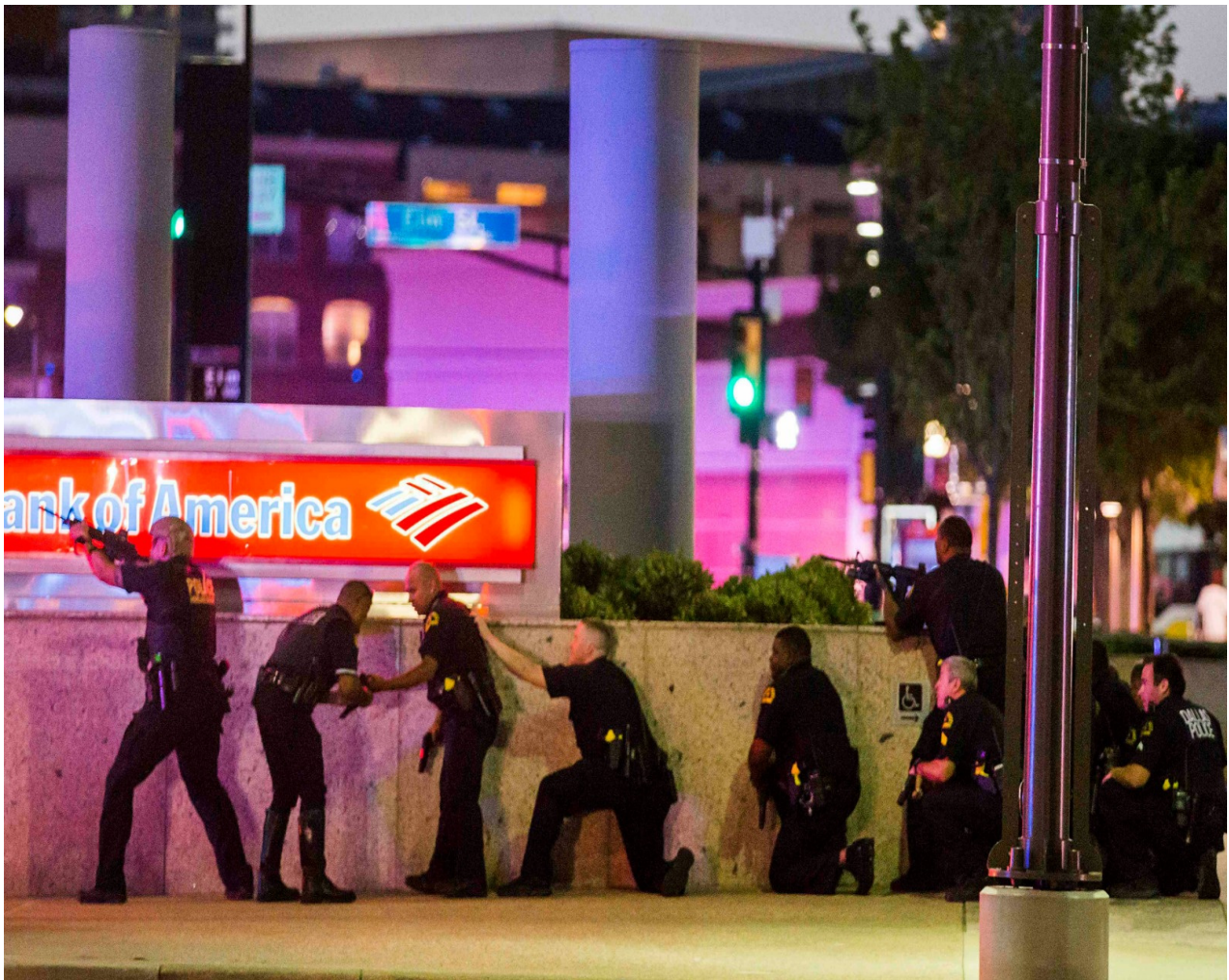


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Praises 'Unity' Between Local Police And Residents In Light Of U.S. Turmoil; Saddened By Police Deaths

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth Gittens, vice chairman of the Legislature's Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, said on Thursday that he is saddened by the spate of violence that has erupted across the nation stemming from conflicts between police and residents.

"I am deeply saddened by these [most recent fatal shootings involving police officers](#), Mr. Gittens said. "The racial tension that has been escalating, coupled with anti-law enforcement posture that many have been displaying only creates an environment

perfect for breeding more violence and ultimately more bloodshed and deaths."

According to news reports, the killings of black men at the hands of police in three days, prompted protests and rallies in various cities across the nation. During the protest in Dallas, Texas Thursday night, [a single sniper](#) targeted 12 police officers, [leaving 5 dead and 7 wounded](#). Mr. Gittens, a former law enforcement officer, said despite the previous killings, these ambush killings are in no way justified.

"No one should try to justify these shootings. They were nothing more than a cowardly attack on men who were sworn to protect and serve our community. We must embrace our police officers across the nation and continue to strengthen the ties and partnerships between residents and officers here at home," he said.

The second-term Democrat says he is thankful that the territory has not experienced any issues with racial profiling or tension between police and residents to this magnitude, and encouraged everyone to continue to exhibit the patience and social tolerance that it takes to ensure a peaceful community.

"This is a difficult time across our nation, where we must embrace each other. We must celebrate the unity that exists in close-knit communities like ours and extend our thoughts and prayers for peace, love and tolerance across the nation and the world in these very difficult times. My sincere condolences go out to the friends and families of the civilian victims of these shootings and to the slain officers," he concluded.