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Latin America Condemns US Espionage at United Nations Security Council

By Carla Stea

August 17, 2013

“The United States appears to be destined by Providence to plague America with misery in the name of liberty.” Simon Bolivar

Throughout the day, on August 6, President Cristina Fernandez Kirchner of Argentina chaired a historic United Nations Security Council meeting that revealed a seismic shift in geopolitical consciousness and incipient strength.

The agenda of Security Council meeting 7015 was: *“Cooperation Between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in Maintaining International Peace and Security.”*

The prelude to this meeting was held, the prior day, August 5, at a press stakeout given by Elias Jaua Milano, Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Hector Timerman, Foreign Minister of Argentina, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Foreign Minister of Brazil, Luis Almagro, Foreign Minister of Uruguay and David Choquehuanca Cespedes, Foreign Minister of Bolivia.

They spoke on behalf of Mercosur, the Southern Common Market, following their meeting with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Their remarks focused on the expression of outrage contained in the “Annex to the note verbale dated 22 July from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, which stated:

“Decision rejecting the acts of espionage conducted by the United States in the countries of the region.” “The President of the Argentine Republic, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay and the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, having met in Montevideo, Eastern Republic of Uruguay, on 12 July, 2013, within the framework of the presidential summit of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR),

Condemning the acts of espionage carried out by intelligence agencies of the United States of America , which affect all countries in the region,

Strongly rejecting the interception of telecommunications and the acts of espionage carried out in our countries, which constitute a violation of the human rights, the right to privacy and the right to information of our citizens, and which also constitute unacceptable behavior that violates our sovereignty and is detrimental to the normal conduct of relations among nations,

Considering the advisability of promoting a coordinated approach to this issue at the regional level,

Decide to:

Work together to guarantee the cybersecurity of the States members to MERCOSUR, which is essential to defending the sovereignty of our countries,

Demand that those responsible immediately cease these activities and provide an explanation of the motives for and consequences of such activities,

Stress that the prevention of crime and the suppression of transnational crimes, including terrorism, must be carried out in line with the rule of law and in strict observance of international law.

Promote the adoption by the relevant multilateral institutions of standards for the regulation of the Internet which place a particular emphasis on cybersecurity issues, with a view to fostering the adoption of standards that guarantee the adequate protection of communications, in particular to safeguard the sovereignty of States and the privacy of individuals,

Express our full solidarity with all countries, within and outside our region that have been victims of such actions,

Promote the joint efforts of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of these incidents and request prevention and sanction mechanisms on the issue at the multilateral level

Instruct the delegations of the Member States participating in the upcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly to jointly present a formal proposal to that end,

Request the Argentine Republic to submit this matter to the Security Council for consideration,

Agree to establish a working group to coordinate efforts, together with the South American Defence Council and the South American Infrastructure and Planning Council, aimed at carrying out activities that will render our telecommunications more secure and reduce our dependence on foreign technology.”

The morning session of the August 6 Security Council meeting consisted primarily of technical diplomatic presentations. Following Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's statement, Cuban Foreign Minister Rodriguez Parrella opened the meeting, as President of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC):

“The history of Latin American and the Caribbean has changed. Two hundred years after our independence, the ideas of ‘a Nation of Republics,’ and of ‘Our America’ envisaged by Bolivar and Marti, respectively, are taking shape. Thus, our Heads of State and Government decided in the Caracas Declaration that ‘in accordance with the original mandate of our liberators, CELAC must move forward in the process of political, economic, social and cultural integration – based on a wise equilibrium between the unity and diversity of our peoples ... Upon founding CELAC, our Heads of State and Government reiterated our commitment to the building of a more just, equitable and harmonious international order based on respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations. ... They reaffirmed our commitment to the defense of sovereignty and the right of any state to establish its own political system, free from threats, aggression and unilateral coercive measures, and in an environment of peace, stability, justice, democracy and respect for human rights. CELAC reiterates that there can be no lasting peace without development and the eradication of poverty, hunger and inequality ... CELAC has adopted a unanimous position with regard to some far-reaching topics on the international agenda, such as, for example, Argentina's legitimate claim in the dispute concerning the sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, and – today on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima – on so-called nuclear disarmament.”

