

Guatemalan Ex-President Freed from U.S. Prison, Arrives Home



Guatemala City, February 27 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Former Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo was released Wednesday from prison in the U.S., after serving a sentence for accepting \$2.5 million in bribes from Taiwan. The former president flew to his home country the same day.

Portillo admitted accepting the bribes from Taiwan in exchange for a promise that Guatemala would continue to recognize the Asian nation.

He was sentenced by a federal court in New York in 2014 to nearly six years in prison and had been held at a minimum-security facility since last year. He was released after being credited with time served in Guatemala, where he faces no further charges.

Accompanied by the Guatemalan consul in Denver, Portillo took a commercial flight and arrived late Wednesday to Guatemala City International Airport, where a small number of supporters welcomed him with music.

Getting off the plane, Portillo said to the press he does not have feelings of hate or revenge, and that all he has is gratitude to the people of Guatemala.

"We are not perfect men, not perfect women, we are all flawed human beings," said the former president.

The 63-year-old Portillo, was president of Guatemala from 2000 to 2004. After leaving office, Portillo fled to Mexico, and was extradited from Mexico to Guatemala in 2008 to face the embezzlement charges and remained free until he was arrested in 2010 on a U.S. extradition request.

He was captured at a beach preparing to flee Guatemala by boat and finally extradited to the U.S. in 2013, pleading guilty to money laundering conspiracy in March 2014.

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