

14. CRUISE MISSILE TESTING

BACKGROUND

On 10 February 1983, Canada and the United States signed an agreement establishing a procedure for the testing of US defence systems in Canada. Known as the "Canada/US (CANUS) Test and Evaluation Programme", the agreement is valid for five years, and was renewed automatically for an additional five-year period on 28 February 1987.

Covering only the testing of US systems in Canada, the agreement is not reciprocal. Under its terms, the United States can request testing of various systems, including: artillery equipment; helicopters; surveillance and identification systems; and the guidance system for unarmed cruise missiles. Canada may, however, refuse any project, and no biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons may be brought into the country. Furthermore, the agreement can be terminated on twelve months' notice.¹

Two groups were formed within the Department of National Defence (DND) to oversee the programme. A steering group, charged with exercising authority over the programme itself, makes recommendations concerning which projects are acceptable to Canada. In addition, a coordinating group reviews the feasibility of the projects and administers the programme. At the beginning of each year, the United States submits a thirty-month forecast to DND, outlining the projects it wishes to see implemented 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 when the proper authority is granted, a project arrangement is jointly developed. Signature of the latter, allows testing to begin. Cabinet approval may, however, be required for specific projects.

On 15 July 1983, the Canadian Government announced that it had agreed to allow tests of the AGM-86B Air-launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) to be conducted in Canada. The cruise missile is an unmanned vehicle propelled by a jet engine that can carry conventional or nuclear warheads. It can be sea-, ground-, or air-launched.

The Government's rationale for agreeing to the US request was that 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." Canadian territory was particularly suitable for such testing because it offered extensive stretches of uninhabited cold weather terrain similar to the attack routes into the Soviet Union. The tests generally take place during the first three months of the year in order to ensure that proper weather conditions exist. The Government made clear, however, that its agreement to allow such testing "...in no way changed Canada's own renunciation of nuclear weapons for our national forces."

The extension of cruise missile testing for a five-year period beyond the initial five-year term of the umbrella testing agreement was confirmed in 1987 when the Government did not give twelve months' advance notice of its intention to withdraw. The

¹ Department of External Affairs, "Testing of Defence Systems in Canada." *Background Notes*, 1983.