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U.S. Inspector's Plane Diverted to Chita Due to Fog

By The Moscow Times

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CHITA — A plane transporting U.S. military inspectors to an airport in southern Siberia under the international Open Skies treaty had to divert to another location because of bad weather on Thursday, an unidentified police official said.

The Open Skies Treaty, which entered into force on Jan. 1, 2002, established a regime of unarmed aerial observation flights over the territories of its 34 member states to promote openness and transparency of military forces and activities. Russia ratified the treaty in May 2001.

The plane with military inspectors, performing an observation flight above Russia in line with the treaty, was heading to Ulan-Ude in the republic of Buryatia. However, the crew was told to divert to Chita in the neighboring Zabaikalsky region because of dense fog in Ulan-Ude.

"Ulan-Ude did not permit the plane to land because of weather conditions, so the crew

requested a landing in Chita. The plane "landed and is still here," a Chita police official said.

The official did not say whether it was a civil or military aircraft.

The plane's crew is currently going through migration and border control checks, he said.

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