

Canada DID join “Missile Defense”

By [Richard Sanders](#)

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For a year now, my peace/anti-war activities have centred on opposing what is euphemistically called America’s “missile defense shield.” And, since February 23, 2005, when Paul Martin cleverly pretended to oppose so called “missile defense,” I’ve focused my efforts on conducting and publishing original research to reveal Canada’s hidden role in this massive, weapons-creation and -development program.

What I found is that for years now, Canadian corporate and scientific communities, as well as government departments, agencies and crown corporations, have been busily participating in the creation, development, maintenance, operation, financing and planned deployment of “missile defense” weapons systems.

However, because Canadians are generally unaware of their country’s involvement in “missile defense,” many immediately praised the Liberal government for its supposed refusal to *join* this offensive weapons scheme. Now, nine months later, although the Liberal government is credited on a daily basis with having *kept Canada out* of U.S. “missile defense” plans, the Liberal’s have yet to substantiate their hollow pronouncement with even a single, concrete action. And, many Canadians — including some key activists who oppose “missile defense” — continue their unfounded applause for the Liberal government’s phoney “no” to involvement in the U.S. weapons-development scheme.

This federal election is an opportune time to draw attention to Canada’s participation in so called “missile defense” and to hold the Liberals accountable for pretending that they prevented Canada from “joining.”

I continue to hope that my efforts to unveil Canada’s actual complicity in “missile defense” preparations will help in some small way to resuscitate Canada’s nearly-defunct — but once vibrant — anti-Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) movement. The peace/antiwar movement can indeed be proud that prior to the government’s much-ballyhooed, but totally hypocritical and duplicitous, “no to missile defense,” we built a strong opposition to this offensive, U.S. weapons program. It is tragic, however, that as soon as the government made its fake pronouncement, grassroots opposition acquiesced and protests disappeared.

By pulling the wool over our eyes on “missile defense,” the Liberal government also managed to pull the rug right out from under our feet! This is the kind of manoeuvre that typifies Liberal governments. They talk from the left side of their mouths, while governing from the right.

ANNEX

Original Research in *Press for Conversion!*

The results of my research on “missile defense” is contained in three lengthy issues of the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT) magazine, *Press for Conversion!* The full text of these issues (totalling about 100,000 words!) is now available online:

Issue #57: “Canada’s Role in so called ‘Missile Defense,’

Part II: Sea-based, Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense”

<http://coat.ncf.ca/TBMD>

Issue #56: “Canada’s Role in so called ‘Missile Defense,’

Part I: NORAD, Government Largesse & the ABC’s of Corporate Complicity.”

<http://coat.ncf.ca/missiledefense>

Issue #55: “Missile Defense”: Trojan Horse for the Weaponization of Space

<http://coat.ncf.ca/starwars>

COAT’s next issue, to be published early in the new year, will deal with Canadian complicity in the militarisation of space, the role of Canadian space technology in U.S. warfighting and implications for “missile defense” weapons systems.

Making “Missile Defense” an issue again!

I’m writing to encourage you to join COAT’s ongoing efforts to make Canada’s role in “missile defense” an issue, not only in this federal election but after it as well. Regardless of whether the Liberals or Conservatives win, Canada will no doubt remain deeply engaged in various “missile defense” weapons programs. Here are some ways that you can help COAT to raise awareness about this important subject:

Order *Press for Conversion!*, subscribe and/or renew

- Here’s a generic, COAT coupon that you can use: <http://coat.ncf.ca/coupon>
- Please order extra copies of our “missile defense” issues for friends, colleagues, political candidates, the media and anyone else you can think of.
- If you haven’t already subscribed, please do so now and we’ll include a free copy of the current issue, and then start your subscription with the next one. (*To get the free, extra copy, please refer to this email offer when you make your payment.*)
- If your subscription to *Press for Conversion!* has expired, I hope you take this opportunity to renew.
- If you’re not sure of your subscription status, just drop me an email: <mailto:overcoat@rogers.com>

Buy gift subscriptions

A subscription to our magazine can make a great present for friends, relatives, fellow activists or even your dearest, political adversaries.

