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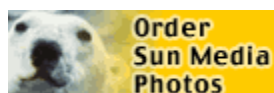
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Tue, May 27, 2003

Poll: Give us space Canucks support U.S. missile defence plan

By [STEPHANIE RUBEC](#), OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA -- Canadians want in on the U.S. anti-ballistic missile defence shield, according to a new SES/Sun Media poll.

The SES Research poll found that 61% of Canadians surveyed either strongly support or somewhat support Canada playing a role in U.S. President George W. Bush's version of Star Wars.

SES asked 1,000 Canadians whether they support Canada participating in a space-based missile defence shield. About 34% of those polled somewhat opposed or strongly opposed it. Another 7% of respondents were undecided or unsure.

SES conducted the survey May 13-23. It is accurate to 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The Liberal government has adamantly opposed any missiles in space, and has denied that Bush is proposing that type of continental defence system.

Liberal ministers traditionally opposed to even discussing a Canadian role in the missile shield now insist that it's important for Canada to continue to play a role in the defence of North America.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien promised yesterday to decide whether to launch negotiations with the U.S. before the House of Commons breaks for the summer in mid-June.

"We hope being able to wrap up the file in the coming weeks," Chretien said after meeting with

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his cabinet yesterday.

"Certainly before we leave, before the break in June."

A call for talks was expected at yesterday's cabinet meeting, but the two-hour meeting was monopolized by the SARS and mad cow crisis.

"We had the opportunity to talk about it again, but there's still caucus discussions left," Chretien said.

The PM has already gotten the green light from Liberal caucus, and his senior ministers have spoken out in favour of negotiating a Canadian role in missile defence.



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