

Lost in Canadian space

Controversial is a big bad word in Ottawa and it just scares the Tories silly. How to handle Star Wars, the space-based defence system, has become a hot potato for the Great Census Maker, Brian Mulroney. He has come up with a brilliant idea. Mulroney is sending forth Joe Clark to ask "average Canadians" what they think of space defence.

To help Clark, who will have to cover a lot of territory, I went out and made my own survey. Here are my carefully tabulated results:

Question: Do you favor research into excimer lasers or x-ray pump devices?

Answer: Doug Richie, car salesman: "Huh?"

Q: Should we be investing in kinetic kill systems or enhanced particle-beam weapons?

A: Shushwap Patel, housewife: "I'm in favor of anything that brings down the price of lentils."

Q: What is your view of the use of ablative coatings for thermal dissipation in post-boost phase?

A: Gaetan LaTulippe, taxi driver: "Eh bien, that's good. My cousin Real has a coat factory in Chicoutimi."

Q: Can refractive optical technology be effective in off-boresight applications in a heavy ECCM environment, given current advances in pulse doppler negative bounceback techniques.

A: Hattie Dewlip, NDP politburo member: "This is a perfect example of fascist Pentagon warmongering. We should be sending all this money to Nicaragua. Russia is our friend."

Q: Will Star Wars make obsolete the current MAD policy and force us to re-evaluate our offensive-defensive weapons mix?

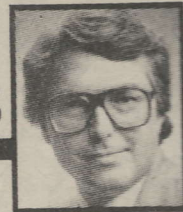
A: Vito Pazzolone, hairdresser: "Sure we should be in Star Wars. Canada needs its own film industry!"

Q: If we do not participate, will our technology fall behind in the areas of WHIC, artificial intelligence, fibre optics and positive/negative di-polar transpondence?

A: Kelly Kramer, model: "Well, technology means better camera shots of me for my book, so, like, it's really good."

Q: Will massed decoy fields, using aerosols, inflatables, dummies and ECM overwhelm battle man-

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agement C3 systems in a counter-measure intense environment?

A: Jeremiah Big Feather, Indian chief: "Tell those twerps in Ottawa to send us our land deeds for Alberta or they'll see how good Star Wars is against arrows!"

Q: Do you think we should be developing electromagnetic rail guns for hard-kill capability or should we focus on directed energy emitters using laser-guided plasma charges?

A: Vladimir Hratchuyn, Saskatchewan farmer: "Who cares about Russian missiles. If hog prices go any lower I'm going to starve to death."

Q: Should we be planning a two-layer defence, using homing overlay systems or a three-tier defence using point-reactive systems?

A: Spiro Hajipapadakis, restaurateur: "I don't care what they use as long as it doesn't protect the Turks."

Q: Will a space-based system lead to an immediate escalation in FOBS, SLBM, and ALCM threats?

A: Rory McRory, fisherman: "Why should we be defending space when Canada can't even defend itself on the ground or at sea?"

Q: Will Star Wars work?

A: Joe Clark, civil servant: "Gee, ah, er, you better ask Maureen about that."

Well, the public has spoken and its voice is clarification clear. No one will yell at Mulroney when Clark takes the public's pulse. *Vox populi* cannot be wrong.

Hats off to Mulroney. Next topics for our national dialogue will be tariff negotiations, how to treat business-accelerated depreciation, funding for research and development, tax law reform . . .

Punch

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