

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending September 4, 2010**

## **Curacao - Coalition Loses Majority; Dissolution Key in Hands of Opposition.**

The current Curacao coalition led by the PAR party of Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage has reportedly lost the August 27, parliamentary elections, capturing 10 of 21 Curacao parliament seats. The new Movement for the Future of Curacao (MFK) led by MP Gerrit Schotte and the pro-Chavez opposition Sovereign Party (PS) led by MP Helmin Wiels are considered the victors of the elections. MFK is entering parliament with 5 seats and PS garnered 4 seats (+3). Support for coalition partner Workers' Front Party (FOL) and the National Party (PNP) was cut in half from 2 to 1 seat. The opposition MAN party of Eunice Eisdien lost three of its five seats. Curacao Force (FK), No Step Back (NPA), and the Democratic Party (DP) will not return. The PAR party jumped from 7 to 8 seats in parliament, thus Netherlands Antilles Governor Goedgedrag will ask the PAR party to form a new majority coalition.

The official elections result will be announced on Wednesday, September 1. (Various media)

## **Antilles – Dutch PM Balkenende Visit Preparation For Sept. 9 RTC**

Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende is visiting the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in preparation for the Final Round Table Conference in The Hague which he will chair – scheduled on September 9. At this round table the Netherlands Antilles administrative dismantling process will be finalized. (Various media)

## **Antilles – Cat. 2 Hurricane Earl Battered SSS Islands**

Category 2 Hurricane Earl battered the Northern Leeward Islands in the Caribbean with rain, winds and waves as it passed on Monday. Earl passed north of the Islands St. Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius (SSS) on Monday morning. Local authorities and residents of the SSS Islands continued to monitor the progress of this weather system before it arrived and took all necessary measures to safeguard life and property. Dutch Marines are at St. Maarten Red Cross facility, and Red Cross Aruba is on standby. The Dutch military support ship Hr.Ms. Pelikaan is enroute to the St. Maarten to offer support. The Dutch support efforts coincide with a planned „Hurricane Exercise” (HUREX) on the SSS-Islands. (Various media)

## **Curacao – Insel Air to Start Daily Service Between Miami and Cuba**

Insel Air will operate flights between Miami and Cuba, starting October 4. American tour operator company Viaha Hoy has requested Insel Air to perform daily flights for them. Viaha Hoy is reportedly one of seven tour operators allowed to offer flights from the U.S. to Cuba. Cuba will be Insel Air's thirteenth destination – besides Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire, St. Maarten, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Miami, Valencia, Las Piedras and Suriname. (Various media)

## **Aruba - Al Gore Keynote Speaker at Environment Conference?**

Former U.S. vice-president Al Gore is the keynote speaker at a three-day environment conference Green Aruba „Our future with green energy“, according to Energy Minister Mike de Meza. “We are happy, proud and most honored to be able to announce that Mr. Al Gore, former U.S. vice-president and Nobel Peace laureate has accepted to be the keynote speaker at our first conference on green energy,” De Meza announced at a press conference. “Vice President Gore is one of the most important driving forces behind the green awareness movement. The wisdom of Mr. Gore’s words will be of great value to our delegates as well,” Minister De Meza added. The environment conference will take place from September 29 – October 1, at the Renaissance Convention Center. Please visit [www.greenaruba.org](http://www.greenaruba.org) for more information.

## **Antilles\Aruba – U.S. Appoints Experienced Chief of Mission**

The Consulate General of the United States of America announces the arrival of the new U.S. Chief of Mission for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, Ms. Valerie Belon. She succeeds Mr. Timothy J. Dunn.

On August 26, 2010, Consul General Valerie Belon assumed her responsibilities as Consul General for the United States of America in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. As Consul General and Chief of Mission, she will remain responsible for Aruba and all islands of the Netherlands Antilles throughout the dissolution process as the senior representative of the United States Government.

