The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor John P. de Jongh Arrested By DOJ Officials

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ST. CROIX -- Acting Attorney General Claude Walker has announced the arrest of Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. and Julito Francis, former director of the Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority at a press conference at the Dept. of Justice here at 11:00 a.m. The arrest was first thought to be a federal and local effort.

The arrest was carried out solely by the local Dept. of Justice. The federal government, it appears, is not involved in this particular case. When asked why, Acting AG Claude Walker did not have an answer. The men were arrested on two counts of embezzlement of public monies, and neglecting to pay over public monies in violation of Virgin Islands criminal code, according to Walker.

The arrest follows the unsealing of federal documents by The Virgin Islands Consortium that revealed de Jongh's involvement in a deeply weaved government corruption culture that has plagued the territory from one administration to the next.

"This morning both men were advised of their constitutional rights before a Superior Court before a magistrate in the St. Thomas district," Walker said. The crimes are punishable by a fine of not more than $10,000," Walker added, "or imprisonment of not more than ten years, or both."

"If convicted, any person violating these statutes shall be disqualified from holding any public office," Walker went on.

Walker said that on or about April 2007, through January 2009, both men, being in public offices, acted in concert in the process of conversion in public monies for private use and executed several government contracts to convert $490,000 of Virgin Islands Government Highway funds, to fund improvements to the private residence of Governor de Jongh without authority of law.

De Jongh and Julito will be arraigned in two weeks.

More to come.