The representatives of other regional organizations, and the members of the Security Council delivered their statements throughout the morning session of the meeting

When the Security Council resumed for the afternoon session, in a courageous and brilliant tour de force, the Argentine Presidency of the Security Council availed itself of the opportunity to publicly denounce espionage in the service of the resurgence of neo-liberal capitalist imperialism. In an unusual gesture of solidarity and support (considering that Heads of State chairing Security Council meetings seldom remain beyond a perfunctory appearance at the morning session), President Cristina Fernandez Kirchner, Foreign Minister Hector Timerman and Ambassador Maria Cristina Perceval were present throughout the afternoon, as the succession of dazzling speeches, delivered by the Latin American Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador illuminated the global menace threatened by the United States National Security Agency programs of surveillance of phone records, e-mails, web-browsing, those very programs disclosed by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

The foreign ministers of Brazil , Venezuela , Uruguay , Bolivia and Ecuador fiercely condemned the United States plan for worldwide espionage, which posed a lethal threat to the democratically elected governments of these Latin American nations and jeopardized their survival.

It is not surprising that this expression of alarm was voiced by Latin America, from Argentina through Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela – in other words from the Southernmost tip of the huge southern continent to the Caribbean, for this continent, viewed imperialistically as the “backyard” of the United States, was for many tragic decades, crushed by military dictatorships inflicting state terror with impunity, following the blueprint of destabilization and overthrow, by the CIA and multinational corporate controlled entities, of their own democratically elected leaders. The tragic destruction of Latin America's democratically elected

governments included President Arbenz in Guatemala, 1954; President Goulart in Brazil, 1964; President Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic, 1965; President Torres in Bolivia, 1971; President Allende in Chile, 1973, and more recently the destabilizations of the democratically elected governments of Honduras and Paraguay (this is not a complete list)

This more than half-century violation of the will of the people of Latin America, engineered by agencies of “the Colossus of the North” was a shattering trauma seared deeply into the consciousness of these leaders, whose recent triumph over fascist military dictatorships which were installed and supported by the United States, is a testament to their moral and intellectual strength and their passion for dignity and control over their own destinies. The Latin American governments speaking at the August 6 Security Council are like the canary in the coal mine: intensely alert and sensitive to imminent or potential threats of repetition of that horrific period they had endured and so recently overcome, these governments denounced widespread evidence of perilous subversive activity, the lethal consequences of which are predictable and terrifying.

The August 6, 2013 afternoon session of the UN Security Council began with Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Foreign Minister of Brazil, who stated, in English:

“You, Madam President made my task easier by referring to the interception of communications and acts of espionage. Such practices violate sovereignty, harm relations between nations and constitute a violation of human rights, in particular the right to privacy and the right of our citizens to information. In that respect, you have complied with the decision of the States parties of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) who met in Montevideo last month. Yesterday, the Foreign Minister of MERCOSUR conveyed to the Secretary-General the position of Argentina , Bolivia , Brazil , Uruguay and Venezuela with respect to and in compliance with, that decision. The matter will also be placed before various United Nations bodies, in accordance with the decision and the document circulated under the symbol A/67/946. This is a very serious issue with a profound impact on the international system. Brazil is coordinating with countries that share similar concerns for the benefit of an international order that respects human rights and the sovereignty of states.

I welcome the timely statement made on 12 July by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay: ‘surveillance programmes without adequate safeguards to protect the right to privacy actually risk impacting negatively on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.’ Pillay also mentioned Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 17 and 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which established, respectively, that ‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence,’ and that ‘Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.’

