



Three Ibero-American Presidents Offer Asylum to Edward Snowden

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Coming off the July 4 meeting of Ibero-American Presidents in Bolivia, the Presidents of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia have offered political asylum to Edward Snowden.

Bolivia's President Evo Morales said July 5 that his offer would be a "fair protest to the Europeans and Americans" who were behind the July 2 grounding of his airplane in Vienna, after four European governments refused to allow his plane to enter their airspace on suspicion that Snowden was onboard. All have accused the U.S. of giving the Europeans the order to do this.

Morales said should Snowden make a formal request, "we are going to grant asylum to that American who is being persecuted by his compatriots. We are not afraid." Moreover, he said, Bolivia "is interested in obtaining information and [learning] what the U.S. government was doing to control us. We have no problem doing this," Morales said.

Speaking at Venezuela's Independence Day celebration July 5, President Nicolas Maduro said "I have decided to offer humanitarian asylum to the young American Edward Snowden, so he may come to live here free of the empire's persecution." He also said that other Ibero-American governments were open to the idea of offering Snowden asylum as well.

Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega announced July 5 that he is willing to offer Snowden asylum, "if circumstances permit." His embassy in Moscow has received Snowden's asylum request, he reported.

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