teamwork and morality and got lies and administrative chaos. Everything he was noted for—caution, patience, leadership, military skill and even good luck—suddenly eluded him at precisely the moment he needed them most.⁷³

This commentary was followed by another scathing attack on the administration's handling of this crisis on May 13:

The best politics for the G.O.P. this summer lay in creating an atmosphere of peace, an air of progress toward an accommodation with the Russians on Berlin, Germany, nuclear testing, and disarmament . . .

By demanding the right to intrude into the Soviet Union, the President has defied Khrushchev to stop him, put Khrushchev on the spot with the Stalinists who have always been against a detente, embar-

rassed the allies by making their bases a target of Khrushchev's anger, and repudiated one of Washington's own favorite principles—namely, that each nation has the right to choose its own form of government.

In domestic political terms—to say nothing of international politics—this situation, created largely by accident, bad luck, and bungling, will do the Republicans no good . . .

The fate of one political party in one country in one election is not, of course, the main consideration. The fate of much more is at stake in the present trend of events. But it is a factor. The G.O.P. has, unwittingly, by bad administration, bad judgment, and bad luck, stumbled into a course which is also bad politics.⁷⁴

An opportunity for progress on Berlin, disarmament, and a test ban was transformed into a hardening and deepening of the Cold War at least partly because of the U-2 crisis.

The decision to lie about the spying was a risky decision for Eisenhower to make. He made that choice in the hope of recouping his losses and achieving his goals for increasing peace. He failed in his attempt to recover his loss and received severe political criticism as a result of his acknowledgments of espionage and concealment.

It is important from the perspective of prospect theory that these decisions took place at a time when Eisenhower felt himself to be in a bad situation in the aftermath of the U-2 being shot down. It is precisely under those circumstances that prospect theory would predict that a decision maker would be most susceptible to engaging in risk-taking behavior.