

Letter to the Editor
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by John Polanyi

The missile gift

Refreshingly, Lawrence Martin (*Beware The Day of Reckoning*, Dec 23) urges us to look beyond our noses in debating the proposed Canadian contribution to U.S. missile defence.

So far as one can tell, nobody in the high councils of our land argues that missile defence is a priority, or that it can be expected to work.

Few are even convinced that, by obliging the United States in this matter, we can be said to be asserting our sovereignty. The prevailing view seems to be, rather, that in missile defence we have found the proper gift for a neglected person on our list.

Mr. Martin asks whether the recipient can afford our gift, and concludes that they cannot. Star Wars is a bottomless pit for money, and the U.S. is going broke.

The feeble rallying cry for participation with the Americans – “they’re going to do it anyway” – then becomes feebler still; they are going to drop it anyway.

This will happen after Canada, having overcome its doubts and swallowed its scruples, takes its place (free of charge) at the table. Our punctured balloon of a gift will remain as a reminder of the reluctance with which it was given.

How much better were we to contribute to international peacekeeping – a gift we can pay for, and should

JOHN POLANYI, *Toronto*