

Confirmation Ruled Out for 3 CIA Posts

*Sen. Glenn Concedes
Plan's Timing Is Bad*

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The Senate yesterday passed an intelligence authorization bill after rejecting, 59 to 38, a proposal that would have required three top CIA officials to go through the Senate's much-maligned confirmation process.

The sponsor of the defeated amendment, Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio), acknowledged that the debate on it couldn't have come at a worse time because of the "trauma and drama" of the weekend's bitter hearings over the nomination of incoming Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas.

But Glenn urged passage of his proposal to add the CIA deputy director for intelligence, deputy director for operations and general counsel to the confirmation list, arguing that it would prevent politicization of the intelligence agency.

Sen. David L. Boren (D-Okla.), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, took the floor late in the four-hour debate to say he favored the Glenn amendment "as an important protection for the American people" in overseeing an agency that operates mostly in secret.

He noted that the committee's recent confirmation hearings on Robert M. Gates to be the new

chief of the CIA included allegations that Gates, while deputy director for intelligence in the early 1980s, slanted intelligence estimates to please policymakers.

Boren said he considered the question a "close call" but "I'd be more comfortable" if the three positions were subject to Senate confirmation.

But several senators argued that the Glenn amendment might have the opposite effect.

Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska), the vice chairman of the intelligence committee, said that if these sensitive positions required presidential nomination, aspirants might try to curry favor with the White House. He entered into the record a letter from President Bush opposing the amendment.

Sen. John C. Danforth (R-Mo.), who led the floor fight for Thomas's confirmation, said it was "one of the rare ironies of the Senate" that less than a day after the Thomas vote they were discussing adding three more positions to those requiring confirmation. He said Republicans and Democrats seem to agree that "something is terribly wrong with the confirmation process" and that it needed fixing before it is extended further.

The debate on the Glenn amendment was part of consideration of the fiscal 1992 budget for the CIA and other intelligence agencies. The amount of the budget is classified but is believed to be somewhat under \$30 billion.

The administration issued a statement yesterday opposing the bill because it would require disclosure of the intelligence budgets for the first time, starting next year. If presented to the president in its present form, "senior advisers would recommend that he veto the bill," the statement said.