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We won't back foreign review on Tory terms Chretien says

By Joe O'Donnell Toronto Star

CALGARY — The federal Liberals have no desire to kill the government's proposed parliamentary committee to review foreign policy, Jean Chretien says.

"We want the committee" but not on the government's terms, the Liberals' external affairs critic said yesterday.

He was responding to External Affairs Minister Joe Clark's charge earlier on the weekend that the opposition parties, by refusing to sit on the committee, want not just to boycott it, but to "kill" it.

Formation of the all-party committee, proposed in Clark's Green Paper on foreign policy last week, has been rejected by Liberals and New Democrats.

They cited Clark's refusal to delay a government decision on Star Wars research and a new trade policy with the U.S. until the committee has studied those issues and submitted recommendations.

Without such a guarantee, Chretien said, the committee is pointless.

"I'm not trying to kill the committee," Chretien told reporters. "I want the committee."

New trade policy

Chretien, who was in Calgary as a guest at the Canada-Japan Businessmen's Conference, said that Star Wars and a new trade policy with the U.S. "are two problems that have to have a priority."

"And I said we will be on the committee if they deal with these priorities."

What is of major interest to Canadians right now, he said, is that the government is about to make a decision on Star Wars — the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative to design a space-based defence system.

Clark has said a Canadian decision on whether to accept the U.S. invitation to participate in the \$26 billion research project will be made within the next three or four months.

He has also offered the committee the option of beginning immediately to deal with Star Wars in its cross-country public hearings. But the opposition parties refuse, saying such a review is pointless if it has no impact on the government's decision.