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Canada Must Say No to 'Golden Dome' Strategic Missile Defence A Call for Parliamentary Oversight

Ahmed Hussen

Chair

House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Charles Sousa

Chair

House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence

Dear Chairs,

On behalf of the Canadian Pugwash Group, I am writing to express our grave concern about the Government of Canada's movement toward participation in the United States' proposed strategic ballistic missile defence initiatives within "Golden Dome".

Recent reports suggest that the government is considering removing long-standing restrictions on strategic missile defence, paving the way for Canadian direct involvement in those elements of Golden Dome or similar schemes. Negotiations are reportedly already under way.

This situation raises profound questions of accountability and oversight. To date, there has been no parliamentary debate, committee review, or public consultation on whether Canada should commit tens of billions of dollars to what would be one of the most expensive and controversial military programs ever launched. Decisions of this magnitude cannot be allowed to proceed with so little attention or accountability.



Beyond these process concerns, the substantive case against Canadian participation remains compelling:

Technically unreliable and prohibitively costly. Golden Dome strategic BMD builds on the long-troubled legacy of strategic, space-based missile defence, which has faced insurmountable technical hurdles since the “Star Wars” initiative of the 1980s, particularly against long-range, nuclear-armed missiles with decoys or countermeasures. Independent estimates place total costs in the hundreds of billions of dollars, with Canadian participation alone projected at more than US\$70 billion – a sum larger than Canada’s entire annual defence budget.

Destabilizing for global security. The current strategic stability and nuclear deterrence system relies on mutual vulnerability to forestall incentives for nuclear first strikes. A system designed to neutralize adversaries’ nuclear deterrents risks provoking destabilizing nuclear arms competition and extending it to the weaponization of outer space. Canada has long championed nuclear arms control, strategic stability and space non-weaponization. Participation in Golden Dome strategic BMD would undermine that legacy and Canadian security.

Risk of entrenchment without debate. Once billions of dollars are committed and integration with U.S. systems proceeds, reversing course will become exponentially more difficult, even if the initiative proves unworkable or contrary to Canadian interests. That is why early scrutiny is essential.

We respectfully urge your committees to examine this issue as a matter of priority. Your role in ensuring that elected representatives are fully informed and able to understand and debate the implications is indispensable. Parliamentary hearings should address not only the technical and fiscal feasibility of Golden Dome strategic BMD, but also its implications for global strategic stability and Canadian sovereignty, our long-standing commitments as a responsible middle power to nuclear arms control and strategic stability, and our mutual security relationship with the United States.



Golden Dome strategic BMD is not simply a procurement choice; it represents a fundamental shift in Canada's defence posture and international identity. In 2005, Canada had already rejected strategic ballistic missile defence, citing concerns about cost, risk, and space weaponization that remain relevant. Such a decision must be informed by open debate and democratic oversight, not made quietly and retroactively confirmed by foreign leaders.

For further detail, we refer you to two recent analyses: Project Ploughshares' [Golden Dome Explained: Ambition, Reality, Risk](#) and the Canadian Pugwash Group's statement [Flawed in Principle and Practice — Why Canada Must Say No to "Golden Dome."](#) Together, these outline in greater depth the technical, fiscal, and strategic flaws of the initiative.

As stressed in both pieces, Canada's existing commitment to enhance NORAD's early warning and surveillance capabilities against the threat posed by cruise and hypersonic missiles constitutes a reasonable investment, based on proven technology and a realistic assessment of risk. The strategic BMD elements of the Golden Dome proposal, by contrast, stand on no such firm technical, scientific, economic, or strategic foundation. It would also carry the extremely risky prospect of accelerating the weaponization of space, a development with far-reaching consequences for global stability and international law.

The Canadian Pugwash Group would welcome the opportunity to provide testimony and written evidence as part of your committees' deliberations. We would also be glad to recommend independent scientific experts from the United States, with whom we work closely, to provide authoritative testimony on the technical and strategic shortcomings of strategic ballistic missile defence.

Respectfully,

Cesar Jaramillo
Chair
Canadian Pugwash Group