
Brazilian VP Jumps the Gun on Rousseff Impeachment

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The audio recording of about 15 minutes was sent to lawmakers of his PMDB party, by “accident,” Temer’s press office said.

If the lower house and then the Senate give the green light to impeachment, Rousseff will have to step down from the presidency for 180 days, which is the period the Senate is allocated to put her on trial.

During that period, she would be replaced as president by Temer, who would complete the term ending on Jan. 1, 2019, if the Senate were to eventually remove Rousseff from office.

In the audio recording, Temer says that “many” have urged him to craft some “preliminary remarks to the Brazilian nation,” but he adds that he had stayed away from doing so because he did not want to give the impression that “he would be committing any action … (to) take the place of the president.”

The audio recording was divulged on the day that the lower house’s special commission will vote whether or not to give the OK to impeachment. If it decides to proceed with a trial, the matter will be passed to the full house.

Temer says that he is awaiting “the definitive decision of the Senate,” but he also says that he must be ready to “face the problems plaguing the country.”

The vice president emphasizes that “come what may” it is necessary to put together a “national salvation” government to get the country out of the serious political and economic crisis in which it finds itself.

Temer has been Rousseff’s VP since she took office in 2011, but disagreements between them began during her second term and the differences became concrete this year when the PMDB, Brazil’s largest party, announced that it was breaking with the government.

While Rousseff is accused of having manipulated budget numbers to understate the size of the deficit, she does not face allegations of graft.

Temer, however, is being probed for his alleged involvement in an illegal ethanol-purchasing scheme, and the next two people in the line of succession – lower house speaker Eduardo Cunha and Senate president Renan Calheiros – have been formally charged in connection with the \$2 billion corruption scandal centered on state oil company Petrobras.
