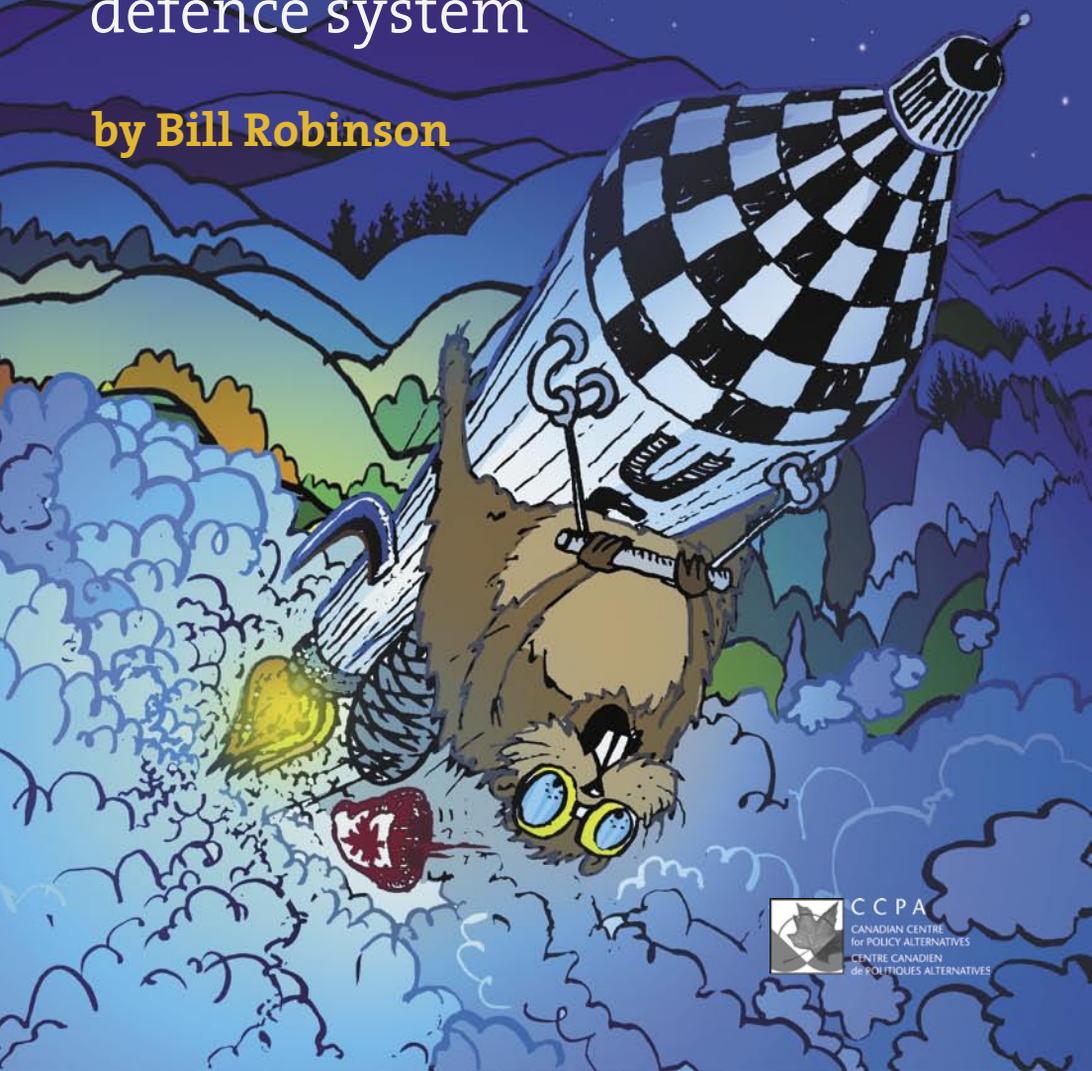


# LET'S NOT GO BALLISTIC:

The case against Canadian participation in the U.S. missile defence system

by **Bill Robinson**

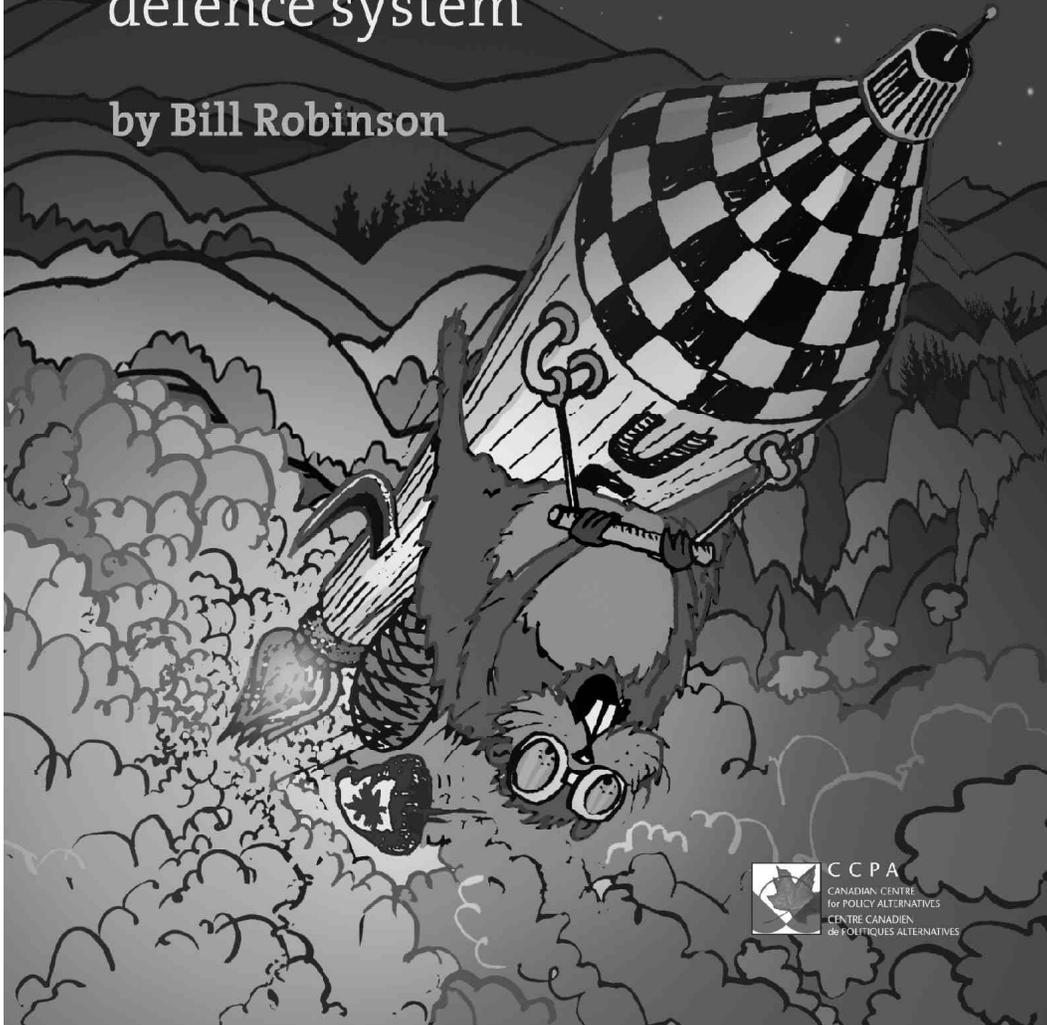


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March 2005

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Bill Robinson has been writing about Canadian defence and security policy issues since 1983. From 1986 to 2001, he was on the staff of Project Ploughshares, an ecumenical peace centre of the Canadian Council of Churches. Since 2001, he has done research and writing for Project Ploughshares, the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the Polaris Institute, and other organizations.



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**T**he Canadian government is now in the final throes of deciding whether or not Canada should participate in the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence System. Formal discussions with the United States were begun more than a year ago, with the expectation that the talks would take “a number of months” and conclude in an agreement to participate. Since that time, in the wake of the intervening federal election, Prime Minister Paul Martin has expressed some concerns about participation, and the ultimate decision now appears less certain than it did several months ago.

Despite a lot of debate about Canada’s possible BMD involvement, the issues raised by the Prime Minister (and several key issues that he has not raised) remain unresolved, with fundamental questions unanswered.

Six key issues need to be addressed by the government and the Canadian public before any decision to participate in missile defence should be considered:

