



pain on the United States.

After two weeks of pummeling the FBI for its failures, lawmakers are shifting their focus to the CIA. "The enemy is overseas. The first place to stop the enemy is overseas," House Intelligence Chairman Porter Goss said in an interview.

President Bush has avoided criticizing the CIA and FBI. But on Monday, he suggested that they need to improve. "In this new war, against this shadowy enemy, it's very important that we gather as much intelligence as we can," Bush said.

One U.S. intelligence official describes the clues collected before the attacks as needles in a haystack. Others say the unheeded warnings add up to a fundamental failure by intelligence agencies to alert the nation to approaching danger from abroad.

The prevailing view on Capitol Hill is that U.S. intelligence had the goods and blew it by failing to recognize and connect warning signs. "If they had acted on the information they had and followed through, maybe things would be different," says Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The other, perhaps more worrisome, conclusion is that despite all their resources, key agencies had no clear warning of what was to come.

The hearings begin behind closed doors, as the House and Senate Intelligence panels jointly discuss what information can be aired. CIA director George Tenet and FBI Director Robert Mueller are sure to face grillings later this month. Other witnesses will include CIA and FBI field operatives and analysts who handled some of the information on the al-Qaeda threat.

The intercepts of conversations are in 13,000 pages of material from the National Security Agency, the nation's eavesdropping service, U.S. officials say. Two U.S. intelligence officials said some were translated and analyzed before Sept. 11. Others went unread until later because of a shortage of translators.

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