Brazil also associates itself with the repeated appeals by Ms. Pillay in various forums that efforts to combat terrorism must necessarily respect human rights and humanitarian law. Her position was incorporated into the decision of the Heads of State of MERCOSUR as well as the Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2013/12) adopted by the Council this morning... Mention should be made of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)... a defense alliance that does not seem to frame its activities clearly under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and has made use of concepts and strategies that raise problematic and sensitive issues in terms of the articulation between the regional level and the United Nations system. We are

concerned that, historically, leaders of NATO and member countries have considered that the organization does not necessarily require explicit authorization from the Security Council to resort to coercion.

We are also concerned that NATO has loosely interpreted mandates for action aimed at promoting international peace and security authorized by the Security Council. As Brazil has maintained, including through the Brazilian concept of ‘responsibility while protecting,’ (S/2011/701, annex), the Security Council should avail itself of the institutional means of monitoring the adequate fulfillment of its mandates.

We are concerned, as well that NATO has been searching to establish partnerships out of its area, far beyond the North Atlantic, including in regions of peace, democracy and social inclusion, and that rule out the presence of weapons of mass destruction in their territories. It would be extremely grave for the future of the articulation between regional and global efforts at promoting peace, as prescribed by the United Nations, if groups of countries started to unilaterally define their sphere of action beyond the territory of their own members.”

Next, Mr. David Choquehuanca Cespedes, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia spoke:

“Preserving peace is not and will not be the result of the existence of international policemen, but rather as a result of the promotion of social justice, equity, complementarity, solidarity and respect between states.....I should like to express our rejection and condemnation of the practice of espionage on the part of the United States. I should also like to express the grief and indignation of my people and my Government over the act of aggression experienced by President Evo Morales Ayma, which has been described by the international community as offensive, humiliating, discriminatory, colonialistic, unfriendly and a violation of human rights and international standards. Given the grave nature of these facts, we ask the United Nations to clarify these events and to take measures to guarantee human rights and international law so that no one will have to suffer such violations again.”

Next, His Excellency, Mr. Elias Jaua Milano, Minister of the People’s Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Pro-Tempore President of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) stated:

“Today we join in the pleasure of the Bolivian people on its national holiday, and recall the commemoration of the 200 years of the triumphant entry of the liberator Simon Bolivar after having carried out a successful campaign that began in December of 1812 in New Grenada. We must always remember that, when united, we South Americans will achieve independence, equality and democracy for our peoples....Peace cannot be achieved in the world without social justice and without eradicating once and for all hunger, poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and the wide technological divides, in other words, without guaranteeing to all the resources necessary for their full development in equal conditions....The instruments, declarations, decisions and resolutions of MERCOSUR have sought democracy and peace in the region, including by preventing coups and other attempts to frustrate the democratic will of our peoples, promoted by fascistic movements represented by political and economic leaders that are found particularly in media corporations. These movements attack democratic governments and peoples that have chosen the path of independence, social inclusion and the grass-roots democratization of our societies.....

The timely and firm action of MERCOSUR along with other regional and subregional organizations, managed to stop attempted coups in Paraguay in 1996 and 1999, thereby guaranteeing democratic order. Similarly, in 2006 and 2007 MERCOSUR condemned and took action to prevent attempts to divide Bolivia as a way of weakening the democratic government of President Evo Morales. Likewise, the Foreign Ministers of the countries members of MERCOSUR condemned the attempted coup against President Rafael Correa in Ecuador on 30 September 2010, joining with other regional blocs to issue a joint warning to the world and prevent that crime from taking place. Although it could not be prevented, MERCOSUR acted decisively in the parliamentary coup against President Fernando Lugo of Paraguay in June, 2012. On that occasion the foreign ministers of MERCOSUR and UNASUR traveled to Asuncion with the intention of starting a dialogue and preventing the interruption of the constitutional order. That was not achieved, and the bloc had to temporarily suspend the Republic of Paraguay until its political, institutional and democratic situation was normalized through the holding of elections. More recently, MERCOSUR has been able to circumvent those situations with peaceful and democratic mechanisms, without economic blockades, military intervention, indiscriminate bombing or armed intervention of any kind. We believe that the only way to defeat violence is with greater democracy and peaceful means. Mercosur has also participated in issues that affect international peace and security, such as the coup in Honduras against President Zelaya...

