

***CANADA AND MISSILE DEFENCE:
SAYING NO TO MR BUSH¹***

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On 24 February 2005, Prime Minister Paul Martin ended months of speculation by rejecting President George W. Bush's invitation to participate in his administration's ballistic missile defence (BMD) program. Martin had come to power in December 2003, intent on joining as a means of improving defence cooperation with the United States in the wake of Canada's decision not to endorse the US-led war in Iraq that had strained relations between Bush's administration and Jean Chrétien's government.² But his plan was thwarted by several factors: public disapproval of the war, which by the time Martin took office had hardened into opposition to Bush's foreign policy; the June 2004 general election that reduced Martin's government from majority to minority status; opposition within Martin's Liberal party and among Liberal, New Democratic Party (NDP) and Bloc Québécois (BQ) members of parliament (MPs); and the ambiguous stance of the Conservatives, who had previously supported Canada's involvement. Also contributing to the decision were the Bush administration's non-committal approach to the negotiation, its failure to respond to Canadian concerns about US protectionism, and the president's ill-advised public intervention in the missile defence debate during his visit to Canada in late 2004.

Critics claimed the decision was a sharp break with the history of close defence cooperation between Ottawa and Washington, that it called into question Canada's

¹ I would like to thank Terry Terriff and the journal's anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions.

² Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water: My Life in and out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), pp. 384-390. See also Donald Barry, "Chrétien, Bush, and the War in Iraq," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 35, 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 215-245.

reliability as an ally, put the country's sovereignty at risk, and weakened the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), the cornerstone of bilateral air defence cooperation since 1957. One opponent termed it "the worst military decision ever taken by any Canadian government."³ However, it was not the first time that Ottawa had broken ranks with Washington over missile defence. Nor did the decision damage Canada-US relations. After an initial display of displeasure, the Bush administration welcomed the Martin government's concurrent commitment to increase funding for defence and border security, a move that also reinforced Canada's sovereignty. NORAD, which was renewed and expanded in 2006, has not been diminished in the short-term although its long-term prospects are uncertain.

Early Rejections

Canada has consistently declined to participate in US missile defence initiatives because of concerns about the possible destabilizing effects on the nuclear balance, the implications for international arms control, and opposition from aroused domestic publics. The issue first emerged in the late 1960s, when intercontinental ballistic missiles replaced manned bombers as the main threat to North America. In 1968, Prime Minister Lester Pearson, concerned that US plans to develop a ballistic missile defence system could destabilize deterrence, refused to support the renewal of NORAD until the implications for Canada were clarified. The US decision to deploy the missiles on American territory and to keep the issue separate from NORAD paved the way for the renewal. This was confirmed in the US diplomatic note, which said the pact would "not involve in any way a Canadian commitment to participate in active ballistic missile defense."⁴ Washington's stand reflected a desire to facilitate the continuation of the

³ James Fergusson quoted in Barry Cooper, "Shameful times for Canadians," *Calgary Herald*, March 2, 2005. See also Barry Cooper, "Being coy on the dance floor," *Calgary Herald*, March 9, 2005; J.L. Granatstein, *Whose War Is It?: How Canada Can Survive in the Post-9/11 World* (Harper Collins Publishers Limited, 2007), especially 102-106; Clifford Krauss, "Divergent Paths: Canada Breaks With U.S. Over Missile Shield," *New York Times*, February 27, 2005; Dwight N. Mason, "A Flight From Responsibility: Canada and Missile Defense of North America," Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 25, 2005; Maria McClintock, "Missile miss a 'disaster'," *Ottawa Sun*, March 3, 2005.

⁴ Quoted in Roger Swanson, "NORAD: Origins and Operations of Canada's Ambivalent Symbol," *International Perspectives* (November/December 1972), p. 6; John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada's*

agreement and the interests of the US army, which had developed the system and did not want to take part in any arrangement controlled by the air force. The United States suspended the project after it signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty with the Soviet Union in 1972, which set limits on defensive missile systems. As a result, the clause was removed when NORAD was renewed in 1981.

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan's proposed Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) – also known as “Star Wars” – a research program to develop a system that would protect the United States from a Soviet ballistic missile attack, brought the issue to the fore again. The administration's invitation to Canada and other allies to join in 1985 posed “a major challenge” for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government.⁵ Mulroney had serious misgivings about the project, which, he feared, could precipitate an arms race in space. He also expected that the economic benefits of participation would be few. Public opinion, moreover, was opposed. Mulroney referred the issue to a special Senate-House of Commons committee reviewing Canada's external policy, which recommended that the government delay a decision until it had more information. He subsequently announced that Canada would not participate on “a government-to-government” basis, although private sector firms and institutions would be free to bid on contracts. Wary of antagonizing the administration, Mulroney called SDI research “consistent with” the ABM treaty and “prudent” in view of improvements in Soviet missile technology.⁶

The Clinton Years

The issue resurfaced in the 1990s. In 1995, a skeptical President Bill Clinton vetoed a bill requiring the administration to deploy a national missile defence system

Department of External Affairs: Coming of Age, 1946-1968 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), pp. 383-384.

⁵ Brian Mulroney, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007), p. 349.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 353. See also Patrick Lennox, *At Home and Abroad: The Canada-US Relationship and Canada's Place in the World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009), pp. 74-81; and Norrin M. Ripsman, “Big Eyes and Empty Pockets: The Two Phases on Conservative Defence Policy,” in Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, eds., *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-1993* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001), pp. 105-106.

by 2003.⁷ But under pressure from the Republican dominated congress, Clinton recognized that he had to proceed with the project so the Democrats would not appear weak on national security.⁸ The following year, the administration reached a deal with congress to develop and test a system by 2000, after which it would determine whether the technology was workable and the threat warranted early deployment. A July 1998 report of a bipartisan commission, headed by former Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, gave “fresh ammunition” to Republicans seeking to make missile defence an issue in that year’s mid-term elections. The report identified North Korea, Iran and Iraq as states that could develop missiles capable of attacking the United States within five years (ten years in the case of Iraq) of deciding to do so.⁹ Bowing to Republican pressure the administration agreed to add (US) \$1 billion to the defence budget for the project.¹⁰

In January 1999, the administration allocated a further (US) \$7 billion to deploy a limited system over the next six years and announced that it would explore the possibility of altering the ABM Treaty to legitimize the project. Clinton also signed the National Missile Defense Act of 1999, which called for the development of a system “capable of defending the territory of the United States against [a] limited ballistic missile attack.”¹¹ Russia and China were opposed. Russia argued that missile defence would destabilize the nuclear balance and force it to resume its own program. China, fearing the system could be broadened to include Taiwan, threatened to expand its nuclear forces if it were implemented.¹²

Although the Clinton administration never formally asked Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s government to participate, it made it clear that it would welcome Ottawa’s support. The government would not be required to contribute funds or territory for

⁷ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, [Presidential Veto of FY 96 Defense Authorization Act] December 28, 1995 www.fas.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w951228v.htm (6/25/2010).

⁸ Confidential US source. See also Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), p. 305, fn. 16.

⁹ Eric Schmitt, “Panel Says U.S. Faces Risk of a Surprise Missile Attack,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1998.

¹⁰ Tim Weiner, “\$9 Billion to Pentagon, With Missile Defense,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1998.

¹¹ “National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense Fact Sheet,” May 20, 2003,

www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/print/20030520-15.html (3/14/2007); Andrew Richter, “A Question of Defense: How American Allies are responding to the US Missile Defense program,” *Comparative Strategy*, 23 (2004), p. 145.

¹² Richter, “A Question of Defense,” pp. 144-145.

radar and missile sites. But Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre called on Ottawa “to take the lead...in helping to communicate with the rest of the world why it is important to amend the ABM Treaty.” Washington also needed to use radar sites in Greenland, Alaska and North Dakota that were controlled and operated by the United States although they were nominally under NORAD command, in order for the missile system to function. If Ottawa decided not to join, said Hamre, the United States would “have to find a way to do it at NORAD and exclude Canada.”¹³ The “awkward, unstated reality,” according to a senior administration official, was that incoming missiles would likely be intercepted over Canada and the debris could fall on Canadian territory. “Obviously, that made it preferable to have Canada’s participation.”¹⁴

The administration’s stand sparked a lively debate within Chrétien’s government. As Defence Minister Art Eggleton and his officials saw it, the project was more about enhancing American power than deterring an unlikely missile threat from states like North Korea or Iran.¹⁵ The key question was whether it was “in Canada’s interest to jeopardize its future in Norad by not giving NMD [national missile defence] the thumbs up.”¹⁶ Foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy and his officials argued that the system would create an unreliable, costly shield that could undermine international arms control arrangements and provoke a new arms race. “The ABM treaty is central to the entire structure of [nuclear] non-proliferation agreements,” Axworthy declared. “If it’s not amended by mutual agreement, then it could generate serious consequences.”¹⁷ The differences mirrored divisions in the House of Commons where New Democratic Party and Bloc Québécois MPs, together with some of Chretien’s Liberals argued that the American plan could jeopardize the nuclear balance and lead to the weaponization of space. Only the Canadian Alliance Party unequivocally supported participation.¹⁸

¹³ Remarks as delivered by Deputy Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, February 18, 2000, www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2000/s2000o218-depsecdef1.html (25/02/2000); Peter Morton, “Canada has ‘time-frozen’ perception of nuclear threat, Pentagon says,” *National Post*, March 16, 2000; confidential U.S. source.

