

Even as Solo Candidate Brazil Has Little Chance to Host the 2014 World Cup

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The International Federation of Football Association (FIFA) Joseph Blatter is skeptic about Brazil's chances of hosting the 2014 World Cup, which according to the rotation system must be disputed in South America.

In an interview with Brazilian daily O Estado de S. Paulo FIFA's president went further and suggested Argentina and Chile should join in presenting an only candidacy, following the example of Japan and South Korea, which organized the 2002 World Cup.

"Even figuring as the only candidate, Brazil must respond to FIFA selection criteria which are very high level. Only if Brazil abides by them will the country host the Cup," warned Mr. Blatter.

FIFA president added that the suggestion of organizing the 2014 World Cup in Brazil is only an idea that with the support from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and other political leaders "is only beginning to become into a project".

"The road leading to that goal and gaining approval from FIFA's Congress by 2008 is long", he added.

Although South American football federations have announced they support Brazil as the only candidate for hosting the 2014 World Cup, Blatter insisted in the possibility of other candidates.

"Why not a joint candidacy from Chile and Argentina? he asked during the interview.

Mr. Blatter finally said that if Brazil is the only candidate and does not abide by FIFA criteria, "the federation could very well decide to cancel the project of holding the 2014 World Cup in South America".

"I'm not a prophet but if conditions are not appropriate, the World Cup will probably move to North America," suggested Mr. Blatter.

However Chile's Professional Football Federation president Reinaldo Sanchez downplayed the suggestion of a possible joint candidacy of Argentina and Chile for the 2014 Cup.

Mr. Sanchez emphasized that the whole South American block is behind Brazil in its bid for 2014, although he admitted that Mr. Blatter's suggestion "must be accepted as a good idea."

In a radio interview in Santiago Mr. Sanchez said that Blatter's suggestion "is most welcome, but 2014 belongs to Brazil; in any case we could think about the proposal further ahead."

Mr. Sanchez pointed out to sports infrastructure as the main challenge for Chile to accept the proposal.

"One must be reasonable; stadiums in Chile are in no way near those in Europe or Asia. Given the number of countries participating in the Cup it's a good idea. Argentina has good stadiums and has already organized a World Cup in 1978, but I insist for Chile the main problem in our sports infrastructure".

Maybe further in the future, after 2014, "when South America's turn again comes up".

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