

## Memos Show Nixon's Bid To Enlist Brazil in a Coup

By ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO

SÃO PAULO, Brazil — President Richard Nixon discussed with Brazil's president a cooperative effort to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende of Chile, according to recently declassified documents that reveal deep collaboration between the United States and Brazil in trying to root out leftists in Latin America during the cold war.

The formerly secret memos, published Sunday by the National Security Archive in Washington, show that Brazil and the United States discussed plans to overthrow or destabilize not only Mr. Allende but Fidel Castro of Cuba and others.

Mr. Nixon, at a meeting in the Oval Office on Dec. 9, 1971, said he was willing to offer Brazil the assistance, monetary or otherwise, it might need to rid South America of leftist governments, the White House memorandum of the meeting shows.

Mr. Nixon saw Brazil's military government as a critical partner in the region. "There were many things that Brazil as a South American country could do that the U.S. could not," Mr. Nixon told the Brazilian president, Gen. Emilio Médici, according to the memo.

"Even by the standards of what is already known about the extensive contacts between the United States and Latin American allies in the context of the cold war, these documents reveal a higher level of collaboration than was believed to be the case," said Michael Shifter, vice president of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Latin American policy research group in Washington. "They indicate that Washington resorted to extreme lengths in this period to combat what was viewed as the spreading Communist menace in its backyard."

The Nixon administration was openly hostile to Mr. Allende, and previously released documents have shown that his administration financed efforts to destabilize Mr. Allende's government and backed the coup that overthrew him in 1973.

The newly disclosed memos shed no light on whether Brazil ultimately did play a role in the

coup.

At the Oval Office meeting, Mr. Nixon asked General Médici whether the Chilean military was capable of overthrowing Mr. Allende. "President Médici replied that they were, adding that Brazil was exchanging many officers with the Chileans, and made clear that Brazil was working toward this end," the memo said.

Mr. Nixon offered his support for Brazil's efforts, saying that if "money were required or other discreet aid, we might be able to make it available."

Peter Kornbluh, director of the National Security Archive's Chile and Brazil projects, said the documents revealed "a hidden chapter of collaborative intervention." He called on President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil to make public his nation's military archives.

"The full history of intervention in South America in the 1970s cannot be told without Brazil coming clean about a dark past that is not previously acknowledged," Mr. Kornbluh said.

The 1971 memo showed that the two leaders also discussed intervention in Cuba. General Médici asked if the United States should support Cuban exiles who "could overthrow Castro's regime." The American president said yes, "as long as we did not push them into doing something that we could not support, and as long as our hand did not appear," it said.

Another document, a 1972 C.I.A. National Intelligence Estimate, predicted a growing role for Brazil in Latin America. "It is unlikely that Brazil will intervene openly in its neighbors' internal affairs," the report said, "but the regime will not be above using the threat of intervention or tools of diplomacy and covert action to oppose leftist regimes."

But after word of the conversation between Mr. Nixon and General Médici found its way to the Brazilian military, a C.I.A. memo suggests that not all military officers were happy with the arrangement.

Gen. Vicente Coutinho, commander of Brazil's Fourth Army, said the United States wanted Brazil "to do the dirty work."