



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 24, 2013

Snowden Headed to Ecuador for Asylum?

As of Monday morning June 24, Edward Snowden's [whereabouts were unknown](#) despite an international effort to track him down. His final destination was also uncertain, with reports of Ecuador, Venezuela, or even Cuba being his target to escape prosecution for blowing the whistle on the National Security Agency (NSA).

Following his release of information on the NSA's surveillance of phone calls and e-mails of citizens and government officials worldwide, Snowden headed for Hong Kong on May 20, where he holed up in an unknown location. When three felony charges were levied against him on June 14 (for theft of government property, unauthorized communication of national defense information, and the willful communication of classified communications intelligence to an unauthorized person), he communicated with Julian Assange of WikiLeaks for assistance.

It is presumed that Assange, living in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, recommended that Snowden request asylum in Ecuador. When Hong Kong began to receive pressure from the U.S. government to extradite Snowden, orders came down from Beijing to urge Snowden to leave immediately. He flew to Moscow where he was met by an associate of Assange's, Sarah Harrison. They scheduled themselves onto Aeroflot flight SU150 (shown) to leave Monday morning but when the flight left, [neither Snowden nor Harrison were on it](#).

In a conference call with reporters on Monday morning, Assange assured observers that Snowden is "healthy and safe" somewhere in Russia while he is waiting for a response to his request for asylum to Ecuador. Ecuador's Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino told reporters that Snowden's request would be considered "in the shortest time possible." Since his passport has been revoked, Snowden is unable to leave the Sheremetyevo airport so it is further presumed that he is hiding there until his request is granted.

Snowden's escapades have left behind a long litany of frustration, hypocrisy, and farcical behaviors. For instance, Caitlin Harden, the chief spokeswoman for the National Security Council, [said](#) the White House was "disappointed" by Hong Kong's decision to ignore a request from the U.S. government to detain him and deport him back to the United States. This was especially galling as Attorney General Eric Holder had personally called his counterpart in Hong Kong to demand that he release him. Now, directing her attention to the Russian government, she said,

Given our intensified co-operation after the Boston marathon bombings and our history of working





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with Russia on law enforcement matters — including returning numerous high level criminals back to Russia at the request of the Russian government — we expect the Russian government to look at all options available to expel Mr. Snowden back to the US to face justice for the crimes with which he is charged.

This willingness to cooperate with totalitarian regimes was matched by hypocritical comments from Secretary of State John Kerry, who said: “It would be deeply troubling, obviously, if they had adequate notice, and notwithstanding that, they make the decision willfully to ignore that and not live by the standards of the law.” Kerry failed to mention the laws that, thanks to the revelations by Snowden, the NSA is now known to have broken.

But the most farcical behavior was observed by the *Guardian*: The Aeroflot flight — the one Snowden was scheduled to take with Harrison — left without Snowden and Harrison but was filled with journalists hoping to get an inside story.

If Snowden’s final destination is Ecuador, and he arrives there successfully, he might have a surprise waiting for him. When Assange was granted asylum there in August, 2012, the Ecuadorian Foreign Minister, Ricardo Patino, said:

A lot of people think it’s strange that a government could act on principles. But we act on principles ... when we were deciding on the asylum....

What has happened here is that Ecuador has recovered its dignity at an international level ... previous governments in Ecuador did what the US or Europe told them to do. Even worse ... based on what they imagined the US or Europe wanted....

What happened since 2007, since Rafael Correa has been president ... is that we have started thinking with our own head and we walk on our own feet. We have dignity and sovereignty.

Snowden could very well be disappointed if he is counting on such pleasantries and sophistry to save him from the long arm of the NSA. Greg Caton, a permanent resident of Ecuador and the founder of Alpha Omega Labs which operates out of Guayaquil, Ecuador, found out the hard way about political realities under Correa: With enough money and pressure, laws and rules and niceties about sovereignty can be successfully ignored.

After serving a sentence in the United States for “defrauding customers” by not following FDA regulations on his natural remedies, Caton and his family moved to Ecuador in the summer of 2007 and applied for permanent residency. In October of that year, an overzealous FDA agent managed to get Caton’s name put on Interpol’s “Red Notice” list — the international police agency’s highest alert level for murderers, rapists, terrorists, international money launderers, and war criminals — by listing his offenses as “drugs related crimes, fraud.” On December 3, 2009, he was arrested at a checkpoint and jailed to await a hearing on December 14. As noted by Mike Adams, the journalist with *Natural News* who broke the story:

Caton was expected to be set free by the Ecuadorian judge at that hearing based on the facts of the case which indicated Caton’s permanent residency in Ecuador is legal and valid.

Three days before the hearing could take place, Caton was taken from his holding facility and, with the help of U.S. State Department employees, involuntarily placed on an American Airlines plane headed for Miami.

An Ecuadorian judge rushed to the airport in Guayaquil and demanded that Caton be released from



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the plane, stating that the attempted deportation was illegal, but American Airlines employees reportedly refused to allow Caton to leave the plane, stating that the plane was “U.S. territory” and that Ecuadorian law did not apply there (even though the plane was still on the tarmac in Guayaquil and under the direction of the air traffic control tower there).

No matter where Snowden finally reappears, there is little doubt that he will be faced with huge difficulties in proving his innocence of the charges currently levied against him. As he is about to discover, there are few places on the planet where he will not have to continually be looking over his shoulder or listening at the door for his accusers.

Photo of Aeroflot Airbus A330 that Snowden was scheduled to take out of Moscow: AP Images

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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