Valerie Belon has enjoyed a 20-year career as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. State Department, specializing primarily in economic development, regulation, investment, and environmental issues. Most recently, she was the Senior Benelux Desk Officer at the State Department, taking the lead role for all Dutch and Luxembourg issues as well as overseeing the desk officer for Belgium.

From August 2008 until June 2009, Valerie Belon managed all outreach and public diplomacy efforts related to the Summit of the Americas in the Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs, which culminated in President Obama’s participation in the Summit hosted by Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009. Her overseas postings began in 1991 with a war-time assignment to Congo-Brazzaville, where she coordinated the evacuation of over 3,000 American citizens, including many remotely-located Peace Corps volunteers and missionaries. She ended her Africa tour as Acting Deputy Chief of Mission during a period of civil unrest with dusk-to-dawn curfews. She also completed assignments at the U.S. Embassies in Belize City (1995-1998), Panama City (1999-2002), and Paris (2002-2006).

Consul General Belon is fluent in French and Spanish. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she worked in the U.S. Senate as a legislative staff assistant. She earned a degree in Economics from Princeton University, a Masters in Business Administration from the University of California Los Angeles, and a Master’s degree in International Policy Studies from Stanford University.

Valerie Belon was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska, and has family ties to California and France. She resides in Willemstad with her pre-school-aged daughter, Lucy.

## **Curacao – PAR Leading Coalition Formation Process**

PM De Jongh-Elhage said Curacao needs to move fast to approve the proposed changes to the constitution between September 4 (when Parliament is sworn in) and

September 9 (Round Table Conference in The Hague). Once constitutional changes are approved, a new coalition will prepare the Antilles for dissolution and steer the formation process of the new Kingdom entities, currently scheduled to emerge October 10, 2010. Netherlands Antilles Governor Frits Goedgedrag has asked Pedro Atacho (PAR) to investigate possibilities to form a new PAR-led Curacao coalition government. Atacho began his first round of meetings yesterday.

Curacao continues to be split with the key to a semi-autonomous future in the hands of Schotte's MFK party. During the final pre-election debate, Schotte indicated he favored some modifications to the existing Antilles dissolution course and to continue current relations with the Kingdom partners. Shortly after the elections, rumors started that MFK might want to lead a Curacao cabinet together with opposition parties PS and MAN. It is unclear whether a MFK-led coalition would delay the dissolution process. (Various media)

### **Aruba – Ritz-Carlton Faces Lawsuit**

Various Aruban environmental organizations have instituted legal proceedings against the Ritz-Carlton. They want to stop the Ritz-Carlton from developing a resort at Fisherman's Wharf and to preserve the proposed hotel location for other, more environmentally friendly, purposes, but the previous MEP administration has signed a development contract with Ritz-Carlton that would reportedly be too expensive to terminate.

The Ritz-Carlton Aruba resort will consist of 320 luxury rooms, including a variety of suite configurations. The property sits on the last developable plot of land in the northwest corner of the island along Palm Beach, adjacent to a protected conservation area and existing Marriott Hotel. Ritz-Carlton management indicated that they will respect the environment. (Various media)

### **Leeward Islands – Tropical Storm Watch in Effect**

Tropical storm Fiona is intensifying as it approaches the Northern Leeward Islands. On the forecast track, the center of Fiona should pass near or just north (90 miles) of the northernmost Leeward Islands later this morning and afternoon. A tropical storm watch is in effect for Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, St. Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius. The governments of the Leeward Islands announced the islands are under tropical storm watch and residents are urged to keep a close watch on Fiona, as tropical systems tend to be unpredictable at times. (Various media)

