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CISPES' strategy is lies, deception for Salvadoran left

"The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) seeks to educate and mobilize public opinion against U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America and in solidarity with the FMLN-FDR, the legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people." — April 1985 edition of "Alert," CISPES' monthly publication.

By Bill Outlaw
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

In "The Network" of organizations that are engaged in a massive effort to turn opinion against U.S. policies toward Central America, CISPES is one of the more active and visible.

"CISPES has launched a national grass-roots canvassing effort to reach hundreds of thousands of people in their communities and bring

Fourth in a series.

many new people into active opposition," according to a CISPES report.

But CISPES appears to be much more than just another "grass-roots" organization disagreeing with specific administration policies.

Documents obtained by The Washington Times and CISPES' own publications reveal that the organization openly supports the Marxist Sandinista guerrillas (FMLN-FDR) in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America.

Moreover, documents indicate that CISPES was itself a creation of the FMLN-FDR and was, among other things, designed to generate

support for guerrilla activity in El Salvador among members of the U.S. Congress and the American public.

CISPES organizers in Washington did not return several telephone calls from The Times for comment. But one researcher reports that CISPES officials have denied the allegations.

An integral component of CISPES activity is to counter Reagan administration policies in Central America.

THE NETWORK

TARGET: Reagan's Central American Policy

"STOP U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA," reads a headline on the front page of CISPES' April issue of Alert. "Support human freedom and dignity by also ending intervention in the Caribbean, Middle East, Asia, the Pacific and Europe."

Administration officials and observers of the group say CISPES is the largest and most effective of the solidarity organizations, which include the National Network in Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua, the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala and the Network in Solidarity with the People of Central America.

Solidarity groups exist for other regions as well, such as for the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

CISPES offices in Washington are located on the seventh floor at 930 F St. NW, next to the office for the Guatemalan solidarity group. The Nicaraguan solidarity group used to be located there, but they have moved to a nearby location on I Street NW.

Observers of the organizations report that they often appear together at protests and demonstrations. However, there is no specific evidence to link these groups.

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that the organization has grown to more than 300 local chapters and affiliates, with seven regional offices.

Each local chapter "includes a series of outreach groups oriented toward the religious community, organized labor, schools, and other community groups and organizations," a CISPES brochure distributed in 1984 states.

CISPES literature further states that it "lobbies Congress, coordinates protest efforts, and conducts humanitarian aid campaigns."

"CISPES activities include fundraising and legislative campaigns, educational and outreach programs, and mass mobilizations, conducted on national, regional and local grass-roots levels," according to Alert.

CISPES has taken part in or has helped organize many of the major protest demonstrations in the United States over the past few years. Its most recent efforts will be seen in the upcoming "Four Days In April" protest in Washington scheduled for April 19-22.

According to a CISPES document entitled, "CISPES Structure and Funding," other major activities in which the group has organized or participated in include:

- A "massive demonstration" in Washington on March 27, 1982, that was timed to coincide with "the U.S. orchestrated elections" in El Salvador.

- A "people-to-people" aid drive to provide medical assistance to Salvadorans "living in the FMLN-FDR zones of control. Through hundreds of grass-roots fund-raising activities, CISPES committees raised more than \$150,000, surpassing the goal of the campaign."

- "Highly visible protest actions including civil disobedience" at Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Bragg, N.C., where Salvadoran troops were being trained by U.S. soldiers.

- A rally at the State Department to protest the "presidential certification amid growing human rights violations in El Salvador."

- A protest at the Honduran embassy and consulates in major cities to oppose "Honduran intervention in El Salvador and the growing use of Honduras as a base of U.S. directed military operations in the region."

CISPES and some other solidarity groups have also promoted letter-writing campaigns about U.S. policy to members of Congress and to U.S. officials in other parts of the world, according to CISPES literature and other sources.

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