

# *EISENHOWER'S "OPEN SKIES" PROPOSAL*



- 1955: President Eisenhower traveled to Geneva, Switzerland
  - First U.S.-Soviet summit conference since Potsdam
  - Eisenhower met with Soviet Deputy Premier Nikolai Bulganin



Nikolai Bulganin

- Eisenhower proposed his “open skies” proposal
  - According to his plan:
    - Each nation would allow the other to conduct flights over the other’s territory in inspect nuclear weapons installations
      - To ensure neither side was planning a surprise nuclear attack
  - Soviet Union rejected the proposal
  - Proposal did enjoy popular support around the world





# *THE U-2 SPY PLANE INCIDENT*

Pilot Francis Gary Powers

- Despite the Soviet's rejection of President Eisenhower's "open skies" proposal
  - The CIA began a series of reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory
    - Used a sophisticated spy plane called the U-2
      - Capable of flying at extremely high altitudes without being detected (70,000 ft, 500 mph)
      - Capable of taking high quality detailed photographs of the ground
    - Soviets had knowledge of the flights for some time
      - May 1, 1960: The Soviets shot down a U-2 flying over soviet territory
      - CIA believed the pilots of these aircraft could not survive being shot down
        - Soviets, however, recovered parts of the down plane and its pilot, Francis Gary Powers, very much alive













© Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images



- Eisenhower had been set to meet with Nikita Khrushchev just prior to the U-2 incident
- Eisenhower first denied the plane was a spy plane
  - Soviet evidence of the downed plane and its camera technology resulted in Eisenhower's admittance that the flight was a reconnaissance mission
  - Refused to apologize to Khrushchev
  - Khrushchev then called off the planned meeting with Eisenhower and withdrew his invitation for the president to visit the USSR
- The U-2 incident only increased tensions between the two nations
- Francis Gary Powers was found guilty by the Soviet court and sentenced to 10 years in prison (7 of the years at hard labour)
  - Powers was traded for the Soviet intelligence officer, Vilyam Fisher - also known as **Rudolf Abel** - who had been serving a 30-year prison term for espionage against the US at a penitentiary in Georgia.