

7. CASE STUDY: DRUG TRAFFICKING AND THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

The drug trade is a prime driver of crime across the Caribbean. In the Netherlands Antilles, authorities estimate that 75 percent of crime is drug-related. Some 60 percent of all the cocaine seized in the Caribbean in 2004 was seized in the Netherlands Antilles, and cocaine seizures there increased dramatically between 2001 and 2004. Confronted with large numbers of people attempting to smuggle drugs by commercial flights, authorities implemented a “100% Control” policy of screening large numbers of passengers for drugs. Drugs were confiscated from the couriers, but in most cases the couriers themselves were not arrested. The program has been very successful in reducing cocaine smuggling via air courier, and could be tested in other contexts, including other Caribbean countries suffering from drug transshipment. The Antillean example also highlights the need for cooperation between Caribbean transshipment countries and destination countries in maritime interdiction.

7.1. Despite their diversity, the Caribbean countries share a common affliction: they are geographically positioned in the world’s largest drug transit zone. South America produces nearly all the world’s cocaine. The United States and Europe are responsible for 88 percent of global retail sales of cocaine, a market worth some US\$70 billion in 2003(UNODC, 2005). The gross domestic product of the entire Caribbean was US\$31.5 billion in 2004. (ECLAC, 2006). In other words, the value of the drug flows through the region may exceed the value of the entire licit economy.

7.2. Drug trafficking is associated with significant increases in crime, particularly violent crime and the use of firearms, as violence or the threat of violence regulates transactions in this market. In addition, drug trafficking is associated with money-laundering, trafficking of firearms, and corruption. Drug *use* is associated with increases in both violent crime and various types of property crime. For more on recent drug trafficking trends in the Caribbean, see Chapter 2; for regional policy responses to drug trafficking, see Chapter 10.

7.3. CARICOM’s Regional Task Force on Crime and Security, speaks of a three-pronged strategy to international drug control:

- Eradication or alternative development for *producer countries* (e.g. Colombia, Peru and Bolivia for cocaine)
- Supply restriction through interdiction operations for *transit countries* (e.g. Caribbean states); and
- Demand reduction for the *main consumer countries* (e.g. North America and Europe).(CARICOM, 2002)

7.4. This chapter examines interdiction efforts in the Netherlands Antilles. The Netherlands Antilles are an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. They are comprised of two groups of islands located about 900 km apart:

- Curacao and Bonaire, located in the south of the Caribbean, near the coast of Venezuela;
- St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Maarten, in the Eastern Caribbean.¹

7.5. The Netherlands Antilles have a population of 183,000 people, (United Nations, 2004; United Nations, 2005)² about 75 percent of whom live on the island of Curacao. The country is relatively well-developed, with a GDP per capita among the highest in the Caribbean, good infrastructure, and an economy based on tourism, financial services, and oil transshipment.

7.6. The Netherlands Antilles was chosen as a case study for two reasons. First, it is one of the Caribbean territories most afflicted by the drug trade and is among the world leaders in cocaine seizures per capita. Second, the government of the Netherlands Antilles, in collaboration with the Dutch government, has undertaken innovative and seemingly successful policies to interdict the supply of cocaine.

7.7. About 100 times more cocaine per capita was seized in the Netherlands Antilles than in the United States in 2004—over nine tons, or just under 50 grams of cocaine for every man, woman, and child on the islands.³ Some 60 percent of all the cocaine seized in the Caribbean in 2004 was seized in the Netherlands Antilles, and cocaine seizures increased dramatically between 2001 and 2004 (Figures 7.1 and 7.2).⁴

7.8. The increased flow of drugs through the region is believed to have a powerful impact on the local crime situation. The Netherlands Antilles authorities estimate that 75 percent of the crime on the islands is drug-related. On March 12, 2004, the Antillean government proposed a state of emergency due to the levels of crime afflicting the society, opening the door for both Dutch and Antillean military to participate in internal security operations. This was in response to a rapid increase in the number of crimes seen in Curacao. Drug-related murders increased from 12 in 2002 to 29 in 2003. Other islands experienced similar problems. The murder rate in St. Maarten went from 20 per 100,000 in 2001 to 47 per 100,000 in 2003.⁵

¹ St. Maarten is half of an island, the other half being St. Martin, a French territory. Aruba was part of the Antilles until 1986, when it became a separate country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. While drug trafficking through Aruba used to be a major issue, it is much less so today. Aruba was removed from the US State Department's list of major drug producing and transit countries in 1999. The reason for this decline is unclear.

