

FORMER ENEMIES NOW OVERFLYING U.S.

[Wire service report, 6/20/95]

CHANTILLY, Va. -- With almost no public notice, an aircraft of the former East German air force became a footnote to post-Cold War history here Monday.

The plane, which was used by the late East German President Erich Honecker until his communist regime collapsed in 1989, took off from Dulles International Airport as part of a joint U.S.-German training exercise to get ready for implementation of the new Open Skies Treaty.

It marked the first time a foreign military aircraft has overflown U.S. territory on a surveillance mission, said David Rigby, head of public affairs at the On-Site Inspection Agency, a Pentagon agency that monitors treaty compliance.

The treaty was negotiated between members of NATO and the former Warsaw Pact and was meant to provide better understanding of the each side's military posture as well as added confidence that no country was preparing a major offensive.

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[This means foreign powers can now officially overfly Area 51 if they choose. --G.C.]