



## **Peggy Mason on Ballistic Missile Defense**

### **CBC Radio The Current in response to BMD segment**

#### **Telephone Comments**

**August 4, 2004**

My name is Peggy Mason. I am a former Canadian Amb to the UN for Disarmament. I was a senior policy advisor in the Canadian FM's office in 1985 when our participation in Reagan's bmd programme (the strategic defence initiative) was being debated and I am now the Chair of the Group of 78, a foreign policy NGO that strongly opposes Cdn participation in Bush's bmd programme.

I wish to thank you for your coverage today of the issue of whether Cda should participate in the USA bmd programme. I wish to respond to some of the comments by Professor Jim Fergusson, the leading Cdn academic proponent of Canada signing on.

Putting aside Prof Fergusson's frankly wishful thinking that participation in this costly, dangerous and to date completely technically unproven programme will give us more access to, and influence on, American security policy, let us deal with his central argument that NORAD will be marginalized if Canada says no. As Fergusson pointed out, the USA does not need Canada for this programme. What America does need, however, is continued Canadian cooperation in the air defence of North America indeed it needs this cooperation more than ever since the airplane attacks of September 11th. This is the core function of NORAD and it is not in any way threatened by Canada staying out of bmd.

Fergusson dismissed the negative impact of BMD on international security as if the weaponization of space was somehow going to be a plus for humanity. He also failed to mention that Russia is actively developing offensive weapons to counter missile defenses as is China exactly the ingredients for a new and deadly arms race.

In 1985 Prof. Fergusson urged Canada to join Reagan's strategic defence initiative (dubbed Star Wars by the media) but then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney managed to say "NO" despite his close relationship with the American President. Let us all hope (against mounting evidence to the contrary) that Prime Minister Martin can summon similar resolve and just say no.