



FAST FACTS



Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Mb • 309-323 Portage Ave. • Winnipeg, MB • Canada R3B 2C1
 ph: (204) 927-3200 • fax: (204) 927-3201 • ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca • www.policyalternatives.ca/mb

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Canada's last chance to keep space for peace

The Canadian government will soon make a historic decision about what role it will play in the new US Star Wars plan. The Pentagon calls it "missile defence" but a quick review of US military documents reveals a long and clear record of moving toward the weaponization of space. In a 1997 US Space Command planning document entitled 'Vision for 2020', the military outlined its plan to control and dominate space. "Control of space," the blueprint noted, "is the ability to assure access to space, freedom of operations within the space medium, and an ability to deny others the use of space." The back cover of the document features a picture of the planet surrounded by space satellites and space-based laser weapons with the words "Space...the war fighters' edge."

The Canadian public is being reassured that its government would not enter an agreement to collaborate on Star Wars if there was any proof that it was designed for any purpose other than "defence." But still, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that the US "missile defence" is a far more radical and ambitious programme, the Canadian government moves ever closer toward participation.

Why is Canada being recruited?

What are the forces driving Canadian Star Wars participation? All one has to do is look at the aerospace industry in Canada to find the answer. The Bush administration launched a public relations campaign immediately after

its controversial "election" in 2000 to line up Star Wars partners. Why does Washington need such recruits? The weaponization of space will be one of the largest industrial projects in the history of the planet Earth, costing so much that even the US can't afford it by itself.

Soon after taking office, President Bush sent Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman to an international security conference in Munich. Lieberman told the audience of military and political leaders: "Gentlemen, we have bi-partisan support for 'missile defence' in the Congress." The message was clear. If you don't want to miss out on the expected technology and profits, then your

governments had better join the Star Wars train. So far this strategy has brought the UK, Australia, Italy, and Japan on-board. Will Canada be next?

The illusion of partnership

In addition to financial gain, delusions of 'influence' are helping to drive the train forward. Since almost all warfare is now coordinated from space, the strategic implications of sole US control of the heavens are stark indeed. Some governments, fearing this advantage, mistakenly believe that by attaching themselves to the US programme they too will gain in power and status, winning a seat at the decision-making 'table'. NATO had this

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belief when it joined with the US during the 1999 Kosovo war. NATO planes flew missions over Yugoslavia dropping bombs that hit military and civilian targets. When it came time to view the satellite pictures of battlefield damage, the NATO allies found out that the US military would not share the reconnaissance information with them. The allies were furious but also helpless; the US had no intention of being a full partner when it came to space technology utilization.

On August 2, 2004 the US Air Force quietly published a new doctrine called Counterspace Operations. In the Foreword to the document, General John Jumper, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, stated: "The development of offensive counterspace capabilities provides combatant commanders with new tools for counterspace operations. . These operations may be utilized throughout the spectrum of conflict and may achieve a variety of effects from temporary denial to complete destruction of the adversary's space capability."

This grandiose vision, however, includes a number of serious blindspots. Just as proposed US Earth-based missile defence technologies are largely unproven, fantastically expensive, and can be easily and cheaply countered, so its proposed spaced-based weapon systems will only exacerbate the ills they seek to cure: proliferation, instability, suspicion and conflict.

Time to stand on the side of sanity

The US is poised to initiate a new, deadly, and costly arms race in space, guaranteed only to make the world - and particularly North America - more vulnerable to devastating attack. The best thing that could happen would be that nations like Canada refuse to join the programme. Canada now has a great opportunity to stand on the side of sanity: but the window is closing fast. Across the world there is a growing grassroots movement to save space for peace. From September 25-October 2, over 100 local protest actions were held in 10 nations opposing Star Wars. In Canada more than 18 local communities held protests calling on the Martin government to step back from the rush to embrace this latest US rush to disaster.

Future generations will remember those of us who speak out now to protect the heavens from the insanity of modern warfare. Let us insist that our precious tax dollars be used to give life here on Earth rather than new forms of death in the skies.

Bruce K. Gagnon

Bruce K. Gagnon Coordinator Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear

Power in Space PO Box 652 Brunswick, ME 04011 (207) 729-0517 (207)

319-2017 (Cell phone) globalnet@mindspring.com

<http://www.space4peace.org>

Bruce will be speaking at a free public forum on Sunday November 28th at 2:00 P.M. at the Planetarium Auditorium.

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