¹⁴ Confidential US source.

¹⁵ Quoted in David Pugliese, “Military questions U.S. motives for missile defence,” *National Post*, May 24, 2000.

¹⁶ Mike Blanchfield, “Eggleton to Axworthy: Keep quiet,” *Ottawa Citizen*, May 5, 2000.

¹⁷ Quoted in Mark Egan, “Gore threatens to scrap ABM treaty if elected,” *National Post*, June 7, 2000.

¹⁸ Art Hanger and Jim Hart, “The case for national missile defence,” *National Post*, March 30, 2000.

The issue was temporarily put on the backburner in September 2000 when Clinton declared that he would leave the decision on whether to proceed to his successor. The announcement followed a series of failed tests and continuing opposition from Russia and China, and US allies.¹⁹

From Clinton to Bush

Initial Doubts

Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, favored an expanded system that could include sea and space-based weapons. He came to power in January 2001, promising to implement the project at the earliest possible date, even if it meant abandoning the ABM treaty.²⁰ After meeting with Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, in December 2000, Chrétien described Canada's participation as hypothetical. But he expressed concern about unilateral deployment saying, "We don't want anything to happen to destabilize what exists at the moment."²¹ Foreign Minister John Manley added that if Bush "can persuade the Russians and the Chinese, then he can persuade Canada."²²

In early May, Bush announced that the administration was examining "all available technologies and basing modes for effective missile defenses that could protect the United States, our deployed forces, our friends and our allies." The "initial capability" would consist of land and sea-based components. Further research would "determine the final form the defenses might take." Bush said the United States would consult with allies, including Canada, "who are also threatened by missiles and

¹⁹ Eric Schmitt, "President Decides to Put Off Work on Missile Shield," *New York Times*, September 2, 2000; confidential U.S. source. According to Janice Stein and Eugene Lang, Clinton had expressed misgivings about missile defence to Chrétien, who was also skeptical. See Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 122.

²⁰ Schmitt, "President decides;" Peter Goodspeed, "Bush steps into shifting global scene," *National Post*, December 15, 2000.

²¹ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, "Putin's visit: Russian, Canada fear US missile crisis," *Globe and Mail*, December 19, 2000.

²² Quoted in Hillary Mackenzie, "Canada likely to follow Russia on missile plan," *Calgary Herald*, January 26, 2001.

weapons of mass destruction,” and called upon Russia to replace the ABM treaty with “a new framework” to accommodate missile defence.²³

A high-level US delegation briefed Canadian officials shortly thereafter. But it had no ready answers to “some pretty direct questions” about how missile defence would affect the ABM treaty or whether it would lead to the installation of weapons in space. “I am not going to take a position on something that I do not know exactly what that means,” Chrétien said, adding that it would be a “lot of months” before a decision would be made.²⁴ One minister predicted that there would “be a big fight when it comes to Cabinet. A lot of us are opposed, not only in Cabinet but also in caucus and the party. That’s why the Prime Minister is trying not to deal with it right now.”²⁵ Although the comment understated Chrétien’s concerns about the project, it demonstrated how controversial it had become. As a public opinion poll showed, Canadians also had misgivings, with 58 percent of those questioned replying that Ottawa should oppose the scheme and only 33 percent saying it should approve.²⁶

At a NATO Council meeting in late May, the United States failed to persuade Canada and other allies to support missile defence.²⁷ The US ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci, stressed that the administration wanted Canada to participate, saying, “I don’t want to entertain the possibility that we might not be in it together.”²⁸ But Ottawa continued to raise concerns. At a G8 foreign ministers meeting in July, Manley pointed to an “increasingly clear trend” toward unilateralism by the Bush administration. He went further following reports that the administration intended to test lasers in space, reiterating Ottawa’s opposition and warning that Washington would become a threat to global security if it insisted on going it alone.²⁹

²³ “Remarks by the President to Students and Faculty at National Defense University,” May 1, 2001. www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/05/print/20010501-10.html (11/20/2007).

²⁴ Quoted In Jeff Sallot, “Missile defence meeting comes up short on specifics,” *Globe and Mail*, May 16, 2001.

²⁵ Quoted in Robert Fife, “Cabinet divided over missile shield,” *National Post*, May 16, 2001.

²⁶ “Missile shield doesn’t fly in Canada,” *Globe and Mail*, July, 23, 2001.

²⁷ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Discuss missiles, allies warn US Bush should follow ABM rules,” *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 2001.

²⁸ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Canada’s help on missile shield crucial, U.S. ambassador says,” *Globe and Mail*, June 13, 2001.

²⁹ Allan Thompson, “Missile shield upsets Manley,” *Toronto Star*, July 20, 2001; Allan Thompson, “Canada raps U.S. missile strategy,” *Toronto Star*, July 26, 2001.

Missile defence became more urgent for the Bush administration in the wake of al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. On 13 December, after efforts to modify the ABM treaty failed, Bush, citing the need "to protect our people from future terrorists or rogue state missile attacks" gave formal notice that the United States would withdraw from the agreement six months later. Reaction from Russia and China was muted. Vladimir Putin called the decision a mistake, but missile defence would not threaten his country's security. China limited itself to an expression of concern. For his part, Chrétien regretted the demise of the treaty and hoped the Americans and Russians would find a solution.³⁰

Reconsidering Participation

The emergence of bipartisan congressional support, combined with tacit acceptance by Russia and China, and waning European opposition changed the terms of the debate about missile defence. Over the next several months, the Canadian government said little in public. But, behind the scenes, the project remained a subject of debate. Department of National Defence officials continued to urge the government to join. The United States had always kept NORAD's surveillance and warning functions separate from its own nuclear release role and any influence Canada might have had on the latter was informal. Despite this, the officials argued that Washington wanted to assign responsibility for missile defence to NORAD for reasons of operational efficiency and sought only Canada's political support in return. Participation would also enable Canadian firms to bid on lucrative defence contracts. A decision to stay out could marginalize NORAD and deprive Canada of any influence on continental aerospace defence. 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

³⁰ Quoted in Steve Holland, "U.S. gives notice to abandon ABM Treaty," *Globe and Mail*, December 14, 2001.

concerned that it could lead to the weaponization of space, something Bush had not ruled out. They, therefore, advised against an early decision.³¹

Defence officials' arguments did not go unchallenged. In June 2002, General Ralph Eberhart, the US commander of NORAD and head of Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the recently established American military command responsible for defence of the United States, Canada, Mexico and parts of the Caribbean, told John McCallum, the new Minister of Defence, that NORTHCOM would likely be given responsibility for missile defence. However, McCallum concluded that, because Washington intended to proceed with the system whether or not Ottawa agreed, the cost to Canada would be limited, and participation might give the government some influence over US policy, it made sense to join. He set about bringing his colleague, Bill Graham, the new Foreign Affairs Minister, on side. The long-standing relationship between the two ministers, Janice Stein and Eugene Lang observe, "paid dividends and helped to break a deadlock between their respective officials."³²

By the time NATO countries commissioned a study of missile defence at their summit meeting in November, Foreign Affairs' opposition had abated. In announcing the creation of a temporary Bi-National Planning Group tasked with improving military, security and public emergency response planning shortly thereafter, Graham said Canada was "quite prepared" to begin missile defence discussions with the United States, observing, "When it comes to preparing for potential threats to our shared continent, we're in this together."³³

But as a December report on North American relations by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade showed, the issue remained controversial. Liberal, BQ and Progressive Conservative members agreed that the government "should not make a decision" to participate "as the technology has not been proven and details of deployment are not known." They recommended that it "continue to monitor" the program and "oppose the weaponization of outer space." Canadian Alliance MPs wanted Ottawa to endorse "a

³¹ "Comments by Peggy Mason on the CBC radio 'Ontario Today' phone-in, Group of 78—Member's Bulletin Board, March 1, 2005, www.web.net/~group78/English/bboard/CommentsCBC_1Mar05.shtml. (9/17/2008); Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 123, 121-123.

³² Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 123-124.

