

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending December 18, 2010

Bonaire – UN Representative to Analyze Referendum Process

A United Nations representative will visit Bonaire December 13-20 to examine the upcoming December 17 referendum process. The representative will meet with several stakeholders, including the Referendum Committee and will follow-up with a referendum report. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

St. Maarten – Strengthen Human Smuggling Legislation

A review of the Human Smuggling Law adopted from the former-Netherlands Antilles is needed and possibly needs to be strengthened, President of Parliament Gracita Arrindell said after the human smuggling boat tragedy off the British Virgin Islands (BVI) a week ago which claimed eight lives. (Daily Herald)

Aruba – AirTran To Start Daily Service To Aruba From Atlanta

AirTran Airways, a subsidiary of AirTran Holdings, Inc. announced expanded seasonal service to Aruba from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Daily flights between Atlanta and Aruba will be available beginning March through May 2011; AirTran now offers weekend services only. After this period, the company will reportedly evaluate the frequency of flights to Aruba during the next winter season. (Various media)

Kingdom – Expedite Ratification International Treaties

The Dutch Kingdom partners reportedly agreed to expedite International Treaty ratification within the entire Kingdom in an attempt to prevent discrepancies. The Kingdom is often criticized for its failure to implement International treaties across the board. Dutch MoJ Ernst Hirsch Ballin, Curacao Minister Plenipotentiary Sheldry Osepa, St. Maarten PM Sarah Wescot-Williams, and Aruba PM Mike Eman signed the implementation change. (Amigoe)

Dutch Caribbean – PMs Meet in Aruba; Strengthen Relationship

The PMs of Aruba, Curacao, and St. Maarten met in Aruba last week, where they decided to strengthen cooperation between the islands and focus on sustainable development of their region. The next PM meeting is scheduled in June 2011. (Various media)

Curacao – PM Schotte to The Netherlands For Meetings

Curacao PM Gerrit Schotte, MoJ Elmer Wilsoe, and AG Dick Piar will travel to the Netherlands this week to celebrate Kingdom Day and to engage in various meetings with their counterparts. They will meet with Dutch MoJ Ivo Opstelten, Minister of the Interior

and Kingdom Relations Piet Hein Donner, Vice PM Maxime Verhagen, Foreign Affairs Minister Uri Rosenthal, and others. (Various media)

Curacao – US \$50 Million for Renovation Hilton and Super Clubs Breezes

Loewenhertz Resorts Holding has signed a US \$50 Million multi-currency senior secured loan at First Caribbean International Bank to upgrade and renovate their premises. (Various media)

Kingdom – TIP Legislation a Kingdom Priority

The four Kingdom Ministers of Justice agreed they will together monitor progress and quality of the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice. Also, they discussed the Joint Court of Justice, the Prosecutor's Offices and Police. The next meeting will take place in St. Maarten on June 20, 2011.

The Ministers were pleased by the positive Trafficking in Persons developments in 2010 which have led to an improved rating of the Netherlands Antilles in the U.S. government issued TIP report. The Ministers agreed that TIP legislation for Curaçao and St. Maarten will remain a top priority. There will be an expert human-trafficking/ smuggling and illegal immigration meeting in March 2011. The Ministers agreed they will continue the memorandum of understanding in the area of human-smuggling, human- trafficking and illegal migration. Also, St. Maarten is seeking additional assistance from the Royal Dutch Marechaussee (military police and immigration officers) to combat illegal immigration trafficking in persons, and human smuggling. (Various media)

Aruba - Valero Planning to Re-Start Aruba Refinery in January

San Antonio-based Valero Energy Corp. executives said Monday that workers are in the process of re-starting the Aruba refinery, after being shut down for the past 18 months. Valero executives say the Aruba refinery startup process will begin on selected refinery units and will continue through December, with the expectation that all refinery units will be operating fully by the end of January. This decision should be beneficial for both the country and the refinery's operations. The refinery investments and financial impact represent more than 12% of Aruba's gross domestic product.

