

## Update 1/2016 (revised)

# Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Caribbean

There are noteworthy trends now in the public domain that confirm the deepening hegemony of the Mexican transnational trafficking organisations (MTTOs) over the illicit trades of the Caribbean island chain.

The first reality speaks to the growing potency of the Eastern Caribbean Trafficking pipeline (ECTP) in moving product from jump off points on the South American mainland (Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil) via the ECTP to Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands (USVI). A US Federal case in the USVI in 2016 indicated the movement of persons from Puerto Rico to purchase cocaine in the USVI to be transported via an ocean going vessel to Puerto Rico. This proves that a drug market now exists on the USVI which has the capacity to supply loads of cocaine in excess of 100 kilos to buyers and access to this drug market will be open to approved buyers not only from Puerto Rico but other Caribbean states such as Antigua and Barbuda etc. This quadrant of the Caribbean island chain is being flooded with product at the retail level as a result and the impact of this on the social orders of these states is readily apparent. A drug market dominated by the MTTOs is very different from what obtained before Mexican hegemony. A MTTOs' drug market sells only to affiliates of the MTTOs as all affiliates whether they are traffickers, wholesalers and retailers locally and in North Atlantic markets must purchase their product for cash from the MTTOs. Affiliates after purchase can sell the product purchased onwards but sales to enemies and competitors of the MTTOs are an action that place the affiliate in jeopardy. Members of the MTTOs charged with trafficking, wholesaling and retailing product are grouped in cells with a single leader in command who deals with a specific person in the command structure this cell leader collects the product and moves the product in accordance with orders passed only to him. This cell leader has to pass any and all cash collected to the collector assigned to him. The family of the cell leader is known and under surveillance by the organisation as this is the first price he pays for failure. Persons who are not linked organically to the MTTOs simply cannot walk into a MTTO' drug market and purchase product and this exclusivity of supply is now feeding a wave of violence in the Caribbean as those excluded from supply have now resorted to banditry and brigandage with extreme and graphic violence as seen in Guyana.

<http://stthomassource.com/content/news/police/2016/04/15/two-found-guilty-drug-firearm-charges>

The second reality is the interdiction of a 28 foot boat with 35 bales containing 798 kilo bricks of cocaine off the Belmont coastline, Westmoreland, Jamaica. The packaging of the 35 bales indicate the operation of an MTTO and the fact that Westmoreland is the westernmost parish of Jamaica points to a possible export point for the 35 bales of cocaine being Honduras, Central America. The command and control point for trafficking from Jamaica into the pipeline to The Bahamas is placed in Montego Bay and the western parishes of Westmoreland and Hanover have now been absorbed by trafficking operations based in the parish of St James. The parish of St James is today the most violent parish in Jamaica. The violence in St James is driven by the new order placed on the ground by the MTTOs and the displaced members of Jamaican gangland and others are now faced with first prosecuting a war against those of Jamaican gangland who are affiliates of the MTTOs which they lost and their operations are being absorbed including lottery scamming. The response to loss of supply, turf, dominance, rank and an illicit business continues to spawn graphic violence against innocent bystanders, the poor and powerless. The reality is then Jamaica now is linked to Central America and other Caribbean states of the Northern Caribbean island chain all charged with moving product to the eastern seaboard of the US. One indicator of this is the number of swallows/mules interdicted at US

airports on flights from Jamaica in 2015 and 2016. To indicate the scale of trafficking into and from Jamaica are two instances: the interdiction of a Honduras registered vessel with 85,000 gallons of fuel on board which was loaded in Venezuela off the coast of the south-western parish of St Elizabeth which borders with Westmoreland. The Belmont coastline of Westmoreland is very close to the parish boundary with St Elizabeth raising the possibility that the fuel vessel was headed to the Belmont coastline. The fuel supply for drug transports making the run from South America to the Caribbean island chain and back is a major logistics issue of the Caribbean illicit trades. The two major sources of supply for this Caribbean trade are Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago. Fuel has to be procured on a regular basis, transported and stored in supply dumps along the Caribbean island chain which indicates that this illicit fuel trade cannot exist without the complicity of states in the region as there can be no illicit trafficking without this complicity. Hence the drive by the MTTOs to acquire their dedicated source of fuel both licitly and illicitly. The interdiction of a 35 foot boat with two 200 HP each outboard motors and 19, 55 gallon drums of fuel at Portland Bight, St Catherine points to a boat loaded with fuel for a return journey without re-fueling where you meet a drug transport on the high seas the load is transferred and the vessel makes a mad dash to the coastline going as fast as the two outboard engines allow. This is the mad dash to the coastline method made usually during the night or early morning but given the limited nature of Jamaica's naval assets it will be done at any time and the landing point will most likely be not where the boat was interdicted.