³³ Quoted in Daniel Leblanc, "Canada open to missile-shield discussions," *Globe and Mail*, December 10, 2002; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 124.

continental missile defence system...under the operational control of NORAD." NDP members took the opposite view, urging the government "to refuse to participate in or otherwise contribute to NMD."³⁴

The US program entered a new stage shortly thereafter when, despite several test failures, Bush ordered the Pentagon to begin fielding a limited system by the fall of 2004. Plans called for the installation of land-based interceptors in Alaska and California to defend against a possible attack from North Korea. The United States would seek British and Danish approval to upgrade long-range radars in Britain and Greenland to provide advance warning of an assault from the Middle East. As an incentive to US allies, the program would be structured in a way that encouraged their industries to participate.³⁵

Graham, although not convinced that missile defence was the right response to threats facing North America, said Ottawa would be willing to begin talks with Washington as long as they did not involve space weapons. "The big red line we all have is weaponization of outer space, which I believe would be immoral, illegal and a bad mistake."³⁶ Ambassador Cellucci claimed the fears were groundless. Calling the scheme "an extension of defending North America from missile attacks," he added, "We obviously want Canada to participate and we're making the case."³⁷

Moving to Yes

Missile defence came up during McCallum's meeting with Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in Washington on 10 January 2003. Although reportedly "pleased" by Ottawa's interest, Rumsfeld did not pressure the government to join. It soon became apparent that Rumsfeld and his officials would tolerate Canadian involvement only if

³⁴ House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Partners in North America: Advancing Canada's relations with the United States and Mexico," December 2002, pp. 112, 317, 334.

³⁵ "President Announces Progress in Missile Defense Capabilities," December 17, 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/print/20021217.html (11/8/2007).

³⁶ Quoted in Barrie McKenna and Jeff Sallot, "First stage of missile shield gets go-ahead," *Globe and Mail*, December 18, 2002.

³⁷ Quoted in Shawn McCarthy, "U.S. envoy sure Canada will join NMD plan," *Globe and Mail*, December 21, 2002.

Canada were willing to participate on their terms. This could be seen when Ottawa sent a team to Washington for talks later that month. In what marked the beginning of a frustrating pattern, Pentagon officials would not divulge details of the system until Ottawa agreed to join. And, departing from the traditional practice of including Canadian officers in all aspects of NORAD, the US military began excluding them from discussions on missile defence.³⁸ These actions reflected a prevalent attitude toward Canada in some quarters of the Bush administration. One official put it bluntly, "As far as this White House is concerned, the U.S.–Canada relationship is defined by Canada. If they want to trade with us, fine. If they want to co-operate on bilateral security issues, fine. If they want to bitch and complain, fine. We're doing our thing."³⁹

National Defence officials argued that the government "had to sign on very soon or the door might close, with grave consequences for Canada."⁴⁰ They were joined by Ambassador Cellucci, who claimed the administration, especially the White House and the State Department, wanted Canada to join -- this despite the fact that neither Bush nor Secretary of State Colin Powell had raised the issue with Chrétien or Graham. A timely decision, Cellucci argued, would help get relations with Washington back on track following Ottawa's refusal to support the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The Chrétien government had declined to do so without the endorsement of the United Nations Security Council or convincing evidence of the Bush administration's claims that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Ottawa's stand and anti-Bush comments from some Liberals soured the administration on the Chrétien's government.⁴¹

The pressures led the government to revisit the missile defence issue. Graham later reflected, "From a foreign policy relationship with the US it was obvious that we should do this."⁴² In late April, McCallum and Graham began laying the groundwork for renewed debate. Noting that the cabinet would soon take up the matter, McCallum said he was "not prejudicing the conclusion....But the geopolitics have changed

³⁸ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 125; confidential U.S. source; Daniel Leblanc, "Canada gets short shrift at NORAD," *Globe and Mail*, May 31, 2003.

³⁹ Quoted in William Walker, "Even before the 'moron' flap, Canada was petty in U.S. eyes," *Toronto Star*, November 29, 2002.

⁴⁰ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 125.

⁴¹ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 124-125; Donald Barry, "Chrétien, Bush, and the War in Iraq," pp. 215-245.

⁴² Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 125.

radically, the Americans are moving ahead anyway, and a case can be made for Canadian security and for our joint defence of the continent that this may be a good idea for Canada.”⁴³ Attempting to head off opposition from former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and others, Graham noted that Canada had long been against the weaponization of space and that “any discussions we would have with the United States about any form of defence of North America would include that principled position.”⁴⁴ The minister’s comments failed to still the critics, including members of his party, whose concerns were reinforced by the Bush administration’s handling of the Iraq war.

The issue was no less controversial in cabinet. In early May, it deferred a decision on whether to authorize discussions with the Americans. Chrétien attempted to win over the skeptics, describing cooperation on missile defence as a continuation of existing collaboration with the United States, and noting that the scheme was “different” from Ronald Reagan’s SDI. Cellucci also weighed in, claiming that involvement would give Ottawa a voice in any decision to intercept a missile over Canada, although it was not clear what this meant. By this time, NORTHCOM had been given the responsibility for missile defence under the operational control of the recently created US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), which was charged with protecting the United States from weapons of mass destruction. The system, moreover, was designed to destroy missiles in space where Canada’s agreement was not required, and the United States could not legally enter Canadian airspace without Ottawa’s permission. Still, Cellucci argued, “We need to make decisions about command and control. We obviously want Canadian Forces to be involved.”⁴⁵

Chrétien met with his divided caucus, a sizable minority of whom opposed Canadian participation. He assured MPs that it would be months before the government would have to make a decision and urged them not to take a stand until they had been briefed. When the Department of Foreign Affairs’ response to the parliamentary foreign affairs committee’s December 2002 report raised “questions

⁴³ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Ottawa flexible on missile defence: ministers,” *Globe and Mail*, April 29, 2003.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Canada continues to oppose weapons in space,” *Globe and Mail*, May 2, 2003.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Sheldon Alberts, “Cellucci urges joint missile defence,” *National Post*, May 7, 2003; Allan Thompson, “Canada opposed to weapons in space,” *Toronto Star*, May 7, 2003; Joseph T. Jockel, *Canada and NORAD, 1957-2007: A History* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), p. 174.

about missile defence's potential impact on arms control and global stability," Graham asserted that in discussions with the Americans, Canadian officials would emphasize the need for a treaty banning the deployment of weapons in space.⁴⁶

The Canadian Alliance Party kept up its pressure on the government. The Association of Aerospace Industries of Canada joined in, claiming that if Ottawa did not sign on "over the next couple of months, we'll be shut out" of the contract bidding process.⁴⁷ But there was little evidence that Canadian companies would benefit despite Bush's announcement that foreign firms would be encouraged to participate. Only one major contract was awarded, and that before Bush's statement, to CAE Systems Inc. to supply simulation software. Stein and Lang reported that "Canada's defence industry, one of the most aggressive lobbies in Ottawa, was not pushing Canada to join BMD."⁴⁸

McCallum and Graham stepped up their efforts to bring parliamentarians on side. McCallum argued that participation "could provide some degree of Canadian influence over the development and functioning of the system." Graham warned that "If missile defence becomes an exclusively American project and thus remains outside of NORAD, the role and relevance of this important partnership, so critical for our participation in the defence of North America, will come into question." The system as proposed was "far away from anything to do with the weaponization of space." But the skeptics were not convinced. The NDP's Bill Blaikie voiced their concerns, accusing the government of "deliberate blindness" toward a scheme that would "eventually create a world in which...Star Wars is a reality."⁴⁹

The government hoped to silence the critics with an agreement that ensured Canada would receive the same protection as the United States, preserved its role in NORAD, and recognized its opposition to the weaponization of space. In late May, McCallum announced that Ottawa would begin discussions with Washington with a view to making a formal decision by September. "If we are not inside the tent, our ability to influence the U.S. decisions in these areas is likely to be precisely zero," he

⁴⁶ Quoted in Daniel Leblanc and Shawn McCarthy, "PM shelves decision on missile defence," *Globe and Mail*, May 8, 2003; Sheldon Alberts, "Liberal rift delays entry into arms plan," *National Post*, May 8, 2003.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Simon Tuck, "Missile defence decision urged soon," *Globe and Mail*, May 12, 2003; Daniel Leblanc, "Pressure to mount for missile shield," *Globe and Mail*, November 1, 2002

⁴⁸ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Sheldon Alberts, "Join U.S. missile plan or lose NORAD: Liberals," *National Post*, May 16, 2003; Daniel LeBlanc, "Graham backs missile shield," *Globe and Mail*, May 16, 2003.

said.⁵⁰ Shortly thereafter, parliament passed a Canadian Alliance motion expressing support for giving “NORAD [the] responsibility for the command of any system developed to defend North America against ballistic missiles.” However, in a show of defiance, 38 Liberals joined their NDP and Bloc Québécois counterparts in opposing the measure.⁵¹

Canadian and US officials held three sets of discussions during the summer, which failed to answer Canada’s questions. It became clear that the government’s target of September could not be met. “Because those concerns and fears were not addressed to Canada’s satisfaction by the time I left office, and there had been no pressure or urgency to make up our mind one way or the other,” said Chrétien, “I passed the decision of whether we should participate to my successor,” Paul Martin.⁵²

Martin and Missile Defence

Early Developments

Martin took office in December 2003 promising to establish “a more sophisticated relationship with the United States.”⁵³ An agreement on missile defence was an important part of his plan. During his leadership campaign, Martin supported participation saying, “If somebody is going to be sending missiles over Canadian airspace, we want to be at the table,” although he added that a decision should not be taken without “full input” from Canadians.⁵⁴ However, by the time he assumed power, public disapproval of the war in Iraq had hardened into opposition to Bush’s foreign

⁵⁰ Quoted in Aileen McCabe and Robert Fife, “Ottawa opens up to missile talks,” *Calgary Herald*, May 30, 2003.

