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'Viva La Revolucion Bolivariana': Caracas, Venezuela Becomes Murder Capital Of Latin America

Kenneth Rapoza

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Can we now please call the Bolivar Revolution of Hugo Chavez a complete failure? There has been nothing good to come of it. If the poor had their lives improved for a time, it is surely worsening by increased security issues and triple digit inflation. How about 700% or more expected this year, according to the International Monetary Fund. That hurts poor people more than it hurts the rich.

The economy is going to hell. The ruling political party thinks Washington is toying with its sovereignty. No one trusts anybody. And for that, Caracas, Venezuela is the murder capital of Latin America. The locals are taking marching orders from peers or political figures who have turned the nation's capital into a disaster area. The peace-and-love days of former president Hugo Chavez are long gone. His successor Nicolas Maduro is overseeing an economy so bad it actually makes Ukraine look good.

According to Mexico-based Citizens' Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, Caracas leads their annual list of 50 most violent cities of 2015 outside of war-torn areas in the Middle East and Central Asia. Last year, the Venezuelan capital of 3.3 million saw nearly 4,000 people murdered. The per capita homicide rate there is 119.9 per 100,00 inhabitants. The Citizens' Council report was released this week.

A Vice News story in 2014 quoted Venezuelan locals saying they believed the crime rate was much higher than reported. One of them threw out the number 20,000, but the Citizen's Council reported nothing remotely close to that in their findings.

Maduro has a tenuous grip on the rule of law and is cracking down on the opposition, probably smelling a rat from the outside. Namely: Washington. A 2002 failed attempt to oust Hugo Chavez was, and always will be blamed as an American conspiracy. While the geopolitical dramas play themselves out — both real and imaginary — the economy falls like dominoes. The country's foreign exchange reserves are disappearing fast. Venezuela is crumbling.

Some in the U.S., like those at the Cato Institute, think Venezuela should just give up its currency and submit to the U.S. dollar like Ecuador. Maduro and friends is obviously aware of such a narrative and that gives them another reason to distrust the opposition, whom they basically view as enemies of the state. Political distrust on both sides has added to the violence.

Venezuelan homicides are more related to political upheaval than the drug and gang violence that plague Mexico and smaller Central American nations like El Salvador.