

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Calls For Better Border Protection For Territory And P.R. At Homeland Security Conference

Government / **Published On July 19, 2016 10:12 PM /**

Staff **July 19, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- At the opening of a two-day Caribbean Homeland Security Conference and Training event, being held at the Marriott Frenchman's Reef Hotel here, Governor Kenneth Mapp expressed his desire to see more focus on securing the borders of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, Government House made known via press release this afternoon.

Addressing an audience which included U.S. Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary, Michael G. Potts, Mr. Mapp was said to note the territory's roughly 117 miles of open border, and stated that local resources are inadequate to police them as required. He called for increased deployment of law enforcement resources to the region,

and urged that the security issues in the Caribbean be assessed according to the interests of the United States rather than just those of the region.

According to Government House, Mr. Mapp said to the room of security professionals that he was not being critical of the current strategy, but making the point that local resources are not enough to combat growing problems such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, and violent crime. He said that in light of the gun violence in the territory, he intends to use all resources available to his administration to reduce crime among young people. The governor also urged parents to speak up if they are aware of their children possessing firearms, reminding parents that it is easier to have a discussion about a firearm than to plan a funeral for an offspring.

The Caribbean Homeland Security Conference is being attended by federal and local law enforcement agency representatives from the United States mainland, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. The Virgin Islands has been designated as a Fusion Center, where information and intelligence are collected, analysed, and disseminated. The concentration of resources at various Fusion Centers throughout the nation is a part of the overall strategy to combat a range of security issues including terrorism.