

The agreement to test the cruise missile generated considerable public debate among Canadians who felt it compromised Canada's position on nuclear weapons and contributed to the arms race. There was also concern about the potential harm to Canadian citizens and the Canadian environment should anything go wrong during a test. In announcing individual tests the Government has assured Canadians that the flight of the cruise missile will never be closer than eight kilometres "to any built-up area."

The Government also stated that the Canadian approach:

...is grounded in several elements: our founding membership in NATO, our dedication to the global dimension of peace and stability, our active pursuit of verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements, and our longstanding decision not to develop our own national nuclear force.

Two groups were formed within the Department of National Defence (DND) to oversee the process. A steering group exercises authority over the programme itself and makes recommendations concerning projects which are acceptable to Canada. A co-ordinating group reviews the feasibility of the projects and administers the programme. Every year on 1 January the United States submits a 30-month forecast to DND outlining the projects they wish to implement in Canada. After review and ministerial approval the Government informs the US of its approval in principle. US sponsors then submit a project proposal to DND. This is again reviewed and the proper authority granted, at which point a project arrangement is jointly developed which, when signed, allows testing to begin. Cabinet approval may be required for specific projects.

Only one test of the cruise missile was carried out in 1984. In 1985, three tests occurred. On 15 January, there was a "captive carry" test of the electronic guidance system in which four ALCMs were carried on a B-52 bomber; this was followed by a free flight test on 19 February, and another one on 25 February. All three tests were successful.