

US Threatens Venezuela. Netherlands has Granted US Military Use of its Islands in the Caribbean

By [Vonk Netherlands](#) and [Hands off Venezuela](#)
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The government of the Netherlands recently granted the US military use of its islands in the Caribbean, with the excuse that this is to help in the “war against drugs”. In reality, this is a direct threat to the Chavez government in Venezuela.

In the Dutch media articles have appeared about the “war-mongering” president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, who is “preparing a war against Colombia”. Now Chávez has accused the Netherlands of supporting aggression against Venezuela, because the Netherlands has given permission to the American armed forces to use the military bases on the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curaçao[1].

In the media Hugo Chávez, as always, has been presented like some “crazy populist”, and of course the “civilised Netherlands” are presented as being totally innocent.

Later Maxime Verhagen, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs, said the American military were on Aruba and Curaçao, as part of the “war against drugs”. He remains silent about what is really happening on Aruba and Curaçao.

Authors such as Noam Chomsky and Eva Golinger have pointed out in different articles that the so-called “war against drugs” has nothing to do with any battle against drug smuggling, but has been used for other causes such as fighting against guerrilla movements and the spying of other countries. Since the start of the “war against drugs” there has only been more smuggling and consumption of drugs.

The fact that the Netherlands are participating in this is quite normal, because the Dutch government has a tradition of supporting American imperialism. After Britain the Netherlands are the biggest ally of the U.S. in Western Europe. The cabinet of Prime Minister Balkenende gave political support to the invasion of Iraq that was based completely on lies. Now the Netherlands have troops in Afghanistan, officially to rebuild the country, but in practice to prop up the corrupt regime of Karzai.

The bases on Aruba and Curaçao

In 1999 the Netherlands and the U.S. signed an agreement for the establishment of Forward Operating Locations (FOLs). This meant that the American military could use air force bases on Aruba and Curaçao. While the bases were originally used for operations against drug smuggling and the Colombian guerrilla movement FARC, this changed with the election of George Bush. Venezuela was seen as a threat by then, because it was a beacon of hope for the poor and working people of Latin America. In 2002 there was a CIA-backed coup attempt

against the democratically elected Hugo Chávez. Since then there have only been more intrigues against Venezuela.

In 2006 there was a big military exercise by the U.S., Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, France and Canada in the Caribbean, named Joint Caribbean Lion 2006. This exercise was clearly a provocation against Venezuela. After criticisms by the Venezuelan government the then-minister of defence Henk Kamp and some right-wing MPs decided to accuse Chávez of “wanting to conquer the Antilles”. This was based on false statements from the Venezuelan opposition, that stated Chávez claimed everything within 200 miles from the Venezuelan coast as Venezuelan territory, while in that speech Chávez clearly said “12”, and not “200” miles.

Now there is a new conflict. This has everything to do with the recent militarization of Colombia and its seven military bases that have been given to American troops. Venezuela is not talking nonsense as the media keep claiming. Colombia’s military spending now is 5% of its Gross Domestic Product. At the peak of her struggle against the FARC this was 2.5%.

Also the American Fourth Fleet has been stationed back in the Caribbean since 2008. This fleet was disbanded in 1950 after the end of WWII, but now it is back and close to the Venezuelan coast.

The Netherlands are now playing the role of junior partner of the U.S. in the Caribbean. Different spy planes have been detected above Venezuela. An American Boeing RC-135 has taken off at different times from Curaçao and has been detected over Venezuelan air space.

It is no coincidence this is happening after president Obama asked the Netherlands to keep their troops in Afghanistan for a longer period. A majority of the Dutch people is in favour of a withdrawal of the troops. Prolonging the mission would mean a big loss of popularity for the Dutch government parties. That is why the Dutch government is now trying to find other ways to support American imperialism.

The Socialist Party (SP) is the only party that has asked questions to the government about the intrigues in the Caribbean, and those questions have not been answered. The SP is also the only party against the prolongation of the agreement with the US. This is a start. It has to be made clear that the support to the intrigues of the U.S. and Colombia against Venezuela has to stop!

No support for the intrigues of the U.S. and Colombia!

The right of self-determination for Aruba and the Antilles! There is no self-determination as long as there are American bases on the islands! There is no real self-determination possible without socialism.

Close the American bases on Aruba and Curaçao!

Note

[1] The Netherlands have two overseas areas in the Caribbean, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. The Antilles consist of Bonaire, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba. Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (the so-called ABC-islands) lie between 15 and 50 miles off the Venezuelan coast.

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