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Alfonso Robelo Returns To Nicaragua After Seven Years Of Exile In Costa Rica

by Deborah Tyroler

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At a press conference in Managua on Sept. 13, Alfonso Robelo, former contra leader, told reporters that he decided to return to Nicaragua after seven years in exile because "things have changed for the better." Robelo was a member of the first governing junta after the overthrow of dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979. Nine months later he resigned, accusing the Sandinistas of betraying the revolution. Later, he established the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), and went into exile in March 1982. At present, the MDN is a legally constituted political party under the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO) coalition. In Costa Rica, Robelo joined the contra force known as the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) headed by Eden Pastora. Later, he was a member of the contra political directorate, known as the Nicaraguan Resistance. Robelo said that the contras as a fighting force are a "closed subject" given the regional peace plan for their demobilization, repatriation and relocation. The former contra leader has said that the formation of the contra army was a "sterile" means to attempt change of Nicaragua's government, since thousands of Nicaraguans were killed in the process. However, he added, the contras served a purpose by bringing the government to accept political reforms and elections. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/13/89)

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