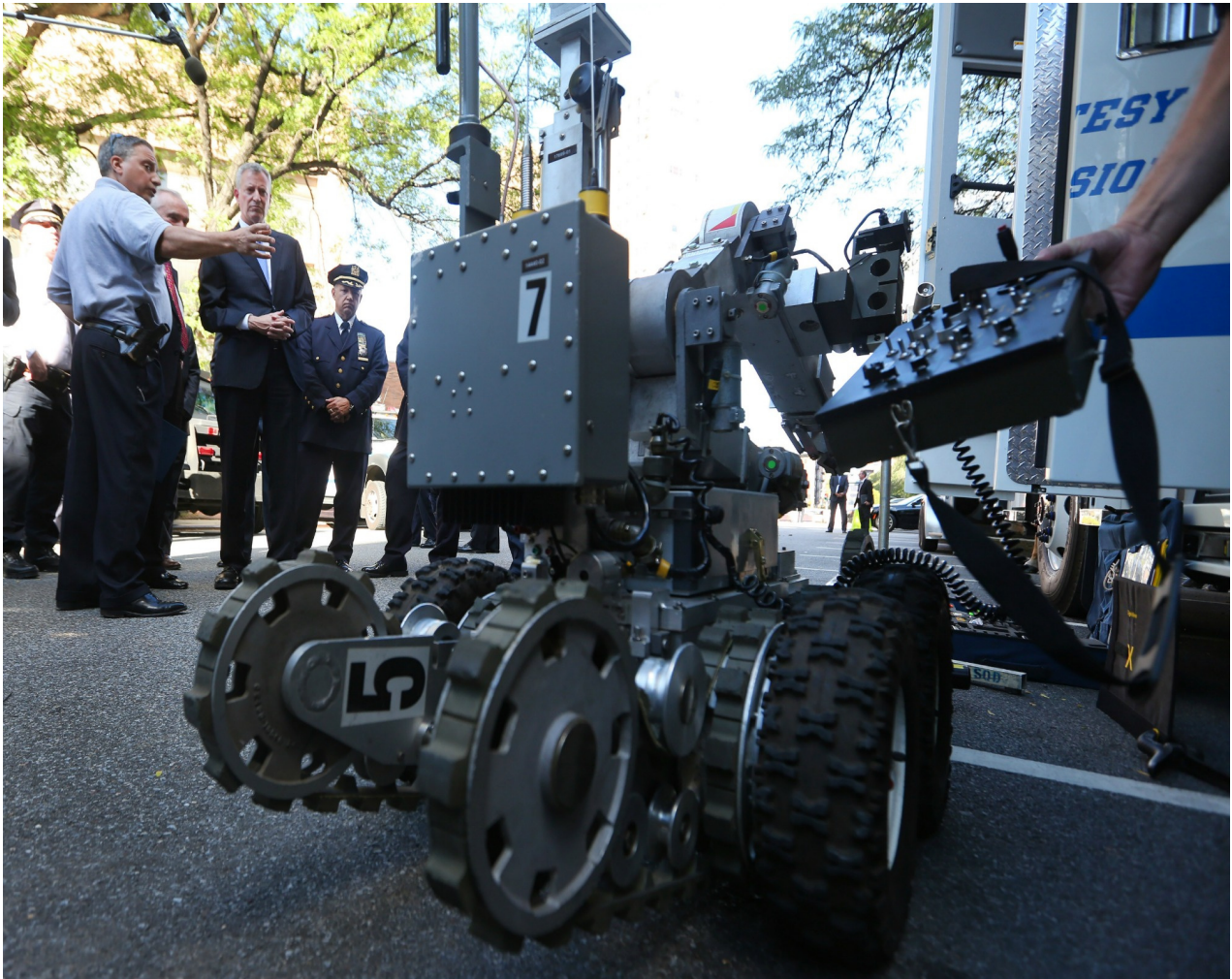


The Virgin Islands Consortium

VIPD Looking To Reinstate Bomb Squad

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Following a bomb scare on Friday [following the discovery of a device](#) resembling a pipe bomb that sat in the middle of the road near Joe's Restaurant in Sunny Isle, V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards, during a press conference Governor Kenneth Mapp held at WICO on Monday, told The Consortium that the police force is in the early stages of reinstating a bomb squad that was discarded years ago.

"We started dialogue back in 2017 with some of the retired officers [who were part of the squad] and also the federal government to rekindle a unit in the territory," Mr. Richards said. "What we have agreed upon in the interim is that in the federal task forces I have police officers, and it is one of those police officers that I relied on during the initial report to put the disposal and everything that goes along with it in motion."

The incident rocked St. Croix from morning until the early afternoon hours of Friday; brought sections of Sunny Isle to a halt, and caused the evacuation of employees and the closure of businesses in the area. In the end, the device was [determined to be a dud](#), put together by staff of the Youth With A Mission (known as YWAM) camp, located behind the theaters in Sunny Isle, the night before.

According to the commissioner, as part of the current agreement with the federal government, once the device was discovered the ATF was immediately notified, and a bomb disposal unit in Puerto Rico was swiftly dispatched.

"Until we are able to fully put a bomb disposal unit back on the road, we're going to have to do that because to have a disposal unit it takes years of training because the bomb makers of today are so sophisticated, that that level of sophistication creates an issue," Mr. Richards said. The commissioner said a functioning bomb squad can spot and relay what they've seen, "but we don't have folks that are fully, fully trained to dispose bombs. But we have a relationship with ATF and the other components who are actually on the island. They reached out for the additional resources to assist us."

As for how long it will take to put the bomb squad back together, Mr. Richards said the V.I.P.D. is attempting to secure funds through the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency to send a select group of officers to a training facility in Alabama.

Governor Kenneth Mapp conceded that the territory needed to "step up" its game relative to the response of such threats, and said his administration would provide the resources to the V.I.P.D. to reinstate the squad.

Bomb disposal is the process by which hazardous explosive devices are rendered safe. Bomb disposal is an all-encompassing term to describe the separate, but interrelated functions in the military fields of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and improvised explosive device disposal (IEDD), and the public safety roles of public safety bomb disposal (PSBD) and the bomb squad.