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# Brazil's Path to First World Is Strewn with Crime, Pollution and Diseducation

Contributed by Pedro Primavera  
Friday, 20 March 2009

To be able to build a nuclear bomb was to hold elite status, whether or not they would be used. They are good to have around to prove you can build one, a gaudy display of the international nouveau riche. With time, the atomic bomb lost its luster and it was good just to be the nouveau riche economically.

Such is the case with Brazil, at least wanting to be one of the nouveau riche. Up until this present generation, its history is one not conducive with the first-world, dabbling in Socialism and juntas, with occasional heroic but hero-worshipping dabbings in democracy doomed to fail.

President Lula's effort to pay off the International Monetary Fund was a large step to joining the First World and hoisting Brazil at least into the status of the nouveau riche.

Brazil, however, has a long way to go to escalate from the emerging BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economies to the G8, or perhaps the G9. On the one hand, it has large strategic oil reserves and all the amenities of luxury. On the other, it is plagued with crime and pollution almost inconceivable.

For instance, anybody who bears the trappings of a tourist is not safe outside the narrow confines of the tourist. If the goal of attracting tourism is to encourage spending, then Brazil is failing miserably.

Crime is not an issue that will go away easily, both from the people as well as the police perspective. It is a leftover from the control economy of the past. As the Brazilian economy grows, many of these problems will subside because of the emerging middle class. In addition, the Brazilian government must learn to resist the need to control the economy and trust its people (as well as quit taking bribes).

The other side of the crime issue is education. Paying families for their children to stay in school only poisons the learning environment for those willing to strive for an education. It amounts to free day care for the future thugs of Brazil.

Paying them for minimal standards might make them more accountable. It is dangerous enough in the public schools of Brazil for both students and teachers. Don't make the schools crime factories.

The more daunting problem is the Dante-like pollution that plagues all of Brazil. Just a short drive from Guarulhos International Airport to downtown São Paulo reveals the horrors of the pollution problem. The Tietê River seems a radioactive-green. Trash is strewn about the rivers and the streets to indifferent excess.

Air pollution is so bad that I can take a knife and cut out a slice to take home. In Guarulhos, a stroll through downtown's shopping district has more trash on the streets than shoppers. Not only does it look poorly to the eye, but shows that Brazilians have no pride for their country.

We need to take ownership of the streets of Brazil for our health and safety as well as our pride. Right now, Brazil seems like an atomic power and a bomb has been dropped on the streets of Brazil. We shouldn't accept third-world status as far as our streets are concerned.

Economic disparity and education woes eventually will take care of themselves as Brazil becomes more affluent and the government takes a lesser role in the economy. If Brazil is to become a member of a future G9, we need to be a more attractive investment opportunity other than natural resources.

We need to take our appearance to the next level as a nation, not only for the sake of others but for a beauty we can call our own, like the people of Brazil.

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