⁵¹ Quoted in Daniel Leblanc, “Missile defence gets boost in House,” *Globe and Mail*, June 4, 2003.

⁵² Jean Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2007), p. 302; Sheldon Alberts, “Missile-deal delay gives critics hope,” *National Post*, September 9, 2003.

⁵³ Quoted in Bruce Cheadle, “Grits criticism of GOP hurting Martin, MP says,” *Globe and Mail*, September 7, 2003.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Ottawa to move on missile defence,” *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 2003; “What Martin, the backbencher said,” *Toronto Star*, February 25, 2005.

policy to the point where it would be difficult “for the administration to get Canadian support for any platform.”⁵⁵

Martin signaled his intention by appointing David Pratt, a strong supporter of the project, to the Defence portfolio. At a meeting with Bush in January 2004, Martin said he could not make major decisions until he had a mandate from the voters.⁵⁶ But his government soon began moving toward approval. In mid-January, Pratt and Rumsfeld exchanged letters that, according to the minister, would establish “a clear path for future negotiations” and give Ottawa “access to the information” it would need “to make a decision on participation” after consulting parliament. Pratt’s letter stated the government’s intention “to negotiate in the coming months a Missile Defence Framework Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States with the objective of including Canada as a participant in the current U.S. missile defence program.” Rumsfeld agreed “that this should be the basis on which we move forward.”⁵⁷ Although the government had said involvement would not require financial support, Pratt allowed that “in-kind contributions are possible,” including “use of Canadian territory for radar sites [and] interceptor rocket launchers.” However, Ottawa remained opposed to the weaponization of space and had begun lobbying its allies to support a global treaty for this purpose.⁵⁸

The government’s handling of the issue became more complicated with the emergence of the so-called “sponsorship scandal.” Arising out of a program launched by the Chrétien government following the narrow victory by the federal side in the Quebec sovereignty referendum in 1995, it gave lucrative contracts to Quebec advertising firms to raise Canada’s visibility in the province. A report by the auditor general in early February 2004 revealed serious abuses, including kick backs from some firms to the federal Liberal party, which sent support for Martin’s government plummeting.

⁵⁵ John Wright, senior vice-president, Ipsos-Reid, quoted in Wallace Immen, “Canadians skeptical of Iraq war, poll shows,” *Globe and Mail*, July 19, 2003.

⁵⁶ Drew Fagan, “U.S. fears unstable Canada,” *Globe and Mail*, June 9, 2004.

⁵⁷ National Defence Canada, “Canada-U.S. Exchange Letters on Missile Defence,” *News Release*, and attachment, January 15, 2004, www.forces.gc.ca/site/Newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1289 (2/3/2004).

⁵⁸ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, “Canada may host U.S. missiles,” *Globe and Mail*, February 23, 2004; Jeff Sallot, “Canada seeking new treaty on space weapons,” *Globe and Mail*, February 24, 2003.

Later that month, the House of Commons endorsed the government's plan to negotiate a missile defence agreement with Washington by a vote of 155-71, defeating a Bloc Québécois motion, supported by the NDP, which called for an end to discussions. The vote exposed deep divisions among Martin's MPs, 30 of whom supported the motion. Several who were opposed were reserving final judgment pending the outcome of the negotiations. "We are very divided as a Liberal party," said former cabinet minister Herb Dhaliwal. "We don't need more issues to divide us."⁵⁹

An opinion poll released in late March, which showed that 69 percent of Canadians were against participation, gave Martin more reason for pause. With his hope for a majority government dependent on a strong showing in Quebec, where Liberal support was shrinking because of the sponsorship scandal and opposition to missile defence was running high, he had to tread carefully. When he met with Bush in Washington in late April, his enthusiasm had diminished considerably. He said only that the government would make a decision "in due course."⁶⁰

Minority Government Travails

The anticipated election took place on 28 June. During the campaign the Liberals exploited anti-Bush sentiment, portraying their Conservative Party rivals (formed from the merger of the former Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties) led by Stephen Harper, as closet Republicans.⁶¹ The tactic helped return Martin to power with reduced support as the head of a minority government.

Even before Martin had chosen his cabinet, Ambassador Cellucci began urging the government to make a decision on missile defence. Dismissing concerns that its minority position would affect the outcome, he asserted "It's in Canada's security

⁵⁹ Quoted in Mike Blachfield, "Backbench Grits to side with Bloc on missile talks," *National Post*, February 24, 2004; Mike Blachfield, "30 Liberal MPs join Bloc attack on missile plan," *National Post*, February 25, 2004.

⁶⁰ "Martin and the politics of missile defence," *Globe and Mail*, May 1, 2004; Ipsos-Reid, "Canadians' Views on Future Canada-US Relations," *News Release*, March 31, 2004; Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, pp. 153-158.

⁶¹ See, for example, Wendy McCann, "PM walks fine line on U.S. stand," *Calgary Herald*, May 25, 2004.

interests to be at the table.”⁶² But Martin was wary of expending his diminished political capital on the controversial project. After the cabinet’s first meeting in late July, he said, “We’re prepared to sit down with the Americans, but we want a negotiation. We have certain criteria that (are) absolutely critical for us, and I think we will simply have to see how that will evolve, and the decision will be made ultimately.”⁶³

With the US military contending that “the existing [NORAD] agreement prevented the passing of information about incoming missiles from NORAD to ‘Northcom’,” Martin moved to preserve the organization’s role in aerospace defence. On 5 August, Ottawa and Washington agreed that “NORAD would share access to tracking data on incoming missiles, which the Americans might use on their own for managing the BMD system.”⁶⁴ Bill Graham, the new Defence Minister, described the action as a necessary but not inevitable step toward participation. “We’re keeping all options open,” he said. The government’s announcement promised that parliament would have “input” on the issue.⁶⁵

The agreement sparked another round of criticism of the government. With the NDP and Bloc Québécois opposed to involvement, Harper’s Conservatives would play a pivotal role if parliamentary approval were required. In a calculated move, they served notice that their support could no longer be taken for granted. “We are still open minded,” said defence critic Gordon O’Connor. “Our party neither supports nor rejects missile defence until we have all the details.”⁶⁶

However, the most immediate challenge facing Martin was the attitude of his own MPs, more than half of whom, according to one member, were against

⁶² Canadian Press, “U.S. ambassador says Canada must join missile defence program,” *Chronicle-Herald* (Halifax), July 13, 2004.

⁶³ Quoted in Graham Fraser, “Martin needs to send message to the U.S. about relationship,” *Toronto Star*, July 24, 2004; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 161.

