

Lawmakers want Bush to fire NASA official

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Two members of Congress are urging U.S. President George Bush to fire the NASA inspector general after reading a report of complaints about him. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., and Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C., said that the investigators who reviewed complaints about NASA Inspector General Robert W. Cobb unanimously "believed that disciplinary action up to and including removal could be appropriate," the Washington Post reported. The White House had at first refused to give Congress the report from the Integrity Committee of the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency on Cobb but relented when faced with the threat of a subpoena. Cobb was an adviser on ethics and conflicts of interest to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales when he was White House counsel. At the space agency, Cobb has been targeted by whistleblowers and critics who say he has dismissed investigations into safety problems and his temperamental behavior has caused experienced auditors and investigators to leave. Critics also say his friendly relationship with former NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe robbed him of the appearance of independence necessary for an inspector general. The Post said Cobb had no comment on Monday on the lawmakers' call for his dismissal.

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