² World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>, accessed 25 July 2006.

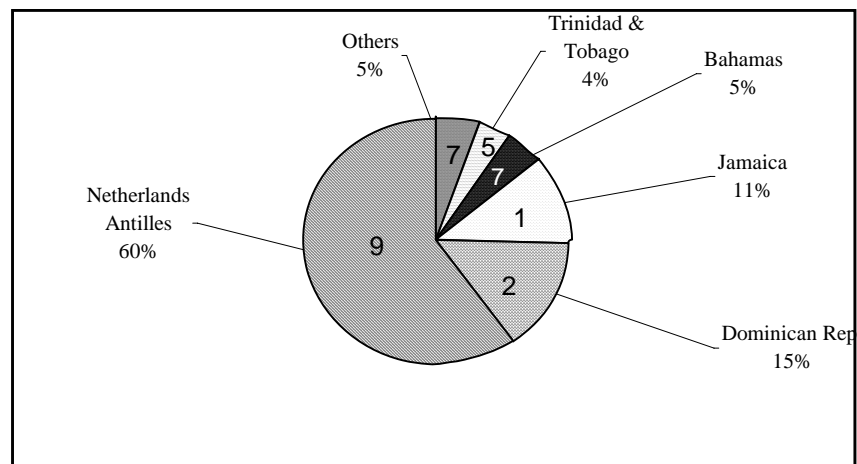
³ The Netherlands Antilles ranked eighth in the world in terms of gross cocaine seizures in 2004, just behind the Netherlands and just ahead of Bolivia and Brazil.

⁴ In addition to a possible increase in real volumes transiting the region, the dramatic rise in seizure figures is likely the result of a shift from an early focus largely on airport interdiction to intelligence-led operations against major traffickers, which only began to pick up around 2001. This was also the time that the Coast Guard of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba (CGNAA) came on line, after being equipped with three cutters in 1999.

⁵ Information on population and number of murders from the Central Bureau of Statistics Netherlands Antilles Statistical Yearbook as quoted on their on-line database: <http://www.cbs.an/stat.asp>.

7.9. As Figure 7.2 shows, the Netherlands Antilles have not always been at the epicenter of the global cocaine trade.⁶ Recently, a number of things have changed. Law enforcement efforts have made it less likely that cocaine shipments depart directly from Colombia than in the past, and more likely that they come from a secondary country, particularly Venezuela. Between much of the Venezuelan coastline and the rest of the world lie the islands of Curacao, Bonaire, and Aruba, so maritime cocaine shipments are likely to pass through the territorial waters of these countries. In addition, there is much commercial sea traffic between Venezuela and the Netherlands Antilles, which are just a few kilometers offshore.⁷ This traffic provides cover for drug shipments that can then be forwarded by sea or by air.

Figure 7.1: Kilograms of Cocaine Seized in Caribbean Territories in 2004



Source: UNODC Delta database.

7.10. The islands' continued membership in the Kingdom of the Netherlands has also been important. While cocaine use in the United States is down since the 1990s, it has been increasing in Europe. The European portion of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is one of the two main points of entry for cocaine to Europe.⁸ The Netherlands Antilles have suffered from high rates of unemployment since the closure of the Shell refinery in

