

ITEM 2  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 73  
COUNCIL MEETING 90/11/26

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
1990 November 20

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &  
BUILDING INSPECTION  
Our File: 08.352

SUBJECT: LOW-LEVEL MILITARY FLIGHTS IN B.C.

PURPOSE: To provide Council with additional information on a low-level military flight corridor over British Columbia.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the regular Council meeting of 1990 November 05, Council received correspondence from the City of Vancouver regarding low-level military flights over British Columbia. The City's Special Council Committee on Peace met with Mr. J. Mate of Greenpeace Canada who described the low-level military flight testing program and requested that the City express opposition to the flights. At the Committee's recommendation, the City adopted a resolution opposing low-level flights and circulated this resolution to all Municipalities and Indian Band Councils in the province.

Council requested that staff obtain further information on low-level military flights over British Columbia from Greenpeace Canada. This report provides the information requested.

2.0 BACKGROUND

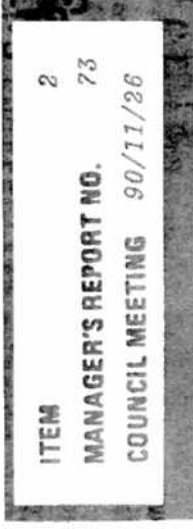
Staff have contacted Greenpeace and the Department of National Defence in Vancouver to obtain additional information on the low-level military flight corridor over B. C.

Low-level Flight Corridor (IR 910)

In June 1989, the Minister of National Defence approved a low-level flight corridor (instrumentation route 910 or IR 910) over British Columbia for training purposes for the United States Air Force. The IR 910 flight corridor, approximately 1400 km in length, begins near Fort Nelson and proceeds along a southwesterly path to the vicinity of Port Hardy. IR 910 will be used by B-52 bombers. The Minister's approval authorized 4 annual exercises of up to 28 flights each with 48 hours advance notice of each exercise.

Greenpeace Research

Greenpeace researchers have reviewed publicly available information including an Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE) on the low-level military flights and obtained additional information through the freedom of information act. Based on this information, Greenpeace has prepared a series of fact sheets that describe the low-level flights and Greenpeace's environmental concerns related to the flights. These concerns are briefly outlined here.



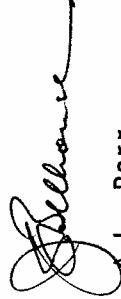
The flight path traverses extensive areas of pristine fish and wildlife habitat. Approximately 40 communities, including 24 Indian reserves, with a combined population of around 20,000 people are located within 34 miles of the IR 910 corridor. IR 910 will be flown by B-52 bombers flying at speeds approaching 1,000 km/h at elevations as low as 75-100 m above the ground. Noise levels of 130 decibels may be associated with such flights.

Impacts which could result from low-level flights include noise levels exceeding the pain threshold of sound, stress resulting from the "startle effect" of sudden loud noise, hazards related to accidents and aircraft crashes, and toxic effects of aircraft exhaust released at low elevations. These impacts would affect human and wildlife populations.

The IEE of the flight corridor was prepared in 1987. The IEE is primarily a literature review and library study. Apparently no environmental field work was conducted in preparing the study, and only one public meeting was held. Approval of the flight corridor was made without referring the proposal to the Minister of the Environment for a complete environmental impact assessment including public consultation.

Department of National Defence Comments

The Department of National Defence indicated that the IR 910 low-level military flight project is still active. Environmental impacts were taken into consideration in approving the IR 910 corridor. To date, the corridor has not been used for the proposed training purposes. There is currently no information available on any plans to use the corridor.



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SG/mcb