

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Potter: Security Risk Reason For Condo Rental

Politics / **Published On July 21, 2015 09:49 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **July 21, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter said at a press conference here on Monday that while he hasn't been threatened by anyone -- and for that matter does not feel that his life is in danger on any of the three islands -- it was determined by the government's security detail that his home was not safe to house a lieutenant governor.

That's what Potter said when asked by journalists in attendance at the presser if he felt that his life was in danger, adding that while the threats may not be apparent now, it's always wise to prepare for the future.

"It is clear that you want to prepare for any eventuality that may happen," Potter said. "You don't want to have your vulnerability at zero where anyone can do you anything at

anytime. You want to be as prepared as possible."

Potter went on, making known that while he does not feel "personally threatened," and continues to attend local events without security, "you have to understand that the society that we live in today, these things can happen. And if you let yourself be that vulnerable, and don't try to provide yourself with some level of basic security, then you are setting yourself up for anything that happens. And you don't want to be a Monday morning quarterback when it comes to safety."

The lieutenant governor had revealed earlier that his home's main entrance gives immediate access to his living room. The "actual location of the residents and the proximity to being able to be in my living room as you open your car door, for the office, and the office of the occupant of the lieutenant governor, was one that was not found to be secure and safe."

And even with all the controversy surrounding the \$2,800 monthly rental, "I have not spent one day at the infamous lieutenant governor's pad at Mahogany Run," Potter said.

The housing arrangement blew wide open after documents provided to the Daily News revealed that the GVI had secured a condominium for Potter in St. Thomas. The situation became more damning after the monthly tag [was reported](#) by The Virgin Islands Consortium to be some \$2,800, which was revealed by Acting Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett at a finance committee hearing.

The agreement, Bennett said, was signed by Governor Mapp, and the government will also expend \$5,000 to \$7,000 to furnish the condominium for Potter, who has a home on the island. The acting commissioner also said that the money will be coming from the lieutenant governor's budget, although he was not able to confirm the revenue stream through which the rental was being funded.

Senator Violet, as was the case throughout the hearing, voiced his disapproval with the ongoing activity at Government House without the 31st Legislature's consent.

Violet wondered aloud why was it that Potter, who has a home in St. Thomas, and with an official lieutenant governor's residence on St. Croix, want to live in a condominium on the island. He said with the governor already being commissioned by law to reside in the capital, Potter should — as has been the case with most lieutenant governors in the territory, the last being Gregory Francis — live on Croix, in the Sion Farm complex.

Senator Janette Millin Young, vice president of the 31st Legislature, echoed Violet's sentiments. She said her father, Henry Millin, was a lieutenant governor in the Juan Luis administration, and although he was offered housing, he refused because he lived on the island.

"It shouldn't be a decision here to say we're renting a house or an apartment for the lieutenant governor who lives right here on St. Thomas," Millin-Young said. "And then you add to it that we have to buy him furniture, too."