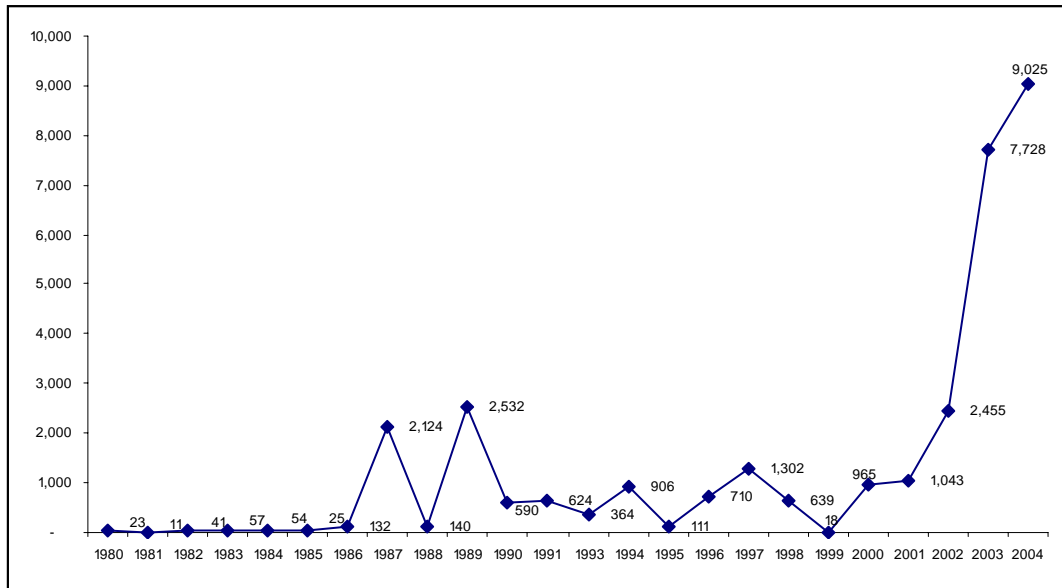
⁶ In the early days of the Colombian cartels, large volumes of drugs were flown by private planes into the United States, their main destination. Improvements in radar response put an end to this, and shipments became increasingly maritime. Again, most sea routes from Colombia to the U.S. did not pass through the most populous areas of the Dutch Caribbean.

⁷ Curacao is less than 65 km off the coast of Venezuela. Venezuela is the source of 52 percent of imports to Antilles. See Economist Intelligence Unit, "Netherlands Antilles Country Report." London: EIU, June 2006.

⁸ The other being Spain. About 65 percent of the cocaine seized in Europe in 2004 was seized in Spain and the Netherlands. According to Europol, "Cocaine is also shipped from South America to Europe via the Caribbean Islands. This in part can be explained due to the historical links that exist between the Caribbean and some European countries, for example Curacao and the Netherlands ..." See Europol, "Drugs 2006." The Hague: Europol, 2006, p. 3.

the late 1980s, creating a pool of potential couriers with European passports (*Central Bureau voor de Statistiek*, 2006).⁹

Figure 7.2: Kilos of Cocaine Seized in the Netherlands Antilles, 1980-2004



Source: UNODC Delta database.

7.11. A final factor in the remarkable seizure totals relates not to the existence of the flow of drugs but rather to their detection. Assisted by the Dutch Royal Navy and the Coast Guard for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba (a common agency of the three countries in the Kingdom), Antillean law enforcement has intercepted some massive shipments in recent years, shipments that might have been missed by less well-resourced agencies, or only apprehended on arrival in Europe. Further, both the Antilleans and the mainland Dutch have also taken an innovative approach to stopping what had been a virtual stampede of couriers on commercial air flights. At least until recently, they have had a “drug focused” (as opposed to courier-focused) interdiction policy at the airports, a policy that is discussed further below.

DRUG TRAFFICKING ON COMMERCIAL AIR FLIGHTS: AN INNOVATIVE POLICY RESPONSE

7.12. It is estimated that 30 tons of cocaine enter Europe on commercial air flights every year, and that Schiphol International Airport in Amsterdam has been one of the primary points of entry (Europol, 2006). In 2000, 4.3 tons of cocaine were seized at Schiphol (INCB, 2001), and by August 2001, the flow of cocaine from the Netherlands Antilles had reached crisis proportions. An innovative approach became necessary. The first priority became stopping the ingress of drugs, even if that meant identifying more couriers than could possibly be prosecuted.

⁹ In 2005, unemployment was 15 percent on Curacao, including 44 percent among youth.

