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The Central Intelligence Agency  
and Overhead Reconnaissance:

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The U-2 and OXCART Programs, 1954-1974

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Subsequent missions in support of Federal agencies included COMPASS TRIP in fiscal year 1973, when Agency U-2s photographed poppy fields that had been planted by the Bureau of Narcotics in order to provide a standard for comparison with satellite imagery. In the following year, U-2s assisted the Corps of Engineers in conducting a geological survey.

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*Earthquake damage, San  
Fernando Valley, 1971*

#### Overseas Deployment Exercises and Missions

With the exception of the Chinese Nationalist-piloted U-2s of Detachment H, all of the Agency's U-2 assets were concentrated in Detachment G in California. To test the ability of Detachment G to respond to a crisis in Europe or the Middle East, the Agency staged an overseas deployment exercise known as SCOPE SAINT each year (unless there was an actual operational deployment, as was the case in 1970, 1973, and 1974). The first of these exercises, SCOPE SAINT-I, took place on 9 October 1968, when Detachment G deployed a U-2G to the [redacted]

[redacted] The U-2 conducted several training flights and then returned to California. SCOPE SAINT-II followed in April 1969 and demonstrated the feasibility of employing a C-141 aircraft to accompany a

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pilots were still flying missions targeted against the People's Republic of China, these missions did not overfly PRC territory. Increasingly, Agency U-2s flew missions that did not involve intelligence collection requirements.

### Support to Other Agencies

Beginning in 1964, the Agency conducted a program known as RED DOT for the Department of Defense. RED DOT involved the development and testing of various color, black and white, and infrared films, emulsions, and processing techniques for use in manned and unmanned high-altitude reconnaissance systems. From 1968 until 1974, Detachment G U-2s photographed areas within the United States that were analagous to portions of the Soviet Union in order to test films and techniques for spotting certain targets. This analogous filming was particularly valuable in connection with agricultural areas and nuclear test sites.

Some U-2 missions supported agencies outside the intelligence community. In 1968 and 1969, Detachment G U-2s flew high-altitude photographic missions in conjunction with the Apollo VII and IX spaceflights in response to a NASA request. These flights provided photography of the western United States for comparison with the photography taken by the Apollo crews. The Department of the Interior also requested U-2 support in early 1969 to help determine the extent of damage caused by a leak in an offshore oil well in California's Santa Barbara Channel. After preliminary assessment of the film at NPIC, the mission photography was given to the US Geological Survey for further study.

Also in early 1969, Detachment G began providing coverage of the western United States at the request of the Department of Commerce. U-2s filmed the Sierra snowfield to aid hydrologists in forecasting snowmelt and flooding potentials. Later that year, Detachment G supported the Office of Emergency Preparedness by photographing 61,000 square miles of the southern United States as part of a Hurricane Baseline Survey. These photographs could be used for future damage assessment following a major hurricane. A subsequent mission in fiscal year 1971 continued the Hurricane Baseline Survey by photographing the Gulf Coast. When a major earthquake struck the Los Angeles area on 9 February 1971, Detachment G U-2s flew four sorties to obtain damage-assessment photos.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., chap. 3, pp. 3-29 (TS Codeword).

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