

Brazil: Army Celebrates 1964 Military Coup and Says It Is Proud of It

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The Brazilian commander of the Army praised the military coup of 1964 and said the service was proud of its past.

In a message released through the Army's Internet site and read in military barracks General Francisco Roberto de Albuquerque said the "Army is proud of its past because in it were born and consolidated the values and principles of the institution".

On March 31, 1964 Army troops from the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais led a military coup which forced elected President João Goulart to abandon the country and exile in Uruguay.

"March 31 really belongs to the best fatherland history and we look at it under the prism of immutable values belonging to our land force and the dynamics of the time", said the release by General Albuquerque whose content was criticized by several human rights organizations.

On April 1st, 1964, the Brazilian Congress declared the presidency vacant and the military took full control of the situation for the following 21 years, with five generals succeeding in the post as head of state.

The Army commander added that those events belong to history and public memory, "dignified at the time by the undisputed popular support".

During those two decades Brazil underwent a significant industrialization process with massive investment in infrastructure and expansion of agribusiness.

But as in the rest of Latinamerican military dictatorships dissidents were persecuted and in many cases eliminated, human rights abused, only political organizations and unions authorized by the regime could function, the press and cultural expression suffered censorship and universities intervened or self regulated.

Ousted President Goulart, a rich cattle farmer from Rio Grande do Sul was accused of being an infiltrated "communist" agent for promoting a very tepid land distribution program among peasants and for trying to double royalties paid by US companies that controlled iron ore exports.

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