7.13. Toward this end, the “100% Control” policy was implemented, in which flights landing in Schiphol originating from the Dutch Caribbean, Suriname, or Venezuela are subject to extensive searches.¹⁰ Rather than attempting to scare off potential smugglers with the threat of incarceration, the Dutch approach was based on increasing the rate of interdiction to the point that smuggling becomes unprofitable. In other words, the focus was on the drugs, rather than the couriers, and was based on incapacitation, rather than traditional deterrence. Europol described the mechanics of the policy in this way:

Crews, passengers, their luggage, the cargo and the planes are systematically searched. Couriers with amounts of less than 3 kg of cocaine are not detained, unless they are arrested for the second time or another criminal offense is involved. Instead, ***the drugs are confiscated and the smugglers are sent back.*** Couriers who have been identified are registered on a blacklist, which is provided to KLM, Dutch Caribbean Airlines and Suriname Airways (Europol, 2005, emphasis added).

7.14. Detecting the couriers is not easy, because most carry the cocaine in their intestines. These “swallowers” (*slikkers*) ingest little balls (*bolletjes*) of cocaine, an average of 90 per courier, usually wrapped in two latex glove fingers and coated in wax (National Ombudsman, 2006).¹¹ If one of these bursts, the courier usually dies of an overdose. Consequently, this form of couriering appeals most to people who are reckless, desperate, or ignorant. In other words, it appeals to people who are difficult to deter with the threat of incarceration in a European prison.

7.15. The first recorded case of cocaine swallowing in the Netherlands Antilles was in 1983. This form of couriering appears to have been exploited early on by West African organized crime groups, which have utilized body couriers to traffic drugs between markets all over the world. The great advantage of using commercial flights is that any criminal entrepreneur with a small amount of capital can try, and this makes the method attractive to the loose, flat networks that typify West African organized crime. The West Africans soon abandoned personally couriering the drugs in favor of hiring people less likely to be searched, starting with Brazilians. Today, East Europeans feature prominently in the courier ranks. However, arrest statistics of the Dutch Royal Military Police, responsible for enforcement at Schiphol Airport, show that 46 percent of those arrested for drug offenses in 2004 were Antilleans (Trimbos Institute, 2005).

7.16. West African networks also pioneered the use of the “shotgun” approach, where multiple couriers are placed on the same flight with the hopes that a few will get through. Traffickers recognize that law enforcement authorities can only arrest a limited number of couriers on any given day, as each requires extensive paperwork and subsequent court time. Once a few are detected, attention turns away from the rest of the passengers. By sending several couriers on one flight, traffickers are virtually guaranteed that some of

¹⁰ In practice, flights from Ecuador and Peru are also subject to 100% control, as all flights from these countries stop over in the Dutch Caribbean.

¹¹ It has also been alleged that cat or goat intestines have been used as wraps as they are apparently more difficult to detect.

their drugs will get through. At least, that was true before the 100% Control strategy was put in place.

7.17. Drug smuggling remains an attractive option for young islanders. While Antilleans are Dutch citizens and thus benefit from extensive social protections, just getting by may not be enough for some young people. Caribbean youth often speak of the “easy money” to be gained through the drug trade, as compared to the near impossible employment situations many face (World Bank, 2003a). Participation in the drug trade offers a tempting way to earn some relatively significant income quickly.

7.18. Under 100% Control, suspected couriers are taken aside and questioned. Once officials have a firm basis for suspicion, the suspects are given the option of proving their innocence by submitting to a body scan. Alternatively, they are kept in custody until their intestines empty themselves, whereupon culpability is positively ascertained. The Dutch authorities even offer a receipt for the drugs taken, so that couriers can explain the loss to their employers.