⁶⁴ Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water*, p. 386.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Drew Fagan, “Canada opens door for missile shield,” *Globe and Mail*, August 6, 2004. See also National Defence Canada, “Canada and United States Amend NORAD Agreement,” *News Release*, August 5, 2004, with attachment, www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1422 (8/12/2004)

⁶⁶ Quoted in F. Abbas Rana, “Grits plot against missile defence,” *Hill Times*, August 16, 2004; Canadian Press, “Martin tells U.S. ambassador decision on missile defence pending,” *RHSI News*, July 11, 2004, http://highspeed.rogers.com/news/national/pf_story.jsp?cid=n071121A (7/12/2004)

participation.⁶⁷ Many viewed missile defence “as a proxy for support of the unilateral foreign policy of the deeply unpopular Bush administration.”⁶⁸ Led by the women’s and Quebec caucuses, they voiced their views at a meeting in late August to prepare for the fall session of parliament. Anita Neville, chair of the women’s caucus, declared “many feel...we did the right thing in Iraq and that (abstaining from missile defence) is the right thing to do here.”⁶⁹ Outspoken Liberal MP Carolyn Parrish called proponents a “coalition of idiots” at a rally on Parliament Hill organized by the Canadian Coalition to Oppose Missile Defence, a citizens’ group with links to the NDP, BQ and dissident Liberals.⁷⁰ Martin did not try to silence his members, but doubtless mindful of the outbursts prior to the Iraq war, he warned that “strongly held views have got to be expressed in language that is acceptable.”⁷¹

Graham stepped up his efforts to win over the critics. Admitting that he did not know whether missile defence would work, he made the case on diplomatic grounds. The United States was “determined to pursue” the project and Ottawa needed to “maintain a close working relationship” with Washington. The issue “is not Iraq” or “American domestic politics. It’s about North American security. We can’t afford to draw a border between Canada and the United States when it comes to defence of the continent....We’re seamlessly connected and we have to reinforce that,” Graham said. “I think Canada will regret it if we don’t participate.”⁷²

Graham’s task became more difficult when a US State Department official challenged Ottawa’s claim that involvement in the system would be cost free. Canada would have to make a substantial contribution if it wanted to receive more than “incremental” protection. “If the Canadian government wants to participate in terms of defending North America and in particular Canadian territory, there would have to be

⁶⁷ Les Whittington and Mary Gordon, “PM warned on missile plan: NDP leader,” *Toronto Star*, August 24, 2004.

⁶⁸ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 161.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Alexander Panetta, “Liberal women against missile defence,” *Chronicle-Herald*, August 25, 2004.

⁷⁰ Stephen Staples, *Missile Defence: Round One* (James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers, 2006), pp. 83-84, 145-153.

⁷¹ Quoted in Mary Gordon and Les Whittington, “U.S. missile defence a ‘coalition of idiots’: MP,” *Toronto Star*, August 26, 2004.

⁷² Quoted in Mike Blanchfield, “We ‘will regret’ snubbing missile plan,” *Ottawa Citizen*, September 23, 2004.

subsequent negotiations that involve technical aspects, financial aspects, things like in-kind contributions, maybe Canadian military personnel, maybe even territory. It depends on what Canada wants," the official said.⁷³

Published reports that the United States was developing a space warfare capability added to the government's woes. US officials had assured their Canadian counterparts that if Washington deployed space-based weapons Ottawa could opt out of missile defence. But to opponents the revelations were more evidence that the Americans were intent on weaponizing space.⁷⁴ They enlisted the support of a former science advisor to the US Chief of Naval Operations, who argued that the unproven missile defence technology faced so many obstacles that claims it could protect North America from attack amounted to "scientific fraud." The Canadian Association of Physicists, too, expressed doubts about the technological feasibility of the project.⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the government had bowed to pressure from the NDP and the Conservatives, agreeing to a non-binding vote in parliament on whether Canada should join. But Conservative support became more problematic in the wake of a new opinion poll, which reported that 52 percent of Canadians surveyed were against involvement. Only residents of Atlantic Canada and Alberta were in favor. Disapproval was highest in Quebec where 65 percent were opposed. "We're not going to support anything without seeing what [the government is] signing on to," said Gordon O'Connor. "They'd better watch out, because they could get a surprising result in Parliament." A Conservative party organizer added, "The goal posts are moving on this, because there's a recognition that missile defence just doesn't sell in Quebec or among urban voters in Ontario," both of which were key electoral battlegrounds.⁷⁶

Ambassador Cellucci tried to lessen Martin's difficulties, saying that Washington did not expect a quick response. "We're not going to put any time limit on this," he

⁷³ Quoted in Bruce Champion Smith, "Ottawa backs missile pact," *Toronto Star*, September 28, 2004.

⁷⁴ David Pugliese, "U.S. maps out star wars strategy," *Calgary Herald*, October 2, 2004; Paul Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2005), p. 160.

⁷⁵ Quoted in David Pugliese, "Missile shield 'scientific fraud': former advisor," *Calgary Herald*, September 30, 2004; John Ward, "Shield hot topic in Canada," *Chronicle Herald*, October 4, 2004.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Mike Blanchfield, "PM frustrates Cabinet with indecision on missile defence," *National Post*, November 6, 2004; "Harper softens support for shield," *National Post*, November 10, 2004; Canadian Press, "Canada poised to join U.S. missile defence plan," *Calgary Herald*, October 16, 2004; Centre for Research and Information on Canada, "Canadians Oppose US Missile System by a Small Majority," *News Release*, November 4, 2004.

said, "We expect that [the debate] will proceed and we will be waiting to see what the decision is."⁷⁷ However, Bush's re-election to office in early November did not make Martin's task any easier. "Between Martin and his promise of more sophisticated relations stands the opinion of much of his caucus, some of his cabinet and most Canadians," wrote columnist James Travers. "That makes it extraordinarily difficult for Martin to lead a domestic debate or make difficult decisions on controversial issues with important implications for national interests."⁷⁸

Bush Intervenes

Bush quickly accepted Martin's invitation to visit Ottawa, seeing it as an opportunity to begin restoring relations with key allies following the divisive Iraq war. In an apparent effort to shield Bush from public criticism and to give Martin more breathing room, at Ottawa's request the two leaders' officials "agreed that the president would not raise the BMD issue in public while he was here."⁷⁹ The prime minister warned his caucus not to pass judgment on Bush's re-election, ousting the undiplomatic Carolyn Parish after she publicly criticized the president.⁸⁰ But Bush viewed the result as a vindication of his leadership, and had no intention of backing away from his hard line approach. "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it," he declared.⁸¹ An opinion poll released on the eve of Bush's visit on 30 November confirmed the gap between the two countries. While 56 percent of Americans reacted positively to the president's reelection, 58 percent of Canadians viewed it negatively. Moreover, 73 percent of Americans favored Canada's participation in missile defence, but only 44 percent of Canadians were supportive.⁸²

⁷⁷ Quoted in Jeff Sallot, "Missile defence not a 'deal breaker' Cellucci says," *Globe and Mail*, November 4, 2004.

⁷⁸ James Travers, "Paul Martin's job just got tougher," *Toronto Star*, November 4, 2004.

⁷⁹ Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water*, p. 388.

⁸⁰ Brian Laghi, "Bush does not expect Canada to rubber-stamp missile plan," *Globe and Mail*, November 9, 2004; "Anne Dawson, "Martin dismisses Bush-bashing MP," *Calgary Herald*, November 19, 2004.

⁸¹ Quoted in Sheryl Gay Stolberg and David E. Sanger, "White House Memo; Win, Lose or Draw, Bush Faces Unfamiliar Terrain," *New York Times*, November 6, 2004.

⁸² CTV News, "Canadians like U.S., not so hot on Bush: poll," November 30, 2004, www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/1101773671621_20/?hub=Canad... (11/30/2004)

At his meeting with Martin, Bush reportedly “stunned” the Canadians when he “leaned across a table” and “lectured” the prime minister about missile defence. “I’m not taking this position,” he asserted, “but some future president is going to say, ‘Why are we paying to defend Canada?’” Martin tried “to explain the politics, how it was difficult to do.” But Bush “waved his hands and said, ‘I don’t understand this. Are you saying that if you got up and said this is necessary for the defense of Canada it wouldn’t be accepted?’”⁸³

At a press conference following the meeting, Bush, deciding “it was time for him to do a bit of public diplomacy,” confirmed that he and Martin had “talked about the future of NORAD and how that organization can best meet emerging threats and safeguard our continent against attack from ballistic missiles.”⁸⁴ But he gave no ground on Canadian complaints about US protectionism on issues ranging from beef exports and wheat sales to softwood lumber and the so-called Byrd amendment that allowed Washington to give domestic companies duties from foreign firms deemed to be trading unfairly with the United States. A miffed Martin told Bush afterwards, “We are now a lot further away than we were five minutes ago.”⁸⁵

Bush also met with Stephen Harper, scolding him over his party’s equivocal stand. “I would hope you’re looking at this in Canada’s national interest and not in terms of partisan politics,” the president reportedly stated. Harper did not deny being pressed by Bush although he claimed to have been misrepresented. A Conservative official was more candid, confirming the party’s position was tactical. “Let’s see them [the Liberals] make a decision for once instead of relying on us,” the official said.⁸⁶

The following day in a speech in Halifax, Bush pledged to “reach out” to US allies. But he defended his administration’s foreign policy, citing the 9/11 attacks as evidence of the need to confront threats before they materialized. And in what Martin called “a clear violation of the agreement worked out between our officials,” Bush expressed the hope that the two governments would “move forward on ballistic missile cooperation.” An “infuriated” Martin said that while Ottawa would work closely with

⁸³ Quoted in Peter Baker, “Bush Doctrine Is Expected to get Chilly Reception,” *Washington Post*, January 23, 2005; Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, pp. 160-161.

