

# **Canada, Missile Defence, and the Pursuit of World Order**

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By Eric A. Macfarlane

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## **ABSTRACT**

Although the Canada-United States (US) defence relationship is unparalleled in the international system in terms of cooperation and interoperability, Canada's responses to offers of participation in two US missile defence programs in recent times confused many observers. This thesis seeks to provide an explanation as to why Canadians were reluctant to engage in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1985 and the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program in 2005. It searches for a deeper explanation than offered thus far by scholars. Phillippe Lagassé and Patrick Lennox have both argued that the most prominent factor in Canada's rejection of these two US missile defence initiatives is the evident support Canadians exhibit for arms control and strategic stability. The thesis builds on the work of Lagassé and Lennox but goes further by suggesting that Canadian anxieties related to how these programs would impact arms control and strategic stability can be traced to Canadians' support of internationalism and, in particular, the tenet of internationalism that, according to Kim Richard Nossal, Stephane Roussel and Stephane Paquin, emphasizes the pursuit of world order.

## **LIST OF NON-STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS**

ABM – Anti-ballistic Missile

GMD – Ground-based Midcourse Defense

ICBM – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction

SDI – Strategic Defense Initiative

SPACECOM – United States Space Command

NORTHCOM – United States Northern Command

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

“Canada's highest foreign policy priority” is, as David Leyton Brown noted, “the management of its relations with the United States.”<sup>1</sup> North American defence, a key feature of this relationship, is the focus of this thesis. More specifically, the thesis seeks to provide an explanation as to why Canadians have been reluctant to engage in ballistic missile defence programs developed by the US. It examines two recent cases where the Canadian government decided against participating in US missile defence programs—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1985 and the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program in 2005.

SDI was a research proposal unveiled by US President Ronald Reagan in 1983. Although a research project rather than a definitive weapons system, SDI sought to render nuclear weapons obsolete through a multi-faceted defence system.<sup>2</sup> A centerpiece of Reagan's Cold War agenda, the program received billions of dollars in funding throughout his presidency, while eliciting much skepticism and opposition from the US public and abroad. Although often credited with contributing to the fall of the Soviet Union, SDI was eventually phased out during the presidency of George H. W. Bush after years of limited technical success in producing a realistic plan for a weapons system.

The Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program was introduced by President George W. Bush in 2002. Unlike SDI, GMD became a functional defence system, limited in scope, but nonetheless capable of defending North America against nuclear attacks from

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<sup>1</sup> David Leyton Brown, “Managing Canada-United States Relations in the Context of Multilateral Alliances,” in *America's Alliances and Canadian-American Relations*, ed. Lauren McKinsey and Kim Richard Nossal (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1988), 162.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Kromer, *New Weapons and NATO: Solutions or Irritants* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 153.



accidental launches by a major power or small-scale launches from rogue states.<sup>3</sup> Over the next several years following the announcement of the program, missile defence systems were established in Alaska and continental US, in spite of questions concerning the feasibility of the technology.<sup>4</sup> As with SDI, there was no request from the US Administration for Canadian bases, personnel or financial support. Washington was simply looking for political support for these projects. In the end, it found an ally whose population was ardently opposed to Canadian participation in any such endeavor.

## 1.2 Orienting the Debate

The central question that the thesis will address is: what is it about missile defence that has brought Canadians and their governments to reject it out of hand, or rather to choose not to participate in US-missile defence initiatives? D. W. Middlemiss and J. J. Sokolsky have suggested that any issue related to nuclear weapons is a major problem for Canadians.<sup>5</sup> Other authors maintain that both of these missile defence initiatives raise discomfiting issues related to Canadian sovereignty. Brian Bow is one of many analysts who have argued that the governments of Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin made their respective decisions to forgo participation in SDI and GMD on the basis of domestic political considerations; that is, in both cases, for the government of the day, missile defence was too explosive an issue, given the unsettled nature of the domestic political environment.<sup>6</sup> Douglas A. Ross has said that in taking such decisions, Canadians demonstrated that they have a different view of military strategy and

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Kendall Holloway, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2006), 63.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 63-65.

<sup>5</sup> D. W. Middlemiss and J. J. Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 120.

<sup>6</sup> Brian Bow, "Defence Dilemmas: Continental Defence Cooperation, From Bomarc to BMD," *Canadian Foreign Policy* vol. 15 no. 1(2009), .

of continental defence.<sup>7</sup> Finally, there is the view espoused by Phillipe Lagassé<sup>8</sup> and Patrick Lennox<sup>9</sup> that Canada's response to missile defence is most often related to Canadian concerns about arms control and strategic stability.

While all of these explanations are well-founded, this thesis seeks to provide a deeper explanation of the decisions on SDI and GMD by looking at the ideas which dominated each decision to forgo participation. It builds on the work of Lagassé and Lennox but goes further by suggesting that Canada's decisions against participation related to Canadians' support of internationalism. It demonstrates how Canadians were showing their support for one of internationalism's chief pillars—the pursuit of order. In particular, the commitment to arms control and strategic stability supported order through an adherence to international treaties and multilateralism.

The commitment to arms control<sup>10</sup> has been a lasting feature of Canadian foreign policy since the decades after the Second World War. The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations notes: "Canada has long pursued non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament measures aimed at promoting security and reducing the threats faced by Canadians and the international community."<sup>11</sup> Evidence of this include Canada's long-standing positions against nuclear weapons, its membership on the International Atomic Energy Commission and sub-committee of the Disarmament Commission, not to mention its more recent leadership in

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas A. Ross, "SDI and Canadian-American Relations: Managing Strategic Doctrinal Incompatibilities," in *America's Alliances and Canadian-American Relations*, ed. Lauren McKinsey and Kim Richard Nossal (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1988), 141.

<sup>8</sup> Phillipe Lagassé, "Canada, strategic defence, and strategic stability," *International Journal* vol. 63 iss. 4 (2008),.

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Lennox, *At Home and Abroad: The Canada-US Relationship and Canada's Place in the World* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> A traditional view of arms control and disarmament holds that disarmament includes the total abolition or reduction of the resources of war, whereas arms control refers to restraints imposed upon the use of particular weapons. John Baylis and Mark Smith, *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, ed. John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, and Colin S. Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 229.

<sup>11</sup> "Non-Proliferation, Arms Control And Disarmament," Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, accessed March 19, 2010, [http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/prmny-mponu/canada\\_un-canada\\_onu/positions-orientations/peace-paix/disarmament-desarmement.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/prmny-mponu/canada_un-canada_onu/positions-orientations/peace-paix/disarmament-desarmement.aspx?lang=eng).

promulgating the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel land mines. According to Michael Tucker, this dedication has not always been strongly articulated in policy; rather, governments in Ottawa have been alternatively “activist” and “conservative” in their approach to disarmament and arms control.<sup>12</sup> Either way, the commitment to both has endured throughout the Cold War and into the twenty-first century.<sup>13</sup>

Intimately related to arms control is the concept of “strategic stability,” which denotes a political and military balance in the international system. Canada was a strong supporter of strategic stability in the post-Second World War world by virtue of its active role in the founding of the United Nations and its agencies and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), along with its involvement in peacekeeping and international diplomacy. This thesis will show that the roots of Canadian support for arms control and strategic stability, like Canadian support for peacekeeping, can be found in Canadian political culture—specifically, in the idea embraced by Canadians that there is a significant role for Canada to play in preventing conflict and maintaining order.

### **1.3 Internationalism**

Canada’s dedication to arms control and the maintenance of strategic stability is a viable explanation for Canadian opposition to the SDI and GMD because of the perception that these systems would lead to the weaponization of outer-space, another tumultuous arms race among great powers, and/or the destabilization of the international system. Canadians were showing

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<sup>12</sup> Tucker contends that the “activist trend” included actively seeking arms control agreements in a multilateral setting, and “anti-nuclear idealism” at home. He depicts the “conservative trend”, on the other hand, as an approach that “mirrored the ‘reality’ of international politics”, acknowledging deterrence, and NATO’s requirement for flexible response. Rather than actively pursuing arms control agreements, the conservative brand witnessed Canada welcome agreements submitted by its major allies—the ABM Treaty being a notable example. Michael Tucker, “Canada and arms control: perspectives and trends,” *International Journal* vol. 26 no. 3 (1981): (637-638).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 635-636,

their support for the 1967 Outer Space Treaty—banning nuclear weapons in outer space—and the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence, which limited the US and Soviet Union’s missile defence infrastructure to two sites each. Such an argument has been made before by Bow and Lennox. However, these authors fail to connect these concerns of Canadians with ideas or beliefs that Canadians hold and articulate about Canada’s role or position in the world. This thesis maintains that anxieties about how both missile programs would affect arms control and strategic stability arise out of what Kim Richard Nossal has called the “dominant idea” of internationalism and particularly its tenet that the goal of international action by states should be the establishment and maintenance of world order.<sup>14</sup>

Internationalism<sup>15</sup> was most notably championed by the late scholar, John Holmes, who consciously avoided a precise definition. The term has been subject to a wide range of definitions in the Canadian context. Costas Melakopides simply defined internationalism as “pragmatic idealism,”<sup>16</sup> stating that it includes peacekeeping, arms control, foreign aid, human rights, and global ecological concerns. Dave Dewitt and John Kirton characterized internationalism as a policy rather than a set of attitudes but assert similarly that it encompasses “functionalism”, “mediatory middlepowermanship” and “distributive internationalism.”<sup>17</sup> Most recently, Nossal, Stephane Roussel and Stephane Paquin offered a more elaborate definition by asserting that internationalism is composed of five elements: (i) responsibility in the management of global conflicts; (ii) participation in international institutions; (iii) respect for and reinforcement of

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<sup>14</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, Stephane Roussel and Stephane Paquin, *International Policy and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2010), 135.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that in the Canadian context internationalism is distinct from liberal internationalism. As Kim Richard Nossal clarifies, internationalism is unique to Canadians because it is grounded in Canadian political culture and history. Furthermore, as a dominant idea, it is narrower in scope than an ideology, yet still carries normative force for foreign policy decisions. Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1997), 139,

<sup>16</sup> Costas Melakopides, *Pragmatic Idealism: Canadian Foreign Policy, 1945-1995* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Don Munton and Tom Keating, “Internationalism and the Canadian Public,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* vol. 34 no. 3 (2001): 527.

international law; (iv) pursuit of the “larger interests of establishing and maintaining order within the community of states”; and (v) a willingness to enter into formal commitments to use national resources to sustain a stable and peaceful international system.<sup>18</sup> In all of these definitions we may discern two main goals of an internationalist foreign policy — the pursuit of peace and of order — which, as Don Munton and Tom Keating have said, reflect not only a strategic perspective but an ethical one as well: that is to say, the “underlying” goal is the realization of a “common good”, or of “what is good for international society in general.”<sup>19</sup>

There is little question that Canadian foreign policy has focused on the pursuit of peace and order in the international system. Two global wars demonstrated to Canadians the horrors of armed conflict, creating both a moral and rational imperative to pursue peace in the world.<sup>20</sup> Beyond this, there is the rational and strategic consideration that peace between states is indivisible and perhaps even impossible in an anarchic world order devoid of institutions and mechanisms for solving international problems. This thesis will argue that the chief aims of Canada’s opposition to missile defence stemmed from the component of internationalism that seeks to promote or sustain world order through the pursuit of arms control and strategic stability.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Nossal, Roussel, and Paquin, 136.

<sup>19</sup> Munton and Keating, 527.

<sup>20</sup> Nossal, Roussel and Paquin, 136.

<sup>21</sup> While the general thrust of this thesis follows from the conception that ideas can determine policy outcomes, it also relies on the work of Denis Stairs, who argued that public opinion can define the limits of government action in foreign policy; see Denis Stairs, “Public Opinion and External Affairs: Reflections on the Domestication of Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal*, vol. 33 (1977-1978). Alternative approaches might include Organizational Theories like the bureaucratic politics model (Graham T. Allison), or Neorealism (Kenneth N. Waltz), although neither would adequately explain Canada’s decisions to not participate in missile defence.

## 1.4 Methodology

The methodology utilized in the thesis reflects an empirical approach to the research, in addition to drawing upon normative literature. The thesis uses primary and secondary sources to describe and explain Canadian policy towards missile defence; no attempt is made to explore what Canada *ought* to do or have done about participating in such initiatives. Among the most important sources were: James G. Fergusson's *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence 1954-2009: Déjà Vu All Over Again*, and Patrick Lennox's chapter titled "Missile Defence, 1983-2009" in *At Home and Abroad: The Canada-US Relationship and Canada's Place in the World*. The most informative primary sources include a variety of government documents and published speeches as well as the *Debates* of the House of Commons. The thesis also cites the memoirs of Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin.

The thesis treats SDI and BMD as individual case studies. This approach is used because, as Don Munton and John Kirton suggest, it "provides the specificity and detail, about both key actions and their antecedents, that are necessary if students are to connect causes to effects, assess competing explanations, and begin the task of evaluating or constructing more general theories of foreign policy behaviour."<sup>22</sup> Denis Stairs adds that case studies have the ability to provide lessons that can be applied to other cases.<sup>23</sup> Each case study briefly introduces the US programs and presents the Canadian appraisal of, and response to, the particular missile defence project. In doing so, the thesis examines the role of the public, political parties, bureaucracy, and the prime minister. Together the case studies enable us to understand the issues involved and demonstrate how arms control and strategic stability were chief factors in each decision. The

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<sup>22</sup> Don Munton and John Kirton, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1992), vi.

<sup>23</sup> Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 298.

fourth chapter confirms the importance of these factors, while explaining how the origins of support for arms control and strategic stability are found in Canadian internationalism. The fifth and final chapter draws the thesis to a close, illustrating the most important findings and considering some questions worth investigating in future research.

## Chapter 2

### Canada and the Strategic Defense Initiative

#### 2.1 Introduction

The US and the Soviet Union “set the terms of the Cold War between east and west” through their dominance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact respectively.<sup>24</sup> Canada was not an impartial player during this ideological standoff, having been a founding member of NATO in 1949 and entrenching itself in a continental air defence arrangement with the United States under the auspices of the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) in 1958. Canada’s Cold War disposition became even more apparent after Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservatives won a landslide election victory in 1984. Like his conservative counterparts abroad, Mulroney was known for his vitriolic criticism of the Soviet Union, removing any doubt of Canada’s firm commitment to NATO and liberal-democracy.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, there were strategic thrusts adopted by Canada’s principal allies during the 1980s that, generally speaking, worried or bewildered Canadians. The most notable example was Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative. This chapter briefly describes the origins of this program and then examines the Canadian opposition to it at the public, party, bureaucratic and prime ministerial levels, highlighting the significance of the expressed commitment by the Canadian government to arms control and strategic stability.

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<sup>24</sup> Lauren McKinsey and Kim Richard Nossal, *America's Alliances and Canadian-American Relations*, (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1988), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Clarkson, *Canada and the Reagan Challenge: Crisis and Adjustment, 1981-1985* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), 357.



