

# ONE SMALL VICTORY FOR OVERSIGHT

One lingering suspicion that they're just moving this off the books:

After several requests from the Homeland Security Committee calling for a moratorium on the controversial use of spy satellite imagery for domestic purposes, the Department has heeded the call and delayed its planned October 1st launch of its new National Applications Office (NAO). The Department has cited the need to address unanswered privacy and civil liberties questions from Congress "as addressed in the Committee's September 6th hearing on the matter and also in letters from August 22nd and September 6th from Committee Members.

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, released the following statement regarding the decision:

"While we are pleased by the Department's decision to go back to the drawing board and get it right, we are troubled by its silence on the second part of our request: that Congress also be provided a full opportunity to review the NAO's written legal framework, offer comments, and help shape appropriate procedures and protocols."

Even putting aside my suspicion this is just another head fake to move surveillance beyond the grasp of Congress, Thompson's point remains. The Administration thus far refuses to allow Congress some input into what appropriate use of satellite surveillance of civilians would be.

Well, at least for the moment Chertoff says he's not going to use satellites to peek into my

bedroom. That's one victory, anyway.