1. Canada’s decision-making role in missile defence.
2. The contribution of missile defence to Canada’s defence needs.
3. The overall effect on Canadian (and global) security.
4. The relationship of BMD to the weaponization of space.
5. Whether the costs are compatible with Canadian priorities.
6. The need for full and informed public and Parliamentary participation.

Canadians deserve satisfactory answers to all of the questions raised by these issues. Failure to provide satisfactory answers for any one of them ought to be reason enough to reject participation. To date, the proponents of participation within the Canadian government have failed to provide such answers, probably because there simply aren't any convincing pro-missile-defence arguments.

Let's examine each of these six issues in detail.

## **1. A SEAT AT THE TABLE? (OR A SEAT ON THE BUS?)**

One of the principal arguments advanced for joining the U.S. missile defence system is that Canada should have a “seat at the table” where missile defence decisions will be made. Prime Minister Martin has said that “Canada wants to have a voice” in missile defence decisions: “We’re not just going to be an innocent bystander; we want to have a say.”<sup>1</sup>

Having a say over the direction of the program certainly ought to be a crucial requirement of any Canadian participation. But what kind of decision-making power would a seat at the table actually provide? Canadian officials suggest that Canada would get no decision-making powers at all, only “improved insight” into the program and “some limited influence” over how it evolves.<sup>2</sup>

There are three reasons why the “voice” Canada would get by joining is insufficient to justify Canadian participation.

