

19. CANADA-US - CRUISE MISSILE TESTING

Background

On 10 February 1983 Canada signed an agreement with the United States entitled the "Canada/US (CANUS) Test and Evaluation Program" which established a procedure for the testing of US defence systems in Canada. The agreement is valid for five years, and was renewed automatically for another five years on 28 February 1987. The agreement can be ended on twelve months' notice. The agreement is not reciprocal since it only covers the testing of US systems in Canada. Under the agreement the United States could ask to test the following systems: artillery equipment; helicopters; surveillance and identification systems; advanced non-nuclear munitions; aircraft navigation systems; and the guidance system for unarmed cruise missiles. Canada may refuse any project and no biological, chemical or nuclear weapons may be brought into the country.¹

On 15 July 1983, the Canadian Government announced that it had agreed to allow the testing of the AGM-86B Air-launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) in Canada. The Government stated that the testing of the cruise missile guidance system was "linked intimately to Canada's security as a member of NATO and NORAD and to Canada's policy on arms control and disarmament." The cruise missile is an unmanned vehicle propelled by a jet engine that can carry conventional or nuclear warheads and be sea-, ground- or air-launched. The use of Canadian territory was explained on the ground that it offers extensive stretches of uninhabited cold weather terrain similar to the attack routes into the Soviet Union. Four to six tests per year of the unarmed ALCM are allowed and take place in the first three months of every year to ensure the proper weather conditions. The Government stressed that "this in no way changed Canada's own renunciation of nuclear weapons for our national forces."

¹ DND, Cruise Missile Testing in Canada, Background Notes, 1983.