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Chavez is a good action man

Did you know that you can buy an Action Man made in Chavez's likeness which makes long speeches from a speaker sited somewhere near its arse?

What a rare and wonderful sense of humour the 'strong armed dictator' must have. Even better, he allows his enemies (who own and dominate the Venezuelan media) to broadcast anti-Chavez propaganda.

So, the jury is out on Chavez in the boardrooms of major UK and US oil concerns because they consider his nationalising of oil assets little short of a crime. But for the vast majority of the Venezuelan population I think Chavez has something to offer. I think you could call it hope of a better future... Unless you think policies which aim to create 100% literacy and basic healthcare provision are a bad thing.

The Venezuelan government has also been compulsory purchasing slices of some huge unused tracts of lands. The productive use of these fertile lands is long overdue.*

But, there are major challenges ahead. Chavez has become leader of a country with a seriously high incidence of HIV. This suggests to me that before his arrival, education, health and well-being were all thoroughly unsatisfactory for a country so rich with resources. Thus, the jury is not out on the leaders that came before Chavez - they were OBVIOUSLY shits.

*The Venezuelan Land Act, passed in 2001, stated that the government can acquire farmlands if they are declared idle or if there is no evidence of rightful ownership. This only applies to large areas of land (more than 5000 hectares) not under production. The landowners then have a period in which they have to begin production and, if they fail to do this, the law says that the land can be bought by the government at current market prices.

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