**FIRST**, the most important missile defence decisions—setting research, development, test, and evaluation priorities; assigning contracts; making deployment decisions; setting overall policies on missile defence and space weapons—won’t be made on the system-operator level, where Canada would participate. The *real* missile defence decision-makers will be in the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Strategic Command, the Missile Defense Agency, and Congress. Northern Command (or whatever agency ultimately operates the North American part of the system) will be able to make recommendations on some of these matters, but it will have no control over them.<sup>3</sup>

**SECOND**, the likelihood of Canada’s views carrying any weight even at the Northern Command table is minimal. With neither money nor any other substantial contribution to the system to offer, Canada would have negligible bargaining power.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, if history is any guide, attempts to exert influence are unlikely even to be made. According

to Canadian officials, as of 1998 Canada had not even tried to use its seat at the NORAD table to advocate Canada's positions against space weaponization and in support of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, even though the two issues have huge consequences for future NORAD operations. The explanation for this record of silence was that Canada has the Permanent Joint Board on Defence and other, more appropriate, government-to-government, department-to-department, and military-to-military channels to consult with the U.S. and put forward Canada's views on such matters.<sup>5</sup> But these channels will continue to exist whether Canada participates in missile defence or not.

THIRD, the influence conferred by membership would also work in the opposite direction—and the driver of the bus has a lot more influence over the direction taken by its passengers than the passengers do over the direction taken by the driver. In practice, the U.S. will make the decisions,

#### **THE SOVEREIGNTY RED HERRING**

U.S. missile defence plans clearly do have consequences for Canadians and their security. But the U.S. has stated that it has no plans to place missile defence systems in Canadian territory. And the system being deployed is designed to make interceptions not in the atmosphere but in outer space—over which Canada has no territorial claim.

Thus, unless sovereignty is redefined to mean the ability to control any act anywhere on or around the planet that may have consequences for Canadians, it is Canada's interests that are affected by missile defence, not Canada's sovereignty.

The war in Iraq provides a good analogy. That war also is likely to affect Canadians and their security in profound ways, but no one has yet claimed that Canada must join the war in Iraq to protect Canadian sovereignty.

and the Canadian personnel at the missile defence table will, in all likelihood, spend more time advocating U.S. positions to Canada than advocating Canadian positions to the U.S.

When Prime Minister Brian Mulroney rejected Canadian participation in the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1985, he specifically cited concerns about “getting involved in a situation where the parameters are beyond our control and where the government of Canada does not call the shots.”<sup>6</sup> He also cited the potential limiting effect of participation on Canada’s freedom of action: “Does it hinder your capacity to act independently? Does it mute a noble voice, Canada’s, in the question of arms reduction and arms limitation? These are important questions for a national government...”<sup>7</sup>

They remain important questions today, and the answers are abundantly clear. Participation will tie Canadian policy to U.S. missile defence decision-making, *but it will not give Canada any control over those decisions*. The Canadian government will find itself faced time and again with decisions that it would not itself have made but that it will feel compelled to defend in public in order to deflect suggestions that Canada withdraw from the program. The “improved insight” that Canada gains from participation will, at best, make Canada a more effective apologist for the program.

In short, what Canada can expect to get from participation is a seat on the missile defence bus and a ticket to ride wherever the program is going. What we will *not* get is a role in the driver’s seat.

## **2. REAL DEFENCE? (YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE)**

The 1994 *Defence White Paper* stated that Canadian involvement in missile defence would have to “make an unambiguous contribution to Canada’s defence needs” (among other conditions).<sup>8</sup> Such a contribution presupposes at least two things: first, there must be a threat capable of being addressed by missile defence; and, second, the negative security consequences of missile defence deployment must be minimal, or at least outweighed by the advantages of deployment. (*For more on the negative security consequences, see “OVERALL EFFECT ON CANADIAN SECURITY” below.*)

Many critiques of missile defence have addressed the credibility of the purported threat from “rogue” states. There is at the moment no long-range missile threat from such states. It is purely conjectural: a problem that may develop at some point in the future. Others have pointed out the huge technological challenges that remain before any missile defence is likely to have much chance of success. These are serious critiques that do much to discredit missile defence.

But there is another—even more fundamental—critique of the case for missile defence. Even if we assume that the threat of attack is real and that a missile defence system that has a reasonable chance of intercepting an attacking missile can be built, such a system is unlikely to provide real protection. Why? Because the country that wants to attack will know the system exists and, if convinced of its effectiveness, will either build enough weapons to overwhelm it or choose another method of attack that is more likely to succeed.