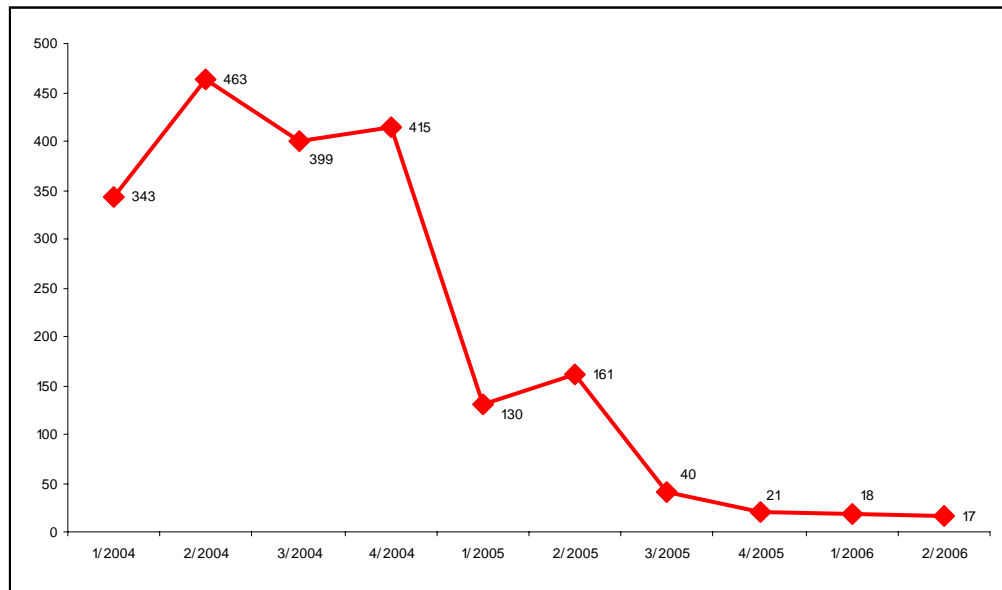
7.19. The strategy appears to have been remarkably successful. Between 1 January 2004 and 1 April 2006, just under 4,000 flights were examined, 6,147 couriers were identified and 7.5 tons of cocaine were seized,¹² accounting for more than half of the cocaine seized at Schiphol airport. This amounts to 1.2 kg per courier, over 70 percent of whom carried the contraband internally (National Ombudsman, 2006). Figure 7.3 shows the decline in the number of couriers detected arriving from Curacao at Schiphol. While the controls have remained quite consistent throughout, the number of couriers detected has dropped dramatically, from a peak of 463 couriers in the second quarter of 2004 to less than 20 per quarter today, a 96 percent reduction.

7.20. The actions at Schiphol are only part of the story.¹³ The approach was actually initiated at Hato International Airport in Curacao in 2002, and today is being extended to other airports in the Netherlands Antilles, particularly St. Maarten. Here, all passengers are screened and those identified as potential couriers are questioned. Those identified as couriers are given the option of proving their innocence, and thus being allowed to board the plane, by submitting to an x-ray scan. Only about one in ten suspected couriers elect to be scanned, and some of these are proven to be guilty. Those who refuse are not allowed to board the plane and are not given a refund on their ticket, so failure to board is tantamount to an admission of guilt.

¹² To put this quantity in perspective, it is more cocaine than was seized annually in any but the top 10 cocaine-seizing countries in 2004.

¹³ The importance of the actions on the Antilles side is demonstrated by the lesser success of the 100% Control strategy for couriers originating from Suriname, an independent country where cooperation has not been as close with the European Dutch.

Figure 7.3: Couriers Detected Arriving at Schiphol from Curacao, by Quarter



Source: Netherlands Ministry of Justice.

7.21. When this procedure was initiated, up to 100 people a weekend were denied boarding. Between mid 2002 and 2004, at least 13,000 people sacrificed their air ticket rather than face the body scan (Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2005).

7.22. Thus, the remarkable seizures at Schiphol were just the residual that evaded the initial screening. On this basis, the authorities estimate that between 80 and 100 couriers *per day* were passing through the airport in 2003. This was cut to 10 a month by October 2005 (Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2006). This reduction was accomplished not by draconian sentencing of the mules, but by making the route unprofitable to the traffickers organizing them.

7.23. The impact of this screening on organized crime was manifest in the violent response the airport team frequently encountered in the early days of the program. In 2003, they suffered at least seven firearm attacks in the airport, as well as threats and assassination attempts while off duty. At one stage, the body scan team was forced to suspend operations due to the threats they had received.

