

Santo Domingo Metro Raises Temperatures

The Santo Domingo Metro project is brewing controversy as costs continue to escalate.

So far around RD\$2.8 billion (US\$86 million) has been spent this year on the metro, but some estimates are putting the final bill at RD\$25 billion (US\$700 million), twice the original budget.

The project was originally announced in 2004, as a solution to Santo Domingo's growing congestion problems. As the largest city in the Dominican Republic and home to most governmental offices, the capital is home to more than 2 million people and also plays host to many thousands of international visitors each year.

The Dominican Republic has no above ground rail network and no underground network until the metro project is completed. Santo Domingo's roads are clogged up with traffic, and many people complain they spend most of their day just sitting in traffic jams.

It's uncontested that something could do with being done to rectify the situation, but many people are criticizing the way the project is continuing and even its existence. Some feel that the project was forced through too quickly, with little foresight and no real understanding of the problem. There is also suggestion from some that the Metro's growing budget would have been better spent elsewhere, in areas such as education, health, a better road system, a nationwide rail network or fixing the well-documented electricity supply problems.

Whatever your opinions on the matter, and many are voicing them quite strongly, the Dominican Republic hopes soon to have a modern, underground transport system to prepare Santo Domingo for more future growth. Nine miles (14km) of track, much of it underground will connect the northern part of the city with the city center near the coast. Many are proud that their city will have such a modern transport system, in common with many other large cities such as New York and Paris. Others doubt the project will make it's claimed early 2008 completion date, and expect the metro to be as reliable as the current electricity supply.

Meanwhile, what it will eventually cost, and whether it will finally be worth it, is the subject on many Dominican's lips.

Bin Laden 9-11 Anniversary Video

September saw heightened security, longer queues and more frustrated passengers at airports in the Dominican Republic and other countries. A 30 minute video released on 7th September, purportedly by Osama Bin Laden marked the anniversary of the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, and as President Bush said, was "a reminder of the dangerous world in which we live."

The tape shows Bin Laden criticizing the US, the Bush administration and the US's continuance of the war in Iraq. He talks about his reasons for launching the 9-11 attacks and derides democracy and capitalism, while at the same time not threatening any further action.

His verbal attacks don't just stop at the Bush regime. "The

leaders of the West - especially Bush, Blair, Sarkozy and Brown- still talk about freedom and human rights with a flagrant disregard for the intellects of human beings. So is there a form of terrorism stronger, clearer and more dangerous than this? This is why I tell you: as you liberated yourselves before from the slavery of monks, kings, and feudalism, you should liberate yourselves from the deception, shackles and attrition of the capitalist system," he says.

He also mentions the Kyoto Protocol and says that large corporations protected by the US government are the reasons behind global warming.

Regarding the war in Iraq, he said, "There are two solutions to stopping it. One is from our side, and it is to escalate the fighting and killing against you. This is our duty, and our brothers are

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carrying it out."

"The second solution is from your side," he continues and later ends with, "I invite you to embrace Islam," he said. "It will also achieve your desire to stop the war as a consequence, because as soon as the warmongering owners of the major corporations realize that you have lost confidence in your democratic system and have begun to look for an alternative, and this alternative is Islam, they will run after you to please you and achieve what you want to steer you away from Islam."

He also mentioned a book by CIA veteran Michael Scheuer, saying, "If you want to understand what's going on and if you would like to get to know some of the reasons for your losing the war against us, then read the book of Michael Scheuer."

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beautiful - but only on the inside."

The club, roughly translated as the "ugly faces club", or more commonly known as the World Association of Ugly People, was started by Iacobelli in 1960 to support and



encourage the less attractive people in the town with 2000 inhabitants.

Now the club has over 25,000 members around the world, and welcomes new

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