

Brazilian dictatorship's participation in coup against Allende revealed

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At the highest level, Brazil joined the U.S. in pushing for the overthrow of Salvador Allende's government, declassified documents show. | Photo: Twitter: National Security Archive. U.S.

Washington, April 1 (RHC)-- On the 57th anniversary of the military coup in Brazil, the National Security Archive of the United States has published declassified documentation on the efforts of the regime that emerged from that military coup to subvert democracy and support the dictatorship in Chile in 1973.

The documents include a memorandum of a meeting between then President of the U.S., Richard Nixon, and the leader of the Brazilian military junta, Emílio Médici, which shows that the Brazilian dictatorship intervened with the United States to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende.

The declassified intelligence documents, released Wednesday by the Washington-based center, show that Médici told Nixon that Allende was going to be deposed "for the same reason that (President Joao) Goulart had been overthrown in Brazil." Goulart was overthrown by a military coup on March 31, 1964, which installed a dictatorship that lasted until 1985.

Another CIA intelligence document cited by the National Security Archive about a meeting between senior Brazilian officials notes that one of them believed that "the United States obviously wants Brazil to 'do the dirty work' in South America."

The center also cited the work of Brazilian researcher Roberto Simon, who in his book "Brazil against Democracy: Dictatorship, Coup in Chile and the Cold War in South America" explored the issue.

Within days of Salvador Allende's election on September 4, 1970, the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, met with the Brazilian Ambassador in Santiago de Chile, Antonio Cândido da Câmara Canto, and shared details of initial U.S. efforts to block Allende's inauguration.

On orders from the White House, Korry said that the embassy was passing information about Allende to Chilean military commanders and threatening to cut off economic aid and credits if he assumed the Chilean presidency. Ambassador Câmara Canto's report on the meeting was considered so important in Brazil that Foreign Minister Mario Gibson Barboza summarized it in a report to President Médici.

According to Simon: "Brazil gave direct support and a model for the Pinochet dictatorship" and the image of the military regime in Brasilia as a "'puppet of Washington' completely aligned with the regional superpower is a myth and relegates Brazil to a mere subsidiary role in the region."

For Simon, "the Brazilian dictatorship had its own motivations, strategic, ideological, economic and otherwise, for intervening in Chile."

After the coup, on September 11, 1973, Brazil sent a team of intelligence agents to Santiago de Chile to participate in the interrogation of prisoners at the National Stadium, which became a mass detention, torture and execution center after the coup.

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