⁸⁴ Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, p. 161.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 164.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Alexander Panetta, “Bush scolded Harper on missile plan,” *Toronto Star*, February 21, 2005.

Washington on continental defence, "Whatever decision we make will be in Canada's interests. We are a sovereign nation and we will make decisions about our airspace."⁸⁷ According to a new opinion poll, 80 percent of Canadians were not moved by Bush's comments. A polling firm official observed, "There are many things about this President, whether it be his lack of understanding about this country or how he has treated this country since 9/11, that...just don't go away."⁸⁸

Problems Mount

Bush's intervention in the missile defence debate left Martin's government "in a political mess."⁸⁹ In parliament, the Conservatives accused the prime minister of dithering, while the NDP and the Bloc Québécois used the issue to link the government to the unpopular Bush administration. But more intent on exploiting the government's weakness than settling the issue, they did not press for a vote.⁹⁰

A more serious problem for Martin was the reaction within his own party. In early December, the Quebec wing approved a resolution urging the government to "abstain" from involvement in missile defence for consideration at the party's national policy conference, which would take place in early March 2005. The chair of the women's caucus declared that her group planned to introduce a similar resolution. Barring a dramatic change such a measure seemed certain to win overwhelming approval.⁹¹

While playing for time in public, Martin met with Graham, Pettigrew and senior officials from their departments. Martin was not able to get "clear answers" from the officials to "questions about the concerns that I had been raising for months." In

⁸⁷ The White House, "President Discusses Strong Relationship with Canada," December 1, 2004, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/12/print/20041201-4.html (12/2/2004); Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 388; Susan Delacourt, "Friendly talk hid missile agenda," *Toronto Star*, December 2, 2004.

⁸⁸ John Wright, quoted in Gloria Gallaway, "Canadians still cool on Bush, poll finds," *Globe and Mail*, December 9, 2004.

⁸⁹ John Ibbitson, "Missile defence: a ticking time bomb," *Globe and Mail*, December 2, 2004.

⁹⁰ Bruce Champion-Smith, "Martin's missile defence headache," *Toronto Star*, December 11, 2004.

⁹¹ CBC News, "Quebec Liberals say no to missile plan," December 5, 2004, www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2004/12/04/quebec-liberals041204.html (3/9/2007); Jeff Sallot, "Martin takes heat on missile defence," *Globe and Mail*, December 3, 2004.

particular, he wanted assurance that if Canada joined it would not be pressed “down the road” to provide help fund the system. He was also concerned that an interception of an incoming warhead could have damaging consequences for Canadian citizens and territory. “I did not want to have a situation, to put it starkly, in which the Americans sacrificed Edmonton to save Denver.”⁹² Not only were the officials unable to respond to Martin’s questions, Graham recalled, they could not “even agree on what they were negotiating.” About the only point on which they were in accord was that Ottawa should not rebuff Washington again on an issue it regarded as crucial to its security, especially when the cost to Canada would likely be minimal.⁹³ But none of this was surprising given the unwillingness of the Americans to engage Canadian officials until the government agreed to become involved.

Martin publicly set out conditions for the government’s participation. These were: written confirmation that Canada would not be involved in the weaponization of space, no Canadian funding, and no interceptor missiles based in Canada. Ottawa also wanted a say in any decision involving the deployment of missiles over the country.⁹⁴

Cellucci confirmed that Canada would not have to participate if the system were extended to space but would not be specific about whether it would be asked to contribute more than political support. The main purpose of involving Canada was to “to ensure that if enemy missiles did come into North American airspace, Canada and the United States would work together to intercept them.” How the interceptions would take place would be decided in the negotiation.⁹⁵ As Cellucci’s comments made

⁹² Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 388, 386-387; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 165, 162-167. Martin had reason to be concerned that Washington would ask for a financial contribution. Former U.S. defence official Philip Coyle points out that Japan and Korea, both of which joined the scheme, have since been asked to help fund it. See David Pugliese, “Joining U.S. missile shield a costly project, ex-Bush advisor warns,” *Ottawa Citizen*, February 23, 2006.

⁹³ Quoted in Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 165. See also pp. 162-167.

⁹⁴ Robert Fife and Anne Dawson, “Missile defence won’t work,” *National Post*, December 15, 2004; Graham Fraser and Tonda MacCharles, “PM wants missile deal in writing,” *Toronto Star*, December 15, 2004. Martin also sent the Clerk of the Privy Council to Washington to assure US authorities that the government had not made a final decision. Robert Russo, “PM will back missile plan, Cellucci says,” *Globe and Mail*, January 10, 2005.

⁹⁵ Susan Delacourt, “No weapons in space, envoy says,” *Toronto Star*, December 16, 2004.

clear, critical questions about the terms of Canadian involvement remained unanswered almost two years after serious discussions began.⁹⁶

A late January 2005 report in the *Washington Post*, revealing Bush's comments on missile defence to Martin the previous November, intensified the pressure on the government. Martin downplayed the report, claiming that Bush had not raised the issue "in a forceful way," and that he had told the president the government "would make its decision when it was in Canada's interest to do so." Cellucci described the conversation as "very polite," and denied the administration was pressing Ottawa or imposing a deadline. However, he argued that Canada's sovereignty would be diminished if the government declined to join because it could not be part of the "protocol for making decisions on incoming missiles."⁹⁷

A new opinion sounding confirmed the public's opposition to Canada's participation. Some 54 percent of those surveyed were against involvement, while 34 percent were in favor. Quebeckers remained most opposed at 64 percent; while 57 percent of British Columbians and 52 percent of Ontarians disapproved. The poll also suggested that Bush's policies rather than missile defence itself was at the root of Canadians' opposition. A polling company executive described the issue as "a proxy for deeper anxieties about what the American administration (is) doing."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Paul Martin says that in his conversation with Bush in November 2004, the president "was not aware that we had a host of unanswered questions," which suggests that Rumsfeld and his officials were the source of this problem. Martin, *Hell or High Water*, p. 388.

James Fergusson contends that "discussions between the parties...laid the outline of an arrangement by October 2003," but he offers no evidence to support the claim. Andrew Richter allows that "there were legitimate questions about what Canada was being asked to agree to," although he mistakenly attributes a comment by Martin's Director of Communications to the effect "that there was a staggering inability to articulate what BMD was, and what we were being asked," to American rather than Canadian officials. See James Fergusson, "Shall We Dance? The Missile Defence Decision, NORAD Renewal, and the Future of Canada-US Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal* (Summer 2005), p. 18; and Andrew Richter, "Permanent Allies? The Canada-US Defence Relationship in the 21st Century," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 12, 1 (Fall 2009), p. 15 and fn. 45, www.jmss.org.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Campbell Clark and Estanislao Oziewicz, "Not bullied by Bush on missile defence, Martin says," *Globe and Mail*, January 27, 2005.

⁹⁸ Frank Graves, president, EKOS Research Associates, quoted in Bruce Campion-Smith, "Missile support plummets," *Toronto Star*, February 12, 2005.

Coming to a Decision

With the NDP and the Bloc Québécois solidly against Canadian involvement and the Conservatives' support uncertain, Graham and officials from the Departments of National Defence and Foreign Affairs briefed Liberal MPs in a final effort to secure their backing. They made little headway. With delegates to the party's policy conference virtually certain to vote against participation, Martin realized that he could not delay a decision any longer.⁹⁹

On 11 February, the prime minister met with his Finance Minister, Ralph Goodale, to review details of the forthcoming budget. It was apparent that the government had enough flexibility to make good on its election promise to boost defence spending, which would not only please the Americans but also represent a "made-in-Canada" contribution to continental security. The package would include a \$12.8 billion increase in military spending over the next five years and more than \$650 million more for border and port security. With the spending plan in place, the prime minister "reportedly felt that he had created enough room...to say no to missile defence, without leaving himself open to U.S. accusations that Canada was not doing its share on the international security front."¹⁰⁰

Martin held another meeting with his senior advisors a week later. But it was not until 20 February, en route to a NATO summit in Brussels that he told Foreign Affairs Minister Pettigrew that he had made a final decision. The public announcement would be made after Goodale presented the budget, with its military and border security spending hikes. Meanwhile, Pettigrew would inform Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, who was also attending the meeting. Tim Murphy, Martin's chief of staff, would convey the news to his US counterpart, Andrew Card. Oddly, Martin did not plan to tell Bush himself.¹⁰¹

The communications plan was soon thrown off course when Frank McKenna, Canada's ambassador designate to the United States, responded to a reporter's question

⁹⁹ Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 168-171.

¹⁰⁰ Susan Delacourt, "Suddenly, it's getting very lonely at the top," *Toronto Star*, February 25, 2005; Brian Laghi and Jane Taber, "It was not an easy decision to make," *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2005.

