

This 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.

NATO membership is a vital element in Canada's foreign and defence policy, which includes firm adherence to NATO's strategy of nuclear deterrence. Canada has therefore long provided facilities for the operational training of both nuclear-capable and conventional forces of our NATO allies. Current examples include operational training exercises carried out by B-52 bombers of the USA Strategic Air Command, and the use by British and German Air Forces of Goose Bay airfield and associated low-level flight training areas. As with the proposed cruise missile tests, all these aircrafts are unarmed -- no nuclear weapons have been or will be tested in Canada. The essential purpose is also the same -- the maintenance of strong and reliable Alliance deterrent forces.

The air-launched cruise missile is an important element of the United States central strategic forces which provide the ultimate deterrent in NATO's strategic triad. The ground-launched cruise missile will be a key factor in the determination of NATO's deterrent posture in the European theatre, given the increased threat posed by the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles. Both cruise missiles serve Canadian security interests: the former through the direct protection of Canadian territory, and the latter through the direct protection of Canadian interests within the North Atlantic Alliance. By testing vital elements of the technology common to both these systems, Canada will be assisting in the maintenance of its own defence as well as NATO's deterrent posture.

In announcing the Government's decision to test the cruise missile, Ministers emphasized that this in no way changed Canada's own renunciation of nuclear weapons for our national forces. Canada has foregone the production and development of nuclear weapons. The Canadian Forces concentrate exclusively on conventional roles in collective defence arrangements. All nuclear capability was removed from the Canadian Forces in Europe in the early 1970's. In the coming months, as the new CF-18 aircraft are deployed the last nuclear weapons capability now held in Canada will also be removed.