

THE NEWSROOM — Newspaper Article

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By Jerry Seper

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FBI disciplined 77 agents over 14-year period

The FBI, which fired, disciplined and prosecuted dozens of agents between 1986 and 1999 for crimes ranging from rape and attempted murder to bribery and extortion, said yesterday it has gone to "great lengths" to improve its internal disciplinary process and bolster confidence in its effectiveness and impartiality.

"The director has communicated clearly and frequently to all employees that the bureau takes seriously its commitment to holding its employees to the highest standards of conduct and integrity; that internal discipline must be imposed and without regard to rank and that whistleblowers and all others who raise legitimate complaints of misconduct ... will be protected from retaliation," said FBI Assistant Director Cassandra M. Chandler.

Her comments were in response to the public release Wednesday by Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Iowa Republican and a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, of a report by the bureau's Behavioral Science Unit and its Law Enforcement Ethics Unit detailing an FBI internal study of the bureau's disciplinary process.

The study, completed three years ago but kept under wraps, listed 77 unidentified agents and FBI employees targeted for egregious misconduct and crimes during the 14-year study period, noting that some had been hired despite negative background checks and that some of the fired or disciplined agents exhibited warning signs on which the bureau never acted.

Mrs. Chandler said that under FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III, all accusations of misconduct within the bureau are referred to the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General to ensure they receive external review.

Secondly, she said, the director commissioned a separate investigation to review the Office of Professional Responsibility, which investigates accusations of misconduct by FBI employees.

That ongoing investigation, by former Attorney General Griffin Bell and former FBI Associate Director Lee Colwell, is expected to result in recommendations for changes to the bureau's disciplinary process.

"Once the report has been completed and reviewed, the director will undertake the reforms needed to implement their recommendations," Mrs. Chandler said.

She said the "well intentioned" study by the FBI, known as the Behavioral and Ethical Trends Analysis, or BETA report, was used to identify and examine behavioral and ethical trends of FBI agents removed from duty. A copy of the report was provided to Mr. Grassley in July, 2003, after he had requested it, but was accompanied by a from the Justice Department urging that it be kept secret.

"Director Mueller is committed to undertaking the reforms necessary to strengthen

the disciplinary process within the FBI and ensure that it is fair, efficient and credible," Mrs. Chandler said. "Any allegation of wrongdoing or impropriety by FBI employees is taken seriously and aggressively investigated. Nothing better ensures this standard than a fair and equitable disciplinary process that applies equally to all employees."

Some of the cases cited in the BETA report included an agent who raped a subordinate employee, an agent who used his FBI weapon to shoot his spouse, an agent who sexually abused children, an agent who stole \$400,000 from informant funds, an agent who killed his informant and an agent who disclosed classified information to people representing a foreign-intelligence agency.

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