

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending July 10, 2010

Curacao - Green Light for Kingdom Consensus Laws

Nothing stands in the way of handling Kingdom Consensus Laws now that the Kingdom Council of Ministers has approved the text of the General Kingdom Measure for Curaçao and St. Maarten. The Kingdom Council of Ministers gave its consent to the text of the Cooperation Regulation Guaranteeing the Plans of Approach in the General Kingdom Measure during its meeting last Friday. Dutch State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten reached an agreement with the GONA, Curaçao and St. Maarten during the Political Steering Group (PSG) meeting in Curaçao last Thursday. The agreement and the confirmation were a requirement of the Dutch First Chamber to handle the ten Kingdom Consensus Laws, including the amendment to the Charter, on July 6 (Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad, Daily Herald).

Curacao - Human Smuggling Ring Broken

Police arrested 13 suspects in Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba yesterday in connection with a large-scale investigation into human smuggling and trafficking. On June 20, four suspects had been arrested in the same investigation. The case started some time ago when two persons of Chinese nationality were detained with counterfeit "sedulas" (identity cards). The names on the sedulas did not correspond with their passports. Police later arrested an additional five suspects in Curaçao, one in Aruba, and three in Bonaire in cooperation with the Kingdom Detective Team RST, Customs and U.S. ICE. All suspects have Chinese nationality. Police also confiscated computers, documents, ammunition, passports and 500,000 guilders (US\$280,000) in cash. Allegedly, there is a smuggling route from Hong Kong to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba through Amsterdam (Antilliaans Dagblad, Extra).

Curacao - Pisas Leaves MAN, Rooijer Leaves NPA

Gilmar "Pik" Pisas resigned from the MAN party and Aldebert Rooijer resigned as Curaçao Island Council member of the NPA party. The resignations of party faithfuls in Curaçao seem to increase after the resignation of Gerrit Schotte of the MAN party last week. Pisas said he felt "undervalued" by the MAN, and immediately started discussions with Schotte over a possible new political movement. Rooijer said his seat will go to the NPA. He did not elaborate on his future plans, but did not rule out participation in the August 2010 election (Various newspapers).

Curacao - Royal Visit Set For 10-10-10

Crown Prince Willem Alexander and his wife Princess Máxima will be in Curaçao for the formal ceremony to dismantle the Netherlands Antilles on October 10. The royal pair announced this during the customary annual gathering with the Dutch media in the Netherlands on July 5. The Crown Prince and Princess said the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles, the creation of Curaçao and St. Maarten as separate entities in the

Kingdom and the integration of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba as public entities of the Netherlands was a historic process (Various newspapers).

Curacao - Dutch Senate Unanimously Approves Ten Kingdom Consensus Laws

The Dutch First Chamber unanimously approved the package of ten Kingdom Consensus Laws, including an amendment to the Charter, yesterday, essentially granting Curaçao and St. Maarten the status of separate entity within the Kingdom and confirming the integration of the BES islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba as public entities of the Netherlands, effective October 10.

Antillean PM Emily de Jongh-Elhage expressed the hope that the constitutional changes would “result in a revival and broadening of the Kingdom ties, not only by politicians and civil servants, but especially in the hearts of the citizens.” She said that even though this legislation package meant the conclusion of an “unprecedented complex constitutional operation,” the islands realized very well that the real work would start on October 10, 2010, when the new relations go into effect. She said the dismantling the Netherlands Antilles would have an emotional effect on some, but cutting old ties was necessary to revive new, hopeful relations.

Aruba PM Mike Eman called on his partners in the Kingdom to continue building a “constructive, positive” Kingdom. He called the Kingdom a “safe haven in a rough sea.” Dutch State Secretary of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten was positive that the removal of the “rubber layer,” the Antillean Central Government, would lead to a clearer and more effective and direct structure.

The Senate showed general support for St. Maarten as a separate entity within the Kingdom, but not without expressing its concerns. Senator Van Kappen (VVD) said he was worried that the execution of the plans of approach for St. Maarten could take many years. Approved on Tuesday were the Kingdom Laws to amend the Charter; establish the Joint Court of Justice, the Public Prosecutors’ Offices, the Police Departments and the Council for the Maintenance of Law and Order; the Regulations for the Governors General of Curaçao and St. Maarten; the law to adapt the Kingdom Laws to create the new entities; the law on Financial Supervision; and the determination of the maritime borders. Whether the new relations can actually go into effect on October 10 is up to Curaçao and St. Maarten. St. Maarten’s Island Council should approve its new Constitution on July 19 or 20, said Island Commissioner Roy Marlin. Elections will take place in Curaçao on August 27, as the Island Council did not approve the Constitution with the required two-thirds majority. After the elections, the Constitution can be approved with a simple majority (Various newspapers).

Curacao - Eleven Parties to Participate in August Election

Eleven political parties have announced their intention to participate in the August 27 election. Each party has to submit its list of candidates on Monday, July 12. Participating parties are: PAR; PNP; MAN; Sovereign People; PLKP; FOL; NPA; Democratic Party. New parties which will participate for the first time are: Alliance Movement Independent Curaçao (party leader: Ruben de Mey); Curaçao Movement Party (party leader: former MAN member Gerrit Schotte); Party for Social Progress and Innovation (party leader: former PNP member Alex Rosaria). The three new parties and PLKP must also submit a list of 745 support signatures because they do not have a seat in the Curaçao Island Council (Antilliaans Dagblad, Amigoe).

Curacao - Opposition Not Happy with Senate Approval of Kingdom Consensus Laws

Opposition parties MAN and Sovereign People (PS) are not pleased with the Dutch Senate's approval of the Kingdom Consensus Laws and the amendment that clears the way for Curaçao as a separate entity in the Kingdom per October 10th of this year. Both Charles Cooper (MAN) and PS-leader Helmin Wiels spoke of the beginning of the "recolonization" of Curaçao.

"There is nothing to be jubilant about," Cooper said. "The Netherlands get another three islands, while Curaçao and St. Maarten are being colonized again. The islands will be placed under financial supervision. Social projects will resort under the Netherlands as well, because we receive money via USONA (development fund – ed.) They want to pretend otherwise, but nothing will remain of our autonomy." Wiels described the approval as "being placed under permanent legal restraint." He added: "The Netherlands determines, draws up the exams, thinks up the questions and soon determines whether we comply with the conditions to be removed from under the legal restraint. The only way out, is that of independence" (Amigoe).

Aruba - Interpol Representatives Visit Aruba

The Aruba Police Department received a visit from two representatives of the international police organization Interpol on July 5 in connection with the preparations for a regional police conference to be organized in Aruba next year. Chief Protocol Officer E. Barbier and Assistant Director of the Americas, J.M. Alvarado were welcomed by acting Chief of Police Adolphe Richardson. The delegation also paid a visit to Minister of Justice and Education Arthur Dowers (AVP) (Amigoe, Diario Aruba, La Prensa).

St. Maarten - No Date Fixed Yet for St. Maarten Island Council Elections

August 27 and September 3 have been mentioned as possible dates for early St. Maarten Island Council elections since the Dutch Senate passed the Kingdom Consensus Laws last Tuesday, but no official date has been set. Curaçao has set early Island Council elections for August 27. Elections in St. Maarten will be held whether the draft constitution for St. Maarten as a separate entity within the Kingdom is approved or not, because the new entity's parliament will have 15 members while the Island Council has only 11 members. The draft constitution will be up for debate in the Council after the Central Committee has completed its work. Following this, the Island Council can be dissolved to make way for elections (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."