

Lula goes to Washington with hopes of renewing U.S.-Brazil relations

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Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will hold talks with his US counterpart Joe Biden at the White House on Friday [File: Agustin Marcarian/Reuters]

Brasilia, February 9 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will seek to “kickstart a new era of relations” with the United States during talks with his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden at the White House,

analysts and Brazilian officials say, but ideological differences are likely to persist.

Da Silva, commonly known as Lula, will meet with Biden on Friday in Brazilian leader's first official visit to the United States after he narrowly defeated Brazil's former far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, in an October run-off election.

The visit, which will come just weeks after Lula was sworn in at the beginning of January, underscores "how much importance" the Brazilian president places on his country's relationship with the U.S., said Filipe Nasser, a senior adviser to Brazil's foreign minister.

Speaking during a panel discussion this week, organised by the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a U.S.-based think tank, Nasser said the timing of Lula's trip "reflects how big a moment this is for Brazil-US relations." "I think this is an opportunity for the leaders to establish or re-establish a personal rapport between them," he said.

While in office, Bolsonaro had expressed admiration for former US President Donald Trump, with whom he had close ties and often emulated, earning him the nickname, "Tropical Trump." The ex-Brazilian army captain also failed to quickly recognise Biden's 2020 presidential election victory over Trump, who had falsely claimed the US vote was marred by widespread fraud, raising tensions between the two countries.

Lula's recent election victory, which Bolsonaro still has not formally recognised amid his own false voter fraud allegations, has raised hopes that Brazil will be able to mend diplomatic relationships that were frayed during the former Brazilian president's tenure.

Before Friday's talks, the White House said Lula and Biden would discuss "the United States' unwavering support of Brazil's democracy and how the two countries can continue to work together to promote inclusion and democratic values in the region and around the world".

The meeting will follow just weeks after thousands of Bolsonaro supporters overran Brazil's Congress, Supreme Court and the presidential palace in early January to demand that the military intervene and remove Lula from office.

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