

Brazil moves to secure telecom, Internet systems after US spying

August 14 2013



US Secretary of State John Kerry (R) and Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota attend a meeting in Brasilia on August 13, 2013. Brazil said Wednesday it is moving to secure its communications through its own satellite and digital networks to end its dependence on the United States, which is accused of electronically spying on the region.

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region.

"Brazil is in favor of greater decentralization: Internet governance must be multilateral and multisectoral with a broader participation," Communications Minister Paulo Bernardo told a congressional panel.

Tuesday, Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota warned his US counterpart John Kerry that the row over Washington's electronic snooping could sow mistrust between the two countries.

Kerry responded by conceding that Brasilia was owed answers from Washington and would get them.

He suggested that the vast US [surveillance program](#) aimed to "provide security, not just for Americans, but for Brazilians and the people of the world."

But Bernardo Wednesday criticized the "strong concentration of (Internet) traffic" by US firms.

Revelations by US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden about the vast scope of US [electronic surveillance](#) programs have caused deep unease in Brazil and other Latin American countries that have reportedly been targeted by the spying.

Bernardo said Brasilia was finalizing the selection of companies that will be tasked with building and launching a geostationary defense and strategic communications satellite.

Tuesday, French-Italian group Thales Alenia Space (TAS) said it had won a contract worth about \$400 million to build a satellite for Brazil's developing space program.

The order, placed by Visiona—jointly owned by Brazilian aeroplane maker Embraer and [telecom provider](#) Telebras—is for a [geostationary satellite](#) for civil and military use.

Telebras said that with the satellite, "high-speed Internet will be extended to the entire nation and will ensure the sovereignty of its civil and [military communications](#)."

Arianespace has been selected to launch the satellite in 2015.

The deal also allows for a transfer of technology between TAS and Brazil, making TAS the preferred industrial partner in building up Brazil's space program.

Sinclair Mayer, the head of the army's science and technology department, told lawmakers that the government was laying underwater cables to link the country with Europe and Africa so that international communication and data traffic does not have to go through the United States.

Bernardo insisted that the NSA was collecting not just metadata—such as duration of calls, their origin and destination—as it claims , but was engaging in "a much deeper surveillance."

Last month, the daily O Globo, citing documents leaked by fugitive ex-NSA contractor Snowden, reported that Washington snooped on Brazilians' phone calls and Internet communications.

It also said a spy base in Brasilia was part of a network of 16 such stations operated by the NSA to intercept foreign satellite transmissions.

Snowden, who was granted asylum in Russia on August 1 after spending more than five weeks in a Moscow airport transit zone, is now said to

live in a safe house in the country.

Washington, who wants to put him on trial for espionage, has expressed strong displeasure at Russia's refusal to hand him over.

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