

The Search for Snowden: Assaults on Sovereignty and Diplomatic Immunity

By [Netfa Freeman](#)

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Apparently the phrase “blood is thicker than water” compares to the Imperial ties that bind NATO, where the history of European colonial collusion runs thicker than internationalist ethics and treaties. The recent brushing aside of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations by France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and US that [endangered](#) the life of Bolivian president Evo Morales should be at least a reminder to the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It demonstrates that only a radical and transcontinental transformation can abolish the vestiges of European colonialism and white supremacy.

The [Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations](#) is the international treaty that forms the legal basis for diplomatic immunity. But on July 2nd the aforementioned NATO countries, most likely led by the US, breached the Convention by colluding to disallow a Bolivian presidential flight into their respective airspace. This was allegedly based on the unfounded suspicion that the flight was transporting US National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden. President Morales and accompanying Bolivian officials were returning to Bolivia after attending a Forum of Gas Exporting Countries in Russia. Low on fuel, due to rerouting caused by denial of passage through the airspace of the European culprit countries, the Bolivian presidential flight had to make an emergency landing in Vienna, Austria.

This is another one of countless arrogant racist double standards that the US and its NATO allies have demonstrated since the dawn of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The Convention on Diplomatic Relations is supposed to be the framework governing relations between independent countries. It specifies the privileges of a diplomatic mission that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by hosts countries, including free and safe passage via land, sea or air.

While the plane was parked in Vienna, according to President Morales, the Spanish ambassador to Austria arrived with two embassy personnel and asked to search the plane. [\(1\)](#) Admirably exercising an understanding of his sovereign rights as a national official, the indigenous South American leader denied them access and asserted from Vienna Airport, “We won’t be threatened. We are a small country but one with dignity. I say to the European countries, we are not in times of colonization and we won’t be intimidated. This is the time of the peoples.” [\(2\)](#)

[Despite the displeasure](#) of European leaders over the disclosure that their US ally has been spying on them as well, their past colonial ties and neo-colonial present remain unquestionably intact.

“A working group of intelligence experts from the EU member states is supposed to discuss with US counterparts allegations that the US spied on the EU and member states’ embassies in Washington, DC and New York and on the offices in Brussels of the Council of Ministers and the European Council.”[\(3\)](#)

Regardless, the previously scheduled US-EU trade-talks in Washington DC are going forward.

Like a parent/child relationship, trade between other continents with the US and the EU do not enjoy such talks. But US-EU talks and their agreements can impinge on the rest of the world because of the 66 year old colonial legacy of the [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade \(GATT\)](#), still in effect under the framework of the World Trade Organization. These talks allow the US and EU to make plans and decisions on how they will manage their trade interactions with everyone else.

Tolerating being spied on by each other is a small tradeoff for global economic and political dominance over the rest of the oppressed, repressed, and suffering majority of the world. There is no question that these nations would never have committed the same offense against an aircraft of one of their own. Nor do they ever have to add to their national security concerns being military invaded, the overthrow of their governments, or being subjected to economic sanctions. Lack of these concerns is a luxury non-NATO nations cannot afford.

Exercising the right of any sovereign nation, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua affirmed that, given a formal application, they would consider without question the human right of Edward Snowden to seek asylum.

In contrast to how revealed US surveillance practices have affected relations among those who preside over neo-colonialism, the US feels free to [threaten Latin American countries](#) with coercive economic measures if they help Snowden. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers told CNN he “absolutely” thinks that one of the 15+ countries to which Snowden applied for asylum will give him travel documents and says the U.S. should look at trade agreements with the nations that are offering asylum “to send a very clear message that we won’t put up with this kind of behavior.”

As the subservience of Latin American states is fast dissolving, US wolf tickets are falling on deaf ears. Instead, this act of imperialist aggression against Bolivia has sparked outrage and condemnations from the leadership and populace of several Latin American countries. Both UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) and ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) called emergency meetings to address what top representative of the OAS denounced as “... total disrespect to the highest authority of a country.”

Selfless acts like those of Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden that expose US corruption and atrocities will always throw the US into a tizzy. As US public response to such corruption and atrocities meets global indignation, legitimate stances like that of Latin America will ripple into transcontinental expression. Africa too will renew and reinforce its proud legacy of bottom up struggle and smile in a new era of strength from unity, and prosperity and power from Pan-African self-determination.

Netfa Freeman is a long-time social justice activist who co-produces and co-hosts Radio WPFW 89.3 FM. He is program director and event coordinator at the Institute for Policy Studies, and a Board member of Empower DC and on the advisory Board of MOMIES TIC.

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