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## **Senate Committee Report On Fbi Investigation Of Committee In Solidarity With The People Of El Salvador (cispes)**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On July 14, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence criticized the FBI's investigation of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) as a "serious failure in FBI management" that violated the rights of hundreds of citizens opposed to Reagan administration policies in Central America. The CISPES investigation grew from a single case in the Dallas Field Office into 178 "spinoff" investigations throughout the country. In a 150-page report, the committee said the FBI collected information on law-abiding citizens engaged in "domestic political activities that should not have come under governmental scrutiny." The report dismissed claims that the investigation was a politically motivated scheme to discourage left-wing dissent. The committee recommended that files containing information compiled by 59 FBI field offices on about 2,375 individuals and 1,330 groups, be purged or removed from the FBI's records. A statement from committee chairperson David Boren (D-Okla.) and vice chairperson William Cohen (R-Maine), said, "The CISPES files contain information about domestic political activities that the FBI should never have gathered. That information must be removed from FBI records so it cannot be used to damage the reputation of innocent persons." The report said, "The FBI...investigation of CISPES was initiated primarily on the basis of allegations that should not have been considered credible; it was broadened beyond the scope justified even by those allegations; and it continued after the available information had clearly fallen below the standards required by the applicable guidelines." The report called the probe an "aberration" in an otherwise successful counterintelligence and counterterrorism program. An FBI internal investigation led to disciplinary actions by Director William S. Sessions of six supervisors for allowing the unjustified probe to begin in the first place and to continue for more than two years. The FBI officials disciplined by Sessions included former terrorism section chief Stanley Klein, who was later promoted to head the FBI's Field Office in Connecticut; Gary Pinrith, an assistant special agent in charge of the Dallas office, who was later promoted to deputy assistant director in the intelligence division; terrorism unit chief George H. Van Balen; former headquarters supervisor Ronald Davenport, and Park Stearns, a supervisory agent in the Dallas office. (Basic data from Washington Post, 07/15/89)

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