## 2.2 Towards the SDI Initiative

SDI was not conjured in a political or strategic vacuum. As Gary L. Guertner and Donald M. Snow note, the hallmark of the Cold War nuclear age was the dominance of offensive over defensive weapons.<sup>26</sup> Patrick Lennox observes further that “the introduction of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles into the international security environment instantly rendered strategic defences impotent.”<sup>27</sup> In such an environment, the defence and security doctrines that emerged were based on deterrence. Nuclear deterrence was premised upon the theory that large quantities of nuclear weapons rendered any sort of nuclear exchange between the Soviet Union and the US, including a preemptive strike, too costly for both sides; the policy was colloquially known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).<sup>28</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 brought a swift end to détente,<sup>29</sup> or what had been the relaxation of tensions between the US and USSR and generally characterized the superpower relationship throughout the 1970s. This was accompanied by a growing concern in the US about the increasing vulnerability of the homeland to ICBMs, not only because the USSR had reached numerical parity with the US in nuclear weapons, but also because it was producing qualitatively superior weapons.<sup>30</sup>

While Canadian governments supported the maintenance of nuclear deterrence and MAD, Reagan, like his predecessors, did not place great faith in deterrence as the dominant strategy to ensure American security.<sup>31</sup> Reagan’s Manichean world view and belief that the US should only negotiate with the Soviet Union from a position of strength, coupled with

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<sup>26</sup> Gary L. Guertner and Donald M. Snow, *The Last Frontier: An Analysis of the Strategic Defense Initiative* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1986), 4.

<sup>27</sup> Lennox, 74.

<sup>28</sup> According to Patrick Lennox, deterrence doctrines adopted by the US included Massive Retaliation (1954), Graduated Deterrence (1959) and Mutually Assured Destruction (1964), (74).

<sup>29</sup> Lennox, 75.

<sup>30</sup> J.S. Finan, “Arms Control and the Central Strategic Balance: Some Technological Issues,” *International Journal* no. 3 (1981): 435..

<sup>31</sup> Lennox, 74.

deteriorating relations between the two powers, led his administration to increase defence spending by more than any previous administration during peace-time.<sup>32</sup> This rise in defence spending, combined with Reagan's virulently anti-communist and anti-nuclear rhetoric,<sup>33</sup> rendered his pursuit of missile defence an unsurprising scenario for most attentive observers. Yet on 23 March 1983, Reagan surprised the world when he asked, in what has been dubbed the "Star Wars" speech:

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?... I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.<sup>34</sup>

On 7 March 1985, the program was officially launched, becoming an important and intensely debated global issue. After speaking to Congress about building a large-scale defensive system based on land and sea, and in the sky and outer space, Reagan was granted his request for \$26 billion in funding over the next five years. As originally conceived, SDI would include exotic technology, featuring directed and kinetic energy weapons, and would have the capability to perform functions like missile interception and destruction, battle management, communications and data processing, as well as various types of surveillance and tracking.<sup>35</sup> In the long run, the program proposed to place such defensive arsenals on land, on sea, and in space. It is important to clarify that SDI was not a definitive weapons system, but a research proposal meant "to encourage the exploration of a variety of emerging technologies to determine their feasibility and suitability as components of a complex system of defense of the American

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<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, "The Origins and Meaning of Reagan's Cold War," in *The Reagan Presidency: Assessing the Man and His Legacy*, ed. Paul Kengor and Peter Schweizer (Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 58-59.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Guertner and Snow, 151-152.

<sup>35</sup> James F. Lee, *The Strategic Defence Initiative* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, 1990), 4-7.

homeland against ballistic missiles.”<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, given the thrust of Reagan’s foreign policy during his first term in office, many foreign and domestic commentators believed—if the research produced results that could translate into a feasible system—such a system would be pursued.<sup>37</sup> Even more alarming for many observers, as Elinor Sloan succinctly states, was that Reagan’s proposal “was in effect, turning the offence/defence debate on its head, arguing that the best way to guarantee North American security was not offensively, through mutual assured destruction, but defensively, through ballistic missile defences.”<sup>38</sup>

The principal justification for SDI was that it constituted a hedge against a Soviet unilateral missile defence program: the Reagan Administration maintained that SDI would actually strengthen deterrence.<sup>39</sup> Although most US strategists were less enthusiastic than Reagan, many liked the program’s potential to diminish the vulnerability of ICBM sites to a Soviet first strike. Just as important, if not more so, SDI created an opportunity to replace the discomfiting notion of MAD with a more positive “Mutually Assured Survival.”<sup>40</sup> There was also the prospect of massive investment in scientific infrastructure, thus stimulating both economic and strategic pay-offs for the US scientific-military-industrial complex.<sup>41</sup>

At the Mulroney-Reagan “Shamrock Summit” held in mid-March 1985, Reagan

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<sup>36</sup> Kromer, 152

<sup>37</sup> As Frances FitzGerald points out “[w]ithin its first two years in office, the administration raised the fear of war in Moscow and in the West, fell out with its NATO allies and many of its supporters in Congress and engendered a major, broad-based anti-nuclear movement in Europe and the United States,” which was present in Canada as well, Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out there in the blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 148.

<sup>38</sup> Elinor Sloan, *Security and Defence in the Terrorist Era: Canada and North America* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 101.

<sup>39</sup> Canada, The Special Joint Committee on Canada’s International Relations, *Interim Report Pertaining to Bilateral Trade with the United States and Canada’s Participation in Research on the Strategic Defence Initiative* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, 1985), 18:43, 18:46.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 18:43.

<sup>41</sup> Ross, 143.

delivered a plea for Canadian participation in SDI.<sup>42</sup> Shortly afterward, Washington extended an official invitation to all NATO allies to join the new US research initiative.<sup>43</sup> The Reagan administration was not asking its allies for territory, financial resources, or materials. Rather, it requested political support in an attempt to increase the international and domestic legitimacy of the program.<sup>44</sup>

In the end, after months of deliberation and intense public debate, the Canadian government announced that it would not be participating directly in the SDI program. It will be shown here that the decision on SDI was influenced by a broad consensus among Canada's political leaders and political parties, senior bureaucrats, and the public more generally that the initiative had the potential to threaten strategic stability and was inconsistent with Canada's historic support of arms control.

## 2.3 The Public

The Strategic Defense Initiative proved to be a highly contentious issue for the Canadian public. A Globe Crop poll conducted in early August of 1985 revealed that 57 percent of Canadians thought Canada should participate in SDI and another 8 percent if more jobs would be garnered for Canada. However, the poll reflected an electorate that was seriously divided over the proposal. Fifty-one percent of women opposed participation while support in Quebec, Ontario, and the West was only at 52, 58, and 56 percent respectively.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, a Decima

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<sup>42</sup> J. J. Sokolsky and Joseph T. Jockel, "Canada and the Future of Strategic Defense," in *Perspectives on Strategic Defense*, ed. Steven W. Guerrier and Wayne C. Thompson (London: Westview Press, 1987), 188.

<sup>43</sup> Albert Legault and Michel Fortmann, *A Diplomacy of Hope: Canada and Disarmament, 1945-1988* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1992), 411.

<sup>44</sup> Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, "Out of the Blue: The Mulroney Legacy in Foreign Policy," in *Transforming the Nation: Canada and Brian Mulroney*, ed. Raymond B. Blake (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 121.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Adams, Donna Dasko, and Yvan Corbeil, "The Globe-Crop Poll Majority favours role in Star Wars: poll," *The Globe and Mail*, August 10, 1985, A2.

poll conducted in the same month revealed “no great enthusiasm” for participation, “in large part because of fears related to a renewed arms race.”<sup>46</sup>

Later in August, other polls showed increasing opposition to participation. In fact, a poll published by Southam News found that only 40.5 percent of those polled wanted Canada to support the program, while 42.3 percent favored rejection.<sup>47</sup> Regardless of which poll most accurately reflected the electorate, it was obvious to most observers that opponents of the SDI were far more vocal and formidable than its proponents.<sup>48</sup> Thus the political costs of supporting SDI appeared to outweigh the cost of outright rejection, particularly for the Progressive Conservative government, whose political support was based on an uneasy coalition grafted between Western Canada and Quebec.

### **2.3.1 The Peace Movement**

The strongest opposition to Canada’s involvement in the program was found among the peace movement. The Canadian peace movement had a lengthy history and had been directly involved in the recent efforts to prevent US cruise missile tests over Canada. It was thus already effectively organized to take a stand against SDI.<sup>49</sup> According to Lennox, leading up to the Shamrock Summit, “the peace movement in Canada had taken up the SDI issue with considerable enthusiasm.”<sup>50</sup> During the summer of 1985, peace groups—primarily composed of church leaders, civic and international organizations, trade unions, as well as other professional

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<sup>46</sup> Middlemiss and Sokolsky, 119.

<sup>47</sup> Carol Goar, “Was Mulroney’s Star Wars stand shrewd or courageous?,” *Toronto Star*, September 10, 1985. .

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> David Langille, “Growing Pains: The Maturing of the Canadian Peace Movement,” *Peace Magazine* vol. 3 (5) (1987).

<sup>50</sup> Lennox, 78.

groups<sup>51</sup>—worked hard to bring to light public opposition to the program. Approximately five hundred groups, which William A. B. Campbell and Richard K. Melchin describe as “well financed, selective in their objectives and unified,” wrote and distributed numerous articles and briefs and organized several rallies and protests in opposition to the proposal.<sup>52</sup>

Criticisms provided by the peace movement highlighted the role of the Anti-Ballistic Missile and Outer Space Treaties in their hostility towards participation. Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) website acknowledged that these peace activists “were vocal in their opposition,” fearing the program was inconsistent with US treaty obligations pertaining to arms control and would potentially spawn a new arms race.<sup>53</sup> For instance, the distinguished Canadian Group of 78 warned that “Star Wars is a crash program designed to achieve a decisive edge over the Soviet Union” in space-based military technology and threatened to produce another dangerous arms race.<sup>54</sup> Others denigrated the SDI as a program that would undermine, or already had undermined, the ABM Treaty.

Opposition to SDI was found among academics as well. Respected scientists like David Suzuki fervently condemned it, while numerous defence and strategic thinkers cautioned against the program’s potentially destabilizing effects. At a conference in Ottawa in April 1985 exploring Canadian participation in SDI, several experts spoke of the strategic, international, and domestic implications of Star Wars. Charles-Philippe David, for example, warned of the potential for a new arms race in both offensive and defensive technologies, which would likely

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<sup>51</sup> Among the groups were the Toronto Disarmament Network, the peace and disarmament committees of the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Metro Toronto Labour Council, the United Auto Workers, as well as a large number of Canadian scientists and engineers from the country’s universities. Additionally, many other professions and even newspapers like the *Globe and Mail* and the *Vancouver Sun* were against Canadian Participation in SDI.

<sup>52</sup> William A. B. Campbell and Richard K. Melchin, *In the Pursuit of Peace and Western Security* (Vancouver: Canadian Conservative Centre, 1988), 172, 175.

<sup>53</sup> “Canada and the World: A History,” Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, accessed May 8, 2010, <http://www.international.gc.ca/history-histoire/world-monde/1984-1993.aspx?lang=eng>.

<sup>54</sup> Coleman Romalies, “What is Star Wars Doing to Canada?,” *Peace Magazine*, June (1985), <http://peacemagazine.org/archive/v01n4p11.htm>.

extend to space. He also contended that, as envisaged by the Reagan Administration, SDI would diminish both MAD and deterrence and actually increase the probability of a nuclear war.<sup>55</sup>

### 2.3.2 The Special Joint Committee

Perhaps the fullest indication of the electorate's distaste for SDI is found in reports and documents of Parliament's Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations. This all-party committee was tasked to study the possibility of Canadian involvement in SDI and a free trade agreement with the US. Touring seven cities during five weeks in the summer of 1985,<sup>56</sup> the committee received approximately 700 briefs, as well as viewpoints from 120 invited witnesses and 200 Canadians who volunteered to participate.<sup>57</sup>

The so-called experts were overwhelmingly opposed to SDI.<sup>58</sup> A sizeable majority of voluntary participants representing either themselves or organizations were also against participation.<sup>59</sup> The experts and voluntary participants argued that the SDI constituted a threat to arms control agreements and the Geneva arms control talks; was not feasible technologically; was detrimental to NATO cohesion; and promoted militarism and the military-industrial complex. Finally, it was also said that joining the program would diminish Canada's international influence and have a negative effect on Canada's trade position.<sup>60</sup>

Because the Special Joint Committee believed that it did not possess all the relevant information needed to make a strong recommendation, on August 23, it urged "the government

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<sup>55</sup> Charles-Phillippe David, *Canadian Perspectives on The Strategic Defence Initiative* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, 1985), 2-5.

<sup>56</sup> Lennox, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin, "The Conservative Agenda," in *Canada Among Nations 1985: The Conservative Agenda*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1986), 20.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Legault and Fortman, 412.

<sup>60</sup> The Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations, 18:49-18:53.

not take a final decision on participation in the research phase of the SDI until it has been able to acquire the required additional information related to the strategic, financial and economic implications of the invitation.”<sup>61</sup> The committee argued that the context of the decision was enmeshed in defence and economic or technological considerations, along with Canada’s commitment to arms control, which had been a major issue for numerous participants. It also stated flatly: “the majority of the Committee is concerned about the implications of ballistic missile defence on international stability and on the future of Canada’s involvement in the arms control process.”<sup>62</sup>

The committee avoided any denunciation of SDI as a threat to arms control treaties and negotiations. Yet it did highlight some of the questions the program posed to the ABM and Outer Space Treaties and claimed “the deployment of space-based or ground-based ballistic missile defences would require the abrogation, or substantial amendment, of the 1972 ABM Treaty.”<sup>63</sup> It also cited the view held by many Canadians that the program was a new phase in the arms race, in addition to posing a threat to existing arms control agreements and negotiations. Specifically, it listed a possible breach of the ABM Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, SALT II, and the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty<sup>64</sup> and was hindering the Geneva talks on nuclear arms control. Moreover, the committee was concerned that participation in the program would render Canada “an accomplice in flouting international law.”<sup>65</sup>

Clearly there was a general concern about the impact of SDI on Canada’s commitment to arms control and its broader effect on strategic stability. Arms control proved to be an issue even among Canadians who favored SDI. For example, in an August 1985 newspaper column,

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 18:68-18:69

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 18:64.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 18:43

<sup>64</sup> The 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty banned explosions in outer space, the atmosphere and under water.

<sup>65</sup> The Special Joint Committee on Canada’s International Relations, 18:49.



Gordon Gibson argued that SDI might be a positive initiative “...especially if it convinces the Soviets that a balanced arms reduction might be a better deal for them.”<sup>66</sup> This line of thinking was attached to support for the US-USSR Geneva talks, which took place later that year. Others argued that SDI might enhance deterrence or even lead to the abolition of nuclear weapons, as Reagan had envisioned.

Canadians’ nervousness about the program was not simply a response to a single, albeit important, US policy initiative. SDI symbolized a shift in US military strategy with which many Canadians were uncomfortable. The growing concern in the US revolving around the perceived vulnerability of North America to Soviet ICBMs was largely absent in Canada. In fact, by the 1980s, Canadians were not nearly as preoccupied with the USSR as was their superpower ally, and they were skeptical of some of the US defence policies and plans. The crux of Canadian concern, as Stephen Clarkson and James Lorimer pointed out in 1985, centred on “[t]he cumulative trend of Pentagon thinking that Reagan has brought to a head is the abandonment of the doctrine of mutual deterrence in favour of a counterforce policy envisaging the option of limited nuclear war.... U.S. strategy has, in effect, shifted from defence to offence.”<sup>67</sup>

There was a growing concern that Canada’s security and defence policy would be indirectly affected by the new strategy embraced by the US. Moreover, there was an increasing number of Canadians who expressed a concern about the possibility of nuclear war.<sup>68</sup> Although Reagan presented SDI as a means of ending the threat—or even existence—of nuclear weapons and, thus, nuclear war, because it was accompanied by a great deal of “evil-empire” rhetoric, Canadians understood it to be a plan for an offensive-weapons system.<sup>69</sup> Canadians were also

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<sup>66</sup> Gordon Gibson, “Doublethink on two vital issues,” *Financial Post*, August 17, 1985.

