



Electric Substation Event in Venezuela

OE Watch Commentary: The political crisis in Venezuela may have settled, but the accompanying reports highlight that the humanitarian and economic crises have not. In late November, a major electric substation experienced an explosion, leading to another widespread blackout. The cause of the explosion is not yet publicly clarified, but the Electric Energy Minister Motta Dominguez quickly blamed it on sabotage. If it was sabotage, then the Minister's claim opens the specter that the political crisis may not be over. The Minister was not optimistic about stopping the saboteurs, either. There does not seem, however, to be much corroborating evidence of such. As likely, the Minister was giving the standard excuse, a likelihood that should be no more comforting in terms of Venezuelan prospects. Gathering from comments like those following the second accompanying reference, many Venezuelans did not receive his explanation as credible. The power grid in Venezuela is not so redundant that it can long withstand continuing deterioration in maintenance investment, sabotage or not. The explosion should remind that Venezuela's basic services infrastructures are precarious and monitoring them may be one key to anticipating accelerations in material suffering in that country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...it is not known where Machiavellian minds are going to attack...”

“It is certain that it was an act of sabotage.”

Source: Editors. “Explosión en subestación Guaparo deja a oscuras a Carabobo (Explosion at the Guaparo substation left Carabobo in the dark),” *El Interés*, 30 November 2017. <http://elestimulo.com/elinteres/explosion-en-subestacion-guaparo-deja-sin-luz-a-varios-sectores-de-carabobo/>

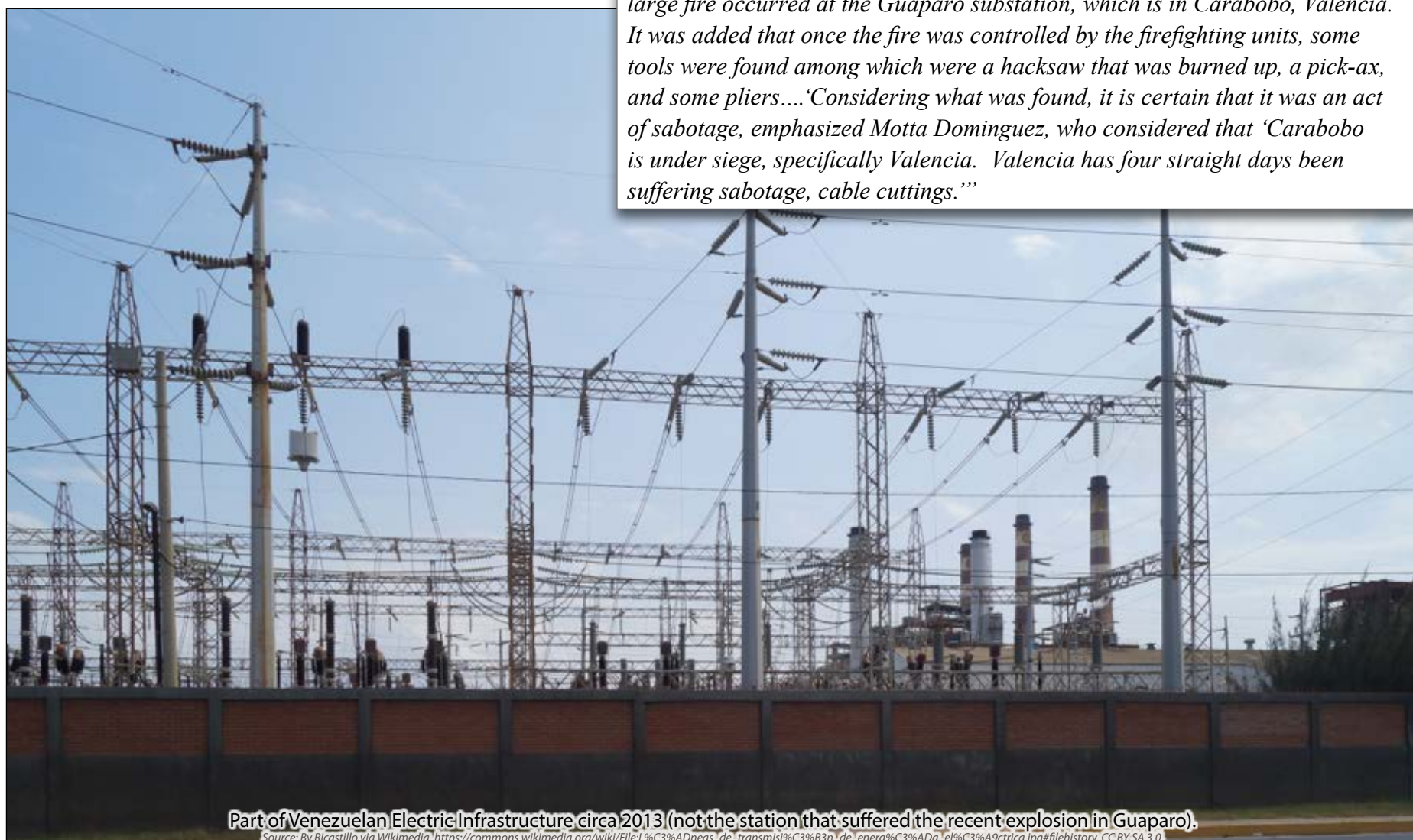
“An explosion in the Guaparo substation, in the Mañongo urban area in the state of Carabobo (center) at about 10:00 PM Wednesday leaving six counties of Carabobo without power, as well as at least two states of the country. The Minister of Electric Energy, Motta Domínguez, blamed the opposition for this incident which he classified as ‘sabotage’ and said that 90% of the electric service in Valencia had been reestablished....

He said that the SEBIN political police arrived there and ‘found at the site tools that were completely burned, the cables they cut, the place where they got in, the fence that they broke into.’...

“For Motta Dominguez, the ‘sabotage’ that the electric system of the country is suffering, in the care of the State, ‘cannot be eliminated because it is not known where Machiavellian minds are going to attack. The electric system is 140,000 kilometers of cable lines and there are hundreds and hundreds of towers and we don’t know.’”

Source: Editors, “¿Y la Custodia Militar? Motta Domínguez, sobre explosión en subestación Guáparo: Seguro que fue sabotaje (And the Military safekeeping? Motta Dominguez, regarding the explosion at the Guáparo substation: I am sure it was sabotage),” *DolarToday* and *Noticioerp Digital*, 30 November 2017, <https://dolartoday.com/y-la-custodia-militar-motta-dominguez-sobre-explosion-en-subestacion-guaparo-seguro-que-fue-sabotaje/>; <http://www.noticierodigital.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=88197>

“Yesterday at about 9:23 PM an explosion followed by the development of a large fire occurred at the Guáparo substation, which is in Carabobo, Valencia. It was added that once the fire was controlled by the firefighting units, some tools were found among which were a hacksaw that was burned up, a pick-ax, and some pliers.... ‘Considering what was found, it is certain that it was an act of sabotage, emphasized Motta Dominguez, who considered that ‘Carabobo is under siege, specifically Valencia. Valencia has four straight days been suffering sabotage, cable cuttings.’”



Part of Venezuelan Electric Infrastructure circa 2013 (not the station that suffered the recent explosion in Guaparo).

Source: By Rjcastillo via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:L%C3%ADneas_de_transmisi%C3%B3n_de_energ%C3%ADa_el%C3%A9ctrica.jpg#filehistory, CC BY-SA 3.0.