

his celebrated "Star Wars" speech of March 23, 1983, and move effectively towards the development of ballistic missile defences using lasers and other advanced technology, then the United States would gradually shift from a strategy based on the threat of retaliation to one designed to counter directly all forms of Soviet and other aerial threats against its territory. In this circumstance, there would be little point in defending against ballistic missiles if the United States was not also protected against bombers, cruise missiles, and other offensive systems; a whole range of defensive weaponry and warning systems — including space-based ballistic missile defences, ground-based missile defence systems, radars, and interceptors — would be necessary.

In this complex situation, faced with questions about the outcome of the current negotiations and also about their implications, Canada confronts a number of possible courses of action. For illustrative purposes, these may be summarized as follows:

1. Canada could encourage the United States to go ahead with the upgrading of present air defence systems and could also seek a full partnership in continental aerospace defence with the United States, including an active part in U.S. defensive and offensive space systems and ballistic missile defences. This would require a fundamental change in the arms control and disarmament policies that Canadian governments have pursued throughout the nuclear era.
2. Canada could press the United States to proceed with the transitional arrangements and seek to obtain an effective but clearly delimited and defined role in them. Canada could also seek to play an effective role in essential space surveillance in cooperation with the United States through NORAD, either by developing its own military surveillance satellites or by trying to negotiate a limited part in U.S. space programmes.
3. Canada could commit itself to upgrade the ground-based systems on its territory whether or not the United States wishes to participate in their modernization. This is a course it may have to consider if the present negotiations are terminated for any reason. If Canada assumed this responsibility, it might wish to avoid the additional expenditures that space surveillance would entail. Alternatively, it could develop a national space programme or seek a part in U.S. space programmes.
4. Hypothetically at least, Canada could try to avoid decisions and opt for a passive approach to the question of upgrading North American air defences. Present systems would be maintained for the time being, and Canada would not engage or participate in any upgrading. With regard to military space activity, there would still be three options: no programme; a national programme; or participation in U.S. space programmes.
5. Although it seems unlikely under the new Canadian government, Canada could let current air defence systems decline or pull out of NORAD completely, in pursuit of policies favouring a minimal contribution to the alliance or some form of neutralism. It might avoid space activities altogether or else endeavour to develop its own independent, space-based surveillance systems.