

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending July 3, 2010

Curaçao - Island Council dissolved, elections called for August

The Curaçao Island Council was dissolved on Saturday and new elections were called. The Island Council has decided to hold elections on Friday, August 27th. The elections will now give the Island Council the ability to approve the constitution by a simple majority during the second reading, after the Council was not able to obtain the needed 2/3 majority to approve the constitution last week (Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad, St. Maarten Island Time).

St. Maarten - Senate Puts Pressure on Political Steering Group

Pressured by the First Chamber, the Dutch Government has to reach an agreement with Curaçao and St. Maarten about amending the General Kingdom Government Measure, during the Political Steering Group (PSG) meeting in Curaçao on July 1. If no agreement is reached, the First Chamber will not proceed with the handling of the Kingdom Consensus Laws on July 6. If the Senate postpones the handling of these vital laws, which include the amendment to the Kingdom Charter, the target date of October 10, 2010, to dismantle the Netherlands Antilles becomes unattainable. The First Chamber has demanded an amendment of the General Kingdom Government Measure, which serves to guarantee the plans of approach for tasks that Curaçao and St. Maarten cannot fully assume when the islands attain their new status on October 10. St. Maarten Constitutional Affairs Commissioner William Marlin said that postponing the handling of the Kingdom Consensus Laws on July 6 would be “unfortunate” and a “disappointment,” but it would not mean the constitutional change process has failed. He said the St. Maarten Island Government had not received any definitive indication that the July 6 meeting would not take place, but he noted that stalling of the process at this stage would be unwelcome (Daily Herald, Antilliaans Dagblad).

Antilles – JIATF South Director RADM Lloyd Visits CTG 4.4 Assets

Director for Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) Rear Admiral Daniel B. Lloyd visited Dutch Naval Base Parera, Dutch frigate Hr.Ms. Van Amstel, Coast Guard NA&A Rescue and Coordination Centre at Parera and the offices at Hato International Airport. Also, RADM Lloyd visited the U.S. Forward Operating Location to emphasize on the International aspect of the agency. The Dutch Navy operates in the NA&A under the auspices of Commander Task Group 4.4 (CTG 4.4) which operates in international waters under the oversight of the (JIATF-S). The U.S. Coast Guard deploys Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETS) on all Dutch naval vessels conducting counternarcotics patrols in the Caribbean. The CTG 4.4 is a close ally of the DEA and other U.S. agencies. (Various media)

Bonaire – Constitutional Referendum on September 3

The Bonaire Island Council decided that a constitutional referendum will be held on September 3. Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, the so-called BES islands, have decided to join the continental Netherlands as public entities, but the current Bonaire Island government has criticized the process and the Dutch influence. They believe that Bonaire must obtain the same rights as a current municipality of the Netherlands. The referendum question is: "I agree with the negotiation result concerning the future constitutional structure of Bonaire," to be answered "yes" or "no."

Various Dutch politicians fear that the referendum could seriously obstruct the current dismantling process, but Bonaire politicians vowed to continue the dismantling process as scheduled. (Various media)

Aruba – PM Eman: Pledge to Comply With FATF Recommendations

Aruba's objective is to comply with all recommendations and key Financial Action Task Force (FATF) conditions within two to three years, Aruba PM Mike Eman said.

The Aruba government attended the 31 May-3 June 2010, FATF Plenary meeting in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan where it presented a detailed and prioritized action plan to the FATF in an attempt to demonstrate substantial progress while addressing shortcomings and avoid possible placement on the FATF list of high-risk jurisdictions. Aruba was referred to the International Co-operation Review Group, the so-called ICRG, of the FATF for a prima facie review. The 2008 evaluation of Aruba's compliance with the 49-FATF recommendations was subpar. Aruba has been found to be non-compliant or partially compliant with 13 of the 16 key and core recommendations. (Various media)

Curacao\Aruba – Various Arrests Made in International Drug Trade and Money Laundering Case