¹⁰¹ Susan Delacourt, "Suddenly it's getting very lonely at the top," *Toronto Star*, February 25, 2005; Brian Laghi and Jane Taber, "It was not an easy decision to make," *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2005; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 173.

about the government's position on missile defence after testifying before the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on 22 February. McKenna, who had not been informed of the prime minister's decision, noted that the NORAD amendment of August 2004 had given the United States "a great deal" of what it wanted from Canada. "We are part of it now and the question is what more we need to [do]?" he added. Concerned that the comment made the government seem "too supportive," PMO operatives quietly informed the media of Martin's decision.¹⁰² On 24 February, the day after Goodale's budget announcement, Martin told parliament that Canada would not participate. Instead, it would strengthen its contribution to continental defence by building up its armed forces and increasing border security.¹⁰³

Aftermath

The Pentagon reacted with indifference to the government's decision. Bill Graham reported that Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz "basically told me, 'We don't give a damn'."¹⁰⁴ But Ambassador Cellucci was less restrained. "We simply cannot understand why Canada would in effect give up its sovereignty, its seat at the table, to decide what to do about a missile that might be coming towards Canada," he said. Martin retorted that Canada expected the United States to consult Canada "on any intrusion into our space." Graham tried to downplay the controversy, contending that a successful interception would have to take place "within the first couple of minutes over the Pacific Ocean. It wouldn't be shot down over Canada." But he also admitted, "Whether we had gone in or not, the United States would have been making those sorts of decisions."¹⁰⁵ Condoleezza Rice expressed the administration's

¹⁰² Quoted in Aileen McCabe and Ann Dawson, "PM to say 'no' to missile shield," *Ottawa Citizen*, February 23, 2005; Brian Laghi and Jane Taber, "It was not an easy decision to make," *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2005; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, pp. 171-174.

¹⁰³ Sean Gordon and Bruce Campion-Smith, "It's no to missile plan," *Toronto Star*, February 25, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, p. 176.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Brian Laghi and Daniel Leblanc, "PM draws fire over missiles," *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2005. Peggy Mason contends that although "in time of crisis the USA may well ignore Canada's sovereignty," Martin was obliged assert Ottawa's right to be consulted on any US intervention into Canada's airspace. "Otherwise, it could be argued in law that he is acquiescing to American plans to, in effect, trespass." "Comments by Peggy Mason on the CBC radio "Ontario Today" phone in," March 1, 2005, www.web.net/~group78/English/bboard/CommentsCBC_1Mar05.shtml (9/17/2008).

displeasure by postponing plans to visit Ottawa that spring, and Bush made Martin wait a week before returning his phone call to discuss a meeting of the leaders of the three North American governments, which would take place on 23 March in Waco, Texas.¹⁰⁶

If Bush and some of his officials were puzzled by the decision, the Canadian public was not. An opinion poll conducted in March reported that 57 percent of respondents believed the government had made the right call, while 26 percent disagreed. Support ranged from 63 percent in Quebec to 50 percent in Alberta. Conservative backers, who were against the decision by a margin of 49 to 35 percent, were the only ones to buck the trend. Another poll showed that 69 percent of Canadians in all regions of the country would be against joining if Canada were required to contribute funds or to allow the United States to install missile launchers on Canadian territory. Opposition was highest in British Columbia where 77 percent were against, followed by 74 percent in Quebec, 68 percent in Atlantic Canada, 64 percent in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and 57 percent in Alberta. Consistent with earlier polls, public opposition appeared to have more to do with Bush's foreign and defence policies, and restrictive trade actions than with missile defence.¹⁰⁷

By the time of the Waco summit, Bush and Martin had decided to put the issue behind them. US officials praised Martin's government for increasing defence spending, calling it "a very, very strong statement of Canadian and U.S. co-operation."¹⁰⁸ Martin said that while the file on missile defence was "closed," Canada-US "co-operation, in terms of defence, in terms of our borders, in terms of the defence of our common frontiers is not only very clear, but it is being accentuated." Bush added that he understood "why people disagree with certain decisions I have made, but that doesn't prevent us from co-operating."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Susan Delacourt, "Bush phone call surprises Martin," *Toronto Star*, March 6, 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Decima Research Inc, "Canadians Approve of Decision on Missile Defence," March 22, 2005, www.decima.com/en/pdf/news_releases/050322E.pdf (3/12/2007); Alexander Panetta, PM gets thumbs up on missile defence," *Chronicle-Herald*, March 23, 2005 and Ipsos-Reid, "Canadians' Views in Future Canada-US Relations: Canadians Support Policy Independence From US," March 31, 2004, www.ipsos-reid.com (3/12/2007).

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Sheldon Alberts and Michael Blanchfield, "White House greets PM with a smile," *National Post*, March 23, 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Kathleen Harris, "Martin on missile defence: No means no," *Edmonton Sun*, March 24, 2005.

Martin's government was defeated in the House of Commons in November 2005. During the ensuing election campaign, the Conservatives expressed willingness to reopen missile defence discussions with Washington subject to a free vote in parliament. Gordon O'Connor, Defence Minister in Stephen Harper's minority Conservative government, which took office in early February 2006, added a further condition, namely that the Bush administration would have to initiate the talks. However, there was less to the offer than met the eye. Continuing hostility from opposition MPs and the public made parliamentary approval highly unlikely. Nor was the Bush administration, sobered by its earlier experience, about to raise the issue again. As the new ambassador, David Wilkins, put it, "That issue came up, and the Canadian officials decided. And we move on from that and continue to work together on other issues in other areas."¹¹⁰ That missile defence was no longer on the agenda became clear at a press conference following the Bush-Harper summit in Washington in early July 2006. The president said he had not asked the prime minister to revisit the decision. "I didn't bring it up, because I figured if he was interested, he would tell me," said Bush, who added that he knew missile defence was a "particularly difficult political issue in Canada." Harper responded "We're not yet ready to open this debate."¹¹¹

Conclusion

Prime Minister Paul Martin's plan to join President George W. Bush's missile defence program was a key element of his strategy to improve relations with Washington, which had deteriorated following his predecessor's decision not to endorse the US-led invasion of Iraq. But caught between the conflicting goals of placating the unpopular Bush administration and maintaining support for his fragile minority government in the face of substantial parliamentary and popular opposition, he was forced to abandon his design.

Some critics saw the decision as a failure of prime ministerial leadership. One commentator, for example, argued that Martin could have made the commitment soon after taking power when "the political costs of taking a step that everyone was

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Graham Fraser, "No plan to ask Canada to join missile system, ambassador says," *Toronto Star*, February 25, 2006.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Sheldon Alberts, "Bush launches missile scare," *Calgary Herald*, July 7, 2006.

expecting him to take at the time would have been minimal.”¹¹² But by then few details of a possible agreement had been worked out. Moreover, Martin was confident that his government would be returned to office with a comfortable majority in the soon to be called election. His calculations were upset by the sponsorship scandal, which eroded much needed support in Quebec where missile defence was also strongly opposed. The government survived the election but was reduced to minority status.¹¹³

Paul Cellucci viewed minority government as a problem that Martin could have overcome. “There had already been two votes on motions tabled by the Alliance and the Bloc and those opposed to missile defense had been pretty solidly thumped on both occasions. We could all do the arithmetic. Even if all the BQ and NDP members voted against missile defense, joined by 30 or even 40 Liberals, a third vote on missile defense would still pass if all the Conservatives voted for it. It might be divisive and the debate acrimonious, but I believed it would have been supported by a majority of Liberals and virtually all of the Conservative members of the House.” However, both votes had taken place under majority governments, and as Cellucci himself admitted, “The Conservative Party was not exactly a model of clarity and principle during all of this.”¹¹⁴ With the Liberal party and the public solidly against participation, there was no guarantee that Martin’s MPs would support it. Even if Stephen Harper’s Conservative members had been willing to do so Martin, having branded the Conservative party as being indistinguishable from the disliked Bush administration, would have put his government in a politically untenable position by relying on them to ensure the measure passed.

Other commentators attributed the decision to the outsized influence of Quebec opinion on Canadian foreign policy. As one of them put it, “Quebec opposed the idea, and that was sufficient.”¹¹⁵ Although most polls showed that Quebecers were more opposed than other Canadians, majorities in both English and French-speaking Canada were of the same mind. According to Decima Research, Martin’s decision had the

¹¹² Pierre Martin, “All Quebec’s Fault, Again? Quebec Public Opinion and Canada’s Rejection of Missile Defence,” *Policy Options* (May 2005), p. 44.

¹¹³ Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 386-389; Stephen Clarkson, “Disaster and Recovery: Paul Martin as Political Lazarus,” in Jon H. Pammett and Christopher Dornan, eds., *The Canadian General Election of 2004* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2004), pp. 28-65.