The range of possible alternatives to long-range ballistic missiles is large and varied. The U.S. intelligence community has suggested that alternatives available to such states include cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), passenger aircraft, transport aircraft, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), short-range ballistic

missiles (SRBMs) launched from ships off our coasts, and smuggled weapons.<sup>9</sup> The current missile defence system will have no capability against any of these approaches.

Simply convincing a would-be attacker to adopt one of these alternative modes of attack would accomplish very little, and might leave us worse off than before. Long-range missiles are fast and make a more visible “deterrent” force, but the alternatives are potentially more threatening in several ways: in particular, they probably would be “more reliable” than the crude long-range missiles available to “rogue” states, probably would be “more accurate” than those missiles, would be “less expensive” to develop and build, would “avoid missile defences,” and could be “covertly developed and employed” in order to prevent us from knowing the source of an attack.<sup>10</sup>

Defences against these threats would cost an enormous amount of money—dwarfing the costs of the current missile defence system—and would be fraught with practical difficulties. Defence against smuggled weapons, if the “War on Drugs” is any guide, is probably simply undoable.

It makes no sense to build a missile defence system unless there is good reason to conclude that displacement

### **THE MAGINOT LINE: A CAUTIONARY TALE**

France’s Maginot Line, a massive series of fortifications built along the French-German border in the years before the Second World War, probably seemed like a good idea at the time. And it even worked, in a sense. When the Germans invaded and conquered France in 1940, they didn’t do it by breaking through the Maginot Line. *They went around it instead, through the Netherlands.* In the end, by diverting France’s defence resources and encouraging a groundless complacency, the Maginot Line may actually have contributed to the disaster that followed. It certainly did nothing to “deter” it.

### **SOME THINGS DID NOT CHANGE ON SEPTEMBER 11**

“September 11 changed the way Canada looks at security.” Perhaps the least credible argument put forward in support of Canadian participation in missile defence is the suggestion that interest in missile defence is somehow a product of the September 11 attack on the United States. The Department of National Defence has been pushing for Canadian involvement in missile defence since at least the early 1990s. Osama bin Laden did not write the section of the 1994 *Defence White Paper* that authorized DND to cooperate with the U.S. in “the examination of ballistic missile defence options.” Nor was it Osama bin Laden who explained in 1995 that “we’re talking about joint involvement in the development of a ... regional ballistic missile defence system.” (That was the Chief of Defence Staff at the time, General Jean de Chastelain.)<sup>11</sup>

If anything, 9/11 was tragic proof that devastating attacks do not depend on long-range ballistic missiles. That fact really ought to have changed the way governments look at security. Sadly, it did not.

of threats in these directions a) would not occur, or (b) would represent a net security gain for Canada. Has Canada done a study of the likelihood and consequences of displacing long-range missile threats that may develop in the future to other modes of delivery? Has it concluded that such displacement either would not occur or would represent a net security gain for Canada? If so, what is the basis for this conclusion? Has the government of Canada estimated the costs of deploying extensive defences against SLBM, SRBM, UAV, cruise missile, and aircraft threats? Has it estimated the costs of deploying effective defences against smuggled

weapons? Is it prepared to pay these costs? If not, on what grounds would the Canadian government rationalize a decision to support the deployment of defences against long-range ballistic missiles, but not the deployment of defences against comparable and no less conjectural threats that have the potential to develop even more rapidly than the conjectured long-range missile threat?

### **3. THE OVERALL EFFECT ON CANADIAN SECURITY (UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED)**

In order to “make an unambiguous contribution to Canada’s defence needs,” missile defence must also have minimal negative security consequences, or at least those consequences must be outweighed by the advantages of deployment.

Unfortunately, the negative consequences of missile defence deployment are likely to be numerous and substantial:

- Russia’s nuclear forces are currently shrinking, and Russia has neither the desire nor the economic strength to fight an all-out arms race with the United States. But there is no reason to doubt that it will act to preserve the credibility of its nuclear deterrent forces. Russia has already withdrawn from its START II Treaty commitments in response to the U.S. decision to scrap the ABM Treaty and deploy missile defences. And Russia’s subsequent decision to retain the multiple-warhead missiles that were to have been destroyed under START II has slowed the rate of Russia’s nuclear reductions, meaning that more nuclear weapons are already pointed at North America than there would have been if no missile defences were deployed. Other responses are likely to include accelerated development and deployment of new nuclear weapon systems and continued refusal to adopt crucial safety measures such as de-alerting (*see box*).
- China’s nuclear forces are comparatively small, totalling about 100 deployed nuclear weapons, including about 20 single-warhead missiles that can reach North America. Even the first-phase missile defence deployment may pose a threat to this force; subsequent phases will certainly threaten its viability, at which point it is highly probable that China will respond by increasing the size and capabilities of its nuclear forces.<sup>12</sup>
- Russia and China also probably will increase their research into ways to defeat missile defences, such as decoys and other countermeasures. One means of de-

feating such a system would be to attack its components, including space-based sensors and communications systems. Missile defence deployment will thus

### **DE-ALERTING: THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**

The greatest nuclear risk facing Canada and the world is the possibility of accidental nuclear war involving the United States and Russia. The U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals continue to operate at very high levels of alert, with thousands of warheads on long-range missiles ready to launch within minutes of warning being received. As a result, every day we face the risk that a false alarm could cause a cataclysmic nuclear war.