Several persons were arrested in an international drug trade and money laundering case, according to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Curaçao. The International organization has branches in Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and the United States. The main suspects have used Aruba to prepare and coordinate criminal activities. The Kingdom Detective Team RST has investigated the organization under supervision of the Prosecutor's Office. Law Enforcement teams confiscated drugs and money during residential searches in various countries. (Various media)

Antilles - US Alleges \$105M Ponzi Scheme in Virgin Islands

A Virgin Islands-based financial manager ran a \$105 million Ponzi scheme that defrauded 400 investors by falsely claiming to invest in foreign currencies, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission charged Monday.

The suspect invested only a fraction of the money he received from investors and channeled much of the rest into offshore bank accounts, the SEC said in a civil fraud complaint. The financial manager is considered a "flight risk" because his residence in the Caribbean provides him easy access to foreign jurisdictions and he has transferred tens of millions of dollars to offshore bank accounts in the Netherlands Antilles and Anguilla, the SEC said. (Antilles Post)

Antilles – PM De Jongh-Elhage to Attend Parliamentary Debate in The Netherlands

Netherlands Antilles PM Emily De Jongh-Elhage will be in the Netherlands from July 3-8, to attend the Kingdom Laws debate in Dutch Parliament's First Chamber on July 6. These laws are crucial in the Netherlands Antilles dissolution process which is scheduled to occur on 10-10-10. (Government Press Release)

Aruba - FBI Probes Disappearance of Cruise Ship Chef

The FBI joined an international investigation Monday into the disappearance of Italian chef Angelo Favila who may have gone overboard during a Caribbean cruise. Favila was last seen on a deck the morning of 26 November, 2009, when he spoke with another crew member as the ship sailed from Aruba to Colombia. (Various media)

Curacao – U.S. Government Requests Carmabi Reef Recovery Expertise

Reefs have been intensively studied on Curaçao for more than five decades resulting in a large number of studies and publications. To facilitate this research, CARMABI, short for the Caribbean Marine Biological Institute was founded in 1955. In addition to facilitating and conducting research, this institute now plays an important role in advising the governments of Jamaica and the U.S. on the sustainability of their reefs. Jamaica, the US and thirteen other (Caribbean) countries – are interested in new reef recovery techniques, a Carmabi spokesperson said. (Various media)

Aruba – Aruban Film to Feature in Ft. Lauderdale International Film Festival

The Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival (FLIFF) will reel out over 200 films from around the globe, October 22 - November 11. One of the featured films during the festival is the Aruban movie Salt in My Eyes. The film features a portrait of the Aruban society, seen through the eyes of three young girls; each with a different background, each with another future. Their lives followed for some time, the decisions they make the roads they take, their own reality. They all go through love, struggling to survive but above all they show us courage, power and optimism. (Various media)

Aruba – U.S. Grand Jury Indicts Van Der Sloot On Wire Fraud, Extortion

A U.S. grand jury in Alabama on Wednesday indicted Aruban murder suspect Joran van der Sloot on charges of wire fraud and extortion, the U.S. Department of Justice said. Van der Sloot is being held in Peru on charges of murder in the death last month of a Peruvian woman, but he is also the prime suspect in the 2005 disappearance in Aruba of 18-year-old American Natalee Holloway, who was from Alabama.

The grand jury indictment, filed in US District Court, charges van der Sloot with soliciting 250,000 from Holloway's mother on the promise that he would reveal to her the location of her daughter's missing remains on Aruba, as well as the circumstances of her death. According to the Justice Department, the indictment said van der Sloot caused Beth Holloway to wire 15,000 dollars from her bank to his account in the Netherlands, and another 10,000 to a lawyer in New York who would personally take the money to Van der Sloot in Aruba. "Once identification of the remains was confirmed, Beth Holloway was to pay the remaining 225,000 dollars to van der Sloot," the Justice Department said in a statement.

