opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alumni recalls wartime Washington memories

David Hamilton's review of David Brinkley's Washing to the War: From Southern Backwater to Free World's Capital (Feb. 14) bring back memories of my own undergraduate years at MIT.

My family was living in Arlington, VA, when I entered MIT and I spent most of the summers and holiday breaks in Washington, committed from New York until the last of the years in which Brinkley writes. My memories of pre-war and wartime Washington are somewhat different from his. It was not really the chaos he describes; from Brinkley's account, one might almost think the United States lost World War II. In fact, compared with other countries or engaged, the American war effort was very well run indeed.

In February on Brinkley, he was not actually in Washington himself until somewhat later in the war after he got out of the Army. MIT students were a conservative lot in those days. One survey showed that seniors were more conservative than freshmen, a trend contrary to that of many other educational institutions in the survey. Unlike Harvard, MIT was strongly Republican.

During the 1940 election campaign Franklin D. Roosevelt came to spend an evening at then President's residence at 520 Beacon Street. To permit easy presidential access, the city of Boston paved the street from his home to the city of Boston paved the street from his home to the Executive Office Building (now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building).

I spent most of the summers and holiday breaks in Washington, DC, growing up. Feb. 14 brings memories of my own undergraduate years at MIT.

Robert W. Blake '41

Many are ignorant of Brazil's status as developing nation

During trips in Europe and the United States I was always asked these questions: Do you live in the trees? Do you have monkeys in your streets? Europeans and Americans seem to think that Brazil is Rio de Janeiro with a big Amazon forest surrounding it. If these people were more careful and would take a look at the world map, they would recognize that the world is not just the United States and Europe. Indeed, Brazil is much more than a rain forest.

In Brazil there are 140 million people. The biggest city is Sao Paulo with 13.3 million people, followed by Rio de Janeiro (10.2 million) and Belo Horizonte (3.1 million).

Brazil is the fifth largest country in area in the world. We are classified as a developing country and rank as the eighth economy of the world. We produce almost everything in all fields: from automobiles to orange juice, from computers to shoes, from aircraft to coffee, and we have even produced our own nuclear reactor.

The development of new technologies is constantly increasing in our country. One of the best examples of this is the solution for the petroleum crisis faced by the nations all over the world in 1973 and 1980. Brazil was the only nation to switch successfully from petroleum to a renewable resource of energy for automotive fuel. Now more than half of all our automobiles run on alcohol from sugarcane. That was the world's most successful alternative energy plan. Nowadays the petroleum price has returned to a reasonable level, but we are the only country in the world that could "run" without the use of petroleum.

Another example is the development of technologies in the aerospace industry. Brazil builds aircraft that are sold in more than 30 countries. These aircraft were recognized by experts as well designed and their prices are extremely competitive.

Brazil is not just a rain forest, but also a country that is in progress of development, a country that will shortly achieve the standard of the so-called developed nations.

Rodrigo Antonia de Palma G