<sup>67</sup> Clarkson, 249.

<sup>68</sup> Middlemiss and Sokolsky, 116.

<sup>69</sup> Francis FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 259.

alarmed at the prospect of future missile defence sites located on Canadian territory, which made sovereignty a major issue. Finally, informed observers were skeptical of the technical feasibility of the proposal and it was “derided as both fantastically impractical or astronomically expensive.”<sup>70</sup>

### 2.3.3 The Senate

The Senate also appeared apprehensive about Canada committing to SDI. Released on 23 January 1985, the Senate Committee on National Defence’s report, *Canada’s Territorial Air Defence*, addressed missile defence in what Ron Purver has referred to as a “little-noticed section on arms control.” The report cautioned that the deployment of ballistic missile defences would be extremely costly, negate the ABM Treaty—which it described as “one of the key achievements of the post-war arms control process”—and “run counter to the spirit of current arms control accords concerning outer space and might well destroy any hope of establishing new accords banning space weaponry.” Canada, it recommended, should avoid joining the US in its pursuit of a military space program and limit its activities to surveillance and passive detection.<sup>71</sup> Although the Senate does not garner nearly as much attention as the House of Commons largely because of questions concerning its democratic legitimacy and efficacy, the Senate Committee’s report at least provides further evidence of the principles that were guiding politicians and the wider public.

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<sup>70</sup> Bow, page unnumbered.

<sup>71</sup> Ronald G. Purver, “Ballistic Missile Defence and Canada,” in *Canadian Perspectives on the Strategic Defense Initiative* (Toronto: Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, 1985), 13.

## 2.4 Political Parties

SDI was just about as attractive to Canada's political parties as it was to the public.

Douglas Ross succinctly described the concerns in Ottawa at the time:

Since SDI's formal inception in March 1983, the leaders of all Canada's political parties have found the United States commitment to 'Star Wars' to be singularly disturbing. What they had hitherto thought was a fairly stable and predictable set of policy axioms governing the Soviet-American strategic relationship-a set of axioms built on the edifice of mutual deterrence, arms control and detente that had been erected in the mid-1970s-suddenly seemed to be on the verge of pre-emptive unilateral destruction by neo-conservative zealots who had been slotted into the key posts of the international security policy-making machinery in Washington.<sup>72</sup>

Since Canada is a well-functioning democracy, it is hardly surprising that its political parties were in tune with the public mood. The Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) and New Democratic Party (NDP) articulated clear positions in opposition to SDI from the outset, which reflected the opposition among the majority of their supporters. Meanwhile, Mulroney's refusal to make a quick decision on the program and the Senate Committee's cautiousness spelled uncertainty. The party leaders in Canada evidently had a different perspective on missile defence than their counterparts in the US. Ross has observed that:

While Reagan's Washington thrilled to the spectacle of the upward thrust to the 'high frontier' and the new 'high ground' of space, the Ottawa of Trudeau, Turner and Mulroney looked eagerly for a new round of arms control and reciprocal restraint by the superpowers.<sup>73</sup>

A closer examination of the positions of the respective opposition parties regarding the program, as well as the currents running through the governing Progressive Conservative Party, provides further evidence that there was minimal support for participation in SDI because of concerns tied to arms control and strategic stability.

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<sup>72</sup> Ross, 138-139.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 142.

### 2.4.1 The Liberal Party

The LPC's denunciation of SDI was expected, given the party's traditional position on missile defence. As early as 1966, Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson had expressed his disapproval of missile defence, describing such an endeavor as a "significant new step in the arms race" leading "to ever-mounting defence budgets without any permanent increase in national security or international stability."<sup>74</sup> Pearson's successor, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, voiced even more determined opposition to missile defence. While he agreed to allow the testing of the Cruise missile over Alberta in 1984, his government viewed the initiative as a new and dangerous escalation of the arms race.<sup>75</sup> It was the Trudeau Liberals, of course, who had decided in 1969 to remove nuclear weapons from Canada's defence system.<sup>76</sup>

The Liberal's antipathy for the program was apparent during the course of the debates on SDI in the House of Commons. In December, 1984, before Canada was officially asked to partake in SDI, Liberal Member of Parliament (MP) Jean Chretien stated: "[t]he Star Wars system is a new dangerous development."<sup>77</sup> On 12 March 1985, Liberal MP Lloyd Axworthy requested that the Canadian government ask the US Administration to cancel SDI.<sup>78</sup> John Turner, the LPC leader and former Prime Minister, echoed concerns about the initiative's impact on arms control and strategic stability when he said:

[w]e believe in speaking out to both superpowers regarding constructive dialogue in the search for an end to the arms race. This is why we suggested in an earlier amendment that the Strategic Defence Initiative be put on the agenda at Geneva for discussion between superpowers.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Purver, 11.

<sup>75</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 411.

<sup>76</sup> Duane Bratt, "Canada's Nuclear Schizophrenia," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* vol 58 (2002), 50.

<sup>77</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 20 December 1984 (Mr. Jean Chretien, LPC), 1405.

<sup>78</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 March 1985 (Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, LPC), 2930.

<sup>79</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 March 1985 (Mr. John Turner, LPC), 3148.

“Why,” Turner asked, “are we opposed to SDI? It is because we believe it is a new escalation. The Russians will not let the Americans do it and not match it.”<sup>80</sup> Following the US invitation to Canada to support the initiative, the Liberals routinely declared their opposition to the program and to Canadian participation in it.

## 2.4.2 The New Democratic Party

The NDP expressed at least as much hostility to SDI as did the Liberal Party.<sup>81</sup> The House of Commons caught a glimpse of the NDP’s opposition to the program when its leader, Ed Broadbent, declared in the House of Commons on 12 March 1985:

[t]he important point about this scheme is that it came from Mr. Reagan and a handful of his advisers. It was attacked by the Republicans in Congress. It was attacked by defence experts. It was attacked by church groups. It has, in fact, been attacked by western allies of the United States, who have been temporarily kept quiet, as being either totally irrational as a concept for defence on the one hand, or destabilizing on the other, or both....<sup>82</sup>

Broadbent pointed out that SDI would “fundamentally change the strategic relationship.”<sup>83</sup> Additionally, NDP MP Pauline Jewitt denounced the program as “another round in the nuclear arms race”<sup>84</sup> and later asked the government to deliver an “emphatic no” to Canadian participation in SDI and to the concept itself.<sup>85</sup>

The NDP’s stance was unwavering during the remainder of the spring and summer of 1985. As an article in the *Globe and Mail* revealed, days before Mulroney’s decision to not participate, Broadbent was “dead set against Canadian participation in the U.S. Star Wars program,” as statements made in Washington the day before confirmed.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 March 1985 (Mr. John Turner, LPC), 3148.

<sup>81</sup> Lennox, 77.

<sup>82</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 March 1985 (Mr. Ed Broadbent, NDP), 3145.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 21 January 1985 (Mrs. Pauline Jewitt), 1504.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 3817.

<sup>86</sup> Torstar Syndication Services, “Broadbent still opposes Star Wars plan despite talk with U.S. official,” *Toronto Star*, September 4, 1985..

### 2.4.3 The Progressive Conservative Party

There is evidence that mounting concerns within the Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) about the international strategic balance had an impact on the Mulroney government. While a majority of PCP supporters were initially in favor of participation, a *Globe and Mail* Crop poll in August of 1985 found that over 25% of those polled were opposed. More importantly, as Bow says, the PCP's internal polling indicated that, like the broader electorate, opposition to the proposal was growing steadily within the party during that summer.<sup>87</sup>

Ambivalence was most evident among PCP members who were colloquially identified as "Red Tories."<sup>88</sup> Several Cabinet Ministers were opposed to participation, but the most prominent Red Tories critical of SDI were Joe Clark and Douglas Roche who, Lennox asserts, made efforts to work with the leaders of other countries to oppose SDI.<sup>89</sup> Having served briefly as Prime Minister in 1979 and occupying the post of Secretary of External Affairs in the Mulroney government, Clark was the most influential opponent of the program within the cabinet. Various speeches revealed his distaste for the initiative. At the United Nations in September 1984, for example, Clark delivered a speech asking other smaller powers to join Canada in encouraging "the superpowers to ban weapons in outer space."<sup>90</sup> According to Lennox, this was in "direct opposition to the initiative that Reagan had outlined in his 'Star Wars' speech," even before the President extended the invitation to Canada to join the initiative. At a NATO meeting in December of the same year, Clark expressed particular concern about SDI and referred to a

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<sup>87</sup> Bow, page unnumbered.

<sup>88</sup> Red Tories are generally understood to be relatively left-leaning Canadian conservatives in the sense that they take interest in upholding the welfare state.

<sup>89</sup> Lennox, 79.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

growing rift between himself and Canada's Minister of National Defence, Robert Coates, who approved of the program.<sup>91</sup>

In the House of Commons on 21 January 1985 Clark stated "in the light of significant Soviet advances in ballistic missile defence research in recent years and deployment of an actual ballistic missile defence system, it is only prudent that the West keep abreast of the feasibility of such projects."<sup>92</sup> But this was at a time, before Washington's invitation, when it was assumed that the initiative would proceed within the bounds of the ABM Treaty.<sup>93</sup> According to Sean M. Maloney: SDI "posed another set of complex problems that were subject to Clark's interference" in the sense that he sought to undermine any governmental efforts to join the program.<sup>94</sup> In the end, Clark refused to sign a joint memorandum from the Department of External Affairs (DEA) and the Department of National Defence (DND) proposing participation in research in the summer of 1985.<sup>95</sup>

As Canada's Disarmament Ambassador to the United Nations, Douglas Roche was uniquely positioned to criticize Reagan's program. He actively lobbied the government to say no to Star Wars "on that grounds that it [was] de-stabilizing and certain to escalate the nuclear arms race."<sup>96</sup> As a member of the secret group Mulroney formed—"a collection of senior party members from the Red Tory spectrum"—Roche also co-authored a report sent to the Prime Minister, advising him to avoid participation. Furthermore, Roche wrote a letter to Arthur Kroeger, a distinguished public servant whom Mulroney had dispatched to study potential involvement in SDI, stating: "Canada must have no part in a program which threatens to send the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 414.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Sean M. Maloney, "Better Late Than Never: Defence During the Mulroney Years," in *Transforming the Nation: Canada and Brian Mulroney*, ed. Raymond B. Blake (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 142.

<sup>95</sup> Douglas Roche, *Creative Dissent: A Politician's Struggle for Peace* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008), 196.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

arms race reeling uncontrollably into the presently unweaponized region of outer space.”<sup>97</sup> Roche was not a leading member of the Cabinet, but he clearly added to the mounting opposition within the PCP to the initiative.

## **2.5 The Bureaucracy**

According to Ross, the SDI proposal “flabbergasted” numerous Canadian officials because it was completely at odds with the “fairly stable and predictable set of policy axioms governing the Soviet-American strategic relationship.”<sup>98</sup> An examination of the most relevant departments, namely the Departments of External Affairs (DEA) and National Defence (DND), reveals that the debate among senior bureaucrats did not always mirror the debate carried out by the public; for example, both departments eventually did support participation. But officials in both departments expressed concerns about the impact of the program upon arms control and strategic stability.

### **2.5.1 The Department of External Affairs**

DEA’s support for arms control and disarmament had a long history. Under the leadership of Lester B. Pearson, External Affairs became actively engaged in arms control negotiations in the 1950s. Both during and after this period, Canada found itself a member of the Disarmament Commission, the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, and the International Atomic Association, among others, all of which contributed to the notion that Canada “punched above its weight.” Canada was also a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (1970) and

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<sup>97</sup> Roche, 196-197.

<sup>98</sup> McKinsey and Nossal, 29.



Outer Space (1967) treaties, as well as a vocal supporter of the ABM Treaty (1972).<sup>99</sup> As the principal department overseeing involvement and negotiations in arms control, DEA had a seasoned track record of support for arms control and disarmament, which was anything but abandoned in the face of SDI.

DEA's support for arms control was evident during the Geneva talks in 1984 when the Liberal government considered proposing a ban on the development of high-altitude anti-satellite systems. Although some officials in DEA worried that such a proposal might damage Canada-US cooperation revolving around NORAD and other interests in space, and acknowledged more generally the destabilizing effects of such systems, the Department encouraged the government to proceed. Yet it hoped the Geneva Summit on arms control, occurring in November of 1985, would produce fruitful results, and it remained opposed to destabilizing ventures, which might threaten negotiations.

Further evidence of DEA's focus on arms control and the maintenance of strategic stability can be found in the foreign policy review accompanying the PCP's ascent to office. In May of 1985, the Department released a green paper<sup>100</sup> entitled *Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations*. The green paper described arms control as one of five priorities for Canada's foreign policy<sup>101</sup> and affirmed that Canada's "security interests demand that we play our part in western defence *and* in arms control and disarmament."<sup>102</sup>

Maureen Apple Molot and Brian W. Tomlin concisely outlined DEA's views as follows:

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<sup>99</sup> These treaties are discussed by Albert Legault and Michel Fortmann in *A Diplomacy of Hope: Canada and Disarmament, 1945-1988*.

<sup>100</sup> Molot and Tomlin describe green papers as issue-raising, problem posing reports designed to fuel debate, whereas white papers generally provide clear, substantive policy thrusts and priorities. They also noted that even though DEA was responsible for *Competitiveness and Security*, it was done with great consultation with other departments, especially DND, which was preparing its own white paper at the time, necessitating the enunciation of similar positions, (9-10, 14).

<sup>101</sup> Maloney, 138.

<sup>102</sup> Don Munton and Tom Keating, "Internationalism and the Canadian Public," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* vol. 34 no. 3 (2001): 522, .

The commencement of new arms control talks in Geneva and the Reagan-Gorbachev summit were strongly supported by Canada. Although Canada recognizes the difficulties of arms control negotiations, the government does see a role for itself in encouraging superpower dialogue and in multilateral arms control discussions.<sup>103</sup>

In spite of the fact the green paper described SDI as a prudent undertaking given the Soviet's own research efforts, it also acknowledged the US's commitment not to go beyond the ABM treaty. More importantly, it said that SDI "raise[d] a host of questions" for Canadians, including the potential to undermine strategic stability.<sup>104</sup> But the key factor again for DEA was the maintenance of positive Canada-US relations. Because SDI was such an important component of Reagan's presidency, most, although certainly not all, DEA officials believed Canada could not afford to say no to participation and, therefore proposed that Canada participate.

### **2.5.2 The Department of National Defence**

Like DEA, DND had a major interest in promoting arms control for the sake of national and collective security.<sup>105</sup> An example of congruence between the two Departments on these kinds of issues was their "...perfect agreement on the 'destabilizing' nature of high altitude Anti-Satellite systems" — which were inextricably linked to missile defence.<sup>106</sup> Strategic stability was evidently an important issue for both Departments.

Middlemiss and Sokolsky make it clear, however, that DND's chief focus was on SDI's impact on NORAD, as well as the opportunities that participation in the initiative might provide.<sup>107</sup> The initiative was viewed as having ramifications for continental defence<sup>108</sup> and,

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<sup>103</sup> Molot and Tomlin, 5-6.

<sup>104</sup> Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1985), 39.

<sup>105</sup> Middlemiss and Sokolsky, 162.