7.24. On those occasions where couriers are prosecuted and convicted in the Netherlands Antilles, they are given, in some cases, an alternative to incarceration: passport forfeiture. As part of a sentencing agreement, convicted couriers surrender their passport for a specified period of time (up to three years). The Netherlands Antilles government has collected over 800 passports in this way. As with the 100% Control strategy, the intent is to incapacitate the couriers without the costs of incarceration.

7.25. While displacement effects would need to be tallied to properly evaluate the impact of this intervention, the 100% Control strategy has apparently disrupted what was once a major trafficking route. Of course, the resources required to individually scrutinize every flight and passenger come at a cost, but these expenses are likely to be less than those of processing and incarcerating an endless stream of hapless mules.

7.26. The 100% Control strategy is not without its critics. The Dutch National Ombudsman¹⁴ recently issued a report critical of the program in several respects (National Ombudsman, 2006). The Ombudsman regards as particularly objectionable the detention and search of innocent people, which comprise about one quarter of all suspects, and their treatment even when exonerated.¹⁵ Earlier practices, which involved body cavity searches, were abandoned on the advice of the Ombudsman. The policy has also been attacked by national leaders from the Dutch Caribbean. Suriname's President Ronald Venetiaan called the policy "inhumane, barbaric, and primitive."¹⁶ It was also loudly condemned by Anthony Godett, who was set to become Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles before he was incarcerated on fraud and corruption charges.

7.27. This places the Dutch in a difficult position. They have a strategy that apparently works, and that is intended to be both more humane and more cost effective than incarcerating those that risk death by swallowing kilograms of cocaine. To be effective, however, a large number of people need to be searched, including some who may prove to be innocent. A more restrictive approach would risk failing to capture a sufficient share of the drug flow to make the route unviable.

7.28. Abandoning the approach altogether is unthinkable, as there is evidence that the former torrent would resume immediately if there were a break in policy. For example, on December 26, 2005, two flights from Curacao to Schiphol were offered to accommodate the flow of returning tourists, one of which was scheduled uncharacteristically early in the morning. Apparently, couriers assumed that controls would be lighter or absent for the earlier flight, but had an unpleasant surprise when they arrived at Hato International. Dozens of no-shows left the fully-booked flight half empty.¹⁷

7.29. Since Schiphol airport is now seeing only a courier a week from Curacao, the detention of innocent people is likely to be minimal, but re-routing may mean that other airports are likely to adopt a similar strategy,¹⁸ so the challenge of creating an even-handed and less controversial approach remains. There is a need for further research on the costs and benefits of the 100% Control system, and frank discussion of the ways it

¹⁴ This office is tasked with investigating complaints against civil servants on behalf of the public.

¹⁵ As of mid-2006, some 2,271 people proved to be 'negatieve slikkers' out of 8,576 people searched, according to information provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Justice.

¹⁶ Cairo, I, 'Suriname to complain against Dutch drug inspections'. Caribbean Net News, 20 March 2006.

¹⁷ Anecdote relayed in an interview with the Dutch Ministry of Justice, 27 July 2006.

¹⁸ The Netherlands is not the only country in the world to receive flights from the Antilles, or to find couriers on those flights. For example, Canada arrested at least eight traffickers carrying over 100 grams of cocaine apiece on commercial air flights from the Antilles in 2004, according to the UNODC Major Seizures Database.

could be improved. The fact that some difficulties have been encountered with implementation does not mean the central principle—drug, rather than courier, interdiction—has been invalidated.

7.30. Of course, commercial air flights are only one of the vectors through which cocaine transits the Netherlands Antilles, and not necessarily the most significant one. The 100% Control approach has seized 7.5 tons of cocaine in two years, but multi-ton seizures can be made in a single instance of maritime interdiction. Since the share of sea shipments seized is almost certainly much less than the share of air couriers apprehended, it is likely that the vast majority of the cocaine traffic is maritime.

MARITIME TRAFFICKING

7.31. The first boat trip cocaine encounters on the Netherlands Antilles route is the short passage from the coast of Venezuela to Curacao, about 65 km away. This trip is essential whether the drug will ultimately be trafficked by sea or by air. Traditionally, go-fast boats carrying between half a ton and a ton of cocaine have been used. But in 2004, the authorities noted a shift to smaller shipments (50-500 kg) in smaller, slower boats, including fruit and fishing boats (UNODC, 2004).