Unfortunately in recent times we have been concerned to see that some countries have continued to assert their political, military and economic power and distorted the very essence of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. They have gone so far as to use the Security Council as a platform to encourage armed interventions against sovereign states and peoples with a view to promoting the poorly named regime change, in contravention of all principles of International Law... as Foreign Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and as Pro-Tempore President of MERCOSUR I take this opportunity to reiterate our firm condemnation of the insult to the office of the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, President Evo Morales, when some European Governments did not permit the overflight or landing of the aircraft transporting him. That was not only a hostile, unfounded, discriminatory and arbitrary action, but also a flagrant violation of the precepts of international law.”

“Similarly, we reject the actions of global espionage carried out by the government of the United States , which undermine the sovereignty of States and which we have become familiar with through the revelations of the former security contractor, Edward Snowden. Given the seriousness of these reports of computer espionage on a global scale, recognized by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union himself, the United Nations must initiate a broad multilateral discussion that would make it possible to design agreements to safeguard the sovereignty and security of States in the light of such illegal practices. MERCOSUR has begun action to promote a discussion on this matter so that we can open an appropriate investigation within the United Nations and punish and condemn this violation of international law.”

“We reiterate our condemnation of actions that could undermine the power of States to fully implement the right of humanitarian asylum. In this respect, we reject any attempt to pressure, harass or criminalize a state or third party over the sovereign decision of any nation to grant asylum, which is enshrined in all international conventions. Likewise, we express our solidarity

with the Governments of Bolivia and Nicaragua , which, like Venezuela , have offered asylum to Mr. Snowden, as expressed by the Heads of State of MERCOSUR in the decision concerning the universal recognition of the right of political asylum, issued in Montevideo on 12 July. These three matters were discussed yesterday with the Secretary-General of the United Nations”

In her remarkable work, entitled “The Shock Doctrine, The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,” (published in 2007) journalist Naomi Klein states, page 573:

“Though clearly drawing on a long militant history, Latin America ’s contemporary movements are not direct replicas of their predecessors. Of all the differences, the most striking is an acute awareness of the need for protection from the shocks of the past – the coups, the foreign shock therapists, the U.S. trained torturers, as well as the debt shocks and currency collapses of the eighties and nineties. Latin America ’s mass movements, which have powered the wave of election victories for left-wing candidates, are learning how to build shock absorbers into their organizing models. ...

Latin America’s new leaders are also taking bold measures to block any future U.S. backed coups that could attempt to undermine their democratic victories. The governments of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Argentina and Uruguay have all announced they will no longer send students to the School of Americas, the infamous police and military training center in Fort Benning, Georgia, where so many of the continent’s notorious killers learned the latest “counterterrorism” (torture) techniques, then promptly directed them against farmers in El Salvador and auto workers in Argentina....If the U.S. military does not have bases or training programs, its power to inflict shocks will be greatly eroded...

Latin America’s most significant protection from future shocks (and therefore the shock doctrine) flows from the continent’s emerging independence from Washington’s financial institutions, the result of greater integration among regional governments. The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) is the continent’s retort to the Free Trade Area of the Americas , the now buried corporatist dream of a free-trade zone from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego....

Thanks to high oil prices, Venezuela has emerged as a major lender to other developing countries, allowing them to do an end run around Washington, and even Argentina, Washington’s former ‘model pupil’ has been part of the trend. In his 2007 State of the Union Address (the late) President Nestor Kirchner said that the country’s foreign creditors had told him, ‘You must have an agreement with the International Fund to be able to pay the debt. We say to them, ‘Sirs, we are sovereign. We want to pay the debt, but no way in hell are we going to make an agreement again with the IMF.’ As a result the IMF, supremely powerful in the eighties, is no longer a force on the continent. In 2005 Latin America made up 80 percent of the IMF’s total lending portfolio, in 2007 the continent represented just 1 percent – a sea change in only two years. ‘There is life after the IMF,’ Kirchner declared, ‘and it is a good life.’”