<sup>106</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 410.

<sup>107</sup> Middlemiss and Sokolsky, 183-184.

therefore, posed questions regarding Canadian sovereignty. However, participation also ostensibly held benefits for the department. As Ross points out, DND had been politically marginalized since the 1960s and SDI “seemed to hold out some real prospect for financial-budgetary gains for DND’s own woefully underfunded capital equipment account.”<sup>109</sup> After weighing the pros and cons, the Department finally agreed that Canada should join the program.

According to Albert Legault and Michel Fortmann, “it was impossible to reach interdepartmental agreement on a common draft of the fundamental problems raised” by the initiative.<sup>110</sup> Nonetheless, at one point during the summer of 1985, the two Departments sent a joint memo to Cabinet proposing that the Canadian government cooperate with the US on SDI research.<sup>111</sup> In the end, for both Departments, the program’s implications for the Canada-US relationship seem to have been the more salient issue.

## 2.6 The Reluctant Prime Minister

The importance of Canadian Prime Ministers in the foreign and defence policy-making process cannot be understated. Their seminal role as the chief executive and leader of the legislature denotes the position’s sweeping prerogative and pre-eminence concerning important foreign policy issues.<sup>112</sup> The SDI invitation was no exception as Mulroney made the final decision in face of intense societal, governmental, and political pressures.

Stating that “[g]ood relations, super relations, with the United States will be the cornerstone of our foreign policy,” during the 1984 election campaign,<sup>113</sup> Mulroney came to

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<sup>108</sup> Maloney, 142.

<sup>109</sup> Ross, 139.

<sup>110</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 412.

<sup>111</sup> Roche, 196.

<sup>112</sup> Nossal, (1997), 197.

<sup>113</sup> Joseph T. Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007: A History* (Kingston: Queen’s Centre for International Relations, 2007), 121.

office set on “refurbishing” Canada’s damaged relationship with the US. From the outset, Mulroney made good on this pledge as attested to by his close relationship with and access to Reagan, which was reflected in the annual summits between the leaders.<sup>114</sup> As Sokolsky and Jockel write, this desire to refurbish the Canada-US relationship necessitated that Mulroney handle the SDI invitation with great care, “lest the good will of the Reagan administration, and of the president in particular, be diminished.”<sup>115</sup>

Although Mulroney favored the program for the sake of improving Canadian-American relations and because of the possibility of employment spinoffs,<sup>116</sup> he was not a supporter of the proposal itself. In a private conversation documented in Kevin Newman’s *The Secret Mulroney Tapes*, Mulroney said “I don’t think Star Wars is a big deal. I’ve never been impressed with the whole concept. I can’t see how we’d gain anything from it. I don’t think we’d participate. It doesn’t make any sense to me.”<sup>117</sup> Likewise, his memoirs reveal that he “found the thought of the weaponization of space and the creation of another costly arms race extremely disconcerting.”<sup>118</sup> So even for the Prime Minister, it is fair to suggest that arms control was a prominent concern.

In an effort to shed light on what course of action his government should follow, Mulroney sought the advice of two senior government officials, Allan Gotlieb and Arthur Kroeger. In the spring of 1985, Mulroney dispatched Kroeger, a respected public servant who served in the Privy Council Office, to Washington in order to examine the scientific, economic, and strategic implications for Canadian participation in SDI. Kroeger informed Mulroney that Canadian firms could expect only around \$30 million from contracts, a paltry sum considering

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<sup>114</sup> Michaud and Nossal, 120.

<sup>115</sup> J. J. Sokolsky and Joseph T. Jockel, “Canada and the Future of Strategic Defense,” in *Perspectives on Strategic Defense*, ed. Steven W. Guerrier and Wayne C. Thompson (London: Westview Press, 1987), 188.

<sup>116</sup> Michaud and Nossal, 121.

<sup>117</sup> Peter C. Newman, *The Secret Mulroney Tapes*, (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2005), 307-308.

<sup>118</sup> Brian Mulroney, *Memoirs: 1939-1993* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2007), 349.

the magnitude of the program.<sup>119</sup> After it became clear to the Prime Minister that SDI contract opportunities for Canadian firms would be minimal, Mulroney's decision on SDI revolved around political calculations.

Allan Gotlieb, Canada's Ambassador to the US, contended in a letter to the Prime Minister that Canada should not reject SDI as it was "a concept too close to the president's heart." However, he also supported Canadian participation in SDI for its potential as a bargaining chip in the Geneva Talks on arms control. Additionally, he emphasized the need for Canada to make a clear distinction between missile defence research and missile deployment and to act so as to create an atmosphere that was conducive to improving Soviet-US relations.<sup>120</sup>

Delivering advice contrary to Gotlieb's was a secret committee composed of senior Red Tories, whom Mulroney called the "special consultants." Senior among the consultants were Robert Stanfield, Hugh Segal, and Douglas Roche. In June, they reported to Mulroney, stating that "[p]ublic opinion, the uncertainty of the SDI project, and the risk of a large financial obligation in the future all suggest that the government should refrain from endorsing the SDI program."<sup>121</sup>

The opposition to the program across Canada stemming from concerns about arms control and strategic stability clearly rendered any decision to join the program politically problematic. The Progressive Conservatives had a majority in Parliament, indeed the largest in Canadian history, and there was little likelihood that the opposition parties could defeat the government on the SDI issue.<sup>122</sup> However, the government's position rested on a fragile coalition between Quebec and the western provinces that "[Mulroney] had so carefully put together" and

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<sup>119</sup> Mulroney, 350.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 350-351.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>122</sup> Bow, page unnumbered.

was unwilling to jeopardize.<sup>123</sup> So even if concern for the integrity of the ABM and Outer Space treaties was not at the forefront of Mulroney's own political calculations, public opposition, which was strongest in Quebec, ensured that arms control and disarmament affected the government's final decision.

## **2.7 The Polite No**

After five months of deliberation, on 7 September 1985 Mulroney announced the Cabinet's decision: "The Canadian Government," he stated, "has reached the conclusion that the policies and priorities of Canada do not justify a government to government effort in support of SDI research."<sup>124</sup> This decision became known as the "polite no" and made Canada the sixth US ally to decide against participation,<sup>125</sup> even though Canadian firms remained free to bid and work on contracts coming from the program. While Mulroney considered this decision an "honourable compromise,"<sup>126</sup> various authors suggest neither the Canadian electorate nor the Reagan Administration was satisfied with the government's decision.<sup>127</sup> Many Canadians wanted a firmer rejection of SDI as a concept, and the US clearly wanted direct government-to-government participation, or at least political support for the initiative.

Most sources contend the impact of the Mulroney government's decision on the Canada-US relationship, and on the relationship between the Prime Minister and President, was minimal. Describing his response to Mulroney's phone call informing him that Canada would not

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<sup>123</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, "The Mulroney Years: Transformation and Tumult," *Policy Options* June-July (2003): 78,

<sup>124</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 413.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Mulroney, 352.

<sup>127</sup> Ross, 161.

participate, Reagan wrote “[a]ll in all I think there is no problem.”<sup>128</sup> Lennox’s more recent study supports the notion that there was little political fallout in Washington:

Washington was reportedly not even upset by Ottawa’s SDI decision. Reagan even thanked Mulroney for the opportunity to work with Canadian firms. At first blush this is surprising, given the intensive lobbying Reagan and his staff had done in Ottawa to bring Canada on board with SDI.<sup>129</sup>

## 2.8 The End of SDI

The SDI program continued during the remainder of Reagan’s and George H. W. Bush’s presidencies and into President Bill Clinton’s first term. However, starting in 1987, the program’s goals were revised and, by 1991, its original goal of protecting the US from intercontinental missiles had largely evaporated. By the time Clinton became President in 1993, the Strategic Defense Initiative was no longer the title, and its financial allotment was drastically cut the following year. All in all, the US Administration spent approximately \$85 billion on SDI research, a sum well beyond the original price tag, and produced very little in terms of tangible defence weaponry.<sup>130</sup> As J. L. Granatstein writes, in terms of research, “Star Wars went nowhere.”<sup>131</sup> Although the US continued to pursue missile defence research more modestly during the 1990s, the issue did not return in any notable fashion for Canadians until George W. Bush unveiled the National Missile Defense program in 2002.

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<sup>128</sup> Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, ed. Douglas Brinkley (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 351.

<sup>129</sup> Lennox, 80.

<sup>130</sup> Craig Eisendrath, Melvin A. Goodman, and Gerald E. Marsh, *The Phantom Defense: America’s Pursuit of the Star Wars Illusion* (Westport: CT: Praeger’s Publishers, 2001), 20-25.

<sup>131</sup> J. L. Granatstein, “Canada’s Flower Children,” *National Post*, February 2, 2007, A 13.

## Chapter 3

### Canada and the Ground-based Midcourse Defense Program

#### 3.1 Introduction

The end of the Cold War in 1991 drastically altered the political and strategic environment in which Canada and the United States operated. James G. Fergusson asserts that, after the demise of the Soviet Union, “the relevance of deterrence stability arguments simply evaporated overnight.”<sup>132</sup> As the distribution of power underwent a radical shift from a bipolar to unipolar world, Canada’s geographic significance declined as it no longer found itself between two nuclear-armed superpowers. As a result, Canadian airspace ceased to be seen by US policy makers as strategically vital as it had been throughout the Cold War, even after the events of 11 September 2001. In spite of the altered strategic atmosphere, Canada’s decision to reject participating in the United States’ Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program<sup>133</sup> in 2005 illustrates that Canadians’ discomfort with the notion of missile defence remained. This chapter demonstrates how concerns among Canadians about arms control and strategic stability, in this case, expressed chiefly through their opposition to the weaponization of space and its potential for igniting another arms race, was an important factor in the decision to forgo participation in a US missile defence program. The chapter describes the events leading up to the US decision to create GMD, along with Canada’s drawn-out decision to decline, and examines the opposition to the program by the public, political parties, the federal bureaucracy, and the Prime Minister.

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<sup>132</sup> James G. Fergusson, *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence, 1954-2009: Déjà Vu All Over Again*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>133</sup> The program was commonly known as National Missile Defense, although it was renamed Ground-based Midcourse Defense in 2002.



## 3.2 Towards the Ground-based Midcourse Defense

While, in a sense, the origins of GMD can be traced to Reagan's SDI proposal, its genesis as a concept can be traced to the US political atmosphere of the late 1990s. In 1998, the Rumsfeld Commission released a report suggesting missiles posed a much greater danger to the US than previously estimated, heightening the apprehension of threats posed by North Korea, Iraq, and Iran, among other states. Shortly after the release of this report, North Korea launched a three-stage Taepodong-1 missile over Japanese airspace, compelling many members of the US Congress to demand the immediate development of a homeland missile defence system. Succumbing to political pressure after initial resistance, the Clinton Administration signed the National Missile Defense (NMD) Act in 1999.<sup>134</sup> The NMD Act reads:

It is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate)....<sup>135</sup>

Even though this Act opened the door for a US missile defence program, due to a lack of confidence in the technology, Clinton chose not to proceed with it, thereby postponing the decision for his successor.<sup>136</sup> The decision to move ahead with such a system had to wait until George W. Bush became President in January of 2001.

### 3.2.1 The Return of the Neo-Conservatives

Republicans were, generally speaking, more inclined to support unilateralism in matters of national security than the Democrats. Most were passionate advocates of missile defence and

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<sup>134</sup> Ivan Eland and Daniel Lee, "The Rogue State Doctrine and National Missile Defense" *Cato Foreign Policy Briefing*, 65 (2001), <http://www.ciaonet.org.cyber.usask.ca/pbei/cato/eli05/eli05.pdf>.

<sup>135</sup> "Our Mission," Missile Defense Agency, accessed August 20, 2010, <http://www.mda.mil/about/mission.html>.

<sup>136</sup> Lennox, 82.

derided nuclear arms control as a redundant carry-over from the Cold War.<sup>137</sup> Prior to winning the presidential election as the Republican candidate, Bush promised that he would “build effective missile defenses, based on the best available options, at the earliest possible date.”<sup>138</sup>

Fergusson observes:

With the election of Bush and the re-election of a Republican Majority in both Houses of Congress, there was little doubt that missile defence would proceed. Missile defence had long been central to Republican defence policy, and George W. Bush, like his father, was an ardent advocate.<sup>139</sup>

Not surprisingly, Bush brought a number of neo-conservatives into key positions in his Cabinet who were supportive of an ABM program, principally because of what they perceived as a decline in US military might.<sup>140</sup> These individuals, together with Bush himself, demonstrated early on that they were ready to implement a scaled-back version of the Strategic Defense Initiative.<sup>141</sup>

After his inauguration, the President moved the US towards a missile defence program expeditiously. Spending on missile defence was increased substantially, an outline of his missile defence vision was provided, and the Pentagon was directed to explore a broad swath of anti-missile technologies.<sup>142</sup> Most importantly, in a speech on 1 June 2001 at the National Defense University, Bush revealed his government’s intent to abrogate the ABM Treaty and create a working missile defence program.<sup>143</sup> The events of 11 September 2001 and the security-focused atmosphere which followed in the US all but guaranteed a missile defence program would be

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<sup>137</sup> Fergusson, 212.

<sup>138</sup> James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O’Hanlon, “Missile Defense after the ABM Treaty,” *The Washington Quarterly* vol. 25, no. 3 (2002): 163.

<sup>139</sup> Fergusson, 208.

<sup>140</sup> Lennox, 83.

<sup>141</sup> Holloway, 63.

<sup>142</sup> Lindsay and O’Hanlon, 163-164.

<sup>143</sup> “Remarks by the President to Students and Faculty at National Defense University,” The White House, May 1, 2001, accessed August 27, 2010, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/05/20010501-10.html>.

initiated.<sup>144</sup> On 13 December 2001, Bush formally announced the United States' withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in six months time and reiterated his pledge to build a missile defence system to defend against rogue states and terrorists.<sup>145</sup>

### **3.2.2 Ground-Based Midcourse Defense**

Bush announced his decision to deploy two Ground-based Midcourse Defense systems at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and Fort Greely, Alaska, in December of 2002; both became operational in the fall of 2004. The other major aspect of the program was the placement of high-frequency radars at Fort Greeley and Thule, Greenland.<sup>146</sup> In the long-term, GMD would be a layered system, including land, sea, and space, which would be able to defend against all types of ballistic missiles.<sup>147</sup> In spite of its broad scope, the GMD program was far more modest than SDI, as it did not attempt to create a colossal shield capable of stopping massive attacks from Russia or China. Rather, GMD aimed to defend against a small number of missiles that might be launched by a rogue state or accidentally by a major power.<sup>148</sup>

Although the events of September 11, 2001 dampened domestic criticism of ABM in the US to a certain extent, GMD was framed as another “Star Wars” and subject to the same line of questioning. Some critics contended the technology was not advanced enough to proceed with a working program, as highlighted by some failures in the initial testing. Others lamented the budgetary cuts that the program would produce in other areas. The Administration’s argument that GMD would be “a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to deterrence” was also routinely torn asunder by

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<sup>144</sup> Fergusson, 208.

<sup>145</sup> “Remarks by the President on National Missile Defense,” The White House, accessed September 9, 2010, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011213-4.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Fergusson, 206.

<sup>147</sup> Lennox, 84.

