

over Canada. These constitute an important part of that strategic deterrent, the part that assures that no attack could go unpunished.⁴

On 17 January 1989 Canada received a formal request from US authorities to amend the 1983 testing agreement in order to permit testing of an advanced version of the cruise missile in Canada. The Advanced Cruise Missile (ACM)--called the AGM 129A--is somewhat faster than the previous model tested in Canada, it incorporates "STEALTH" technology (i.e., reducing its radar signature), and possesses a longer range than its predecessor. Its possession of more advanced guidance technology also gives the missile greater accuracy.

News of the US request prompted considerable opposition from arms control analysts as well as peace and disarmament groups, many of whom expressed concern about the possible first-strike implications of the ACM. Such critics viewed approval of ACM testing as "a dangerous escalation of the arms race."⁵

On 1 February 1989, Minister of National Defence Bill McKnight announced Canada's agreement to allow the US to test the unarmed advanced cruise missile over Canadian territory. In making the announcement, the Minister remarked that cruise missile testing constituted "an important Canadian contribution to the effectiveness of NATO's strategic deterrent."⁶ Observing that Canada supported the pursuit of mutual arms reduction, Mr. McKnight went on to state that this process could only move ahead effectively if both sides were dealing from equivalent positions. He added that the Warsaw Pact already had a significant and impressive cruise missile capability, and that both superpowers were agreed that under the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), improved cruise missiles would continue to form part of their future strategic inventories.⁷

Echoing Mr. McKnight's remarks, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark added that cruise missile testing would contribute to a climate "that will lead to balanced arms control."⁸ He also denied allegations that the Stealth cruise missile constituted a first-strike weapon capable of being used in a sudden attack on the Soviet Union. In this regard, Mr. Clark noted that the advanced cruise would require "something like six hours to reach Moscow from North America," and that it "would be visible" on Soviet radar screens.⁹

That same day, a Department of External Affairs publication stated that substantial improvements were taking place in Soviet cruise missile capabilities. Noting that many of

⁴ Department of External Affairs, *Statements and Speeches* 13 January 1989, p. 5.

⁵ Tim Harper, "New Cruise Missile Tests Fuel the Arms Race Critics Say." *Toronto Star*, 2 February 1989, p. A2.

⁶ DND *News Release*, 06/89, 1 February 1989, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁸ *Supra* note 5, p. A2.

⁹ Iain Hunter, "Disarmament Groups Condemn 'Stealth' Cruise Missile Testing." *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 February 1989.