In early June a US attorney filed a complaint charging van der Sloot with the same crimes, which prompted a US investigation that climaxed in a sting operation in Aruba. But the FBI, which reportedly taped a May meeting in Aruba in which van der Sloot accepted the 10,000 dollars, came in for criticism for not arresting the Dutchman when its agents -- operating with Aruban authorities -- had the chance. Van der Sloot reportedly slipped out of Aruba three days later. He arrived May 14 in Peru, where authorities said he then killed 21-year-old Stephany Flores in a Lima hotel room. Police said he confessed to the Peru murder.

The lawyer for van der Sloot claimed that a statement his client made confessing to the crime was made under duress and should be invalidated because it allegedly infringed upon his constitutional rights. But the Lima penal court ruled Friday that the request was "baseless."

Van der Sloot was twice arrested in the Holloway case and spent three months in jail but was never charged. Holloway's body has never been found. Also, Van Der Sloot is asking US \$1 million to do a TV interview from jail, according to reports yesterday. (Various media)

Curacao - Delta To Cease Service From Atlanta

The Curacao Tourism Board announced that Delta will cease its service from Atlanta to Curacao during the winter season, starting August 28. (Various media)

Curacao – Insel Air Announces Plan For Service to Charlotte, NC

Management of local airline Insel Air announced they are planning to start service, twice per week, to Charlotte, NC per November 25, 2010 (Thanksgiving Day). Insel Air currently offers daily flights to Miami. US Airways operates hubs in Charlotte, NC, Philadelphia and Phoenix, and a focus city in Washington, DC at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport which makes the Northeast better accessible, Insel Air Director Kluyver said. Also, Insel Air signed an interline agreement with US Airways in October 2009. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Curacao – USFOL Partners With Marriott in Shoreline Clean-Up

The U.S. Forward Operating Location (USFOL) in Curacao partnered with the Marriott Hotel to clean up the shoreline from the Sonesta Beach down to the Holiday Beach Hotel, yesterday. This area includes the full area of the Koredor, Playa Piscadera, and Sonesta Beach. (La Prensa)

Curacao – Hato Airport Runway Needs Overhaul

Curacao Airport Holding Director Maurice Adriaens stated that Hato International Airport's runway needs a major overhaul to improve the quality, capability and safety of the airfield. Air transportation is an engine for the economy, but the current runway state does not support heavy cargo aircraft. Cargo Airlines are now using other airports in the Caribbean. An airstrip repair to support heavy aircraft is the only way improve airport operations and generate business, Adriaens said. (Various media)

CURAÇAO

Crime June 25 – June 30

On June 28 a suspect was shot and killed by a grocery store owner in Flip during an attempt to break into the store. The store owner and his son were also injured during the shootout (Extra, Amigoe).

ARUBA

Crime June 25 – June 30

On June 28 a young man was accidentally shot and killed in Oranjestad by a friend who was handling a firearm (Diario Aruba, Amigoe).

ST. MAARTEN

Chamber of Commerce presents camera surveillance plan

The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce revealed its comprehensive camera surveillance plan as a strategy to deter crime on June 29. The plan calls for placing and monitoring dozens of cameras in Philipsburg and St. Peters/South Reward. The chamber had hoped to receive the support of the business community and called for a public-private partnership. Instead, it met with resistance from storeowners who worried whether the surveillance system would be worth the US\$600,000 investment, and just how much government would contribute. Staffing, monitoring and maintenance would cost another US\$900,000 annually. Some businesses cast doubt on the police department's ability to provide a proper and timely response to criminal activity.

The chamber had commissioned a US\$100,000 study into St. Maarten's security needs in November 2008 and contracted private consulting firm Liberty Consulting, Inc. to determine the feasibility of cameras to reduce crime. The chamber expressed its willingness to go ahead with the camera system, but left the final decision to the business community (Daily Herald).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."