Challenge the myth of Canada's "no" to "missile defense"

You can use the wealth of information published in our latest issues when you:

- write letters to newspaper editors
- phone radio call-in shows and talk-back lines
- raise the issue with peace groups, riding associations, unions, etc.
- ask questions at all-candidates meetings and other public events
- debate these issues online with friends and adversaries alike
- make a presentation, prepare a lecture, write an essay, etc.

Promote COAT's original research online

Here are some ways to stimulate debate and discussion, and spread the word online:

- Circulate this email to your list of email contacts
- Post this information to list serves
- Link websites to COAT <<http://coat.ncf.ca> >
- Refer the media, politicians, researchers and others to *Press for Conversion!* issues (#55-57) on "missile defense."

Make a donation to COAT

It's been a real struggle over the past year trying to debunk the overwhelming illusion that "we won on missile defense." Please contribute to COAT's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about Canadian complicity in this offensive, U.S.-led weapons development program. Keep in mind that COAT does not receive any funding from foundations, unions, corporations or government agencies. (We are thankful however for photocopying from several national unions.)

COAT relies entirely on the support of subscribers and supporters. Please give whatever you can to help us out. Any amount you can afford would be greatly appreciated!

Don't give up!

As peace/anti-war activists, it often seems that we're fighting a losing battle. Canadian industry (and its allies in government) are so closely integrated into the U.S. war economy, and our military is so deeply embedded into American institutions of war, that they fall readily in line, by default. Our government, which has long been among the world's top military spenders, will now — *thanks to the latest Liberal budget* — be even better equipped

to join in whatever wars, invasions or regime changes that the U.S. power elite claims are necessary in order to protect world peace and to fight terrorism. And, of course, Canadian war industries, being among the world's most successful, weapons producers and exporters, always play a major part in U.S. wars.

It's easy then to get disheartened and discouraged but, of course, we can't give up these important struggles.

The biggest obstacle that we face in challenging Canadian complicity in war is the widely-pervasive myth that Canada is a benevolent global force for peace, justice and democracy. While most Canadians embrace this myth and feel good about the positive self-image it engenders, I have long argued that our main work as peace/anti-war activists is to expose and debunk the many corollaries of this national delusion. For instance:

- IRAQ: How can we oppose Canada's current role in training the Iraqi police and Iraqi armed forces, let alone our Navy's part in protecting and escorting fleets of U.S. warships through the Persian Gulf on their way to Iraq since 2003, when Canadians are still proudly thinking that our government said no to any involvement in that illegal war?
- HAITI: How can we protest against Canada's support for the right-wing, CIA-backed coup that ousted the democratically-elected government of Haiti, when Canadians still think our "peacekeepers" are there to protect democracy?
- BMD: How can we counter Canada's ongoing role in so called "missile defense," when Canadians have accepted at face value the Liberal government's puff that it "said no" to participation in this offensive, U.S.-led weapons development program?

Our efforts to counter the behemoth of government propaganda are overshadowed by disinformation that is churned out daily through the mainstream, corporate media.

In spite of all this, we just can't give up our efforts to raise public awareness and to radicalise ourselves and others in the peace/anti-war movement. We must persist even though there seems little hope that we will achieve all of the successes that we long for. This struggle has been going on for literally thousands of years, and it will continue for as long as there are wars and injustice. Each era of activists builds upon the struggles and gains of all those who came before.

I do believe that our efforts are useful and worthwhile. If I really thought this work was futile, I wouldn't have devoted the past 22 years — with little remuneration — to full-time activism, organising, research, writing and publishing.

As my hero, anthropologist Margaret Mead famously said:
"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Thanks for anything you can do to help COAT make "missile defense" an issue again, and particularly for whatever you can do to alert Canadian activists to the fact that we did *not* (yet) "win" the struggle to stop Canada's participation in "missile defense," or the war against Iraq.

Yours sincerely for peace,

Richard Sanders
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P.S. Thanks to all those who've recently made a donation to COAT, ordered extra copies, and otherwise supported our efforts to renew Canadian opposition to "missile defense." Your help is very much appreciated!

P.P.S. Here again is a generic, COAT coupon that you can use to order magazines, subscribe, renew or donate to COAT. *Thanks!!*
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