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'Commander Zero' Returns to the Fray

By Karen DeYoung
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LOS CHILES, Costa Rica—Nearly four years after he commanded the Costa Rica-based "southern front" of the Sandinista revolution against Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, guerrilla hero Eden Pastora is back at war in these rugged border hills.

The odyssey of "Commander Zero," once one of the best-known Sandinista revolutionary figures, has come full circle, from a position in the Sandinista government, to disillusionment with its increasing alliance with Cuba, to exile and finally again to the place where he began.

Two weeks ago, 500 to 700 guerrilla troops led by Pastora opened a new "southern front" of battle along the border, this time against the Sandinistas themselves.

Their attacks, although largely limited so far to harassment and minor ambushes, have resulted in new tensions between Nicaragua and a Costa Rican government that no longer wants to be involved in Nicaraguan conflicts, and have threatened to widen U.S. involvement in efforts to oust the Sandinista government.

Pastora's decision to take up arms again follows a recent agreement by his Democratic Revolutionary Alliance exile organization, known as ARDE, to coordinate activities and strategy with a larger force of CIA-backed rebels operating in northern Nicaragua. According to sources close to ARDE who are opposed to the new coordination with the Honduran-based, 7,000-man Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), Pastora also has begun receiving U.S. assistance through FDN supplies.

Pastora had long resisted ties with the FDN on the grounds that anti-U.S. sentiment in Nicaragua, and the fact that the FDN includes many members of Somoza's defeated National Guard, would undermine his credibility as a revolutionary leader and his efforts to spark domestic unrest against the Sandinistas.

But ARDE's codirector Alfonso Robelo said the group had been forced to become more "pragmat-

ic" after acknowledging the failure of its year-long attempt to obtain international support for pressure against the Sandinistas and a peaceful resolution of the Nicaraguan crisis.

"It became a question of our losing credibility," as a viable option inside Nicaragua as the FDN attacks escalated, Robelo said in an interview earlier this month in Washington, where he met with Assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders and FDN leader Adolfo Calero. "Especially for Eden, it was a question of machismo," Robelo said. U.S. officials in Costa Rica declined comment in response to questions on possible aid to ARDE. Pastora himself has been inside southern Nicaragua for the past several weeks, according to ARDE spokesmen in San Jose, and cannot be reached.

One of the reasons that Pastora, a man who always has been eager for press coverage, has been unavailable, Nicaraguan exile sources said, is the opposition of the Costa Rican government to becoming, once again, a base of military operations against Nicaragua. During the fight against Somoza, "all of Costa Rica helped. But the government of Costa Rica doesn't want to play the same role

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