### **Curacao – Coalition Talks Ongoing; MAN and PS Out**

Coalition talks in Curacao are ongoing. The opposition MAN party has declined a request by PAR for a second meeting, and the Sovereign Party (PS) has refused to meet with PAR "informateur" Pedro Atacho. An informateur is a politician who is appointed by the head of state to lead the formation of a coalition government. Atacho has a second meeting with Movement for the Future of Curacao (MFK) leadership today. He said another political party will probably be tasked by the Governor to lead the coalition formation process, if the meeting with MFK is unsuccessful. Talks with the Workers' Front Party (FOL) and the National Party (PNP) are unnecessary, because they are current coalition partners, Atacho stated. Rumors about a possible

accord between MFK, PS and MAN are growing stronger, but the parties are denying a majority coalition was formed. (Various media)

### **Antilles – U.S. Consul General Belon Visits PM De Jongh-Elhage**

Incoming U.S. Consul General Valerie Belon met with Netherlands Antilles PM Emily de Jongh-Elhage yesterday during her Netherlands Antilles and Aruba introductory tour. They discussed topics of common interest. (Various media)

### **Curacao – MFK, MAN, AND PS Sign Declaration of Intent; PAR Out?**

MFK (5 seats), PS (4 seats) and MAN (2 seats) signed a statement of intent to form a new Curacao coalition. The parties have 11 seats in the 21-seat Island Parliament. Netherlands Antilles Governor Frits Goedgedrag will reportedly replace PAR “informateur” Pedro Atacho by a representative of the MFK. MFK and MAN want to modify the current Curacao draft Constitution, but PAR, PNP, and FOL do not want to. The Sovereign Party supports full independence for Curacao. A MFK-PS-MAN coalition could delay or halt the dissolution process indefinitely if the parties insist on constitutional changes already rejected by the Dutch. PM Emily de Jongh-Elhage said this is true democracy and that the dismantling process cannot be stopped. (Various media)

### **Kingdom - Cooperation Against Drug Trafficking in the Caribbean**

On 8/28, the Kingdom of the Netherlands acceded to the Caribbean Regional Maritime Agreement, a treaty which will pave the way to intensified cooperation in combating drug trafficking in the Caribbean. Under the terms of the agreement, participating countries may operate within each other's territorial waters and airspace as well as in international waters. Both the Royal Netherlands Navy and the Coast Guard Netherlands Antilles and Aruba are actively engaged in counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean. The treaty will help them to work more effectively. It will also improve cooperation between law enforcement authorities in bringing international drug traffickers to justice. The Netherlands was instrumental in establishing the Agreement, to which seven countries are party. (Dutch Foreign Ministry press release)

### **Antilles/Aruba – New Dutch Navy Ship Arrives**

The Dutch naval supply vessel Hr.Ms. Zuiderkruis arrived in Curacao for a four-month Caribbean tour. The ship has a Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) team from the U.S. Coast Guard aboard for counter-drug missions. (Various media)

### **Antilles/Aruba - NCIS Provides Crime Scene Investigative Training for Law Enforcement Officials**

Two Naval Criminal Investigative Service Agents (NCIS) from Mayport, FL provided training to approximately 40 officers from the Curacao and Aruba Police Corps (KPC and KPA), upon invitation of the U.S. Consulate General Curacao, last week. The agents are representatives of the NCIS Major Case Response Team (MCRT). The course was classroom oriented, but also involved practical exercises to employ the skills learned.

The officers developed an understanding of both the role and value of evidence; learned to identify potential evidence and basic evidence collection techniques; learned basic crime scene and evidence documentation techniques; and developed an appreciation for crime scene preservation and contamination issues. NCIS together with KPC and KPA leadership are looking into future evolutions of the same training in order to get more officers exposed to the basic Crime Scene Investigative (CSI) techniques. The training was very well received and an excellent opportunity to strengthen the strong relationship between the NCIS and law enforcement authorities on the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. (Amigoe)

### **Editorial in St. Maarten Daily Herald Newspaper**

Following the passing of two storm systems in a matter of days, St. Maarten may be faced with the consequences of a political storm that is brewing in Curaçao. It appears that MFK, PS and MAN have formed a new pact that would oust PAR from government despite its coming out of Friday's elections as the island's biggest party once again. Should the signed statement of intent indeed lead to a new Executive Council, it puts in serious doubt the culmination of the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles and with it also country status for both Curaçao and St. Maarten come 10-10-10. After all, if a majority in Curaçao's newly elected Island Council does not approve the draft constitution this weekend, the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament most likely will not give its blessing next week to the Kingdom Charter amendments to make the new constitutional relations possible and the Round Table Conference (RTC) to follow for the formalization of the changes undoubtedly will have to be cancelled.

