

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Over 1000 Kilos of Cocaine Worth \$23 Million Seized From Vessel Interdicted South of Puerto Rico; Three Non-Nationals Arrested

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Two people from the Dominican Republic and one from Venezuela were arrested at the beginning of the week, when U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations agents intercepted a vessel south of Caja de Muerto, an island 8 miles off Puerto Rico's south coast.

According to a media release from CBP, an air surveillance crew spotted a vessel with "two outboard engines and approximately three persons on board" heading north towards the Puerto Rican coastline. The crew kept watching, guiding Coastal Interceptor Vessels

to the suspect vessel's location, where they intercepted it and boarded for a search.

"Inside the vessel, agents found [a] total of 37 bales of contraband," the statement says. The contraband? Cocaine, weighing 2,351 pounds (1006.5 kilograms), which is worth around \$23 million, according to CBP.

The Customs and Border Protection agents handed the drugs and the three men over to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for seizure and prosecution, respectively.

"Our collaboration with fellow law enforcement and our maritime domain awareness allows us to be successful interdicting these smuggling attempts," said Augusto Reyes, director of Air and Marine Operations in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. "Air and Marine Operations agents are determined to detect and intercept any attempts to smuggle contraband to our shores."