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The Devil's Excrement

Observations focused on the problems of an underdeveloped country, Venezuela, with some serendipity about the world (orchids, techs, science, investments, politics) at large. A famous Venezuelan, Juan Pablo Perez Alfonzo, referred to oil as the devil's excrement. For countries, easy wealth appears indeed to be the sure path to failure. Venezuela might be a clear example of that.



Archive for October 10th, 2011

The Mysterious Contractors For Power Plants in Venezuela

October 10, 2011

Yesterday, Caracas papers had full page ads by a company called Derwick Associates:

October 2011

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 - » Javier
 - » Julia
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DERWICK

DERWICK ASSOCIATES VENEZUELA

Gente que cumple




Somos una organización que presta servicios integrales para el desarrollo de proyectos de Ingeniería, Procura, Construcción, Operación y Mantenimiento de Plantas Eléctricas.

Cada proyecto constituye para Derwick Associates un reto, al que respondemos con soluciones integrales y tecnología de punta.

Arrancamos en 2003
Desde entonces no hemos parado ni un día. Y seguimos creciendo.


Queremos seguir adelante
Tenemos un horizonte: hacer las cosas bien y crecer. Cumplir con nuestros clientes. Ser los mejores.

Trabajamos sin descanso para instalar entre 2011 y 2012, 12 plantas termoeléctricas capaces de generar más de 1.462 Megavatios en beneficio de más de 850 mil familias en distintas regiones de Venezuela.

UNA EMPRESA RESPONSABLE CON EL PAÍS

I was a little surprised at the size of these ads by this American sounding company that builds power plants, even clipped El Nacional's ad that appeared on Sunday, as I was leaving Venezuela. I got home, was going to look into it, but had many things to do first. Then today my friend Toby from Veneconomy called and asked about the company and this brought the issue to the front of the line.

Despite the English sounding name, [you look in the company's website](#) and you quickly realize the company's only experience or operations are in Venezuela. There is no address or phone numbers, which in itself would make it suspicious.

- » Liberal Venezolano
- » Megaresistencia
 - » Mi Venezuela
 - » Pedro Mario
 - » Quico y Juan
 - » Recivex
- » 
- » to2blogs
- » urru
- » Veneconomia

BLOGS BY VENEZUELANAS

- » Bruni
- » Chorro de Escape
 - » Dolar Paralelo
- » The Venezuelan Libertarian
 - » to2blogs
 - » Veneblogs
- » Venepiramides
- » Venezuelafx

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But then you find that these ads are simply meant to deflect accusations made against the company by [Ultimas Noticias investigative reporter Cesar Batiz](#), who is making a very good name for himself by looking into electric contracts. [Quico already pointed out one of his articles](#). This case is bigger and as mysterious and quite iffy if you ask me.

Essentially, this company has received 12 contracts in 14 months to build some 1,400 MW of power generation in Venezuela. Its first contract began even before the company formally existed in the country. Costs are known for only two power plants, one in Pírcure with capacity of 134 MW for US\$ 130 million and another in Guarenas with capacity of 156 MW and at a cost of US\$ 211 million. If costs are similar for all the plants, we are talking that this company has received over US\$ 1.5 billion in contracts, despite its lack of experience, no partners and no record before 2009.

The company is apparently owned by a bunch of 30 year olds, with no known experience in the field, according to Catiz. According to Ultimas Noticias article, the company was registered in Barbados in 2009. National Assembly Deputy Enrique Marquez from the opposition [has called for an investigation](#) of the company and the contracts. He claims that these projects are assigned without competition to inexperienced companies and some of the plants are not even needed. Thus, the ads by Derwick Associates seem to be a silly attempt to gain credibility.

This piqued my interest even further and [I found a telephone number for the company in Florida](#), thus I looked in the Florida registry of companies and it turns out [the US company was created only on December 2nd. 2010](#), and transferred to its current owners six days later. The new owners are two of those named by Ultimas Noticias in the article and a third person. The first two have an address in Campo Alegre, Caracas, indicating and confirming that this is really a Venezuelan based and owned firm, despite the bombastic name to make it appear foreign.

I looked up the address in google maps and was surprised at the location of the office, at one end of the Ft. Lauderdale airport. Thus, I called a reader of the blog that lives near there and asked him to go take a look. Here is the picture of the sign in front of the office building:

- » April 2010
- » March 2010
- » February 2010
- » January 2010
- » December 2009
- » November 2009
- » October 2009
- » September 2009
- » August 2009
- » July 2009
- » June 2009
- » May 2009
- » April 2009
- » March 2009
- » February 2009
- » January 2009
- » December 2008
- » November 2008
- » October 2008
- » September 2008
- » August 2008
- » July 2008
- » June 2008
- » May 2008
- » April 2008
- » March 2008
- » February 2008
- » January 2008
- » December 2007
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- » June 2006
- » May 2006
- » April 2006
- » March 2006
- » February 2006
- » January 2006
- » December 2005
- » November 2005
- » October 2005
- » September 2005
- » August 2005
- » July 2005
- » June 2005



As you can see, the building is occupied by the Customs Office of the Ft. Lauderdale Airport, the TSA office and some suites that are rented mostly to aircraft related companies. In fact, the telephone number listed under Derwick Associates, 954-359-1157 is registered under the name Airport Services International and not under Derwick's name, which goes to show how flimsy this whole thing is.

Clearly, this is no way to assign billion dollar contracts. This company probably hired someone else to do all the work, was likely formed for the job and made a lot of money for some people.

Such are the ways of the Bolivarian revolution.

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