

BUSH WOULD FORGO NEW FISA PROGRAMS TO MAKE SURE DICK GETS IMMUNITY

Bush says he wants a new FISA bill, and he wants it now.

The White House told Democratic congressional leaders Saturday that President Bush opposes a 30-day extension of an expiring eavesdropping law and instead wants an expanded version to be passed by Friday.

"The president would veto a 30-day extension," a senior administration official said. "They're just kicking the can down the road. They need the heat of the current law lapsing to get this done."

To which Reid appropriately pinned any blame on Bush.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called the veto threat "shamefully irresponsible" and "simply posturing in advance of Monday's State of the Union address."

"There will be no terrorism intelligence collection gap," Reid said. "But if there is any problem, the blame will clearly and unequivocally fall where it belongs: on President Bush and his allies in Congress."

Reid's response is useful. But he needs to say one more thing. If Bush vetoes a 30-day extension, he will be doing so for one reason and one reason only: because the existing legislation, PAA, doesn't offer immunity to telecoms—and with it, to Dick Cheney and

everyone else in this Administration who pushed the telecoms to continue their spying even after the acting AG, Jim Comey, refused to certify the program for a period in 2004.

Bush is willing to forgo implementing new FISA programs (all the existing ones will continue for at least six months) all because he wants Dick to get his immunity ... now. This is about Bush putting Dick's interests—and his own—above the security of the country.