Having resisted foreign (and domestic) military control, and foreign (and neoliberal) economic control, the new peril confronting Latin America’s independent governments emanates from the United States’ National Security Agency’s electronic surveillance programs, an insidious new cyber-age method of total social control of the most private and intimate spaces of their lives – and identities, their minds, destroying their capacity to forge networks of solidarity and obtain the information crucial to their understanding and critical thinking, without which they are

vulnerable to being reduced to the condition of the “zombies” (so popular in Hollywood’s movie narrative), rendering them confused, docile, easily herded, subjugated, ultimately exploited and enslaved. This surveillance is tantamount to imposing total individual and societal control, which is a stealthy form of isolation, a form of psychological and intellectual solitary confinement, one of the cruelest forms of torture, which ultimately leads to the disintegration of the human personality, within an invisible prison.

This condition is described by the American Civil Liberties Union, and quoted in Charles Savage’s August 8 report to The New York Times:

“Hints of the surveillance appeared in a set of rules, leaked by Mr. Snowden, for how the NSA may carry out the 2008 FISA law. One paragraph mentions that the agency ‘seeks to acquire communications about the target that are not to or from the target.’ The pages were posted online by the newspaper The Guardian on June 20, but the telltale paragraph, the only rule marked ‘Top Secret’ amid 18 pages of restrictions, went largely overlooked amid other disclosures....While the paragraph hinting at the surveillance has attracted little attention, the American Civil Liberties Union did take note of the ‘about the target’ language in a June 21 post analyzing the larger set of rules, arguing that the language could be interpreted as allowing ‘bulk collection of international communications, including those of Americans’....Jameel Jaffer, a senior lawyer at the ACLU said Wednesday that such ‘dragnet surveillance will be poisonous to the freedoms of inquiry and association’ because people who know that their communications will be searched will change their behavior. ‘They’ll hesitate before visiting controversial web sites, discussing controversial topics or investigating politically sensitive questions. Individually, these hesitations might appear to be inconsequential, but the accumulation of them over time will change citizens’ relationship to one another and to the government.’”

The infrastructure for de facto fascist police state and military control is being established under the guise of counterterrorism, (as, earlier, similar fascist states were established under the guise of fighting communism) a phenomena Latin America recognizes and knows from horrific historic experience. And their historic memory of this has not yet been expunged: indeed, many of the leaders of Latin America today were earlier imprisoned and tortured only a few decades ago under such fascist police and military states (established ostensibly in the name of anti-communism), including Chile’s former, and possibly future President Michelle Bachelet, Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff, Argentina’s late President Nestor Kirchner, and the world famous father of Argentina’s Foreign Minister Hector Timerman, the late Jacobo Timerman, imprisoned and tortured for two years during the Argentine military dictatorship’s “dirty war.” No doubt, Uruguay’s President Jose Mujica well remembers those horrors, and Chile’s former President Ricardo Lago spent considerable time in prison during the Pinochet dictatorship.

Patino Aroca, Foreign Minister of Ecuador, next delivered, at the August 6 Security Council meeting, one of the great speeches in United Nations history.

“During the recent summit of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) that took place on 12 July in Montevideo, the States convened resolved to ‘request Argentina to submit the matter of the massive espionage case uncovered by Edward Snowden for consideration by the Security Council.’ They also resolved to ‘demand that those responsible for those actions immediately cease therefrom and provide explanations of their motivations and their

consequences.’ In similar terms, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America spoke at the last Guayaquil summit which was held just five days ago, when it was decided to ‘warn the international community about the seriousness of these actions, which imply a threat to the security and peaceful coexistence among our States’...