<sup>148</sup> Holloway, 63.

critics.<sup>149</sup> Russia's criticism of GMD was somewhat muted in comparison to SDI, but its leaders argued that moving beyond the ABM Treaty posed a threat to strategic stability. The Chinese government indicated that it had the same concerns, considering itself even more threatened than Russia, largely because it possessed fewer long-range missiles.<sup>150</sup> Even Clinton, prior to leaving office, declared that missile defence held the potential to engender a multi-sided arms race, increasing the risks of nuclear warfare.<sup>151</sup>

### 3.3 Canadian Participation?

Months after coming to office, Bush was calling for Canadian participation in a future BMD system.<sup>152</sup> Yet Canada was neither pressured to join nor formally invited to participate until the government expressed interest in being at the table.<sup>153</sup> As with SDI, the Bush administration was not asking Canada for money or territory—the president sought political and diplomatic support. Either way, the administration made clear it would go ahead with GMD regardless of Canada's decision. Canadian support may not have been necessary for the functioning of the program, but it would aid the US government in garnering GMD international and domestic legitimacy. At minimum, helping bolster the program's legitimacy was a matter of “diplomatic prudence” in an era of sub-par Canada-US relations.<sup>154</sup>

Changes in US continental and strategic command unintentionally eased the possibility of Canadian participation. The decision to change the command of GMD from Space Command to United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in 2003 arguably rendered Canadian

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<sup>149</sup> Michelle Ciarrocca and William Hartung, “Star Wars Revisited,” in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, ed. Tom Barry and Martha Honey, vol. 6, (25): 2001, <http://www.ciaonet.org.cyber.usask.ca>.

<sup>150</sup> Lindsay and O'Hanlon, various pages.

<sup>151</sup> Ciarrocca and Hartung, page unnumbered.

<sup>152</sup> Lennox, 83.

<sup>153</sup> Brian Bow, page unnumbered.

<sup>154</sup> Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water: My Life In and Out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2008), 385.

participation through NORAD a separate venture from a future system in space.<sup>155</sup> In theory, therefore, the government could participate and claim it was upholding Canada's international arms control obligations, while demonstrating its commitment to continental defence and bilateral relations. The positive responses GMD received from most European leaders also eased the difficulty for Canada in deciding whether to participate.<sup>156</sup> Lastly, Russia and China may have been disappointed by the US decision to rescind the ABM Treaty, but the lack of expected vitriolic rhetoric from these states meant Canada could no longer fall back on the Treaty as an excuse to opt out of missile defence.<sup>157</sup> Despite minimal contributions required and favorable circumstances, the GMD question would prove to be a significant dilemma for Canada's governing Liberals.

### **3.3.1 False Signals**

Contrasting with Mulroney's handling of SDI, the decision-making process for GMD was drawn out and awkwardly communicated. This contrast was illustrated in the years prior to the final decision in February 2005 when participation became increasingly controversial and the principal issue for the Canadian government.<sup>158</sup> During this period, the issues were complicated by a series of misleading signals from political actors, which led observers to assume Canada intended to participate in GMD. Such a signal was given at the commencement of negotiations between Canada and the US in June 2003 while Jean Chretien was Prime Minister. The Canadian government made no effort to clarify if the commencement of negotiations meant that Canada

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<sup>155</sup> Fergusson, 225.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>158</sup> Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), 168.

had agreed to participate in the proposed program.<sup>159</sup> In fact Chretien avoided making any decision on the issue, especially after Bush started to talk about placing weapons in outer space.<sup>160</sup> Thus the decision, or “political hand grenade,”<sup>161</sup> was left to Chretien’s successor, Paul Martin, who became leader of the Liberal party and majority government in December of 2003.

Martin expressed interest in Canadian participation in GMD from the outset, having campaigned in favour of the idea during the Liberal leadership race in 2003. If the initiation of negotiations failed to clarify the intent of the Chretien administration, the letter sent by Martin’s Minister of National Defence, David Pratt, to Washington did the same thing. The Bush Administration asked the Martin government to signal its support for the program in advance of the commencement of negotiations.<sup>162</sup> Pratt responded in January 2004 in a letter to US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, which was subsequently posted on the DND website:

[W]e believe that our two nations should move on an expedited basis to amend the NORAD agreement to take into account NORAD’s contribution to the missile defence mission... it is our intent to negotiate in the coming months a Missile Defence Framework Memorandum of Understanding with the United States with the objective of including Canada as a participant in the current US missile defence program and expanding and enhancing information exchange.<sup>163</sup>

As Fergusson explains, at this point, it was not a question of whether Canada would participate or not, but rather what Canada’s role in the program would be.<sup>164</sup> Participation seemed even more certain when, in February 2004, DND divulged plans to participate in radar tests for the program, issuing tentative contracts valued at \$700,000.<sup>165</sup>

By March of 2004, however, Canadian officials were ordered to cease work on missile defence and desist from making any public statements. An election was looming, and the Martin

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<sup>159</sup> Fergusson, 207.

<sup>160</sup> Lennox, 84.

<sup>161</sup> Stein and Lang, 161.

<sup>162</sup> Fergusson, 237-238.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>165</sup> Lennox, 85.

government had come to view participation in GMD as politically unwise.<sup>166</sup> After the Liberal government was reduced to minority status in June 2004, the GMD decision was again delayed because of a deeply divided caucus and increasing opposition among Canadians.<sup>167</sup> Yet, even with efforts toward participation on hold, Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang argued that “Canada appeared to be inching its way into BMD through the NORAD door.”<sup>168</sup> This so-called back door to participation ostensibly resulted from the re-negotiation of NORAD, leading up to its renewal in August 2004. The terms of renewal allowed NORAD to pass its missile warning information to USNORTHCOM, which was delegated the task of commanding GMD. As a result, some critics contended that Canada had already embraced missile defence, while others became increasingly skeptical of Ottawa’s intentions.<sup>169</sup>

One of the most misleading and troubling incidents for the Martin government involved comments made by Frank McKenna, the incoming Canadian Ambassador to the US and a proponent of GMD. During a media scrum on Parliament Hill in January, 2005, McKenna told reporters that, because Canada agreed to have NORAD deliver information about incoming missiles to USNORTHCOM, the country was implicitly involved. This was interpreted by the media as a signal that the government would formally sign on to GMD, at a time when the Martin government was actually in the process of opting for outright rejection.<sup>170</sup> It did so formally by announcing the decision on 24 February 2005 in the House of Commons.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the reasons for this rejection, focusing on the public, political parties, the federal bureaucracy, and the Prime Minister’s evolving views on the program.

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<sup>166</sup> Fergusson, 243.

<sup>167</sup> Holloway, 64.

<sup>168</sup> Stein and Lang, 160.

<sup>169</sup> Stein and Lang, 162.

<sup>170</sup> Martin, 389.

### 3.4 The Public

The GMD program attracted less media and political attention than SDI. This did not mean that Canadians appraised it with any less contempt. Steven Staples, an ardent critic who wrote a detailed account of Canada's rejection of GMD, notes that a Canadian decision to join the program "would have flown into a public-opinion hurricane."<sup>171</sup> Even as early as 2001, David Rudd points out, Canadian reactions "ranged from polite skepticism to angry rejectionism."<sup>172</sup> While some Canadians opposed GMD as an affront to Canadian sovereignty,<sup>173</sup> the distaste of others resulted from a loathing of President George W. Bush and a rejection of his Administration's foreign policy, specifically the controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003. Among a variety of interest groups, academics, and leading public figures, there was a sizeable opposition that was premised upon a desire to maintain strategic stability and a discomfort with the prospect of weapons in space.

Although there was nothing comparable to the peace movement of the 1980s, a few organizations voiced their opposition to the program. Basil Hargrove, President of the Canadian Auto Workers, contended that GMD was financially wasteful, did little to enhance security, and threatened world peace through weaponizing space and propelling a new arms race.<sup>174</sup> Canadian churches, including Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United, also thought Canada should forgo participation, sending a letter to Paul Martin in March of 2004, which stated: "[t]he *weaponization* of *space* and related *BMD* developments are hollow attempts

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<sup>171</sup> Steven Staples, *Missile Defence: Round one* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2006), 165.

<sup>172</sup> David Rudd, "Missile Defence Revisited: A Reality Check for Canada," Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, accessed 14 December 2009, [http://www.ciss.ca/Comment\\_MissileDefence.htm](http://www.ciss.ca/Comment_MissileDefence.htm).

<sup>173</sup> This was a concern even though it was clear that the Bush Administration was not asking for a territorial commitment.

<sup>174</sup> Basil Hargrove, "Reject role in U.S. missile defence plan," *National Post*, October 25, 2004, FP.12.



at technical solutions that only intensify the nuclear threat...."<sup>175</sup> The Council of Canadians organized rallies on Parliament Hill to draw attention to their opposition. Even a sizeable ad hoc group called the Canadian Coalition to Oppose Missile Defence was established,<sup>176</sup> not to mention other smaller groups like the Vancouver Island Public Interest Group which agreed that the US MD program would cause a new arms race.<sup>177</sup>

### 3.4.1 Opinion Polls

Polling between 2003 and 2005 highlighted the growing opposition to GMD among the Canadian electorate. A poll taken by SES Research in May of 2003 found 61 percent of Canadians supported participation while only 24 percent was either strongly or somewhat opposed.<sup>178</sup> In 2004 pollsters were getting mixed results, although it was evident that support for GMD was eroding across Canada.<sup>179</sup> In March, an Ipsos-Reid poll found that 69 percent of Canadians were opposed.<sup>180</sup> A poll conducted by Environics and the Centre for Research and Information on Canada in the fall showed that 52 percent of Canadians were opposed, 31 percent of which were strongly against participation.<sup>181</sup> Just after Martin announced that Canada would not participate in the program, a COMPAS poll reported 54 percent of Canadians were opposed.<sup>182</sup> A Decima poll conducted around the same time showed that support for Martin's

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<sup>175</sup> Various Church Leaders, "Canadian church leaders urge nuclear disarmament and ballistic missile control," *Ploughshares Monitor*, June 22, 2004, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com>.

<sup>176</sup> Staples, 73.

<sup>177</sup> Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group, "Missile Defence: new debate, same old song" (A Presentation to the Citizens Inquiry on US-Canada Relations, Victoria, B.C., December 2, 2004):1-2, accessed September 19, 2010, [http://www.vipirg.ca/publications/pubs/public\\_hearings/0412\\_citizen\\_inquiry.pdf](http://www.vipirg.ca/publications/pubs/public_hearings/0412_citizen_inquiry.pdf).

<sup>178</sup> Staples, 47.

<sup>179</sup> In 2004, an Ipsos-Reid poll found 69 percent of Canadians were opposed.

<sup>180</sup> Donald Barry, "Canada and Missile Defence: Saying No to Mr Bush," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2010): 27.

<sup>181</sup> Elizabeth Thompson, "Canadians oppose missile shield," *National Post*, November 5, 2004, A 5, <http://proquest.umi.com.cyber.usask.ca>.

<sup>182</sup> James Cowan, "Canadians open to missile plan: poll: 'Oppose it in practice, support it in principle'," *National Post*, February 28, 2005, A 1., 2001, <http://proquest.umi.com.cyber.usask.ca>.

decision was widespread, including men and women, senior citizens, teenagers, urban and rural constituents, as well as a majority of respondents in every province. In fact, the only supporters of GMD were Conservative Party supporters and some business groups, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, and the domestic aerospace industry.<sup>183</sup>

### 3.4.2 Quebec

The opposition to GMD in Quebec warrants special attention. Prior to Martin's decision, a full 75 percent of Quebecers polled were against participation—the highest level of opposition to the program in the country by a sizeable margin. Another poll showed Quebecers who opposed the program were “firmer in their beliefs than supporters, and more resistant to arguments in favour of missile defence...” compared to other Canadians.<sup>184</sup> As will be discussed later, because Quebec was such an important electoral battleground, its sizeable opposition to GMD was disproportionately influential.

### 3.4.3 Academics and Notables

A number of academics and notable public figures opposed the missile program. Lloyd Axworthy, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and political scientist Michael Byers suggested that signing on to GMD would imply agreement with Bush's unilateral foreign policy and would contradict Canada's historic support for arms control and disarmament. Moreover, it would discredit current international treaties that set limits on weapons in space.<sup>185</sup> Mel Hurtig,

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<sup>183</sup> Staples, 38, 44.

<sup>184</sup> Pierre Martin, “All Quebec's Fault, Again? Quebec Public Opinion and Canada's Rejection of Missile Defence,” *Policy Options*, May (2005): 42.

<sup>185</sup> Staples, 45.

among the most vocal opponents, contended that GMD would result in “Armageddon,” as it was “...unquestionably leading to accelerated nuclear proliferation, major world destabilization and a substantial escalation of insecurity throughout the world.”<sup>186</sup> Douglas Roche, a former Progressive Conservative Senator and Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Committee, was one of many leading public figures who argued that GMD would start another arms race among other world powers; they had, he declared, already begun upgrading their nuclear arsenals to deal with missile defences. Along with this new arms race would come global instability and a greater chance of nuclear war. In a letter published in the *Edmonton Journal* in November of 2004, Roche wrote: “only a fool would believe that the startup system is not inextricably linked to future weapons in space.”<sup>187</sup> A number of Canadian celebrities, including Bryan Adams, David Suzuki, Sarah McLachlan, and Stompin’ Tom Connors, also expressed their disagreement with the prospect of participation by signing a letter to the Prime Minister in March 2004 opting for rejection. The letter focused on concerns about strategic stability:

Canadian involvement in U.S. missile defence would undermine decades of Canadian efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.... It would require the reversal of a 30-year Canadian policy opposing the weaponization of space.... A new global arms race is a likely consequence, as existing nuclear powers seek to maintain a credible deterrence by strengthening their retaliatory arsenals of missiles and warheads.<sup>188</sup>

Maintenance of global stability was a goal, as well, of those who favoured the program. It would be an effective means, supporters argued, of influencing US strategic decisions. David Rudd, for example, asserted that a decision to join the missile defence program could be “constructive” in giving Canada the opportunity to steer the program away from one involved with weapons in space and thus avoid another arms race.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Kevin Spurgaitis, “Canadian nationalist warns against compliance with U.S. missile defence,” *Catholic Times*, November 21, 2004, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0MKY/is\\_18\\_28/ai\\_n8586818/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MKY/is_18_28/ai_n8586818/).

<sup>187</sup> Douglas Roche, “Missile defence participation would be wrong for Canada,” *Edmonton Journal*, November 22, 2004, A 14, <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/>.

<sup>188</sup> Staples, 66.

<sup>189</sup> Rudd, page unnumbered.

### **3.5 Political Parties**

While the position of the opposition Conservatives in Parliament remained ambiguous and opportunistic, those of the other opposition parties were strongly against participation. Indeed, the Bloc Québécois and NDP constantly criticized the Liberal government, demanding that it reject GMD at every stage of the decision-making process. Making Martin's decision even more difficult was staunch opposition among members of his own caucus and party.

#### **3.5.1 Ambiguity from the Official Opposition**

The Conservative Party of Canada was hardly the same coalition of forces that existed in the Mulroney era. Influenced much less than in previous years by its progressive wing, the party had few prominent members who opposed missile defence on ideological or moral grounds. Nonetheless, even the Conservatives under Stephen Harper were reluctant to give full support to GMD, because of the possibility that such an endorsement would erode the party's electoral base or cause a divide within the party itself.