Valero shut down its day refinery in July 2009 amid economic conditions and high taxes. Last May, the Aruban government approved a tax settlement with the refinery and in June, Valero announced that a combination of the tax settlement and an improved economy had warranted a re-start of the refinery. Throughout the shutdown, the refinery's 650 employees remained on the payroll, according to the company. A plantwide "turnaround," or thorough maintenance period, was begun shortly afterward. Now that the turnaround work has been completed, Valero has determined that market conditions support the refinery's operation. "We are very happy to announce that the refinery, which is a crucial part of Aruba's economy, will soon be in operation," said Kim Bowers, Valero's Executive Vice President and General Counsel. "We would like to thank our employees and our contractors for all their hard work getting the plant ready to operate safely and efficiently, and we appreciate the efforts of Prime Minister Mike Eman and Finance Minister Mike de Meza that have made this day possible." (Various media)

Aruba - Valero Announces Plans for LNG Project

Officials with the Valero Aruba Refinery and the Government of Aruba announced today that they had signed a memorandum of understanding addressing the delivery of a liquefied natural gas to Aruba, which will help reduce utility costs and lower emissions on the island.

The announcement represents a boost to Aruba's economy. Generating power through liquefied natural gas rather than more expensive fuel oil has significant potential to reduce costs both for the refinery and the island.

Prime Minister Mike Eman and Finance & Energy Minister Mike de Meza, who are both actively working on this project, also see an important synergy between Aruba and Valero in this endeavor. (Various media)

Aruba – 60 Kilos of Cocaine Found in Container

Aruban Law Enforcement Officials found more than 60 kilos of cocaine in a container. The drugs were hidden in furniture ready to be shipped to the Netherlands. Aruba customs officials believe this shipment is part of a bigger network. (Diario)

Aruba – Couple Arrested for Selling Drugs

Aruban Law Enforcement Officials confiscated approximately 70 kilos of cocaine last week and arrested seven people in an effort to clean-up a neighborhood. In follow-up action this weekend, a couple was arrested for selling drugs. (Various media)

St. Maarten – “Snowflake” Case Hearing Postponed

The “Snowflake” case court hearing concerning the transportation of 170 kilos of cocaine continued Tuesday. The lawyer for the defendants requested the case be dismissed for irregularities, because law enforcement officers reportedly antedated documents in the case file. Judge Monique Keppels decided she needs more time and postponed the hearing until March 23, 2011. The four suspects in St. Maarten were arrested simultaneously with suspects in Curaçao during an intense investigation into drugs-trafficking operations from St. Maarten and Curaçao to Europe. The investigation spanned at least seven islands and countries in the region. Joint police and anti-drug agencies from the former Netherlands Antilles, the United States, Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and other countries orchestrated the arrests of these men. (Various media)

Aruba – Oil Spill At Valero Refinery

Approximately 700 liters of oil leaked into sea at Reefberth 1 of the San Antonio-based Valero refinery in Aruba earlier this week, after the transshipment of oil from a tanker into a storage tank partially failed, according to an Aruban Coastguard official. Valero officials reportedly did not inform the authorities concerning the spill, but nearby anglers warned the Coastguard after they saw Valero personnel spraying chemicals on the spreading oil slick. Richard Simon, Valero Marine Department manager and cleaning action coordinator said the cleaning process is almost completed.

He assured the chemicals used for cleaning are on the Aruban government and international institutes approved chemicals list and are not harmful to the environment and the underwater life. (Various media)

CURAÇAO

Crime December 10 – 16

On December 16, neighbors found a man stabbed to death in his home in Amerikanenkamp. The case is under investigation (Antilliaans Dagblad, Extra).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime December 10 – 16

On December 10 there were two robberies. Four men attempted to rob a pedestrian in Simpson Bay. When the victim resisted, the suspects fled the area. The same day, a man outside a bar in Soualiga was robbed. On December 11, a vehicle driver in Mullet Bay was beaten and robbed by four men and a pedestrian in Philipsburg was robbed by three men (Daily Herald).

"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."