

No Filibuster On Monitors For CIA, FBI

Associated Press

Senate leaders have agreed to end a low-key filibuster against a proposal to create a new intelligence watchdog committee.

The agreement yesterday, which set a time limit for debate on all amendments to the proposal, canceled plans to try to invoke cloture, the procedure for cutting off all debate.

No limit was set on the number of amendments that could be offered. Therefore, there was no indication when a final vote on the resolution might occur.

THE NEW 15-member committee would have exclusive jurisdiction to monitor activities of the CIA and would share oversight of other intelligence agencies, including the FBI, with other Senate committees.

The strongest opposition

to the proposal was centered among members of the Senate Armed Services Committee who had shared oversight responsibility for the CIA with members of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Supporters of the new committee included most members of the special panel that just concluded a 15-month investigation of alleged abuses by intelligence agencies, and the majority and minority leaders of the Senate.

Sen. John Tower, R-Tex., who served on the special committee that investigated intelligence abuses and also sits on the Armed Services Committee, argued that "the plan for a single oversight committee seems designed more to respond to pressure from outside groups than to the oversight needs of the Senate."

TOWER ADDED that the existing committees could do the job and that creating a new panel was "superfluous" and raised the danger of leaks of intelligence information.

But backers of the new panel, including Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, D-Mont., argued that the recent disclosures demonstrated that the committees that had been responsible for keeping an eye on intelligence agencies hadn't been doing the job.