Many suggestions have been made for ways to eliminate this risk, ranging from adoption of “no-launch-on-warning” policies to use of physical measures to “de-alert” nuclear arsenals by preventing their rapid launch and/or de-mating the warheads from the missiles. (Canada has been an advocate of de-alerting and de-mating since 1995.) Unfortunately, high-alert postures also represent a cheap and immediate way to respond to missile defence deployment, since the forces that could be launched before the arrival of a missile attack would be much larger and more capable of overwhelming a missile defence than the forces that might survive such an attack.

The result is a triumph of missile defence ideology over reason: far from protecting us from accidental missile launches (one of its supposed purposes), deployment of missile defence is helping to perpetuate the risk of an accidental nuclear war involving arsenals far larger than any that missile defence could ever hope to save us from.

create an incentive for other countries to consider development and deployment of space weapons.

- Russian and Chinese responses also could lead to a cascade of other nuclear build-ups, most notably in South Asia, where India might respond to the expansion of Chinese forces with an expansion of its own, leading in turn to a build-up of Pakistan's nuclear forces.<sup>13</sup>

Missile defence proponents usually dismiss these concerns with blithe assurances that Russia's nuclear forces are too large to be affected by the U.S. system<sup>14</sup> and unsubstantiated claims that China intends to enlarge its nuclear forces regardless of U.S. missile defence deployment. Has the Canadian government done an independent assessment of the likely Russian, Chinese, and other country responses to U.S. missile defence deployment? If not, how can it make a rational decision whether missile defence will enhance or detract from the defence of Canada? If it has done such an assessment, why has it not released this study so that Canadians can assess its validity and draw their own conclusions about the security consequences of missile defence?

What is Canada's position on future phases of the system? Even missile defence proponents must recognize that at some point an increasingly capable missile defence system will cause reactions in other countries. Such reactions might be prevented, or at least minimized, by prior negotiation of a binding arms control regime that imposes restrictive limits on the future size, capabilities, and deployment mode (ground, sea, air, space) of missile defence systems. The U.S., however, has chosen explicitly not to submit to or even to define unilaterally for itself any such limits. In the absence of binding, multilaterally agreed-upon, and restrictive limits on the size, capabilities, and deployment mode of missile defence systems, Russian and Chinese reactions to missile defence will almost certainly lead to a net reduction in Canadian and global security.

Has Canada defined any limits on the size, capabilities, and deployment mode of missile defence systems that it is willing to support? Is Canada considering joining a system that has not been restricted to such limits?

## **4. SPACE WEAPONIZATION (NEXT STOP, SPACE)**

Perhaps the most emphatic condition that Prime Minister Martin has laid out concerning Canadian participation in missile defence relates to Canada's long-standing opposition to the weaponization of space: "We will not, in any way," the Prime Minister has pledged, "support the weaponization of space."<sup>15</sup>

This is a crucial requirement. But no details have been provided as to what it means in practice. A great many issues need to be clarified.

**FIRST**, will Canada insist on a U.S. commitment not to weaponize space as a condition of Canadian participation in missile defence, or will any commitment apply only to Canada? If the former, will the commitment also apply to post-Bush administrations? Will it be a legally binding, treaty-level commitment?

**SECOND**, what is defined as space weaponization for the purposes of Canadian policy? Only the deployment of weapons in space? Or does weaponization include the full range of possible space weapons, including Earth-to-space weapons (e.g., ground-based lasers with anti-satellite capabilities), space-to-space weapons, and space-to-Earth weapons (weapons in space that could strike targets on the ground, at sea, or in the atmosphere)?

**THIRD**, what is the threshold for the activities that Canada considers to be space weaponization? Space weapon research and development? (The U.S. has already begun such activities.) The start of space weapon test and evaluation activities? (Preliminary tests may begin soon.) The start of actual deployment? Full deployment of an "operational" capability? What if the system is deployed ostensibly as a "test-bed," like the missile defence system currently being built? Will that count as deployment?