“Just a few weeks ago the world saw a sequence of events more akin to a Cold War spy novel than to modern times. On 5 June, leaks began to appear in publications in major global media outlets, leaks that were mixed with almost deathly intent and unspooled as a reality show before global public opinion. The leaks came from a former 29-year-old American analyst who sought to escape deportation to his country, where he would be tried for those leaks. After a journey that began in Hong Kong and was supposed to end in Latin America, today, it seems to have stopped, but it may not have completely run its course, despite the granting of asylum by Russia .”

“During those few days in June we saw the size and the discretionary nature of a massive surveillance apparatus that suddenly brought all the inhabitants of the planet closer than ever to an Orwellian nightmare. Although at first it appeared to be a simple matter of wiretapping, it was later discovered that there was discretionary monitoring of e-mails. While it seemed initially that the apparatus was being used in operations against organized crime, later we learned that it was also being used to gain advantage in trade negotiations with other countries. If we once thought that they were simply looking at unaffected States, we now know that everyone — absolutely everyone, debtors and creditors, friends and enemies, South and North — is considered a usual suspect by the authorities of the United States of America . Now we know that our communications are permanently monitored by them.”

“No one knows yet if Mr. Snowden will once again manage to leak information that he claims to possess. Of course, it seems that he will not do it when he is in Russia . In any case, the wounds opened by those events should be assessed within the main multilateral forums. They deserve to be so because not only do they reflect an unacceptable imbalance in the global governance system, which in no case would help to build a climate of trust and cooperation between countries, and, in the final analysis, a climate of peace among nations. They deserve to be assessed because we have also moved dangerously close to the limits set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

“The imbalances to which I refer are clear — the United States, like any other countries, has the need to deal with demands related to its national security, it goes without saying, but those legitimate demands must be dealt with in a way that does not affect the rights of individuals or indeed the sovereignty of other nations. That is to say, limits must be set. However, we are now faced with the fact that any limits there may have been have vanished. The national security of the United States has been placed above all universal moral values.”

“Such a drive has meant that the principles of equality and non-interference in the affairs of States, established in the Westphalia peace agreement, have now vanished into thin air. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been violated. The rights to the privacy of correspondence — article 12 — and to freedom of expression and opinion — article 19 — the rights of all citizens of the world, including United States citizens, have been trampled in the name of a greater goal, that is, national security — or rather, for the sake of the profits of the national security industry.”

“What are the limits, really? Has the time not come for the Council to take up this question again and discuss it? In the end, does this not pose a threat to global peace? What mutual trust could possibly exist among nations under such circumstances? We believe that the time has come for the United Nations to face up to this matter responsibly.”

“As we have seen with the disappearance of such limits, this situation threatens to build walls between our countries. If it has not done so already, it could also affect international cooperation against organized crime; strangely enough, there is even the possibility that trade negotiations could be disrupted. Paradoxically, even the very national security of the United States will suffer from the increase in global mistrust generated by massive espionage.”

“The events to which I have referred have also revealed other very disturbing realities. To start off with, it has re-ignited the debate on the right of asylum, which all human beings have, as enshrined in international law, as well as the ability of any sovereign state to grant it. This is a right that is granted to avoid fear of political persecution; its legitimacy can only be determined by the country granting it. Let us also remember its peaceful and humanitarian nature, which cannot in any case be described as unfriendly towards any other State, as established in General Assembly resolution 2312 (XXII) on territorial asylum. I should also quote Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the case at hand: ‘Snowden’s case has shown the need to protect persons disclosing information on matters that have implications for human rights, as well as the importance of ensuring respect for the right to privacy.’”

“Leaders who should be giving explanations and facing up to the debate on the limits of what we are discussing, have instead launched a crusade against the right to asylum – a full-on diplomatic offensive against countries that have taken to the global stage to show interest in such an important case. States in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) have been under pressure, simply because they are considering a request for asylum. All those countries have signed the 1954 Caracas Convention on Territorial Asylum, which is perhaps one of the most important instruments of the Inter-American human rights system.”

