

## Seeing Red (Planet)

The gully-scarred walls of a meteor impact crater on Mars are seen in this undated handout photo from NASA's Mars Global Surveyor. It is one of the highest-resolution images ever obtained of the Red Planet. This photo and more than 112,000 other images from the surveyor can be seen online at [www.msss.com/mars\\_images/moc/e7\\_e12\\_captions\\_d\\_rel](http://www.msss.com/mars_images/moc/e7_e12_captions_d_rel). Global Surveyor, launched Nov. 7, 1996, entered the Martian orbit on Sept. 12, 1997. The mission has studied the entire Martian surface, atmosphere and interior and has returned more data about the Red Planet than all other Mars missions combined.

AP Photo / NASA



# Congress' Unfinished Business

## Priority bills upstaged by elections and Iraq

By Anne Q. Hoy

WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington — The strong winds of war — both military and political — have upended major legislative efforts in Congress that once headed the to-do lists of both parties.

Blown aside by the debate over granting President George W. Bush authority to use military force against Iraq and the swiftly approaching midterm elections in which control of Congress is at stake are bills dealing with a host of pressing domestic issues.

They include proposals to create a new homeland security department, to increase federal payments to doctors, hospitals and nursing homes that provide care to Medicare recipients, and to protect the retirement funds of workers. Also stalled are bills to overhaul the nation's energy policy, to help shield commercial property and casualty insurers from massive losses caused by terrorist acts, to overhaul bankruptcy laws and to provide prescription drug coverage to the elderly.

Republicans have given up hopes of winning an extension of Bush's \$1.7-trillion tax package beyond its 10-year life for this Congress. Democrats are unlikely to win an increase in the minimum wage or an extension of unemployment benefits.

Still, it is too early to declare any one of the efforts dead for the 107th Congress, something that many lawmakers facing re-election next month would like to adjourn this week. Lawmakers traditionally wait until the final days of a session to force deals on once implacable opponents.

"Both sides play the clock," said Donald Ritchie, associate historian in the Senate Historical Office, noting that this has been going on a long time. In the 19th century the door keeper used to wield a stick to turn back the clock, literally, to give lawmakers extra time to seal final deals.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) last week threatened to keep the Senate in session until the Nov. 5 elections, insisting that the Democratic-controlled chamber first complete action on the homeland security bill, judicial nominations, a catch-all spending measure to fund the government because Congress has failed to pass any one of the required 13 appropriations bills, terrorism insurance, bankruptcy reform and an energy overhaul bill.

An exasperated Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) last week laid blame for the legislative logjam at Daschle's doorstep. "The state of the Senate is not very good, obviously," Lott said. "We need leadership right now worse than ever in the Senate, in dealing with national security, homeland security and economic security."

Paul Light, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, a think tank here, said the Iraq debate has dramatically shifted the ground under the homeland security bill. It is stymied over Bush's demand that he be given flexibility to strip affected federal workers of their collective bargaining rights.

Democrats, with a large union core, strongly oppose the move.

Light said before the push this fall by the White House to win congressional approval of an Iraq resolution, Bush was being portrayed as standing in the way of the new department by picking a divisive fight over union rights. "The Iraq debate really re-sorted that and made it look like the Democrats are standing in the way [of a bill]," he said.

Others contend the midterm elections and the historically narrow majorities between the parties in Congress are the more likely reason behind the legislative deadlocks.

Thomas Mann, an expert on Congress also at Brookings, said it is the high stakes of the Nov. 5 elections, more than the focus on the Iraq resolution, that has sidetracked so many issues.

Mann said because the parties are less likely this year to compromise on issues dear to core voters he expects fewer deals to emerge in the final days of this session.

# Connecting the Data

## Panel: Sorting should be focus of Homeland Dept.

By Thomas Frank

WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington — A new Department of Homeland Security — not the FBI — should be the hub for collecting and analyzing domestic intelligence about possible terrorist attacks, a bipartisan panel of experts and former intelligence officials recommends.

A report given to the White House yesterday concedes that the arrangement "could be a source of friction" between the new department and the FBI.

It says, however, a Homeland Security Department would be better equipped to be "the lead agency for shaping domestic intelligence" in charge of "setting priorities and giving overall guidance for . . . the collection of domestic intelligence."

The FBI's focus on law enforcement is too narrow to handle information analysis from a wide range of sources and spread the analysis to local authorities for preventive actions, the report suggests. "The FBI has no effective process for providing intelligence on terrorism to policymakers or others outside of the law-enforcement community," it adds.

The report was written by a bipartisan panel of experts headed by former Netscape chief executive James Barksdale and Zoe Baird, who was a member of President Bill Clinton's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and is now president of the Markle Foundation, a Manhattan-based policy institute. Other members were former NATO commander Gen. Wesley Clark, former CIA general counsel Jeffrey Smith and Eric Holder, who was Clinton's deputy attorney general.

The report underscores the importance of a new Homeland Security Department as efforts to create it have stalled in a partisan dispute in the Senate.

The department would combine 22 federal agencies and establish an agency to analyze intelligence gathered by the CIA, FBI and others.

Philip Zelikow, the panel's executive director, said the report "might" prompt senators to end their impasse and pass a bill to create a new department, though an administration official was pessimistic.

"At the very least it shows people that what the country needs is not just a reorganization of existing capacities, it needs the creation of entirely new capabilities," Zelikow said.

There has been broad agreement since Sept. 11 about the need for better intelligence sharing and analysis, underscored recently by congressional reports disclosing how agencies did not get information that might have helped them thwart the terrorist plot.

Although the proposed Homeland Security Department would create an analysis agency, yesterday's report criticizes the Bush administration for seeking only \$200 million for "information integration" for the department. It also says President George W. Bush's plan for information sharing is "too Washington-centered" and does too little to incorporate local authorities.

Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, who met with Zelikow and others yesterday, said the report "has quite a number of ideas that are going to be helpful."