¹¹⁴ Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, pp. 161, 165.

¹¹⁵ J.L. Granatstein, *Whose War is it?* p. 151.

backing of “virtually every constituency in the country,” with “majorities in all regions, both genders, all age groups, rural and urban Canada alike.” Most respondents were more concerned about Bush’s defence policy and the lack of US responsiveness to Canada’s trade complaints than they were about missile defence. “We know most Canadians want a friendly and closer relationship between the two countries,” said the firm’s CEO, Bruce Anderson, “but there’s caution and skepticism in matters of military and foreign policy. Adding long running frustrations around trade disputes makes it almost impossible to assemble broad and deep support for such an idea as this, at a time like this.”¹¹⁶

Cellucci appeared to recognize that much of the opposition reflected “general uneasiness” about Bush’s policies.¹¹⁷ This made the president’s intervention in the debate during his visit to Canada all the more puzzling. Cellucci claimed Bush did so “because he couldn’t understand what the basis was for the Canadian government’s reluctance to sign on to missile defense, particularly after the amendment to NORAD the previous summer.”¹¹⁸ Whatever the reason, his involvement all but doomed what remained of Ottawa’s resolve.

Nor did the United States make the negotiations easy for Canada. Although the Bush administration agreed that Ottawa could opt out of the agreement if the system were extended to space, few other details, including the extent to which Canada would be protected and the nature and costs of participation had been worked out. As a close US observer put it, the administration was “committed” to building the system “and sought to minimize any constraints [it] might face.”¹¹⁹ Michael O’Hanlon contended that Washington “made major diplomatic errors in handling this topic with Canada. It asked for a blanket endorsement of an open-ended US missile defense program, rather than for specific help with specific technical challenges and defensive weapons. This

¹¹⁶ Alexander Panetta, “PM gets thumbs-up on missile defence,” *Chronicle Herald*, March 23, 2005, and Decima Research Inc., “Canadians Approve of Decision on Missile Defence,” March 22, 2005.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Susan Delacourt, “No space weapons, envoy says,” *Toronto Star*, December 16, 2004.

Cellucci went further in his memoir arguing that a minority of Liberal MPs “were uneasy about anything that might be construed as expanding military cooperation with the United States.” For some, “this uneasiness was accompanied by a virulent dislike of President Bush and a belief that any policy he supported must be bad for Canada and the world.” *Unquiet Diplomacy*, p. 166.

¹¹⁸ Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, pp. 160-161.

¹¹⁹ Confidential US source.

was a fundamental mistake, and the US has mostly itself to blame for the resulting fallout.”¹²⁰ More to the point was Cellucci’s complaint “that the prime minister did not tell the president himself, although the two men were both at the NATO meeting and at several points were standing side by side. But not a word was said. All in all, it was an inept ending to a frustrating process.”¹²¹ Martin insisted there was “no time for a meeting” but admitted “we could, and should, have done a better job of managing public expectations and communicating our decision-making process.”¹²²

Cellucci’s claim, supported from time to time by Canadian officials, that participation would give Canada a role in any decision to intercept an incoming missile over Canada is more problematic.¹²³ Even missile defence supporters acknowledged that although Ottawa would participate in the warning and assessment of a missile attack, “the decision to launch nuclear weapons in response would...be made by the US-only Strategic Command” and US willingness “to allow Canada to participate in continental missile defence would not go beyond these parameters.”¹²⁴ Cellucci added that, “A missile destined for the US is not going to vary its route so that it does not travel through or over Canadian airspace. Nor do the niceties of whose airspace is where figure in a US response. Whatever the target, a US decision to intercept a missile would probably be made well before it was over American airspace.”¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Michael O’Hanlon, “Don’t blame Canada for missile-defense snub,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 3, 2005.

¹²¹ Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, p. 164.

¹²² Martin, *Hell or High Water*, p. 389.

¹²³ Sheldon Alberts, “Cellucci tries to allay fears of missile defence,” *National Post*, May 7, 2003.

¹²⁴ Alexander Moens and Barry Cooper, “Canadian Participation in North American Missile Defence” A Cost-Benefit Analysis,” *Fraser Alert* (January 2005), p. 3.

¹²⁵ Cellucci, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, p. 149. Reinforcing these points Joseph Jockel notes that although the NORAD agreement recognized the importance of “the fullest possible consultation between the two Governments on all matters affecting the joint defence of North America” Canada “received no special treatment during the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis or during subsequent emergencies.” Claims that Canada could leverage its involvement “into a special consultative relationship were, at best, unrealistic.” Jockel adds that “deep down, the American approach to air defence cooperation with Canada remained the same as it had been since 1945...The important role Canadian territory, airspace, and armed forces played in the defence of North America had not conferred on Canadian officialdom special consultative rights on matters beyond this continent. In American eyes, Canada had not become any more influential than any of America’s many other allies simply because Canadian air defence forces had now been placed under the operational control of a USAF general.” Joseph T. Jockel, *No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States, and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), pp. 128-129.

Although Bush was not pleased with Martin's decision, Cellucci conceded that, contrary to the predictions of some analysts, it did not have a lasting impact on the relationship. "It did no damage to Canada-U.S. relations," he confirmed. "We just threw our hands up and said these people don't know what they are doing."¹²⁶ In fact, the administration went out of its way to acknowledge Canada's increased contributions to continental defence and border security.

Neither has the decision weakened NORAD, at least in the short-term. Building on its traditional outward looking air and space defence mission, NORAD has taken on a new inward looking role in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in which it cooperates closely with civil aviation authorities in identifying and intercepting unauthorized aircraft in North American airspace. For example, it was tasked with protecting the airspace over the Vancouver Olympics and the recent G8 and G20 summit meetings in Huntsville and Toronto. The August 2004 amendment to the NORAD agreement assured that instead of having to set up its own surveillance and detection system, Washington could focus on building other satellites and radars required for missile defence.¹²⁷ In May 2006, the two governments extended the NORAD agreement indefinitely, adding maritime warning to the organization's responsibilities. Moreover, working relations between US and Canadian officers at NORAD and NORTHCOM remain intact. Elinor Sloan notes that the detection and response functions that had been divided between the two organizations following NORTHCOM's establishment "proved to be difficult in practical terms." In 2008, NORAD's command centre was moved from Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado and co-located with that of NORTHCOM at Peterson Air Force Base in nearby Colorado Springs. "With a Canadian deputy commander-in-chief NORAD sitting in the chair beside the American commander-in-chief NORTHCOM," she observes, "it is hard to conceive of Canada not providing input into a response against an incoming ballistic missile."¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Quoted in Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, 177; Brian Laghi and Jane Taber, "It was not an easy decision to make," *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2005.

¹²⁷ Peggy Mason, "Missile defence argument ridiculous," *Toronto Star*, January 18, 2005; Elinor Sloan, "Continental and Homeland Security," *International Journal*, LXIV, 1 (Winter 2008-09), p. 195.

¹²⁸ Sloan, "Continental and Homeland Security," p. 196.

However, NORAD's future is less clear.¹²⁹ In the wake of the 9/11 attacks both countries established their own unified command structures in the form of NORTHCOM in the United States and Canada Command (Canada COM) in Canada "whose responsibilities encroach on those of NORAD."¹³⁰ The extension of NORAD's mandate to include maritime warning fell short of the Bi-National Planning Group's recommendation that the organization develop into an overall bilateral defence command. As Dwight Mason explained, "NORAD fitted uneasily into this new structure."¹³¹ Although Colin Robertson has argued that "with different threats and challenges, there is a compelling case for expanding NORAD to integrate the land and sea forces of Canada Command and U.S. Northern Command, "in the most recent review in 2010 "no new ideas were put on the table by either side."¹³² The next review in 2014 will be crucial in shaping the organization's future tasks.

¹²⁹ See James Fergusson, "NORAD's Indefinite Future?" *The Dispatch*, 6,1 (Spring 2008), www.cdfai.org/newsletters/newslettersspring2008.htm; and Joseph T. Jockel, "Saving NORAD: Should Ottawa Seize the Moment?" *SPP Briefing Papers*, University of Calgary, School of Public Policy, 2,3 (September 2009).

¹³⁰ Richter, "Permanent Allies?" p. 32. See also Jockel, *Canada in NORAD*, pp. 196-197.

¹³¹ Dwight N. Mason, "NORAD and the Maritime Defense of North America," June 16, 2006, www.centreforforeignpolicystudies.dal.ca/pdf/msc2006/Mason.pdf (2/6/2008). See also Jockel, *Canada in NORAD*, pp. 182, 196.

¹³² Colin Robertson, "Take advantage of the Obama effect," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 22, 2009; Edward Greenspon et. al., "Open Canada: A Global Positioning Strategy for a Networked Age," (Canadian International Council, 2010), p. 68.