**FOURTH**, what will Canada do if space weaponization does occur? Will there be an automatic Canadian withdrawal from all aspects of missile defence? Automatic with-

### **“IT’S NOT OUR CONCERN”**

Missile defence proponents like to argue that the security consequences of missile defence are matters for U.S. concern, not for Canadian concern. The U.S. is going ahead with the system whether we like it or not, they argue, so Canada might as well focus on the only thing it can control: Canada-U.S. relations. Unlike the Canada-should-join-to-get-influence claim, this argument says that Canada should join because it *cannot* influence these matters. The reality, of course, is somewhere in between. Canada cannot dictate its will to the world, but neither are its international security and arms control activities irrelevant. There is no reason to close down the Department of Foreign Affairs just yet.

And missile defence is far from a done deal. While an initial deployment decision has been made by the U.S., dozens of decisions remain to be made over the next decade and beyond with respect to future elements of the system, space weaponization issues, and arms control questions. Future U.S. administrations may even decide to cancel the system entirely, just as an earlier U.S. missile defence system, first approved for deployment in 1967, was reoriented dramatically in 1969 and then cancelled in 1975.

Canada needs to remain active in pursuing its interests on missile defence issues at the United Nations, with the United States, and around the world. And for that, we need an active, independent, and un-muted voice.

drawal from selected aspects? Which aspects? What if the space weapons in question are not formally a part of the missile defence system or not one of the components operated by the organization(s) of which Canada is a member?

Would Canada remain involved with any elements of missile defence not specifically connected to space weapons? So far, government officials have suggested only that any agreement would have a termination clause “allowing for early withdrawal from the agreement if Canada so decided.”<sup>16</sup> The implication of this wording is that the option might not be exercised.

The weaponization of space is not an issue for the distant future. If it occurs, it will have been the result of dozens of small steps in the wrong direction, not a single giant leap. If Canada is to have a meaningful commitment against space weaponization, it must actively oppose all steps leading toward weaponization—not passively (or even actively) collaborate with the process until the actual moment the weapons are deployed and the weaponization of space has become a reality. *Canadian opposition is going to be required immediately.*

Indeed, the Canadian government has already acknowledged that “any deployed BMD system capable of exo-atmospheric intercepts”—*which includes the system now being deployed*—“would at least theoretically possess a latent capability to serve in an anti-satellite role.”<sup>17</sup> Will Canada insist, as a condition of its participation, that the U.S. rule out any use of this system in an anti-satellite role, including any testing against objects in orbit, studies and war games of the system in an anti-satellite role, and contingency planning for its use against satellites? Will Canada withdraw from any connection with the missile defence system if these conditions are breached?

It is frequently claimed that one of the purposes of participating in missile defence would be to improve the state of Canada-U.S. relations. Has the Canadian government studied the likelihood of significant steps being taken toward the weaponization of space over the next few years, and has it considered the ramifications for Canada-U.S. relations of signing on to missile defence only to withdraw from some or all co-operation within a few years?

## **5. THE COST TO CANADA (TICKET TO A FREE RIDE?)**

Prime Minister Martin also has stated that Canada will not spend a significant amount of money on missile defence, pledging that “I’m not going to put money into it.”<sup>18</sup> According to the Prime Minister, “Our financial priorities, in terms of the defence of North America, do not involve missile defence. They involve the protection of the sovereignty of the Arctic, our coasts, and our borders.”<sup>19</sup>

But does the Prime Minister really believe that the United States will accept Canadian participation in missile defence without any contribution of any kind—in dollars, personnel, equipment, or territory? According to one Canadian official, the U.S. has already “made it clear that it would expect Canada to contribute in some form.” This official has suggested that Canada might contribute by “facilitating Canadian industrial engagement” and/or drawing on “our existing infrastructure and personnel at NORAD.”<sup>20</sup>

Notional contributions such as these, however, are not going to satisfy the U.S. Canada’s NORAD activities have long been recognized as our contribution to joint air defence, but the U.S. is not likely to see our continuation of those activities as a new contribution to missile defence. And why would the U.S. interpret Canada’s willingness to accept money in the form of contracts from the U.S. as a Canadian “contribution” to missile defence? (Or is the suggestion here, contrary to Prime Minister Martin’s pledge, that the government of Canada would fund such contracts itself?) Is it really credible to suggest that substantive Canadian contributions in the form of new money or the emplacement of weapons, sensors, or other facilities on Canadian territory will never be expected or demanded?

If Canada does make substantive contributions, serious questions are raised. What effect would these contributions have on Canada’s ability to fund higher Canadian priorities, as cited by the Prime Minister? How easily could such contributions be withdrawn in the event of a decision to end

## **NIGERIAN SCAMS AND STAR WARS BONANZAS**

Most Canadians have learned to be skeptical when e-mails claiming to be from Nigeria arrive in their mailboxes promising millions of dollars for nothing. But some still seem to believe that Canada will receive untold riches in the form of high-tech contracts if only we sign up—at no cost to us!—for missile defence.