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/4-arrested-after-J-900m-worth-of-cocaine-seized-off-Westmoreland-coastline>

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/UPDATE--Commish-lauds-effort-of-lawmen-in-Westmoreland-drug-bust>

[http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Police-seize-boat-and-several-drums-of-fuel\\_56398](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Police-seize-boat-and-several-drums-of-fuel_56398)

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Police-seize-Honduran-registered-boat-in-Jamaican-waters>

The third reality is the interdiction of two vessels manned by Haitians at the public dock at Matthew Town, Inagua, The Bahamas with each holding over 100 kilos of cocaine. These instances indicate the arrival of Haitian organised crime as players in Caribbean illicit trafficking as a result of the new order the MTTOs have put in place. Haiti's strategic importance to the agenda of the MTTOs in the Caribbean opened the way for Haitian organised crime affiliates of the MTTOs. Haitian affiliates are now conducting their own trafficking operations throughout the Caribbean and to the US and Europe whilst serving the interests of the Caribbean MTTOs in their employ. Shipments in excess of 100 kilos of cocaine but less than 200 kilos illustrate the constant drip methodology that is part of the strategy to flood a market with a tsunami of product for both local consumption and export thereby changing the drug market and the social order forever. As Haiti's prominence in the Caribbean drug trade grows and as Haitian affiliates of the MTTOs become apex Caribbean players in the trade the nature of the threat posed by Hispaniola will intensify especially to Puerto Rico. The strategy of the MTTOs call for multiple trafficking nodes in the Caribbean and in this strategy Jamaica and The Bahamas are in play but are not the only potential nodes as there are potential nodes in the Eastern Caribbean especially those with political and governance links to the EU. The Eastern and Southern Caribbean remain open under defended spaces which give the MTTOs space to play in and they have seized the initiative whilst the states of this area play catch up at best when they choose to play the game most choose not to recognise much less play the game.

<http://www.thenassauguardian.com/news/64153>

<http://www.thenassauguardian.com/news/62463-police-find-281-kilos-of-suspected-cocaine-in-two-operations>

The fourth reality is the interdiction of 2,900 kilos of cocaine in a container from Curacao at Rotterdam, The Netherlands on March 11, 2016 by Dutch authorities. This quantity of cocaine placed

in a single container illustrates the volume of product now transiting Curacao for the EU and questions the trafficking methodology of those traffickers who packed and sent the container to the port of Rotterdam as the risks were much too grave even if there were assets at the port who were supposed to allow safe passage of the container. This volume of product in a single shipment compromises human assets at the port of entry. What this trafficking failure points to is the passing of information to the authorities on the operations of a reckless competitor who was posing a threat to the operations of a hegemonic transnational trafficking organisation at the port. The MTTOs dropped the dime.

<http://curacaochronicle.com/local/huge-drugs-catch-from-curacao-in-rotterdam/>

A Dutch frigate part of the anti drug trafficking ongoing operation termed Carib Venture in the international waters between Jamaica and Venezuela intercepted a speed boat which dumped its cargo of 320 kilos of ganja, hashish and MDMA which was recovered. The transport of MDMA via go-fast boat in the Caribbean Sea is indicative of the deepening of the product mix of illicit products now being moved through the Caribbean under the hegemony of the MTTOs. The combination of MDMA and hashish on the transport vessel illustrates the strategy to supply a multiplicity of demand on drug markets where demand exist and generate a multiplicity of demand on drug markets that lack depth and diversity. The maximisation of profits under the order of the MTTOs. Without detail in the news report one is left to ask if the hashish was made from high potency, organic Caribbean ganja especially Jamaican grown if yes then this is the next stage attained in adding value to premium ganja for export markets especially those in the north-eastern US. The cargo of MDMA points to the move to create and supply markets for the product in the Caribbean especially in the tourist havens and for local drug markets outside of these havens.

<http://curacaochronicle.com/local/dutch-warship-de-zeven-provincien-intercepts-320-kg-of-drugs/>

A Colombian trafficking organisation that moved product to the US from Colombia via Central America was reported as being dismantled by Colombian Police. What is of relevance is the report that this gang was an affiliate of Clan Usuga as they paid tribute to the Clan on every shipment they moved. Clan Usuga is itself an affiliate of the MTTOs which indicates the dominance of the trafficking order of the MTTOs in Caribbean Basin illicit trafficking today. The system of using affiliates is the strategy to operate within an extreme cellular structure where the risks to the apex traffickers are minimised by placing the tasks that are plagued with grave risks in the hands of the affiliates. This then is a strategy of risk aversion. It is stated in the news report that this affiliate was active in Haiti and one expects affiliates of this affiliate in Haiti and the Caribbean as this is the strategy of the MTTOs.

<http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2409708&CategoryId=12393>

The economic crisis in Puerto Rico ongoing for 10 years has resulted in rates of migration from Puerto Rico never seen before in the modern history of Puerto Rico. What this persistent economic crisis is doing is accelerating the rate of evolution of Puerto Rico into the apex trafficking point for illicit products into the north-eastern US in the Caribbean island chain and this accelerated evolutionary process is sucking in other islands of the northern arc of the Caribbean island chain such as Jamaica, The Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the US Virgin Islands and Hispaniola into the vortex. The previous trafficking order of these islands have all come under the assault of the MTTOs as a new order is put in place on the ground and the changes are apparent throughout especially in Puerto Rico. The ECTP is already being impacted as the volume of product moved along this pipeline to the northern island arch expands impacting the social orders of the islands through which the pipeline runs. Alternate supply pipelines to this northern arch are already in operation such as the pipeline to Jamaica from Central and South America and others.

<http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2411359&CategoryId=14092>

<http://www.stlucianewsonline.com/la-corbiniere-deems-recovery-of-assault-rifle-troubling/>

<http://www.bahadostoday.bb/2016/03/31/up-in-smoke-5/>

This update presents in graphic detail the reality that the order of the Mexican transnational trafficking organisations is now hegemonic in the Caribbean Basin and evolving rapidly leaving governments and state agencies of the region permanently engaged in catch up when there is a will to deal with the problem which is largely absent. Pax Mexicana!!!

(c) Daurius Figueira  
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