

Curacao Is U.S. Spy Base Against Venezuela

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Dutch Socialist MP Harry van Bommel has claimed that US spy planes are using an airbase on the Netherlands Antilles island of Curaçao.

Mr Van Bommel has asked Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen whether he is aware that a Boeing RC-135 aircraft has been making regular reconnaissance flights from the Caribbean island's Hato airport over the past few weeks.

War on drugs

The flights were the cause of angry reactions by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, who accused the Netherlands of colluding with the United States. The Hague government is contributing to rising tensions between Venezuela and Colombia, according to the Venezuelan authorities.

The opposition MP said it is up to the Netherlands to help de-escalate these tensions. He is asking for a ban on American military flights over Colombia from the Antilles. Ostensibly such flights are part of the US "war on drugs" but Mr Van Bommel claims they are also used in a "war on guerrillas". The MP wants to scrap the US-Netherlands Forward Operations Location treaty enabling the Americans to use airfields in Curaçao and the Antilles for anti-drugs flights.

Shoot them down

Meanwhile President Chávez has ordered his airforce to shoot down any US plane entering Venezuelan airspace. He said on state television that a US drone, an unmanned plane, had attempted to enter from Colombia on Sunday. Since an agreement with the Colombian government was signed in October, the US military have access to seven military bases in Colombia.

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