

**De:** National Security Archive archive@GWU.EDU  
**Objet:** BRAZIL: TORTURE TECHNIQUES REVEALED IN DECLASSIFIED U.S. DOCUMENTS  
**Date:** 8 juillet 2014 16:14  
**À:** NSARCHIVE@HERMES.GWU.EDU

---

BRAZIL: TORTURE TECHNIQUES REVEALED IN DECLASSIFIED U.S. DOCUMENTS

DICTATORSHIP-ERA RECORDS GIVEN BY VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN TO PRESIDENT ROUSSEFF

DETAIL "PSYCHOPHYSICAL" SYSTEMS OF TORTURE, SECRET EXECUTIONS

43 STATE DEPARTMENT RECORDS MADE PUBLIC BY BRAZILIAN TRUTH COMMISSION

National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 478  
Posted July 8, 2014

Edited by Peter Kornbluh

For more information contact:  
Peter Kornbluh 202/374-7281 or peter.kornbluh@gmail.com

Washington, D.C., July 8, 2014 -- The Brazilian military regime employed a "sophisticated and elaborate psychophysical duress system" to "intimidate and terrify" suspected leftist militants in the early 1970s, according to a State Department report dated in April 1973 and made public yesterday. Among the torture techniques used during the military era, the report detailed "special effects" rooms at Brazilian military detention centers in which suspects would be "placed nude" on a metal floor "through which electric current is pulsed." Some suspects were "eliminated" but the press was told they died in "shoot outs" while trying to escape police custody. "The shoot-out technique is being used increasingly," the cable sent by the U.S. Consul General in Rio de Janeiro noted, "in order to deal with the public relations aspect of eliminating subversives," and to "obviate 'death-by-torture' charges in the international press."

Peter Kornbluh who directs the National Security Archive's Brazil Documentation Project called the document "one of the most detailed reports on torture techniques ever declassified by the U.S. government."

Titled "Widespread Arrests and Psychophysical Interrogation of Suspected Subversives," the document was among 43 State Department cables and reports that Vice President Joseph Biden turned over on June 17 to President Dilma Rousseff during his trip to Brazil for the World Cup competition for use by the Brazilian Truth Commission. The Commission is in the final phase of a two-year investigation of human rights atrocities during the military dictatorship which lasted from 1964 to 1985. On July 2, the Commission posted all 43 documents on its website, accompanied by this statement: "The CNV greatly appreciates the initiative of the U.S. government to make these records available to Brazilian society and hopes that this collaboration will continue to progress."

The records range in date from 1967 to 1977. They report on a wide range of human rights-related issues, among them: secret torture detention centers in Sao Paulo, the military's counter-subversion operations, attitudes of the Church on human rights violations, and the regime's hostile reaction in 1977 to the first State Department human rights report on abuses. Some of the documents had been previously declassified under routine release procedures; others, including the April 1973 report on psychophysical torture, were reviewed for declassification as recently as June 5, 2014, in preparation for Biden's trip.

During his meeting with President Rousseff, Biden announced that the Obama administration would undertake a broader review of still highly classified U.S. records on Brazil, among them CIA and Defense Department documents, to assist the Commission in finalizing its report. "I hope that in taking steps to come to grips with our past we can find a way to focus on the immense promise of the future," he noted.

Since the inception of the Truth Commission in May 2012, the National Security Archive has been assisting the Commissioners in obtaining U.S. records for their investigation, and pressing the Obama administration to fulfill its commitment to a new standard of global transparency and the right-to-know by conducting a special, Brazil declassification project on the military era. "Advancing truth, justice and openness is precisely the way these classified U.S. historical records should be used," according to Kornbluh. "Biden's declassified diplomacy will not only assist the Truth Commission in shedding light on the dark past of Brazil's military era, but also create a foundation for a better and more transparent future in U.S.-Brazilian relations."

To call attention to the records and the Truth Commission's work, the Archive is highlighting five key documents from Biden's timely donation.

Check out today's posting at the National Security Archive's website - <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB478/>

Find us on Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/NSArchive>

Unredacted, the Archive blog - <http://nsarchive.wordpress.com/>

---

THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE is an independent non-governmental research institute and library located at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The Archive collects and publishes declassified documents acquired through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). A tax-exempt public charity, the Archive receives no U.S. government funding; its budget is supported by publication royalties and donations from foundations and individuals.

---

PRIVACY NOTICE The National Security Archive does not and will never share the names or e-mail addresses of its subscribers with any other organization. Once a year, we will write you and ask for your financial support. We may also ask you for your ideas for Freedom of

Information requests, documentation projects, or other issues that the Archive should take on. We would welcome your input, and any information you care to share with us about your special interests. But we do not sell or rent any information about subscribers to any other party.