“The day the United States signs that treaty – even the day it ratifies the San Jose pact, one of the foundations of the Inter-American system of human rights – we will be closer to seeing that country adhere to the Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties, and it will become a part of a group of equal nations, committed to complying with international law.”

“Instead of joining this group, we find ourselves with a country that prefers to lunge forwards and blame the messenger in order to cloud the message. The final result was that a group of countries decided to endanger the life of the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, forcing him and his entourage to make an emergency landing in violation of international norms governing respectful relations among nations.”

“It is not the revelation of the offence that threatens the climate of understanding among nations, it is the offence itself. In a fragile world where armed conflicts are barely affected by international pressure, such actions do not help generate trust but tension.”

“I would like to conclude with two comments.”

“First, the Government of Ecuador fully supports the request of the Bolivian Government that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights conduct an exhaustive

investigation into the unjustifiable treatment suffered by President Evo Morales Ayma during his trip from Moscow to La Paz.”

“Secondly, massive global, discretionary and unlimited surveillance must stop. It is for the Security Council to urgently make that demand of one of its permanent members, since, theoretically, it is up to this body to maintain peace on our planet. That, too, is the demand of Latin America, a zone of peace that, through organizations such as MERCOSUR and ALBA, has demanded an end to those practices. It is also required by the spirit of coexistence, which inspired the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also the appeal of billions of people in the world who understand that any action that aims to ensure the security of a country has its limits, which are the human rights of everyone on the planet.”

The representative of the United States, Mr. DeLaurentis replied:

“Let me address an issue unrelated to our debate that was raised earlier today, namely, the United States efforts to prevent terrorism and the recent disclosure of classified information about techniques we use to do that. All Governments do things that are secret: it is a fact of modern governing and a necessity in the light of the threats all our citizens face. Our counter-Terrorism policy is ultimately about saving people’s lives, which is why the United States works with other countries to protect our citizens and those of other nations from many threats. All nations should be concerned about the damage these disclosures can cause to our ability to collectively defend against those threats.”

Contradicting this assertion, a senior United States intelligence official said, regarding the ‘about the target’ surveillance that it “was difficult to point to any particular terrorist plot that would have been carried out if the surveillance had not taken place.” He said it was one tool among many used to assemble a ‘mosaic’ of information in such investigations. “The surveillance was used for other types of foreign-intelligence collection, not just terrorism investigations,” the official said. This admission that this surveillance is not limited to preventing terrorism is the most damning indictment of the secrecy of the program.

The American people, whose taxes pay for these programs, have an inalienable right to know what are the “other” uses to which these surveillance programs are being put, in their name. Powerfully refuting any contention that these surveillance activities are for the purpose of preventing terrorism is the testimony of United States Senator, Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, who said he had been shown a classified list of “terrorist events” detected through surveillance, and it did not show that ‘dozens or even several terrorist plots’ had been thwarted by the domestic program. “If this program is not effective, it has to end. So far I’m not convinced by what I’ve seen,” Senator Leahy said, denouncing ‘the massive privacy implications’ of keeping records of every American’s domestic calls.

What really is the purpose of this NSA program of global surveillance? Failing to significantly thwart terrorist activity, it must have an ultimate purpose. The possibilities are terrifying. The hysterical, desperate and deadly determination to arrest Snowden suggests that he may have uncovered something further, something so illegal that the authors of such crimes will not hesitate to endanger the very lives they claim to be protecting, in order to prevent exposure. The frantic orchestration of the actions endangering the life of the President of Bolivia makes this conclusion unavoidable.

The August 6 Security Council meeting under the Presidency of Argentina re-enforced the credibility of the United Nations. The Government of Argentina and her courageous sister nations of Latin America have thrown down the gauntlet on behalf of the majority of the citizens of this planet.