Initially the Conservatives appeared to support GMD. In February 2004, they helped the Liberal government defeat a Bloc Québécois motion demanding that the government oppose missile defence and cease negotiations with the Bush Administration.<sup>190</sup> Yet as time passed there was evidence that Harper, in dealing with his caucus, was looking more for a desirable political outcome than one predicated on ideology, principle or policy. Even in the House of Commons, the Conservative position was either vague or muted on the matter of missile defence. Unlike the BQ and NDP leaders, Harper did not argue for or against participation but rather criticized the Liberal government's backtracking and ambiguity on the issue.

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<sup>190</sup> Fergusson, 243.

Under Harper's leadership, the Canadian Alliance Party<sup>191</sup> introduced a motion in the House of Commons in June of 2003 to "support giving NORAD responsibility for the command of any system developed to defend North America against ballistic missiles."<sup>192</sup> However, the 2004 election platform of the new Conservative Party was devoid of any reference to missile defence. Even after Martin's decision to decline participation, the Party's position on GMD remained vague, its 2005 Policy Declaration giving support to "Canada's participation in negotiation of a North American Missile Defence System on the clear understanding that any agreement must serve Canada's interest."<sup>193</sup>

As *Globe and Mail* journalist John Ibbitson astutely assessed, there was more to the Conservative Party's public ambiguity than just simple electoral support:

Mr. Harper knows that voting against missile defence — even though he has repeatedly supported it in principle — would lead to a humiliating Liberal defeat. Endorsing the motion, on the other hand, would not only rescue Mr. Martin, his political archenemy, from a predicament, but could exacerbate the Red Tory/Reform split inside his own party.<sup>194</sup>

The fact that the party was unwilling to make a firm stand in these circumstances suggests either societal or intra-party concerns for strategic stability and the strong distaste for Bush was influential.

### 3.5.2 The New Democratic Party

From GMD's onset the NDP was opposed to Canadian participation and to the existence of the program itself. The party's position was consistent with the one that it had put forward against SDI in 1985, deriding the new initiative as a destabilizing force in global affairs, which

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<sup>191</sup> The Canadian Alliance Party was one of two parties which amalgamated into the CPC in 2003; the other party was the Progressive Conservative Party.

<sup>192</sup> Staples, 49.

<sup>193</sup> Stein and Lang, 16.

<sup>194</sup> John Ibbitson, "Why Ottawa won't join Bush's missile plan," *The Globe and Mail*, February 10, 2005.

would invoke a new arms race in outer space. The NDP's espoused abhorrence to the prospect of a Canadian role in the program was boldly declared in the 2004 election platform, which claimed the party would firmly oppose "any Canadian participation in the grossly expensive Star Wars missile defence scheme, which will result in the weaponizing of space and does nothing to protect us from terrorism, and promoting the proposed Space Preservation Treaty."<sup>195</sup>

This stance was maintained and strongly advanced in the House of Commons in 2004 and early 2005, when the NDP expressed the clearest opposition to missile defence of any party. As Stein and Lang say, "[t]he NDP hammered the government for going to bed with the Americans on BMD."<sup>196</sup> Party leader Jack Layton articulated the NDP's stance on 6 December 2004:

Missile defence is going to increase the build-up of arms globally. It is going to lead to the weaponization of space. It is going to take away from Canada's credibility in arguing for disarmament. When will the Prime Minister stand up and say that he has heard the evidence, and that Canada will simply say no to missile defence?<sup>197</sup>

NDP member Bill Blaikie declared on 2 December 2004 that GMD "... is not just about the weaponization of space. It is also about the prospect for a new arms race. This can happen with or without the weaponization of space."<sup>198</sup> Such statements help clarify the nature of the NDP's opposition, which was evidently rooted in concerns for strategic stability and arms control.

### 3.5.3 The Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois (BQ), absent from the party system during the controversy surrounding SDI, was also vociferously opposed to participation. Their stance was based on the widespread resentment of Bush, fear of militarization, doubts about GMD's feasibility and costs, as well as the prospects of the weaponization of space and a new arms race.

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<sup>195</sup> New Democratic Party, *Platform 2004: Jack Layton, New energy. A Positive choice* (2004), 53.

<sup>196</sup> Stein and Lang, 160.

<sup>197</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 6 December 2004 (Mr. Jack Layton, NDP).

<sup>198</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 2 December 2004 (Mr. Bill Blaikie, NDP).

The BQ's stance on the campaign trail in 2004 and in the House of Commons following the election highlighted the salience of concern about arms control and strategic stability. The 2004 election platform declared the party would oppose "Canada's participation in the anti-missile defence shield and campaign in favor of an international treaty forbidding the militarization of space."<sup>199</sup> Other comments during the election made note of the destabilizing nature of the program, involvement in which the BQ was adamantly opposed.

The Bloc Québécois's activities in the House of Commons bar any doubt concerning the party's stance. In February 2004, the Bloc proposed a motion to cease negotiations with the US on GMD. After the motion was defeated, the party continued to denounce the program routinely. Party leader Gilles Duceppe equated participation with signing "a blank cheque for the militarization of space...."<sup>200</sup> Caucus member Claude Bachand, among others, added that partaking in GMD would undermine Canada's credibility as an advocate of arms control and tarnish its international reputation.<sup>201</sup> The program, Paul Crête stated in 2004, was at odds with the values of Quebec society: "[i]f there is one thing on which Quebecers agree, it is the inadvisability of getting involved in the development of a missile defence system."<sup>202</sup>

### **3.5.4 The Liberal Party of Canada**

The LPC's traditional opposition to missile defence and its commitment to arms control and strategic stability continued even after the end of the Cold War. As Lloyd Axworthy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Chretien government, argued, GMD was not only unreliable but could also undermine strategic stability and arms control arrangements, as well as precipitate

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<sup>199</sup> Bloc Québécois, *Un Parti proper au Quebec: Summary of the electoral platform* (2004), 3.

<sup>200</sup> Stein and Lang, 169.

<sup>201</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 21 October 2004 (Mr. Claude Bechand, BQ).

<sup>202</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 October 2004 (Mr. Paul Crête, BQ).

a new arms race.<sup>203</sup> Yet such sentiments did little to prevent Chretien from moving towards joining the US program in the pursuit of improved relations. By the time Martin became prime minister, a number of prominent Liberals supported the program, including leading Cabinet Ministers Bill Graham and Scott Brison.<sup>204</sup>

But it became apparent to most observers that GMD was too controversial an issue on which to spend political capital needlessly. Likely recognizing the electoral costs of taking a position on GMD, the LPC's 2004 election platform under the new leader, Paul Martin was bereft of any mention of the program. In fact, the platform's section on Canada's foreign policy did not even mention the North American defence relationship or the state of Canada's relations with the US. The focus fell on bolstering the Canadian Forces for missions abroad (specifically Afghanistan), nation-building, and combating disease in Africa.<sup>205</sup> Beyond the skepticism about GMD among the electorate, this absence resulted from the divide within the party itself.

By February 2005, the number of Liberals dissidents had grown as public support for participation continued to decline. According to Liberal MP Pat O'Brien, chairman of the House of Commons Defence Committee, nearly two-thirds of the Liberal caucus opposed joining the US initiative at this time, himself included.<sup>206</sup> High-ranking ministers stated publicly that Canada would not join a program that threatened to weaponize space and, instead, should encourage the US to rescind the program. In the House of Commons, Liberal MP Keith Martin succinctly summarized concerns about GMD: "[t]he government has made it very clear that Canada is firmly against the weaponization of space. It is something that the Prime Minister, the Minister

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<sup>203</sup> Barry, 16.

<sup>204</sup> David Pugliese, "Ex-diplomat warns of arms race in space: Missile defence plan could spark weapons rivalry," *Calgary Herald*, December 6, 2004, A 4.

<sup>205</sup> Liberal Party of Canada, *Moving Canada Forward: The Paul Martin Plan For Getting Things Done* (2004), 47-49, accessed July 29, 2010, [http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes2004/pdfplatforms/Liberal\\_platform\\_en.pdf](http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes2004/pdfplatforms/Liberal_platform_en.pdf).

<sup>206</sup> Hadekel, A 12.



of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have made abundantly clear time and time again.”<sup>207</sup>

The Canadian Alliance motion to place GMD under the command of NORAD brought to light the split in the Liberal caucus on the issue, as thirty-eight Liberal MPs voted against the motion. The BQ motion to end missile defence talks with the US also exposed the Liberal rift: instead of reigning in his caucus on the motion, Martin allowed its members to vote according to conscience. As a result, thirty Liberal MPs supported the motion.<sup>208</sup> As Peter Hadekel of the *Montreal Gazette* pointed out, if the government had chosen participation, it might have produced “a massive rupture within the Liberal Party and caucus.”<sup>209</sup>

Concern for strategic stability was also apparent among the Liberal Party rank and file. The Liberal youth wing planned to put forward a motion at the party convention in March of 2005 forbidding Canadian participation. This motion had the support of the Quebec wing and the women’s caucus was considering putting forward a similar motion.<sup>210</sup> Most analysts concluded it would pass at the convention, making a decision to join prior to the convention problematic, if not impossible afterwards.<sup>211</sup>

### 3.6 The Bureaucracy

Whereas relations between Ottawa and Washington during the SDI discussions had been, for the most part, harmonious, deliberations between officials in the two countries on GMD were characterized by a marked degree of acrimony. For the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and DND the most important priority was maintaining positive

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<sup>207</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 7 December 2004 (Mr. Keith Martin, LPC).

<sup>208</sup> Peter Hadekel, “Missile Defence Dissidents,” *The Montreal Gazette*, August 14, 2005, A 12.

<sup>209</sup> Ibbitson, A1.

<sup>210</sup> Barry, 22.

<sup>211</sup> Ibbitson, A1.

relations with the US. Still, apprehensions related to the program's possible effects on strategic stability instilled a degree of caution among government officials.

### **3.6.1 The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade**

Opinion within DFAIT was divided with regard to participation. Even before the idea of GMD became public, it is clear that DFAIT had qualms about the ramifications of missile defence for strategic stability. The official government statement crafted by the Department's officials on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in 1999 acknowledged that North Korea's nuclear missile program posed a threat, but advocated a different response to that of the US.<sup>212</sup> It stated that "Canada shares the international community's desire to preserve and protect current economic and security benefits from the use of outer space while avoiding the creation of new and daunting military competitions in the future."<sup>213</sup> The statement articulated Canada's continued support for the ABM Treaty and encouraged the nuclear powers to commit greater efforts to the reduction of nuclear arsenals.<sup>214</sup> It also argued NATO security was enhanced by developments in arms control and disarmament.<sup>215</sup>

These sentiments were hardly renounced when Bush introduced GMD. According to Lennox, the Department "recognized that BMD could be a destabilizing force in the world."<sup>216</sup> Donald Barry cogently summarizes the Department's concern for strategic stability once GMD was proposed:

Foreign Affairs officials remained cautious. They were worried that missile defence could lead China, India and Pakistan to expand their nuclear arsenals and threaten international arms control arrangements. They were also concerned that it could lead to the

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<sup>212</sup> Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs, *Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Advancing Canadian Objectives* [Ottawa], 1999, 8.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>216</sup> Lennox, 84.

weaponization of space, something Bush had not ruled out. They, therefore, advised against an early decision.<sup>217</sup>

DFAIT was cognizant of potential damage to Canada's niche role in nuclear arms control if it joined GMD. In the twenty-first century, this role was more than just a historical legacy, as Canada had been active in promoting measures at the United Nations Preventing an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). Yet by 2002, DFAIT had come to support participation in a missile defence program<sup>218</sup> and, prior to Bush's deployment announcement, recognized the necessity of discussing a role for Canada.<sup>219</sup> The rationale for the policy change was that participation in the program would help mend Canada-US relations, which had deteriorated in the latter years of the Chretien government.

### **3.6.2 The Department of National Defence**

DFAIT's concerns about destabilizing the international system were not at the forefront of the DND's strategic thinking. The main issue for DND was the capacity of GMD and willingness of the US to protect Canadians.<sup>220</sup> The official DND position was that an effective missile defence program covering North America could enhance Canadian security. Stein and Lang have argued that the real issue was improving Canada-US relations:

[officials] were convinced that Canada would pay a huge price [if it did not participate]: the withering away of NORAD, and lost access to intelligence and surveillance information. They kept coming back to the same argument; they feared that if Ottawa slapped the Bush administration in the face again on an issue Washington regarded as vital to its national security, and one that would cost Ottawa little or nothing, then the Canada-U.S. relationship would go into the deep-freeze at all levels.<sup>221</sup>

Yet within DND there were clearly misgivings about the program. Declassified documents demonstrate that DND officials had the same fears as many Canadians that the US

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<sup>217</sup> Barry, 19-20.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>219</sup> Fergusson, 230.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>221</sup> Stein and Lang, 166.

program posed a “significant risk” to international efforts to ban weapons in space.<sup>222</sup> Such misgivings did not materialize in policy recommendations, but undoubtedly contributed to the cautiousness of the Liberal Cabinet in considering policy alternatives.

Most authors claim that both DFAIT and DND opted for participation in GMD because of a concern about the state of Canada-US relations. As one of Martin’s advisors said anonymously about advice from these Departments: “there was a hangover from the Iraq decision that gave a hysterical tone to all the advice that was coming to us. It boiled down to – ‘You must do this, for God’s sake, or you will alienate the White House.’”<sup>223</sup> This analysis seems to be supported by Martin’s memoirs, in which he stated that the only argument his officials provided was the US’s likely reaction Canada if it opted not to join the program.<sup>224</sup> After Martin started to waver, DFAIT and DND officials became even more adamant that Canada could not afford to resist the White House on such an important matter for US security.<sup>225</sup>

### **3.7 The “Dithering” Prime Minister**

Like most Canadian prime ministers, Paul Martin came to office wanting to take a different direction from his predecessor and put his own stamp on Canada’s foreign policy. In an assessment of Martin’s foreign policy during his first year in office, Andrew Cohen wrote: “[i]n North America, Martin wants to mend fences with the United States, which means agreeing to protect and tighten the border and embracing missile defence, albeit reluctantly.”<sup>226</sup> The need to repair relations with Washington was indeed a top priority for the Prime Minister, as Chretien’s

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<sup>222</sup> Jeff Sallot, “Martin takes heat on missile defence,” *Globe and Mail*, December 3, 2004,

<sup>223</sup> Lennox, 88.

<sup>224</sup> Martin, 388-389.

<sup>225</sup> Stein and Lang, 169-170.

<sup>226</sup> Andrew Cohen, “Martin’s First Year on Foreign Policy – The Rhetoric of Good Intentions,” *Policy Options* February (2005): 48,

decision not to join the US in the 2003 invasion of Iraq was poorly communicated and caused considerable damage to Canada-US relations.<sup>227</sup> Participating in GMD was considered the logical first step towards refurbishing relations—one Martin would pursue until it became too politically costly.

As Martin's memoirs reveal, the prime minister was not a proponent of missile defence. From a defence and security perspective, he thought GMD was neither cost-effective nor addressed real threats posed by terrorists. Moreover, he pointed out that such a program held the potential to be destabilizing even if the theory of deterrence had become irrelevant.<sup>228</sup> Like his colleagues in Cabinet, he was evidently nervous to join a program that might include a space-based component. Yet the priority of improving relations with the US initially dominated his thinking; he wrote: "if the Americans were going ahead with BMD anyway, I thought there might be some virtue in Canada being at the table."<sup>229</sup>

In his memoirs, Martin provides an explanation of the evolution of his thinking on GMD. His first concern was the impact that a negative decision would have on the possibility of the renewal of NORAD. This concern was largely abated in August, 2004 when NORAD was renewed. His next concern was to ensure that Canada would never be asked to commit any funding if it participated.<sup>230</sup> And finally, he wanted a guarantee that "the system was designed with as much concern for Canadian lives and territory as American."<sup>231</sup> In particular, he wanted Canada to be involved in designing the program and a protocol by which Canadian cities were

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<sup>227</sup> Fergusson, 232.