The 1985 invitation to participate in Strategic Defense Initiative research also was accompanied by visions of a Star Wars contract bonanza. A more sober study done at the time estimated that the direct and indirect employment Canada could expect from SDI contracts would average 1,680 jobs per year over five years, with only 400 of those being direct jobs.<sup>22</sup> In the end, Canada chose not to sign on to SDI research, although we generously offered that our companies would accept any contracts the U.S. chose to dispense. The bounty never materialized, of course, and not just because Canada failed to sign on. The experience of countries such as Britain, which did join the SDI program, confirmed that the bonanza had never been anything more than a mirage.

Hopes for a bonanza arising from the current program are even more absurd, since they are wildly at odds with the Canadian government's ostensible expectation that missile defence will be a small, non-space-based system that will not lead to significant Russian and Chinese counter-steps. With much of the design already done and production contractors already chosen for that system (which, after all, is already being deployed), where are the big-money contracts for Canadian companies supposed to come from?

missile defence co-operation? Weapons, sensors, and other facilities would be difficult to remove once emplaced on Canadian territory, and the act of removing them might trigger a very unpleasant reaction in Washington. Would Canada really choose to withdraw under such circumstances, or would the act of having made such contributions effectively trap us into remaining despite our convictions? It would certainly raise the costs of honouring our convictions substantially. And withdrawing a NORAD “contribution” to missile defence would not be feasible at all unless we were also to withdraw from NORAD, a step that the Canadian government would be extremely reluctant to take.

If, on the other hand, the assumption that Canadian participation can be had at no cost is correct, additional questions are raised. One of the goals of participation is supposed to be an improvement in Canada-U.S. relations. Does the Canadian government really believe that an offer to participate predicated on little or no Canadian contribution will generate useful and lasting gratitude in Washington? U.S. officials already accuse Canada of free-riding on defence issues on a regular basis. Such comments are a staple of the speeches of U.S. ambassadors to Canada.<sup>21</sup> What is the rationale for concluding that Canada will not end up accused of further free-riding if we attempt to participate in missile defence on this basis? What is the government’s fall-back plan if the U.S. starts to pressure Canada to make a more substantial contribution to the system?

## **6. FULL PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY PARTICIPATION (THE ROAD AHEAD)**

The sixth key issue related to Canadian participation in missile defence concerns the role of Parliament and the Canadian public.

Will Canadians get to see the full text of any agreement negotiated on participation before Canada has signed the agreement? Will Parliament get to vote for or against the agreement, or even express an opinion on its merits, before Canada has signed the agreement? Canadians and their elected representatives ought to be able to judge for themselves whether the important questions they have about Canadian participation have been adequately answered *before* commitments are made in their names.

Second, would a Canadian decision to add, drop, or modify elements of the agreement or conditions regarding participation, such as Canada's opposition to space weapons, require public discussion and a Parliamentary vote or merely a Prime Ministerial or cabinet decision? Missile defence skeptics who recall the sorry story of Canada's firm "commitment" to the ABM Treaty (*see box*) are not likely to feel reassured by "commitments" that may or may not be in writing and in any case could be modified at any time, in secret, without even reference to Parliament.

The Canadian process for decision-making with respect to missile defence needs to be open, transparent, and democratic, with full debate based on full information of all the ramifications of Canadian participation before any commitments are made.

Is the government of Canada willing to institute such a process?

## **THE AMAZING DISAPPEARING CORNERSTONE**

In February 1995, the Government of Canada stated in response to concerns about missile defence that “Canada will continue to oppose the abrogation or weakening of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.” In March 1996, it pledged that “Canada remains firmly committed to the 1972 ABM Treaty.” In May 2000, November 2000, and December 2000, it solemnly declared that the ABM Treaty is a “cornerstone of strategic stability.”

Finally, in December 2001, the federal government could have been expected to respond to the U.S. decision to withdraw from the treaty by announcing that “Canada is ending its missile defence discussions with the United States.” But it didn’t say that. Canada’s response, delivered by then-Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley, was: “I think it is important to recognize that the ABM treaty is a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation, formerly the Soviet Union, and that the United States has acted within the terms of that treaty in giving six months’ notice.”

Thus ended Canada’s “firm” commitment to the cornerstone of stability.

Now, just a few years later, Canada is on the verge of participating in a system that was prohibited by that treaty. Is it any wonder that Canadians who are opposed to the weaponization of space want stronger guarantees of Canada’s firm opposition to space weapons than just another political promise, no matter how often repeated?

