

who claimed to be aware of the issue rose from about one in every two Canadians, in late 1982 when the question was first asked, to almost nine out of ten, in 1985. Cruise testing was also one of the most divisive of recent issues amongst social groups. Anglophone Canadians, older age groups, males, the university educated and upper income earners were more in favour than opposed. Francophones, British Columbians and Quebeckers, younger age groups, females, public school educated persons and lower income earners were more opposed than in favour.

STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

The second highly controversial defence issue was that of the US Strategic Defense Initiative and possible Canadian involvement. Again the level of awareness was relatively high; over eight in ten of those interviewed during the summer of 1985 - during the Special Parliamentary Committee's hearings on this subject - said they were aware of the Reagan Administration's plan. Perhaps the only aspect of the SDI on which Canadians reveal a consensus is its feasibility. Eight out of every ten thought it likely that such a space-based defence system could in fact be built. No consensus exists on its consequences, however. When asked what the effect of such a system would be on the arms race, 60% thought it would speed it up, 15% that it would slow it down, and 24% that it would have no effect. When asked whether a space-based defence system will make the world safer or less safe from nuclear destruction, about four in ten replied safer. The same proportion replied less safe. In this case the remainder had no guess. On the key policy question of Canadian involvement in SDI research, a bare majority approved. Forty percent were opposed. When the Decima organization asked a similar question distinguishing between research and deployment, slightly less than one-third believed Canada should only participate in the SDI research phase, and slightly more than a third believed this country should be involved in both research and deployment. Approximately one-third were against any involvement.