<sup>228</sup> Martin, 384.

<sup>229</sup> Martin, 384.

<sup>230</sup> Martin, 386.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 387.

not sacrificed – in the event of a missile attack – in order to save a US city.<sup>232</sup> These concerns, he explains in his memoirs, went unanswered:

[a]s the weeks passed, I could not get the answer to my questions and it became increasingly obvious that someone, either in the U.S. Defence Department or at our Department of National Defence was stalling on my requests. I was getting increasingly frustrated.... I was becoming more and more doubtful about signing onto BMD.<sup>233</sup>

By 2004 the Prime Minister ceased making clear statements about GMD, not only in public, but in caucus and cabinet meetings too.<sup>234</sup> Aware of a waning of support for his leadership within the caucus and desiring to avoid needlessly spending his political capital, he tasked the new and popular Defence Minister, Bill Graham with getting support for the GMD. According to Stein and Lang, Martin asked Graham “to sell BMD to an increasingly recalcitrant Liberal caucus that knew very little about either the substance or the history of missile defence,” as well as a skeptical public and media, which Stein and Lang described as an “impossible assignment.”<sup>235</sup>

Publicly, Martin asserted that Canadian participation would be impossible if GMD involved weapons in space. It is fairly clear that neither Canadian nor US officials were able to convince the Prime Minister that GMD and space weapons were mutually exclusive, although Washington promised to allow Canada to opt out if the program moved in this direction.<sup>236</sup> The public was certainly not convinced of that and, as a result, put pressure on the government to make a negative decision.

An examination of the foreign policy review promulgated by Martin after becoming Prime Minister in 2004 provides another indication of the direction in which he wanted to push Canada and why GMD was rejected. The final report released in April of 2005, entitled

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Stein and Lang, 161.

<sup>235</sup> Stein and Lang, 162.

<sup>236</sup> Barry, 33, 41.

*Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, identified many of the threats that the Bush administration was targeting, including international terrorism and rogue states.<sup>237</sup> But the foreign policy statement contained no reference to missile defence as a solution to these threats. Instead, it opted for diplomatic, multilateral, and preventive solutions. The strategy for preventing rogue states and terrorist organizations from acquiring WMDs would be designed by DFAIT, not by DND. Canada would use diplomatic channels like the G8, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The foreign policy statement also reiterated Canada's longstanding policy goal of preventing an arms race in space.<sup>238</sup>

A highly influential factor in Martin's decision was domestic political conditions. The Liberal minority government relied on the parliamentary support of the Bloc and the NDP and, on this particular issue, their opposition was abundantly clear.<sup>239</sup> Even within the Liberal Party, an affirmative decision would likely have eroded Martin's support as leader or irreconcilably divided the cabinet and caucus. Furthermore, hostile public opinion polls, rooted in a ubiquitous detestation of President Bush, as well as apprehensions about weapons in space and a destabilized international environment, suggested there were worrisome electoral costs associated with participation. Quebec's unshakeable opposition was especially important for the Liberals who were, as Stein and Lang write, "desperate for electoral gains in the province."<sup>240</sup> For Martin, the GMD issue was politically problematic.

Bush's visit to Canada in November and December of 2004 served only to further attenuate the political viability of joining GMD. In spite of a prior agreement not to mention

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<sup>237</sup> Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World, Diplomacy* [Ottawa], 2005, 5.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-14.

<sup>239</sup> John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 111.

<sup>240</sup> Stein and Lang, 161.

missile defence, Bush raised the prospects of participation at a summit in Halifax. Because of his dismal approval ratings in Canada, this turned out to be a failed public diplomacy attempt and paradoxically, as Martin admitted, raised the political costs of participation for his government.

### 3.8 Rejection

On 24 February 2005, Pierre Pettigrew, the Minister of DFAIT, formally announced Canada would not partake in the US ballistic missile defence initiative:

The U.S. has weighed the risk to its citizens and territory against available resources, and has decided to proceed with deployment of a missile defence system. This is their right, and we understand and respect their decision.

Canada, however, must act in its own interests, and must determine where its own priorities lie. We must determine where investments will bring the greatest tangible results. After careful consideration of the issue of missile defence, we have decided that Canada will not participate in the U.S. ballistic missile defence system at this time.<sup>241</sup>

Bow points out that Martin, like Mulroney two decades earlier, declined to participate in missile defence in a manner that “[won] points with voters at home, ...[but] was rather provocative for Americans.”<sup>242</sup> Because negotiations with the US had been ongoing, and the Martin government had agreed to amend the NORAD Agreement in 2004, the announcement on GMD was unexpected by the US Administration.<sup>243</sup>

Paul Cellucci, the US Ambassador to Canada, said a chief complaint of Washington was the manner in which the Canadian decision was delivered. Some members of the Bush Administration were furious, notwithstanding Canada’s support of GMD as a concept, on account of how the Canadian decision was communicated. Whereas Mulroney ensured that Reagan was aware of the pending decision prior to the government’s announcement, Martin failed to inform Bush until after the decision was aired by the press. In fact Martin had several

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<sup>241</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 24 February 2005 (Mr. Pierre Pettigrew, LPC).

<sup>242</sup> Bow, page unnumbered.

<sup>243</sup> Fergusson, 207.



opportunities to inform Bush personally of his position at the NATO summit in Brussels, Belgium, days earlier but failed to do so.<sup>244</sup> The President admitted he was angry that he was not informed of the decision at the Brussels Summit when the opportunity presented itself.<sup>245</sup> American Rear-Admiral Ian Mack informed Canadian officials that the mood in Washington engendered by Canada's decision was neither pleasant nor understanding. He alleged that, in the minds of US officials, Canada had said no seven times in recent cases, and these people no longer considered Canada to be a reliable ally.<sup>246</sup>

At home, critics contended the decision weakened NORAD and called into question Canada's reliability as an ally and its ability to protect its own sovereignty.<sup>247</sup> In reality, the decision would have little effect on Canada-US relations and neither NORAD nor Canadian sovereignty would be affected as a result. Bush pledged to defend Canada against ICBMs regardless and, as in most situations where there are differences between like-minded allies, the problems caused by the Martin government's pronouncement eventually dissipated. David T. Jones noted accurately in May 2005 that "[t]he flare-up over Canadian non-participation in North American missile defence is now fading. Shortly, it will be just another memorably unpleasant chapter in recent politico-military bilateral relationship between the United States and Canada."<sup>248</sup> The Bush administration indeed soon came to welcome Canada's concurrent decision to increase funding for border security and, shortly afterward, the adoption of a combat role for the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.<sup>249</sup> Martin's subsequent comment on the impact of the decision on relations with the Bush administration showed that the damage had been

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<sup>244</sup> Barry, 42.

<sup>245</sup> Alexander Panetta, "Canadians give Martin big thumbs up on BMD stand on eve of summit with Bush," *The Canadian Press*, March 22, 2005, accessed August 25, 2010, <http://proquest.umi.com.cyber.usask.ca/>.

<sup>246</sup> Stein and Lang, 167.

<sup>247</sup> Barry, 12-13.

<sup>248</sup> David T. Jones, "When Politics Trumps Security: A Washington Vantage Point," *Policy Options* May (2005): 45.

<sup>249</sup> Barry, 13.

minimal: “I called Bush later. He took a week to get back to me, but my call with Bush was fine. BMD was much bigger here than it ever was there.”<sup>250</sup> Celluci, among the fiercest advocates in the Bush administration of Canadian participation, seemed to agree, stating “it did no damage to Canada-U.S. Relations....”<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Stein and Lang, 177.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to answer the question: what is it about missile defence that has brought the Canadian people and their governments to reject or to choose not to participate in US-missile defence initiatives? The first section of the chapter explores the consistencies between the SDI and GMD cases in terms of the role played by the main political actors in Canada in making the case that US-led missile defence initiatives were unacceptable because of an overriding Canadian concern about arms control and strategic stability. The second section explores the viability of the notion that Canadian support for arms control and strategic stability was rooted in internationalism and, in particular, its focus on preserving world order.

#### **4.2 The Commitment to Arms Control and Strategic Stability**

This thesis recognizes that there were a number of factors that influenced Canadians in their rejection of participation in the SDI and GMD initiatives. Canadian antipathy towards US President Reagan in the case of the SDI and President Bush in the case of GMD was an important factor. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate Canadian concerns about the missile technology from concerns about the broader thrust of US foreign policy under these two Presidents, considering both leaders were immensely unpopular in Canada. Secondly, each program was also plagued by skepticism regarding technological feasibility among political leaders and the public in Canada. The economic and security benefits of these initiatives for Canada were perceived as exaggerated and unlikely to be realized, which contributed to the lack of enthusiasm among Canadians. Thirdly, claims that Canadian sovereignty would be eroded by

these programs or that Ottawa would have no control over them whatsoever caused concern as well. What the research shows here is that a prominent factor in the missile defence decisions was an overriding concern about arms control and maintaining the strategic balance in the world. A summary of positions taken by the public, political parties, public service, and Prime Minister on the missile defence systems provides the evidence.

#### **4.2.1 The Public**

There is little doubt that the Canadian electorate played a seminal role in the rejection of both missile defence initiatives. In 1985 opinion polls and the peace movement attested to the strong opposition to SDI in Canada. Although some polls in early 1985 found support for participation, it was markedly unenthusiastic. Moreover, most Quebecers came out fervently against participation. The Progressive Conservative Party relied on electoral support from both Western Canada and Quebec, and opting for involvement in missile defence would have threatened their tenuous hold in both places. As Chapter Two demonstrates, public opposition towards SDI was based, to a significant degree, on public perceptions of the initiative as an affront to arms control treaties and strategic stability.

In 2005, the public realm in Canada was devoid of a significant peace movement, but opinion polling indicates that public opposition to Bush's GMD was even more widespread than to SDI. Again, various statements from interest groups, newspaper editorials, and prominent public figures highlight how concerns for arms control and strategic stability reflected the public's distaste for the program. Widespread opposition among Quebecers seems to have been an even greater factor for the Liberal Party in 2005 than Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives two decades earlier as the Liberal Party was clearly desperate for electoral gains in the province.

In light of the evidence, the conclusions drawn by Middlemiss and Sokolsky from the SDI case are as applicable in 2005 as they were in 1985. That nuclear weapons was at issue in both cases undoubtedly contributed to the divisive debates that transpired around the missile programs. Middlemiss and Sokolsky go further in proposing that “there is a certain ambivalence in Canadian opinion when the government’s support for specific U.S. and NATO policies and doctrines appears to be inconsistent with its espousal of the cause of arms control and disarmament.”<sup>252</sup> This was certainly true in the cases of SDI and GMD. The evidence shows that strong public opposition was a major factor in both decisions. More specifically, the opposition of the Canadian public to both missile defence initiatives had, in Denis Stairs’s words, a “parameter-setting effect,”<sup>253</sup> rendering participation politically unfeasible.

#### **4.2.2 The Political Parties**

Parliamentary democracy made sure that neither the SDI nor the GMD decision was immune to pressures from political parties. The substance of policy pronouncements, posturing, and pressure from within all parties (with the exception of the Conservative Party of Canada in 2005) highlighted arms control and strategic stability as issues in influencing the government’s decisions in both cases.

Opposition parties were forthright in their aversion to the prospect of Canada participating in missile defence. It is clear that concern for arms control and strategic stability dominated the NDP’s positions regarding each program. Although the BQ did not exist in 1985,

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<sup>252</sup> Middlemiss and Sokolsky, 115.

<sup>253</sup> Denis Stairs describes this effect as follows: “public opinions can... have the effect of establishing certain limits on what policy-makers are actually able to do – able, that is, within the range of what they regard as acceptable, or tolerable, political and other costs. Such opinions can serve, in short, to confine the policy community’s range of politically workable choices.” Denis Stairs, “Public Opinion and External Affairs: Reflections on the Domestication of Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal*, vol. 33 (1977-1978): 131.

its appraisal of GMD in 2005 reflected the same preoccupation. Both the NDP and the Bloc consistently raised the issues of weapons in space, a new arms race, and a less stable strategic environment. There is also much evidence that concerns about arms control and strategic stability were among the chief reasons the Liberal Party disapproved of SDI while sitting as the Official Opposition in 1985. Among opposition parties in both cases, the Conservative Party of Canada in 2005 was the only party that refrained from denouncing GMD, which may have had as much to do with domestic political calculations as with policy. Certainly NDP and BQ opposition was critical in the lead up to the 2005 decision, largely because the Liberal government relied on the NDP for support in the House of Commons.

Moreover, both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments in 1985 and 2005 faced strong opposition to participation in missile defence from within their own ranks. Red Tories like Joe Clark and Douglas Roche, who viewed SDI as an affront to arms control efforts and Cold War stability, clearly influenced Mulroney's political calculations. The growing majority opposed to GMD in the Liberal cabinet and wider caucus in 2005 was even more noticeable, because of the minority government situation and the anticipation of an election.

### **4.2.3 The Bureaucracy**

In light of DND's mandate to defend Canadian territory and population, as well as its commitments to the US under NORAD, its support for both missile defence initiatives was expected. In 1985 and leading up to 2005, the Department had been set back by years of budget cuts. SDI and GMD presumably offered DND the possibility of increased equipment funding, not to mention the potential for an expanded role for NORAD. A successful missile defence program would act as a hedge against attacks by either the Soviet Union or rogue states and terrorist organizations. Finally, in both cases, there was anxiety about how non-participation

would affect Canada-US defence relations. But, as the analysis above has shown, even within DND there were misgivings about the both missiles programs. With SDI, both DND and DFAIT had concerns about the “‘destabilizing’ nature of high altitude Anti-Satellite systems” — which were part of the SDI concept.<sup>254</sup> And DND officials had the same fears as many Canadians that GMD posed a “significant risk” to international efforts to ban weapons in space.<sup>255</sup>

For the DEA (and its successor, DFAIT) it was a slightly different story. DEA and DFAIT were responsible for Canada’s international reputation and interests, which were firmly established in the field of arms control. Participation in SDI and GMD threatened Canada’s reputation and credibility as an active arms control advocate and there is little doubt of the discomfort felt by officials in these Departments with the possibility of weapons in space and another costly arms race, both of which ostensibly carried undesirable ramifications for the geostrategic balance.

As with DND, DEA (and DFAIT) placed great importance on maintaining good relations with the US; it was always in the background, and sometimes in the foreground, of discussions on missile defence. But with both SDI and GMD there was an unmistakable recognition of the commitments that Canada had made to arms control and to vehicles and policies that achieved strategic stability.

#### **4.2.4 The Prime Ministers**

Missile defence presented Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin with an opportunity to improve Canadian relations with the US and to ensure NORAD remained relevant to Canada. Yet both prime ministers recount the unease that they felt with the implications of the

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<sup>254</sup> Legault and Fortmann, 410.

<sup>255</sup> Jeff Sallot, “Martin takes heat on missile defence,” *Globe and Mail*, December 3, 2004.

respective missile defence programs. Mulroney took issue with SDI based on concerns about arms control efforts and its implications for strategic stability, while Martin vowed not to participate in GMD if it weaponized space.

