

Jittery Brazil Spied on Russian Officials

By [Giovanni Lorenzon](#)

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Brazilian Defense Minister Celso Amorim, left, greeting Shoigu during a bilateral meeting in Brasilia last month. **Ueslei Marcelino**

SAO PAULO, Brazil — Brazil's spy agency monitored and photographed the activities of a senior Russian diplomat and other officials over fears that Moscow might be engaged in espionage as it seeks to become a major arms supplier to the South American country.

The revelations about the spying, which were confirmed by the Brazilian Intelligence Agency after a newspaper broke the story Monday, came days after Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu urged Brazilian officials during a visit to Brasília to buy the new Sukhoi T-50 fighter jet instead of the U.S.-built Boeing F-18.

Boeing's \$4 billion proposal was once seen as the leading bid in a three-way fight with Dassault and Saab's Gripen NG to upgrade Brazil's aging air force. But it is now up in the air after U.S. intelligence leaker Edward Snowden released classified documents in July that showed the U.S. National Security Agency had been spying on Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff, and her aides.

The Brazilian Intelligence Agency, known by its acronym, Abin, confirmed a report in the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo that it had spied on Russian, U.S. and Iranian officials in 2003 and 2004, largely by following them on foot and by car and by taking photographs of them. The Russians included Anatoly Kashuba, former consul general in Rio de Janeiro, and representatives of Rosoboronexport, the state arms export agency, the newspaper said.

"Abin suspected that Russian officials were involved in espionage activities in Brazil," according to a leaked Abin report published the newspaper, the country's largest.

Both Abin and Rousseff's office released statements that defended the counterintelligence operations as legal under Brazilian law and vowed to find and prosecute those responsible for the leak.

Officials with the Russian Embassy in Brasilia declined to comment.

Defense Minister Shoigu led a Russian delegation to Brazil in mid-October to pitch the Sukhoi fight jet and to reaffirm a \$1 billion contract for Russian-built Panzir-S1 air defense systems. Curiously, Shoigu also told Brazilian authorities during private talks that he backed Rousseff in her anger over the National Security Agency spying allegations and he threw his support behind a Brazilian proposal to establish a joint task force to control the Internet, Folha de S. Paulo said.

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