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Venezuela Offers Asylum to Snowden, Nicaragua Also Hints at Possibility

By Jason Ditz

July 5, 2013

US whistleblower Edward Snowden has continued to apply for asylum around the world in an effort to get out of the Moscow Airport. Those requests appear to have finally borne fruit, as Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro became the first to officially offer him asylum.

France was the latest nation to turn down an asylum bid, and Iceland's parliament also rejected an effort to grant him citizenship, but for the first time since fleeing Hong Kong, Snowden finally seems to have options other than staying in the airport.

Venezuela may just be the first of many options, as well, as Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega also said he was willing to offer asylum "if circumstances allow," though he didn't specify what those circumstances would be.

Snowden has sought asylum in at least 26 different nations worldwide, though many of those nations have simply been unable to process a request unless Snowden is able to get to their embassy, which so far he has been unable to do.

Getting to Venezuela, or elsewhere, may be a big challenge in itself, as even the rumor that Snowden might be on the plane of Bolivia's President Evo Morales was enough for EU nations, at the behest of the US, to force Morales' plane to land and submit to a full search.

If Snowden can't overfly the EU in a trip, it may be awfully hard to get a plane from Moscow to anywhere in Venezuela without a layover anyplace.