

A more recent question on SDI from the November 1985 CBC survey found Canadians more or less evenly divided in approving (41%) and disapproving (44%) of the "star wars defense system". A solid majority (61%), however, approved the Mulroney Government's decision to allow Canadian business to participate in star wars research. Most also opposed direct government participation and were against government help to these companies.

REGIONAL CONFLICTS

Regional conflicts around the world are not generally priority issues for the Canadian public in comparison, say, to the nuclear arms race. For example, around two in every ten Canadians generally regard conflicts in the Middle East or Central America as "very important" for this country. As many or more attribute no importance or very little importance to these situations. In Canada's overall relationship with different regions, Central America, South America, the Caribbean and Africa (in that order) trail Western Europe, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia.

Concerning situations in these regions, Canadians tend to take, in principle, a middle-of-the-road position. When Decima asked about the causes of the "unrest in Central America" in 1985, a minority (28%) singled out the Soviet Union and Cuba. A smaller minority (12%) blamed American policies. A solid majority (56%) of the Canadian public said the root cause of the unrest is poverty and injustice. An earlier survey considered three alternative policies Ottawa might adopt to deal with the conflict. Military assistance to "local governments" to combat insurgency found the least favour with only one in ten saying it would be most appropriate. Increased economic assistance was regarded as preferable by around two in ten while 70% opted for supporting the peacekeeping efforts of other Central American countries as the most appropriate. However, in the 1985 CBC poll, more Canadians disapproved of US policy in Central America (40%) than approved of it (32%).