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## White House Plans Push for Intel Overhaul

### White House Plans Push for Stalled Intelligence Overhaul Bill; 9/11 Panel Members Meet With Cheney

#### The Associated Press

**Dec. 1, 2004** - Former members of the Sept. 11 commission met Tuesday with Vice President Dick Cheney, and President Bush planned talks with leaders of Congress in an attempt to gain passage for an intelligence reorganization bill this year.

Tom Kean, the former New Jersey governor who chaired the commission, said panel members are offering Cheney whatever help they can to break an impasse over military intelligence and immigration issues.

Kean said he left the half-hour meeting with Cheney optimistic that the bill would pass, but declined to say what specific strategy the White House would pursue to resolve the impasse.

"He reiterated the full support of the administration," said Kean. "What I asked them to do is, as they worked on the bill, if there was any congressman from either party that I or any member of the commission could help by talking to, let us know."

Speaking in Ottawa, Bush said he plans to discuss the bill later this week with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and House Speaker Dennis Hastert.

"I want a bill," Bush said. "Let's see if I can say it as plainly as I can: I am for the intelligence bill."

The House reconvenes Dec. 6 to fix an appropriations bill in a session expected to take a few hours at most. The Senate would return the next day only if a deal is reached on the intelligence bill.

The bill to reshape the nation's intelligence community and create a national intelligence director has stalled amid opposition from two key House Republicans who charge it doesn't do enough to toughen immigration requirements and may weaken military intelligence.

The White House supports the compromise reached by House and Senate negotiators, but its failure to come to a vote earlier in November has led some to question whether Bush has done enough to convince members of his own party.

A compromise version of the bill foundered due to the opposition of House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter and Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner.

Bush said he has already talked with Hunter and Sensenbrenner about the bill. Top White House officials also were meeting Tuesday and Wednesday with GOP leaders at a retreat in Virginia.

Kean and other members of the commission urged the leaders to bring the bill to the House and Senate floors for votes. Floor votes had been scheduled for Nov. 20 but Speaker Dennis Hastert canceled the one in the House after Sensenbrenner and Hunter rallied opposition to the bill.

Some Sept. 11 family members disagree on the merits of the measure. The Family Steering Committee fervently supports a bill drafted largely by the Senate with participation from Cheney's staff. **Families for a Secure America doesn't want any measure passed that doesn't include tougher immigration rules and stricter standards for driver's licenses.**

Any negotiation with Sensenbrenner and Hunter will have to be by phone. Sensenbrenner is out of the country and not expected to return until Sunday, while Hunter is on a family vacation and not expected to return to Washington until Monday.

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., a vocal proponent of the compromise, challenged the bill's opponents to debate the issues on the House floor, and said the president has shown he can be very effective in making Congress act.

"If the president asks for and gets a vote, it will be to me proof of the fact that he believes in this legislation and has worked to get it done," said Shays.

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