

U.S. offers Brazil NATO partnership, 5G tech to dump China's Huawei



Brazilian Defense Minister Walter Braga Netto (L) and US National Security advisor Jake Sullivan meet in Brasilia on August 5, 2021. (Photo by Reuters)

Brasilia, August 7 (RHC)-- U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has reportedly offered Brazil "global partnership" status in the NATO military alliance if it squeezes the Chinese Huawei out of its 5G network market and instead uses an American model.

During his high-level visit to Brazil this week, Sullivan held talks on Thursday with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and other senior officials to discuss cooperation in telecommunications, cybersecurity and the prospects of Brazil becoming a NATO global partner as well as Amazon deforestation and corona vaccine supplies.

Sullivan apparently brought up the outlook of Brazil joining the US-led alliance as a "global partner" during his first visit to the South American country aimed at discussing regional defense and security issues with Brazilian Defense Minister Walter Braga Netto, local daily Folha de Sao Paulo reported on Friday.

Also on the agenda of Sullivan's visit was a meeting with Brazilian Communications Minister Fabio Faria in order to introduce and promote US Open RAN technologies – a tool to develop wireless capabilities similar to 5G – as an alternative to Huawei in South America's largest economy.

"Today, Security Advisor Jake Sullivan discussed with Fabio Faria the issues of cybersecurity and guarantees that all the Brazilians will be able to benefit from 5G network," the U.S. Embassy in Brazil said in a Twitter post.

"We mostly discussed 5G. We will work together to elaborate solutions on Open RAN," Faria said about his meeting with Sullivan as quoted in local press reports. "As the hemisphere's two largest democracies, the United States and Brazil have a stake in each other's success. Together we can promote shared security and prosperity, advance ambitious climate goals, and combat the COVID-19 pandemic," Sullivan noted in a Twitter message on Thursday.

Sullivan's visit to Brazil is reportedly the second high-level trip by a US official in less than a month, after the director of the CIA spy agency, William Burns, apparently paid a "secret" visit in July to meet with senior government officials, including Bolsonaro.

However, Folha de Sao Paulo reported that there were divergent opinions within the Brazilian military and security establishment regarding the value of such a deal. The Institutional Security Cabinet (GSI) – and executive cabinet body that advises Bolsonaro on national security and defense – is apparently in favor of taking Washington up on the offer, but other military officials have expressed hesitancy about the issue.

According to the daily, those officials have argued that there had never been any problems with Huawei in the more-than-two decades the firm had operated in the country, which contradicts Washington's claim that Huawei spies for China and does not respect intellectual property rights.

This is while U.S. Ambassador Todd Chapman had gone so far as to warn Brazil last July of "consequences" if it continued to deal with Huawei. He told O Globo daily that "firms involved in intellectual property are scared to make investments in countries where that intellectual property is not protected."

Last year, the Trump administration signed a billion-dollar export agreement with Brazil to promote American exports in various sectors, including the telecommunications arena and 5G network technologies.

However, reports emerged in January that the Bolsonaro administration would not bar Huawei from participating in lucrative 5G network auctions. The bidding was scheduled to begin in June but has since been delayed a number of times.

The development came as Huawei Technologies has been placed on a list of restricted entities, banning it from gaining access to US hardware and software.

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