

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Says He's Ready To Drop 'Missiles And Bombs' On Opponents In Gubernatorial Race

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ST. CROIX -- When Governor Kenneth Mapp arrived at the Elections System of the Virgin Islands here on Monday afternoon to file his election documents, the governor appeared confident. Flanked by a dozen or so of his cabinet members -- everyone from BMV Director Lawrence Olive to Marvin Pickering, Bureau of Internal Revenue director -- Mr. Mapp seemed relaxed as he made his case as to why he should be given four more years.

"I have no fear, politics is what I do," Mr. Mapp told The Consortium after stating that he would like to be reelected to continue "doing the good work" he says his administration has been at the helm of. The governor spoke of paying tax refunds and not missing a

government payday even though the Government of the Virgin Islands was foreclosed from the bond market. And he pointed to the \$1.8 billion being made available to the U.S.V.I., a direct result, the governor has said, of his administration's efforts.

Yet while Mr. Mapp said his campaign would highlight his administration's work to better the territory, he was not coy about his intention to hit his contenders where it hurts.

"We're letting the others understand that it's not going to be a cake walk; they're coming to a real war so don't come with no BB gun; don't come with no sling shot [because] it's missiles and bombs we have," Mr. Mapp warned.

"And I don't want nobody bawling because this is not an easy job; public scrutiny is not easy. All of us who have been in elected office, we've been subjected to the public light, and there are a number of folks running for this [the governor's] office that have not had any public scrutiny in their lives.

"We also tell young folks, when they're running for political office, if there's something in your life that you've done that you don't want to ever see on the front page of a newspaper, don't run for public office."

The governor said many people refer to digging up unpleasant truths about gubernatorial hopefuls as running a low campaign. However, Mr. Mapp said while his campaign would talk about the successes of his administration's four-year tenure, the so-called dirt about his opponents would be unearthed and brought to the fore.

"People also need to understand who is running for the office," Mr. Mapp said. "So this year we want to talk about credit scores because you can't want to handle billions of people's dollars and then you can't handle your few hundreds."

The governor later told The Consortium that politics "is not a church meeting." "We're not serving communion," he added. He said as governor, he is subjected to abuse by the populace. "Well, if you run for the office, you should not wait until you get into the office to feel some of the abuse. You should feel it on the campaign -- we're just preparing you just in case, right? That's the kind of fun we have to have," Mr. Mapp said.

So far, the race has been tame, with Democrats hardly throwing punches at each other. But with the way he spoke today, the governor appeared to have gathered unflattering files on his opponents, and seemed ready to use them.