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## Four Caribbean Nations Make US` Major Drug List

Caribbean nations have made the US` latest list of `major illicit drug producing and/or drug-transit countries.`

The list is included in the latest U.S. international narcotics report, released by the U.S. State Department Monday. The four are The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica.

In The Bahamas, according to the U.S. report, cocaine, marijuana and other illegal drugs are transshipped through its 700 islands and cays spread over an area the size of California.

Cocaine is shipped from South America bound for both the U.S. and Europe, and for marijuana from Jamaica through the Bahamas said the report. Cocaine transits The Bahamas via go-fast boats, small commercial freighters, or small aircraft from Jamaica, Hispaniola and Venezuela.

This even though the government of the Bahamas cooperates closely with the U.S. government to stop the flow of illegal drugs through its territory.

Jamaica, meanwhile, remains the Caribbean`s largest source of marijuana for the United States but it is also a transit point for cocaine trafficked from South America, say U.S. officials.

`Cocaine smugglers continued to use maritime containers, couriers, checked luggage, and bulk commercial shipments to move cocaine through Jamaica to the United States,` said the report. `There was a noticeable increase by law enforcement in detection of liquid cocaine secreted into consumer goods and Luggage while marijuana traffickers continue to barter for cocaine and illegal weapons.`

In Haiti, clandestine flights from Venezuela remain the primary narcotics threat, with traffickers continuing to use small aircraft to make some offshore air drops and many more land deliveries at clandestine airstrips throughout the country, said the U.S. report.

`From January to September, there were a total of 17 suspect drug flights to Haiti, as compared to 2008 when 25 suspect drug flights were recorded,` added the report. `As in previous years, go-fast boats also transport cocaine to locations on Haiti`s southern coast for shipment to the United States or to the Bahamas and other Caribbean markets.`

And the Dominican Republic was listed as a major narcotics transit country, especially for cocaine, en-route to North America and Europe.

`A substantial number of illicit drug flights from Venezuela to Hispaniola drop their loads over the DR and its territorial waters,` stated the U.S. report. `Maritime deliveries arrive via go-fast boats, privately owned fishing and recreational

boats, and cargo containers. The majority of these originate in the Maracaibo area of Venezuela and the Colombian Guajira Peninsula.

One of the reasons that major drug transit or illicit drug producing countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographic, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced despite the concerned government's most assiduous enforcement measures, the U.S. State Department says.

A country's presence on the Majors List is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government's counternarcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United States.

While other Caribbean nations did not make the major list, they also continue to serve as transshipment points for drug traffickers. The seven Eastern Caribbean (EC) countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines - continue to experience significant drug trafficking from South America to markets in the U.S. and Europe, said the report.

While cocaine from Colombia and Central America as well as cannabis from a variety of nearby countries is transshipped through islands in the French Caribbean en route to Europe and, less frequently, to the United States.

Guyana, meanwhile, was listed as a transit point for cocaine destined for North America, Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean, but not in quantities sufficient to impact the U.S. market. The U.S. claims that the government's counternarcotics efforts remain hindered by inadequate resources for, and poor coordination among, law enforcement agencies; an overburdened and inefficient judiciary and the lack of a coherent and prioritized national security strategy.