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Interview on “The House”, CBC Radio, 18 December 2004; Stephanie Rubec, “PM wants a no-pay missile say,” *Calgary Sun*, 15 December 2004.
- <sup>2</sup> *Speaking Notes for a Presentation by Paul Chapin, Director General, International Security Bureau, Foreign Affairs Canada to Parliamentarians on Ballistic Missile Defence*, December 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> Participation at the operator level would provide “some limited influence” over actual operations of the North American part of the system. Influence at this level would be tightly constrained, however, by higher-level policy decisions, the technological limitations of the system (which would pre-determine most of its operating parameters), and the very tight timelines involved (which would allow for very little human decision-making aside from the initial intercept decision).
- <sup>4</sup> See issue 5 (Costs to Canada). The idea that Canada would have significant influence just by being “inside the tent” is dismissed as “Canadian hubris” even by one of the strongest advocates of Canadian participation. See James Fergusson, *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence: What we know, don’t know and can’t know!*, 4 November 2004, p. 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Discussion at the “Roundtable on Canada, NORAD and Missile Defence”, Ottawa, 30 September 1998.
- <sup>6</sup> “Transcript of Remarks – Prime Minister Brian Mulroney,” Saturday September 7, 1985, Ottawa.
- <sup>7</sup> Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, quoted in “A polite ‘no’ to Star Wars,” *Maclean’s*, 16 September 1985.
- <sup>8</sup> *Defence White Paper*, Department of National Defence, December 1994.
- <sup>9</sup> *Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015*, U.S. National Intelligence Council, September 1999.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Quoted in Dave Todd, “Canada, U.S. plan ‘Son of Star Wars’: Anti-missile system to focus on new threats,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 January 1995.
- <sup>12</sup> According to the U.S. government, China already takes the view that “U.S. efforts to develop missile defenses will challenge the credibility of China’s nuclear deterrent.” *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People’s Republic of China*, Department of Defense, 2004. Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs also acknowledges that “China is believed to have concerns about the viability of its own very limited strategic deterrence in light of US BMD planning.” *Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence*, Foreign Affairs Canada, 2004.

- <sup>13</sup> The Indian Ministry of Defence recently stated that “the asymmetry in terms of [Indian and Chinese] nuclear forces is pronouncedly in favor of China and is likely to get further accentuated as China responds to counter the U.S. missile defense program.” Cited in Brigadier Vijai K. Nair, “China’s Nuclear Strategy and Its Implications for Asian Security,” *China Brief*, Volume 4, Issue 3, 4 February 2004.
- <sup>14</sup> Such assurances are disingenuous for two reasons: 1) Russia’s concern is not about whether it will retain the ability to destroy the U.S. if Russia strikes first; its concern is about whether the Russian forces that would survive a U.S. first strike are large enough to be sure of overwhelming U.S. missile defences. As long as its surviving forces can overwhelm the missile defences, deterrence theory assures us Russia can feel secure that its forces will deter any such attack. The small numbers that might survive a U.S. attack at present, however, make even a small missile defence system a concern. 2) The U.S. has set no limits of any kind on the eventual size and capabilities of future phases of its missile defence system. Since Russian responses to such developments could take years to develop and deploy, conservative military planners will argue that Russia must hedge its bets and begin its responses now.
- <sup>15</sup> Interview on “The House,” CBC Radio, 18 December 2004.
- <sup>16</sup> *Speaking Notes for a Presentation by Paul Chapin, Director General, International Security Bureau, Foreign Affairs Canada to Parliamentarians on Ballistic Missile Defence*, December 2004.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Non-Weaponization of Outer Space: Food for Thought Paper*, Department of Foreign Affairs, 31 March 2002.
- <sup>18</sup> Interview on Global TV, 25 December 2004.
- <sup>19</sup> Interview on “The House,” CBC Radio, 18 December 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> *Speaking Notes for a Presentation by Paul Chapin, Director General, International Security Bureau, Foreign Affairs Canada to Parliamentarians on Ballistic Missile Defence*, December 2004.
- <sup>21</sup> See also President Bush’s recent comment to Prime Minister Martin: “I’m not taking this position, but some future president is going to say, ‘Why are we paying to defend Canada?’” Peter Baker, “Bush Doctrine Is Expected to Get Chilly Reception,” *Washington Post*, 23 January 2005.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Economics of the Strategic Defence Initiative: Critical Questions for Canada*, Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, August 1985.

# Six crucial BMD questions

Should Canada participate in the U.S. ballistic missile defence (BMD) program? Before a final decision is made, six key questions need to be answered:

1. What would be Canada's decision-making role, if any?
2. In what way would BMD help meet Canada's own defence needs?
3. What would be the overall effect on Canadian (and global) security?
4. How could Canada justify participation in a program that will inevitably lead to the weaponization of space?
5. Will the costs to be incurred divert needed funding from Canada's essential social programs?
6. Will the decision on BMD involvement be preceded – as it should be – by a full and informed public as well as Parliamentary debate?

This booklet contends that there are no satisfactory answers to the first five of these questions that would justify Canada's involvement in the U.S. BMD system. And, point by point, author Bill Robinson leads off the much-needed debate by debunking all the pro-BMD arguments so far advanced.



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