7.32. On arrival in the Netherlands Antilles, cocaine destined for onward maritime shipment is generally consolidated. An estimated 230 tons of cocaine enter the European Union annually via maritime shipments and air freight, an unknown share of which transits the Netherlands Antilles (Europol, 2006). Large seagoing vessels have been used to bring this contraband to Spain, increasingly via West Africa. The extent of containerized traffic of narcotics to Europe is debated. There are few concrete cases, but U.S. authorities suggest that this is an active trafficking vector (U.S. Department of State, 2006).

7.33. The United States also receives cocaine from the Netherlands Antilles, often trafficked via go-fast boats and in the holds of leisure sea craft from St. Maarten to Puerto Rico, but this flow is not considered a significant source of the United States' supply. However, law enforcement cooperation between the United States, Colombia, and the Netherlands Antilles has led to some significant drug arrests in recent years.

7.34. Detecting maritime trafficking requires intelligence work and a dedicated interdiction force. In 1996, the Coast Guard for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba (CGNAA) emerged as a distinct entity after acquiring three cutters designed for combating drug traffickers. It continues to work with the Royal Navy of the Netherlands (RNN) in making major seizures. In 2004, the Netherlands Antilles saw their largest seizure ever when some 2.5 tons of cocaine and 28 kg of heroin were seized. But since that time, numerous large maritime seizures have been made:

- On June 25, 2005, 1.8 tons of cocaine was seized by the CGNAA and RNN (Netherlands Ministry of Justice, 2006).
- On July 21, 2005, a Venezuelan craft carrying 792 kg was seized (Netherlands Ministry of Justice, 2006).

- On August 27, 2005, a joint U.S./Dutch effort seized over two tons of cocaine from the Bolivian flagged M/V *Sea Atlantic* (U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, 2005).

7.35. While final seizure figures for 2005 have not yet been released, these three seizures alone would amount to about half the cocaine seized in 2004, a record year.

7.36. Of course, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba are situated between Venezuela and Europe, just off the Colombian border. This location means that shipments directly from Venezuela to Europe often pass through Antillean/Aruban waters incidentally. In short, the CGNAA and the RNN are doing a lot of Europe's interdiction work close to the source. These seizures may have little to do with the Netherlands Antilles or the Antilleans.

7.37. All indications are that Venezuela will continue to grow as a conduit for cocaine, and this is likely to mean that maritime seizures in the Netherlands Antilles will remain high. As the Colombian government continues to make progress, those elements of the FARC and the AUC committed to conflict or criminal incomes are likely to withdraw into Venezuela. The small Caribbean countries will need international support if they are to continue to form the front line in maritime cocaine interdiction.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

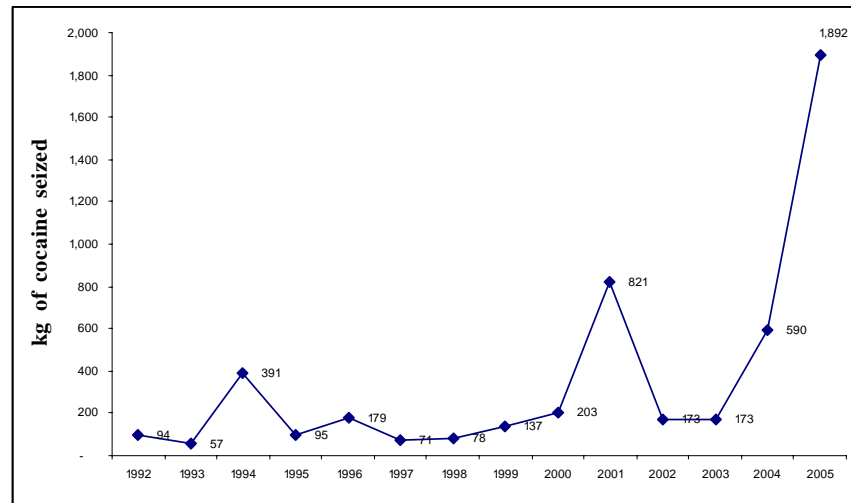
7.38. Looking strictly at the seizure figures, one might see the disproportionate use of the small Netherlands Antilles for drug trafficking as an indictment of Dutch drug policy. The reality is more complicated than that. The Netherlands Antilles are somewhat unique in their geographic vulnerability, particularly with regard to maritime trafficking. In essence, they constitute Europe's (and, to a lesser extent, the United States') first line of defense against drug shipments coming from the Venezuelan coast. The high seizure figures are largely a product of remarkable police work, and should be commended, not condemned.

