

W3UR

HOW'S DX?

Disbanding the Netherlands Antilles May Create Four New Caribbean DXCC Entities

In mid-July of this year the Dutch Senate (*Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal*) agreed to disband the Netherlands Antilles.[1] The effective date is October 10, 2010 (10-10-10). The breakup will give the Dutch Caribbean islands of Curaçao and Sint Maarten independent country status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, much like it did with Aruba back in 1986. The split up will continue to keep the BES islands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) as special municipalities (*bijzondere gemeenten*) of the Netherlands.

NETHERLAND ANTILLES DXCC HISTORY

During the creation of the ARRL's first postwar (WWII) DXCC Countries List the Netherlands West Indies (PJ) was one DXCC entity, which included the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and Sint Maarten. During the late '40s and early '50s radio communications between these island's amateur stations and amateur stations of other countries were forbidden. The ban was lifted on March 11, 1952.

In 1954 the Netherlands advanced the Netherlands West Indies from a colonial territory to a domestic autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which was the beginning of the Netherlands Antilles. The May 1955 issue of *QST* announced the recognition of two DXCC entities within the Netherlands Antilles, which was effective July 1, 1955, but with a starting date back dated to November 15, 1945 for DXCC credit purposes.[2]

During this time period there was not a set distance rule but rather a "does it have adequate geographical separation from a parent nation?" rule. So then there were two DXCC entities. One in South America, which at the time included Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao and a second in North America including Saba, St Eustatius and Sint Maarten. [At the time it may have been a good idea to have called them Southern Netherlands Antilles and Northern Netherlands Antilles, instead of the two current names, Netherlands Antilles and Saba, St Eustatius and Sint Maarten. Too late now. — *Ed.*]

On January 1, 1986 Aruba was constitutionally separated from the Netherlands Antilles, shortly afterward receiving the P4 prefix directly from the Netherlands and not the ITU.

What Can We Expect?

So with the date (10-10-10) now official as to the termination of The Netherlands Antilles, DXers and DXpeditioners are no doubt asking how all of this will affect the DXCC program. Let me first state that from this point on these comments are the thoughts and opinions as seen by your editor as things stand as of today (August 1). Obviously by the second week in October we will have a much clearer picture of what to expect.

The Deletion of Two

Once The Netherlands Antilles are disbanded, both of the current DXCC entities (PJ2, 4, 9 Bonaire and Curaçao; and PJ5-8 Sint Maarten, Saba, St Eustatius) should then be deleted per DXCC Rules. The Netherlands Antilles were put on the DXCC Countries list prior to many of the modern day rules, including the separation of the two and any measurable distance rule.

The Addition of Four

From that point it is clear that Curaçao (PJ2) and Sint Maarten (PJ7) would become two new DXCC Entities. This would leave the BES islands (Bonaire, PJ4; St Eustatius, PJ5, and Saba PJ6). The distance from the homeland, the Netherlands (PA), to the first island is more than 350 km thereby giving a third DXCC Entity of St Eustatius and Saba. These two islands are too close to each other and must be one DXCC Entity. Bonaire is just barely over the 800 km distance from PJ5 and PJ6 so it would then be a fourth new DXCC Entity.

How and When Will This Happen?

Now the questions and the answers get a little tricky as to when these new DXCC countries will come online because the ARRL DXCC Rules are clear on what and how "Political Entities" are added to the list.

These Rules Affect the Addition of Curaçao and Sint Maarten

DXCC Rule 1a asks if the potential new one is a member state of the United Nations. Neither one is and neither is expected to be. This is just like Aruba. Rule 1b is not likely to apply, in the near future and most likely not by 10-10-10. It is doubtful that the ITU will assign a new prefix in time for the expected date. You can watch the ITU Web site at **www.itu.int/online/mms/glad/cga_callsign.sh?lng=E**. There is a chance, but not a high probability, that the Netherlands will give up one of their current prefixes. Most likely Rule 1c is the one that will get these two fledgling DXCC Entities on the DXCC list. The US Department of State's "Dependencies and Areas of Special Sovereignty" list will most likely be updated around the birth date of these two new DXCC countries. Watch the State Department's Web page, **www.state.gov/s/inr/rls/10543.htm**.

What About the BES Islands?

The BES islands should immediately be added to the DXCC list on 10-10-10 (exact time of day is yet to be determined) as they will clearly meet the DXCC criteria per the "Geographic Separation Entity" rule. Since the first set of islands (Saba and St Eustatius) are 350 km or more away from the parent country (Rule 2bii) and a second island (Bonaire) being 350 km from the parent country and just over 800 km from "any other island attached to that Parent" (Rule 2biii).

Again I want to emphasize the last six paragraphs are the opinions of your editor and not the official word of the ARRL or the DXCC Desk. The new DXCC Entities should be:

- Curaçao (PJ2)
- Bonaire (PJ4)
- St Eustatius (PJ5) and Saba (PJ6)
- Sint Maarten (PJ7)

So there you have it. You will definitely want to pay specific attention to the DX

[1]B. McClenny, W3UR, "How's DX?," *QST*, Nov 2009, pp 88-89.
[2]R. Newkirk, W9BRD, "How's DX?," *QST*, May 1955, p 152.

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