There is little doubt that Mulroney's concerns about strategic stability influenced his decision. He was, according to Peter Newman, alarmed by the idea of SDI technology in space and by the possibility of another costly round in the arms race.<sup>256</sup> Because of these concerns, his government was pleased to hear initially from Washington that SDI would be bound by the ABM treaty. Further evidence of Mulroney's concern is provided by a letter that he wrote to Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet General Secretary, in September 1985:

Canada's geographic location naturally requires us to take a particular interest in strategic issues and their associated arms control dimensions.... My government attaches great importance to maintaining the integrity of the ABM Treaty, one of the key elements in the strategic balance. Strict adherence by both parties to its provisions is one of fundamental importance to the arms control process.<sup>257</sup>

Mulroney declined to justify his position publicly on SDI in strategic terms. This is likely because he wanted to use language that would help improve the atmosphere of Canada-US relations, which had deteriorated under the Trudeau government. Saying no to Washington undiplomatically would have likely caused more damage to the Canada-US relationship.

Mulroney was keen to avoid the public outcry in Canada that might accompany a decision to participate in an exceedingly unpopular program. Although leading the largest majority government in Canadian history, his party's support rested on a fragile coalition of supporters from Western Canada and Quebec. And Quebecers had come out strongly in opposition to Canadian involvement in SDI. In the end, the "polite no" was partly a matter of minimizing differences in Canadian and US policy, and partly a recognition of the misgivings of Canadians (especially in Quebec) about arms control and strategic stability.

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<sup>256</sup> Newman, 307.

<sup>257</sup> Mulroney, 353.



By the time Martin had come to power in 2004, the international system had been transformed by the 9/11 attacks—for him, the strategic implications of a missile defence were no longer related to the cold war. His Foreign Minister, Peter Pettigrew stated: “we face a security environment dramatically different than during the cold war. While prospects of nuclear war and tensions between superpowers have diminished, prospects of asymmetrical threats have risen.”<sup>258</sup> Unlike Mulroney, who told Gorbachev that, in Canada’s view, missile defence systems would affect the strategic balance, Martin initially told Russian President Vladimir Putin that in the case of GMD this was not Canada’s greatest concern.<sup>259</sup>

In this sense, Martin and his senior colleagues appraised missile defence differently from Mulroney and his ministers. Of course, the respective decisions were made in two entirely different international and domestic political environments. In 1985, the bi-polar, nuclear-armed standoff characterizing the Cold War could not be ignored. In 2005, Canada’s borders and neighbours remained, but the importance of the country’s geography and international strategic stability had declined in the post-9/11 political atmosphere. Canada’s concerns, Martin indicated, were with different kinds of actors in the international system. But the public, and especially Quebecers whose electoral support was critical for Martin, was now concerned about the change to the strategic environment where outer space might be weaponized, and the Prime Minister personally echoed this concern.

### **4.3 Locating Internationalism in the Missile Defence Debate**

The preceding analysis largely affirms Phillipe Legassé’s and Patrick Lennox’s propositions that Canada’s opposition to missile defence has been mainly about strategic

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<sup>258</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 24 February 2005 (Mr. Pierre Pettigrew, LPC).

<sup>259</sup> Martin, 390.

stability. But from where does such a concern about the international strategic environment arise? This thesis locates its roots in the Canadian political culture, or rather in ideas that Canadians have about the type of international system that they prefer. There is an abundance of evidence of significant opposition to SDI and GMD not only in statements by the Prime Ministers at the time but also in reports and/or comments by party leaders, senior bureaucrats, leading academics, activists, the press and the general public. Such statements can be seen as a reflection of a widely held view among Canadians that stability in the international system and initiatives such as those that promote arms control, are inherently desirable. Such a view, this thesis argues, is an expression of the Canadian brand of internationalism.

Some scholars argue that internationalism was a dominant idea in Canadian foreign policy in the decades immediately after the Second World War, but that by the 1970s it had lost its salience. Keating, Munton, and Nossal dispute this, and have argued that Canadian internationalism was still prevalent at the time of the SDI and GMD initiatives. The argument made here is that Canadian opposition to these two initiatives reflected the continued support by Canadians of internationalism, and in particular their search for one of internationalism's main goals — world order. The thesis maintains that, regardless of whether we are speaking of a bipolar nuclear and economic standoff or unipolar domination in an age of asymmetric threats, Canadian doubts about US-led missile defence initiatives were prompted by a belief that the premises behind such initiatives ran counter to Canada's traditional support of international treaties and of multilateralism.

An ABM system's effect on order in either era was fiercely debated among politicians. Even experts were highly divided on whether SDI or GMD would greatly alter the strategic calculus. Arguably, as a research program, the former never actually threatened nuclear deterrence, and the latter was created in an era void of deterrence or a nuclear balance. Whether

or not the general public or policy experts and leaders appraised each program's effect on the existing orders correctly is not the focus. Rightly or wrongly, the view that American dominance of the strategic nuclear game threatened what tenuous order existed sheds light on how such programs were an affront to this basic ideal of Canadian internationalism.

### **4.3.1 The Treaties**

A great deal of Canadians' criticism aimed at SDI and GMD was based upon their support for the 1972 ABM and 1967 Outer Space Treaties. Considered a crucial tool for preserving Cold War deterrence, the ABM Treaty always had strong Canadian support. Canadians were evidently uncomfortable with the idea that the US could undo nuclear deterrence and MAD by developing anti-ballistic missile technology. The threat to the Outer Space Treaty was also prevalent among Canadians' appraisal of US missile technology. They viewed this Treaty as a critical component of international order, a key hedge against a costly arms race in the final frontier.

In 1985, public dialogue in Canada about missile defence included continuing references to the ABM Treaty. Numerous individuals and organizations that composed the peace movement expressed concerns about the possible demise of the Treaty. But such concerns extended beyond the peace movement to government leaders, experts, public servants and parliamentarians. When SDI was first discussed, the Mulroney government was relieved to hear that this initiative would not threaten the ABM Treaty.<sup>260</sup>

Much of the concern about SDI related to the scope and intent of its weaponry. For while SDI was ostensibly a research initiative, it had the potential to lead the US towards actual deployment of the technology in outer space. Such an occurrence would not only violate the

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<sup>260</sup> Lennox, 77.

Outer Space Treaty but could cause a nuclear arms race in outer space, leading to a destabilized US-Soviet relationship and perhaps even war.

After the US withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002, the concerns of Canadians about a possible arms race in space grew. Such concerns were further intensified when the Bush Administration came forward with the concept of GMD. While Russia and China responded to the GMD initiative by announcing their own new missile programs, Canadian officials worried about the position in which Canada would be placed. As Lennox clarifies:

[s]upport for missile defence would align Canada with what was widely seen after the 2002 US abrogation of the 1972 ABM Treaty as a destabilizing US foreign policy. As a result, such support could harm Canada's specialized reputation in the broader international community. The prospect of an invincible America, combined with the corrosive effect the pursuit of this lofty goal had on the legal fabric of international society, put missile defence at odds with Canada's interests in a multilateral managed, arms-controlled, anti-nuclear international system.<sup>261</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed by a variety of Canadians in the months that followed. Polls showed that both the public and the Canadian Prime Minister believed that GMD would weaponize space and lead to a new arms race. Martin declared publicly that Canada would not join a program that placed weapons in space.

### **4.3.2 Multilateralism**

It is also arguable that Canada's rejection of SDI and GMD reflected the preference of Canadians to work for the stabilization of the international environment by multilateral as opposed to unilateral means. Canada's goals were arms control and strategic stability, both being intrinsic goals in the multilateral search for world order. For example, Canadian policy-makers viewed SDI as a threat to superpower negotiations in Stockholm and Geneva, which most NATO members, including Canada, supported. In short, Canada's concerns about SDI were clearly premised upon the Canadian desire for multilateral solutions in a delicate strategic environment.

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<sup>261</sup> Lennox, 86.

Just as important for Canadians was the fact that other countries, besides Canada, viewed SDI and GMD as dangerously unilateral and destabilizing. They linked SDI and GMD to Reagan's and Bush's broader foreign policies, which they found alarming. The Reagan administration's "evil empire" rhetoric was distressing for many, especially after a decade of détente. According to Clarkson and Lorimer, under Reagan, the Pentagon took American unilateralism to new heights with minimal consultation with allies; the goal was to build US military superiority and challenge the USSR in any potential theatre of war.<sup>262</sup> David Watt contends that both Canadians and their European counterparts believed the Reagan administration "vastly overreacted to the Soviet threat, thereby distorting the American (and hence the world) economy, quickening the arms race, warping its own judgment about events in the Third World, and further debasing the language of international intercourse with feverish rhetoric."<sup>263</sup> SDI, a centrepiece of Reagan's foreign policy, was an unmistakable expression of US unilateralism, which Canadians opposed.

President George W. Bush's foreign policy was even more unpopular in Canada than Reagan's. Bush proved to be so unpopular that one could speak of an intense "anti-Bushism,"<sup>264</sup> which was different than traditional anti-Americanism. GMD appeared to be synonymous with the much-hated Bush Doctrine, which many Canadians perceived to be aggressively militaristic and destabilizing. They also associated it with Bush's unilateralism, another example of which was his decision to abrogate the ABM treaty without meaningful consultation with other NATO members. National polls and statements by Canadian officials indicate that Canadians deemed the ABM Treaty abrogation to be irresponsible. They were unconvinced by the Bush

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<sup>262</sup> Clarkson and Lorimer, 248.

<sup>263</sup> David Watt, "The Conduct of American Foreign Policy: As a European Saw it," *Foreign Affairs* special edition (1983).

<sup>264</sup> Jean-Cristophe Boucher, "Questing for an independent Canadian foreign policy: Quebec's perception of the Ballistic Missile Defence (2002-2005)," (Paper presented at the International Studies Association Convention, Montreal, Quebec, March 16-19, 2011).

Administration's claim that deterrence and nuclear stability were relics of the Cold War and held on to the logic of deterrence among the five original nuclear powers along with other nuclear-armed states.<sup>265</sup> While the US openly sought strategic superiority, Canadians believed their interests and values were better served by a more predictable world in which Canada continued to provide support for multilateral arms control agreements and opposed those initiatives that created distrust and instability.

Canada's historic role in arms control, characterized by several decades of leadership in multilateral arms control regimes, must be considered as well. On one hand, the public continuously desired the peace and cooperation they associated with multilateralism and welcomed headlines which spoke of Canadian involvement. On the other hand, government officials and policy experts understood Canada's reputation for leadership and support for multilateral arms control agreements.<sup>266</sup>

### **4.3.3 Missile Defence and Peace**

In support of the argument that Canada's devotion to arms control and strategic stability was rooted in internationalism, it is important to note that this commitment was also consistent with internationalism's other main tenet: peace. Clearly many Canadians were strongly opposed to SDI and GMD because their effects on arms control and world stability threatened world peace. Both SDI and GMD were connected to what Canadians perceived to be militaristic agendas and, as a result, were often viewed as offensive projects in spite of their defensive aim. From the perspective of Canadians who were unfamiliar with theories related to nuclear deterrence, international trends, and geopolitics, these initiatives represented quite simply a

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<sup>265</sup> Jeffrey S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture," in *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, ed. John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, and Colin S. Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 100.

threat to peace. As James G. Fergusson writes: "...the Canadian public, like all Western publics, is intuitively predisposed to oppose policies that speak of killing and war."<sup>267</sup> Such statements elucidate the connection between peace and order, as well as internationalism`s connection to missile defence.

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<sup>267</sup> Fergusson, 244.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

The roots of Canadian antipathy towards SDI and GMD are difficult to pinpoint. Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, Canadians' support for arms control and strategic stability was an important factor behind the rejection of both initiatives. The evidence shows that such a stance arose out of a Canadian preoccupation with the pursuit of world order. To this end, Canadians were upholding ideals integral to internationalism, which called for the upholding of international treaties and the preference for multilateralism. A number of conclusions may be drawn from this study.

Among the most obvious conclusions of this thesis is that ideas matter in the formulation of foreign policy. This is far from a new or innovative finding, as much study has already been devoted to the influence of ideas on policy. What is worth noting is the nature of these ideas and how they are articulated in the face of divisive issues. The emphasis each program's opponents placed on arms races and the weaponization of space was indicative of the need for simplicity in communicating with the public. As arms control treaties and strategic stability carry a certain complexity often lost upon the average voter, these more easily identifiable concepts were used to galvanize opposition. What this might suggest is that although internationalism is strong in Canada, Canadians struggle to define it. But perhaps the struggle to articulate internationalism has as much to do with its complexity as it does with the latency of dominant ideas.

This thesis also lends credence to Denis Stairs's notion of a parameter-setting effect. It could be fairly argued that the strong opposition resting on internationalism and the pursuit of order acted as parameters for both prime ministers. Although these parameters were not so defined that neither Mulroney nor Martin could move beyond them had they chosen participation, such a decision would have had a significant impact on their political capital. From



this angle, participation would have been political infeasible. Nevertheless, the scope and influence of this effect on government activity is extraordinarily difficult to gauge, so it is probably better to avoid unscholarly speculation until the parameters of public opinion can be more thoroughly explored. At the very least, parameter-setting is a logical and interesting concept that students of Canadian foreign policy and international relations should continue to consider in their analysis of foreign policy dilemmas, especially in instances of intense public pressure.

Finally, Canada's decision to reject SDI and GMD casts doubts on repeated declarations by academics that Canadian internationalism has been in decline since the end of the Cold War. Public discourse in Canada on foreign policy issues, along with polling and in-depth academic studies, demonstrate the resilience of internationalism; two decades seem to have done little to mitigate the potency of this dominant idea. Although recent government policies have arguably been painted more in Continentalist, Regionalist, or perhaps even Realist hues, internationalism shows no sign of disappearing at the public level. Indeed, internationalism remains a centre-piece of the national political culture.

Its survival as a component of Canadian political culture raises a few questions for students and scholars of Canadian foreign policy to explore: Will internationalism thrive amidst domestic and global changes in the twenty-first century, and with a government in Ottawa apparently committed to a foreign policy that shuns international diplomacy in favour of the pursuit of economic and security interests? Will internationalism come to be used mostly as a tool of rhetoric while other dominant ideas increasingly determine the substance of Canada's foreign policy? More specifically, how will Canada pursue arms control in a world that is likely to see more exotic weaponry in the arsenals of major great powers and how will it reconcile its commitments to either NORAD or NATO amidst these pursuits? Finally, what sort of dilemmas

might missile defence bring for Canada in the near future? The questions surrounding internationalism and a future missile defence dilemma are worthy of contemplation.

Since Stephen Harper's Conservatives formed government in 2006, there has been a clear attempt to steer Canada's foreign policy away from internationalist ideas. A determination to distinguish Harper's ideologically-based approach from ideas often associated with the Liberal Party is the most likely source of this shift. The Harper approach envisages a Canada less willing to "go along to get along", a focus on sectoral national interests, and a slightly more militaristic or aggressive tone. Given that internationalism has had decades to entrench itself in the national psyche, it is unclear if the Harper government will be able to reshape Canada's foreign policy along such lines. Future research should seek to determine if this ideational shift has a lasting impact on Canadians' views of international relations and foreign policy. The possible emergence of another dominant idea should be considered.

NATO's ongoing effort to build a European missile defence system will undoubtedly be the subject of another case study in the near future. The alliance's consensus-based approach to decision-making suggests that Canada has not opposed this endeavour. On the other hand, the notion that Canada influenced the language and scope of the program cannot be ruled out. When more details are available, scholars should explore the sources of Canada's decision to either support or not prevent this development.

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