The question would be: "What then?" Reversing the process seems undesirable, if not impossible, as Central Government tasks already have been transferred to the Island Territories that are to become countries and the accompanying personnel made available. In addition, civil servants of both the Central and Island Governments in Curaçao already have received their job offers for the new administration of country Curaçao and similar letters are about to go out in St. Maarten. At the same time, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba are well on their way to become special overseas public entities of the Netherlands as the so-called BES islands, so that the Netherlands Antilles –consisting of five islands – as it is known today would in any case appear be a thing of the past and halting the execution of the agreements made at this stage would appear almost unthinkable.

It may not come to that, however. While MAN and also MFK leader Gerrit Schotte when still part of MAN voted against the current draft constitution the first time in the Island Council, they did not oppose the related Kingdom Charter amendment in the Antillean Parliament. What's more, the politicians involved have indicated that they do not want to frustrate the entire process to then start all over again either, while Schotte would also lose his chance of becoming the first Prime Minister of country Curaçao should they do so.

Pro-independence PS has made it more than clear it will not vote for the current draft constitution under any circumstances, but when it comes to this issue the signed statement of intent also says the three parties will "leave space for each to vote according to their good conscience." All this could mean that the draft is passed without the support of PS but with that of its two new coalition partners MFK and MAN, assisted by the PAR/PNP/FOL combination that paved the way for the new relations to take effect. The latest developments in Willemstad at first sight are certainly not good news

when it comes to country status for St. Maarten, but there is still a chance it will all turn out as intended anyway.

### **Curacao – Sovereign Party Out; 10-10-10 in Jeopardy?**

Sovereign Party (PS) leader Helmin Wiels wrote in a letter to MAN leader Charles Cooper and MFK political leader Gerrit Schotte that his party cannot participate in a dismantling process it has disapproved from the start. He reminded MFK and MAN that they have voted against the current dismantling procedures during the past four years. PS wants independence while MFK and MAN prefer to remain a Kingdom partner. Wiels did not participate in the latest round of talks with the MFK and the MAN party. Also, "PS will not travel to the Netherlands to participate in the final Round Table Conference on September 9," Wiels said. (Various media)

### **Antilles – Dismantling Hurdles Before 10-10-10**

The new Curacao Parliament, the Aruban parliament, and the Dutch Lower Chamber still have to discuss the Constitutional Charter amendments next week. The Kingdom Council of Ministers has to formally approve the changes, before the final September 9, Round Table Conference. (Various media)

### **Aruba – Bomb Threat at Aruba Parliament Building**

The Aruban Police at the Parliament building received a bomb threat yesterday during the Constitutional Charter debate. The building was evacuated, but no explosive device was found. The police have the case under investigation. (Various media)

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime August 27 – September 2***

On August 28, a home owner in Van Engelen was stabbed and injured by an intruder. The suspect fled from the area empty-handed. On September 1, home owners in Vredenberg were robbed by five masked men. The victims were tied while the suspects ransacked the house. Two suspects were later arrested by police (Extra, Amigoe).

## **ARUBA**

### ***Crime August 27 – September 2***

On August 30, a lottery ticket-selling business in San Nicolas was robbed. The suspect was later arrested (Diario Aruba, Amigoe).

## **ST. MAARTEN**

### ***Crime August 27 – September 2***

On August 28, two persons were stabbed and injured during an altercation at a political rally in Sucker Garden (Daily Herald).

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*"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."*