

# NSA Snooping on Brazil's President's Emails. Unfolding Diplomatic Fall Out between Washington and Brasilia

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There is a fascinating diplomatic dynamic going on between one superpower and an emerging great power to be. I am referring to the US and Brazil . In light of recent revelations (graciously provided by the ex -NSA man, now Russian resident, Edward Snowden), Brazil has recoiled and its president, Dilma Rousseff, has decided to abruptly cancel (or to be postponed?) an upcoming state visit to Washington . This is more than a snub to president Obama. It is essentially a slap in the face (figuratively speaking of course) from an important nation and a lady head of state, who does not take too kindly to Uncle Sam's snooping into her very personal and very official presidential email.

As the NSA scandal widens world wide, it has also now encompassed Brazil . There are real negative consequences for the US- Brazil relations in view of this recent diplomatic tiff (1).

These less than gracious actions or revelations, will deal a blow to future bi-lateral cooperation without a doubt. Economic deals are at stake which include aircraft purchases from the US , in view of the chill. They may be scuppered by the spy scandal. Brazil will go shopping for armaments in Europe or elsewhere (maybe even, China ). Brazil is a leading innovator in the Internet technology, and the US needs to have such a partner on board to maintain its "cutting edge" dominance, in the field. Industrial and scientific research or "know-how" cooperation will also unlikely be enhanced, as a result of the spying and snooping the NSA and other agencies tasked with foreign communications monitoring , engage in without oversight or limitations being places on them.

Why spy of a friendly nation is the question? Well, in the post cold war era, the US electronic and communications surveillance behemoth can't seem to, and maybe won't both to distinguish between enemies, potential foes, or loyal allies. These American Golems of information gathering, collect, or suck in mega-data faster then we can breathe air. Brazil is of course targeted with espionage because it is a potential great power. It has tremendous sway in Latin America ; it has a wealth of valuable resources ready to exploited and cashed in on. Yet what might worry some in Washington most, is Brazil 's penchant to do business with an American rival: China which already has superpower status to a certain established degree, Whether we like it or not Brasilia has forged over the years close economic and also strategic ties with Beijing to Washington's discontent, dismay if not frustration. Hence, we see the systematic eavesdropping on the Brazilian president and her nation. So these latest spying revelations should really be of no great surprise to anyone.

On a multilateral level Brazil is a fine candidate to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council in the not too distant future. It is the leading voice of the Latin American on the international stage. It has championed UN reform to make the ageing body more

reflective of today's new balances of power, and more representative of and towards the third world nations. Washington needs good ties with Brazil as this nation has growing clout in the world.

Just as an aside, Brazil has excellent ties with countries or other emerging power like itself (in this case would be ones) such as Turkey (A NATO member with the largest armed forces ready for combat). Furthermore, it has friendly ties with the Bolivarian nation of Venezuela, which Washington consider a pariah state. In a nutshell Brazil is a key player which merits respect and trust from its big brother to the North, and its former protector in this Hemisphere. The cancellation of the visit is a set back to bi-lateral ties but also another reason for all of Latin America to view the US's intrusive surveillance with great distrust if not apprehension and growing concern.

(1) US-Brazil: What's at stake, Global Post, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013-09-20 13, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/americas/brazil/130918/rousseff-obama-boeing-oil-security-council>

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