7.39. The fact that the Netherlands Antilles are preferred by air couriers is another matter. This is undoubtedly tied to the fact that the Netherlands is a key drug distribution center for Europe, which in turn is tied to the perception that the Dutch are soft on drugs. But here again the Netherlands have risen to the challenge and, at considerable expense and effort, have managed to stem what was once a major source of cocaine supply to Europe. Not only that, they managed to do so in a way that did not destroy the lives of the troubled youth and addicts that comprise the corps of international drug mules.

7.40. Of course, even eliminating the Netherlands Antilles as a drug transit area altogether will not stop the flow of drugs, and displacement effects are inevitable. French authorities are already asserting that Charles de Gaulle airport is increasingly being targeted by air couriers, and lesser airports are also seeing increased drug traffic. In August of 2006, almost 40 kg of cocaine was seized from French and Dutch nationals in six separate incidents at Orly airport in France. Cocaine seizures in nearby Trinidad and

Tobago have skyrocketed since the program really began to take off in 2003, although whether this is strictly a displacement effect is unclear.

Figure 7.4: Cocaine Seizures in Trinidad and Tobago



Source: UNODC Delta database.

7.41. Despite their success, the Dutch seem intent on disavowing the drug-centered interdiction approach, having faced considerable international criticism before all the numbers were in. Today, they are quick to insist that all couriers will be prosecuted, but often neglect to mention that this is only possible because the numbers have declined so radically, due in no small part to the fact that not every courier was prosecuted in the past. This reluctance to promote drug-centered interdiction is unfortunate, because the 100% Control experiment represents an innovation worthy of further promotion and testing.

7.42. Of course, Caribbean countries may object to the intense scrutiny of passengers arriving from their countries. But the alternative, involving the arrest and prosecution of many Caribbean nationals for drug trafficking, may be even less palatable. Officials positively identified over 6,000 couriers arriving at Schiphol from the Dutch Caribbean in less than three years, at least half of whom were Antilleans. In the absence of a drug-focused policy, all these people might be in Dutch jails today.

7.43. Focusing on the drugs rather than the couriers is a powerful approach because it defeats the “shotgun” technique, where traffickers are willing to sacrifice an endless stream of gullible couriers so long as sufficient quantities of drugs arrive for them to make a profit. It has proven itself to work in the case of the Netherlands Antilles, and could be tested in other contexts, including other Caribbean countries suffering from drug transshipment. Once there is clear evidence that a particular routing is being used by drug mules, measures similar to the 100% Control approach could be taken at both source and destination airports. Drug-focused interdiction bypasses the couriers, who, willing to risk their lives for a few thousand Euros, are unlikely to be deterred by threat of incarceration. Instead, it speaks directly to the traffickers in the language they understand: it renders drug routes unprofitable.

7.44. The Antillean example also highlights the need for cooperation between Caribbean transshipment countries and destination countries in maritime interdiction, as called for by CARICOM's Regional Task Force on Crime and Security (CARICOM, 2002.) Given that small Caribbean countries have inherent limitations in law enforcement capacity, a little assistance can go a long way.

7.45. Of course, this case study does not deal with all elements of the drug puzzle in the Caribbean; the Caribbean Regional Task Force on Crime and Security identified several challenges beyond successful interdiction:

- On the demand side, to reduce demand and treat and rehabilitate drug abusers.
- On the supply side, to find ways to counter the attraction of cultivation of illicit crops as a means of livelihood.
- In terms of rehabilitating those convicted of drug possession, to introduce a penal system that places greater emphasis on uniform, non-custodial sentences for drug abusers and minor drug offenses, with the aims of promoting rehabilitation, and reducing prison overcrowding.