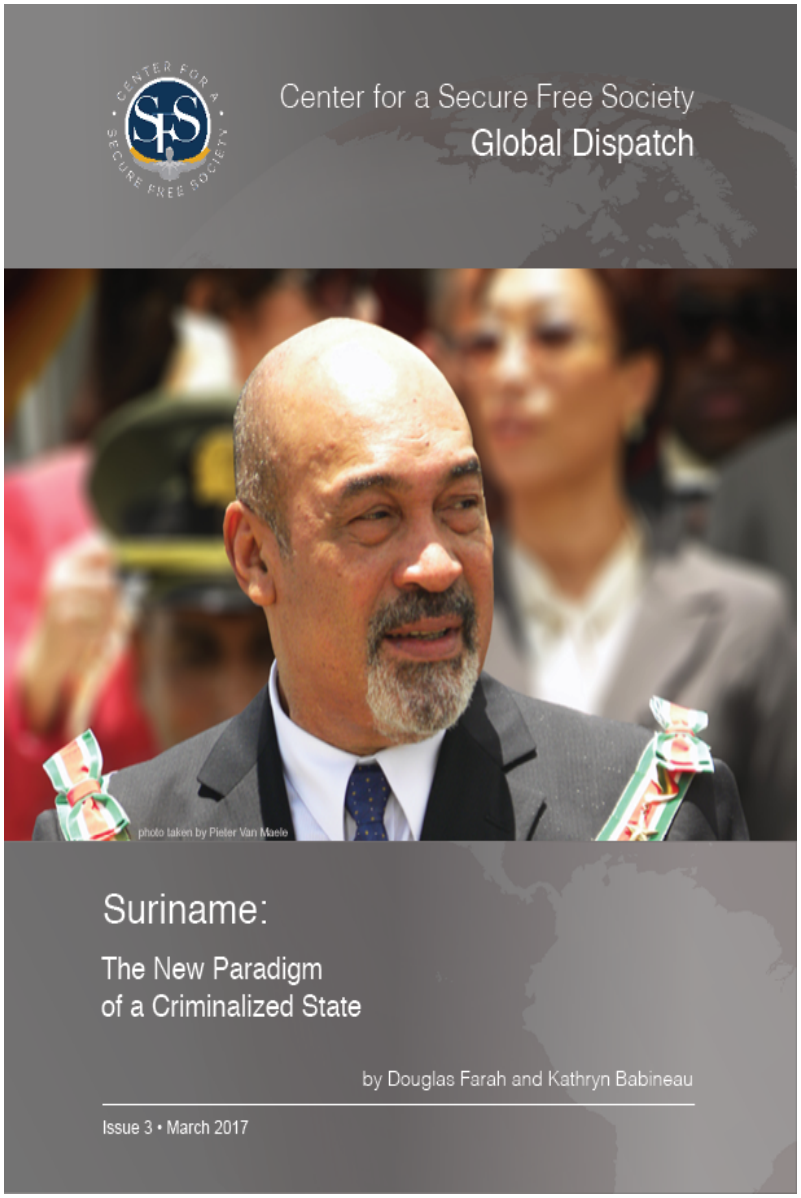
March 2017 • Issue 3

by Douglas Farah and Kathryn Babineau



Paramaribo, Suriname—An isolated country on the Caribbean coast of South America, Suriname, has long been identified as an ideal “transit zone” for narco-traffickers and other nefarious actors. Its weak borders and corrupt government allows for ease of unsupervised entry and egress. Recently, the use of gold to accommodate the flow of illicit funds and to launder money has become an attractive vehicle for transnational organized crime (TOC)

groups and some terrorist organizations. The nature of the gold market readily allows actors to convert bullion into exchangeable assets.

The Dispatch examines how the government of Desi Bouterse has become a vertically integrated criminal structure, benefiting in TOC and embedding criminals in state organs. It also looks at the Bouterse government's involvement in the gold trade. Covering up illegal transactions and serving as a safe-space for TOC, Suriname has become the perfect paradigm of a criminalized state.