

NATO would gain a much safer training ground in Labrador, and the region's weather would suit the visual flight operations necessary for low-level flying.



on an area over 500 000 square kilometres in size – cost more than \$6 million and culminated in the publication of a major Environmental Impact Statement in the autumn of last year.

The EIS concluded that a fourfold increase in low-level flying brought about by the establishment of a NATO Tactical Fighter Centre would cause only negligible or minor environmental damage to the area and that such damage could be reduced or eliminated through a series of mitigating measures outlined in the study.

Public hearings on the Statement will be held in communities in Labrador and North Eastern Quebec. Only if the hearings confirm that flying activities can be conducted within the environmental constraints imposed by the government, will the NATO Tactical Fighter Centre be allowed to go ahead.


If it does go ahead, Goose Bay will have a sophisticated, computer-based Geographic Information System to help them develop low-

level routes which avoid the over-flying of sensitive areas. The system allows the rapid retrieval and display of mapped information on wildlife, vegetation and people in the area, and it calculates the most important effect flight operations would have on the local environment. The results are displayed on the computer screen and colour coded to show whether the avoidance area is 'absolute', 'seasonal', 'monitored', or 'limited'.

Benefits for the local economy

From the economic point of view, an increased military presence in Goose Bay would bring substantial benefits. The base now employs more than 900 local people and generates employment for 750 others within the local community.

If the Tactical Fighter Centre went ahead, it is estimated that by the year 2001, central Labrador would be \$850 million better off, and the rest of Newfoundland would benefit to the tune of some \$100 million. Employment at the Goose Bay base would rise to almost 6700 by the year 2001, with about 1800 of the positions being filled by civilians. In addition, 5800 construction-related jobs would be created.

The population of the Goose Bay area would grow significantly because of the job opportunities, which in turn would lead to an expanded infrastructure. This would include a major road network, a new arts and cultural centre, a modern sports complex and a hospital. At the same time, a former World War II staging post could become as crucial to NATO in the year 2000 as it was to the Allies in the 1940s. 

NATO still needed to maintain peace

On April 4, 1949, Canada's Foreign Minister, Lester B Pearson, joined representatives from the governments of the United States and ten European countries at the White House in Washington, DC. They had come together to sign a document destined to alter the course of European history—the Northern Atlantic Treaty. It created an alliance of unprecedented scope, a multinational military force of sufficient might to maintain European stability through four consecutive decades, and a security umbrella that helped pave the way for the political and economic re-emergence of a vibrant European community.

Last April marked the 40th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. For Canadians it was a time to reflect on the history of an international role that has kept Canada's troops on European soil almost continuously since 1939—a chance to celebrate the success of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in maintaining security without armed conflict.

Working for Peace

In the dark days following World War II, leaders of democratic states on both sides of the Atlantic sought a political route to rebuild Europe, without re-creating the national rivalries that had led to two horrifying global conflicts in the first half of the century.

The outlook for peace was anything but optimistic, Stalin's army remained at full war-time strength; and with a civil war in Greece, the Berlin blockade, the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia and political turmoil in Western Europe, the continent seemed poised for another major war.

Against this backdrop, the free countries of Europe and North America joined together to create an organisation for common defence. First and foremost, NATO's purpose was to prevent conflict or repel it should it arise. But NATO also provided a means for continuous co-operation, research and consultation in non-military areas