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## **Finding New Support, Senate to Debate Rules for Detainees**

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WASHINGTON — The Senate this week will engage in a politically volatile debate over the U.S. military's treatment of terrorism suspects as fresh allegations of prisoner abuse surface and support builds for legislation to establish standards for handling detainees.

Led by Sen. John McCain of Arizona, a group of Republicans wants to have amendments imposing restrictions on the detention, interrogation and prosecution of prisoners tacked onto the \$440 billion military spending bill the Senate is to vote on by weeks' end.

Senators offered the same proposals in the summer as the Senate worked on a bill setting Pentagon policy. But Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., scuttled that bill in part because of White House opposition to the detainee proposals.

Undeterred, McCain, who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam, resurrected his legislation this week. His amendment would ban the use of "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" against anyone in U.S. custody and require all U.S. troops to follow procedures in the Army Field Manual when they detain and interrogate suspects.

On Wednesday, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., was reintroducing his proposal that would define "enemy combatant" and put into law procedures for prosecuting detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

Eight Republicans support the proposals and Democrats also are on board. Votes could come on the amendments as soon as Wednesday night.

As it did before, the White House last week threatened a veto over the proposals, arguing they would tie the president's hands during wartime.

However, this time the administration did not send Vice President Dick Cheney to Capitol Hill to personally lobby McCain, Graham and Sen. John Warner, R-Va., the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman who supports the amendments.

"I hope there is a realization that this is the right thing to do," McCain said Tuesday.

At the same time, Democrats plan to continue to push their own proposal that would establish an independent commission to investigate allegations of prisoner abuse. The Pentagon already has done several of its own investigations and argues that another would be redundant.

But Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, said those reviews weren't thorough enough. "This is a rich target for a true investigation," he said Wednesday. He accused the White House of issuing a "false threat" to veto the bill over detainee amendments.

McCain, Graham and Warner decided that standards for handling detainees were needed in light of allegations of mistreatment at the Navy's Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba and the abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Since July, a list of retired generals and admirals backing the effort has doubled from 14 to 28.

"It is now apparent that the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and elsewhere took place in part because our men and women in uniform were given ambiguous instructions," the retired officers said in a letter dated last month. "Our service members were denied clear guidance, and left to take the blame when things went wrong. They deserve better than that."

In recent weeks, new claims of abuse and reminders of Abu Ghraib have been in the headlines.

Human Rights Watch, a U.S. rights organization, reported that soldiers in the Army's elite 82nd Airborne Division systematically tortured Iraqi detainees in 2003 and 2004. The Pentagon says it's investigating.

Army Capt. Ian Fishback of the 82nd Airborne disclosed to Senate Republicans and Democrats that he had heard about widespread prisoner abuse while serving in Iraq. Fishback was meeting with Levin on Wednesday, a day after meeting with McCain.

Last week, a federal judge in New York ordered the release of dozens more pictures of prisoners being abused at Abu Ghraib, rejecting government arguments that the images would provoke terrorists and incite violence against U.S. troops in Iraq.