

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending December 4, 2010

Curacao - Oil Drilling Debate Continues in Parliament

Oil drilling contract discussions in Curacao's territorial waters will continue this week in parliament, after talks in early November were adjourned to give PM Schotte more time to prepare. PM Schotte announced that the government received documents showing that contracts for research into and drilling for oil – signed in the past – have been extended. The opposition has denied allegations from the government that there are signed contracts. Opposition party PAR vowed that there are oil research contracts, but not oil drilling contracts. The parliament meeting will be live broadcasted on National TV. (Various media)

Curacao – Judge: National Security Director Back at Work

Curacao National Security Administration (VDC) director Edsel Gumbs who was suspended early November by PM Gerrit Schotte for reportedly leaking information to opposition party PAR won a court case against the government and went back to work, but was again denied access by the government. Schotte said irresolvable differences and a lack of trust makes it impossible for Gumbs to return to his previous position; a new position could solve the current distrust. The government will conduct an investigation into the VDC-leak, the PM stated. (Various media)

Aruba – Vessel Carrying Drugs Intercepted with JIATF-S Support

A joint effort by various Aruban Law Enforcement entities and JIATF-South resulted in the interception of a Colombian vessel Katrina seafaring between Colombia and Aruba, last week. Law enforcement officials found 51.7 kilograms of cocaine and 6.6 kilograms of marijuana in a hidden compartment. The crew of six was arrested. (Various media)

Aruba – Marine Biologist Warns For Negative Consequences Gas Pipeline to Venezuela

US-owned Valero refinery, Utility Company WEB and the Aruban government agreed to study the possible construction of a natural-gas pipeline from Venezuela to Aruba, and expressed support for maintaining a cooperative relationship between Venezuela's state oil company and oil refineries in Aruba and Curacao, last July. Marine biologist Dolfi Debrot recommends research into the environmental consequences of the gas pipeline which could harm marine ecosystems. (Amigoe)

Caribbean - China Expands Energy Footprint in the Region

China is taking another great leap forward in its Latin American energy plans, raising Cuba's energy importance in the process, with a deal to lead a \$6 billion refinery expansion project on the communist island, experts said this week. State-owned China

National Petroleum Corp has leased a 5 million barrel storage facility on St. Eustatius and reportedly talked with San Antonio, Texas-based refining giant Valero Energy Corp. about buying its Aruba refinery. (Various media)

Aruba – DHS Pre-Clearance Stops Processing Morning Flights

Diario newspaper owner Jossy Mansur wrote in his editorial that he regrets DHS no longer supports morning flights. There are economic reasons and the morning operations would reportedly incur budget constraints, Mansur noted. He regrets the decision, because DHS is an important partner at the airport and a valuable asset. Mansur hopes DHS will find a workable solution, because innocent American tourists and local citizens are the victims of the decision. (Diario)

Curacao – Cables Between 1966-2010 Appear on WikiLeaks Site

WikiLeaks' slowly spilling flood of U.S. diplomatic cables has sparked a fierce debate around the world. Now Curacao is in the mix, too. 19 cables by the U.S. Consulate General in Curacao between 1966 and February 2010, with the majority coming from the 2007-2010 period, appeared on the WikiLeaks website. Details were not revealed. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Curacao – Isla Refinery Back in Full Swing Next Week

A Venezuelan State-owned Oil Company PdVSA-operated Isla refinery spokesperson said the refinery will be at full strength by December 12, including the catcracker and the Crude Distiller-3 (CD-3). Curaçao Utilities Company (CUC) reportedly guarantees they can supply enough electricity, steam and compressed air to support the operations. The BOO (Build, Own and Operate) plant - owned by Utility Company Aqualectra and Japanese Trading Company Marubini – has not operated without issues since March 1. The BOO sale to Refineria di Korsou has not been completed yet. (Various media)

Aruba – Valero: Refinery Blackout Causes No Delays

San Antonio-based Valero Energy Corp said the plans to restart its 235,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Aruba by December 15 will continue as planned despite an unexpected blackout last weekend. (Various media)

St. Maarten – Governor Holiday Returns From Trip To The Netherlands

Governor Eugene Holiday recently returned from his first working visit to the Netherlands. During his November 21-26 trip, he met with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Dutch Ministers Piet Hein Donner (Internal Affairs and Kingdom relations), Hans Hillen (Defense), and Uri Rosenthal (Foreign Affairs). (Daily Herald)

Kingdom - Minister Rejects Calls For intervention In Curacao and St. Maarten

During a Dutch Parliamentary debate on the 2011 Kingdom Relations budget, various Dutch party spokespersons called on Dutch Minister Donner to intervene in Curacao and St. Maarten because of questions on the integrity of administrators in Curacao and the lack of financial supervision in St. Maarten. By contrast, spokespersons were mostly positive about Aruba because it is believed that the Aruban government is on the right track towards getting its finances in order.

Donner asserted that the Netherlands must hold back in the relationship with Curacao and St. Maarten. The governments there came about following democratic elections. "Then it is inappropriate for us to start a debate again that everything should be different when we disagree with the way things are run there." The Netherlands should not turn its back on the islands, but it must hold back and give them a chance to grow, Donner argued. It is in the first place up to Curacao itself to resolve its problems. The Netherlands has the authority to intervene but should first allow "the self-cleansing power" on Curacao to do its work. If it goes completely wrong, then Donner is prepared to talk with the Dutch parliament about a possible intervention.

The Kingdom Government has responsibility for defense, foreign affairs, some areas of judicial oversight (such as the Supreme Court), and "Kingdom matters" described in charter Article 43(2) including human rights, rule of law, and good governance.

Curacao PM Gerrit Schotte will reportedly submit the cabinet members screening report to Governor Frits Goedgedrag today.

Also, Dutch left wing party Groen Links wants to make environmental pollution issues at the Venezuelan State-owned Oil Company PdVSA-operated Isla refinery a possible intervention topic. (Various media)

Curacao – Eight Arrested Narcotics Suspects Released

Eight arrested narcotics suspects in the "Benz" and "Snowflakes" cases were released on Wednesday, after irregularities were reportedly found in at least one of the arrest reports made by Special Police Taskforce (RST) officials. The Public Prosecutors Office is apparently investigating whether the errors are fraud related. (Various media)

CURAÇAO

Crime November 26 – December 2

On November 30, two housekeepers in a private home in Cas Corá were robbed. On December 1, a man in Koraal Specht was stabbed and injured during an altercation. The same evening, an elderly couple in Matancia was robbed at their home by two men. The male victim was shot and injured during a struggle with one of the suspects. On December 2, there were three robberies. A female pedestrian in Saliña was robbed of her handbag. In Klein Marchena, a money courier for a lottery business was robbed by two men. The same evening, a lottery ticket seller in Gosie was robbed by two men when he was about to open his store (Amigoe, Extra, Antilliaans Dagblad).

ARUBA

Crime November 26 – December 2

On November 27, a man in Madiki was shot and injured. The motive was unknown. The same evening, a grocery store in San Nicolas was robbed (Diario Aruba, Amigoe).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime fund to be established

The Justice Ministry announced that is in the process of setting up a crime fund for St. Maarten. As a result, law enforcement funds will be no longer be shared with the other islands of the former Netherlands Antilles. Minister of Justice Roland Duncan said that two million guilders (USD1.1 million) had been allocated to St. Maarten just before the dissolution of the Antilles. He also said a separate fund will be established to help crime prevention programs (St. Maarten Island Time).

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