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WITNESS SAYS CIA PAID SALVADORAN OFFICIAL LINKED TO DEATH SQUADS

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The head of a Salvadoran police force linked to rightist death squads was on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency payroll for several years, according to an unnamed El Salvador official interviewed Wednesday by CBS.

Nicolas Carranza, chief of the El Salvador Treasury Police, received payments from the CIA for "five or six years," the official said.

He said right-wing Salvadoran presidential candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson was in charge of the death squads and that D'Aubuisson personally ordered murders. But he said D'Aubuisson took orders from Carranza.

A U.S. government official, speaking on condition he would not be identified, told The Associated Press the CBS report was accurate, but there was no further confirmation. The CIA refused to confirm or deny that Carranza was on its payroll, CBS said.

The witness, interviewed by correspondent Walter Cronkite, was filmed in shadows and spoke through an interpreter. When asked if the CIA had knowledge of any specific murders in El Salvador, he said, "No, I don't think so."

Carranza was not in his office in San Salvador, and could not be reached by telephone, despite several calls placed to him by The Associated Press.

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