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Lorna Smith Joins VIP, Paving Way for New British Virgin Islands Government

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Lorna Smith was sworn in as deputy premier of the British Virgin Islands on Tuesday, April 25, 2023 after joining the Virgin Islands Party, giving the party the 7 seats needed to form a government. By. THE BVI BEACON

On Tuesday afternoon, elected members of the Virgin Islands Party were sworn in to form the next government of the British Virgin Islands.

The swearing in came after a [day of discussions](#) following Monday's general election, which resulted in the VIP winning six of the territory's 15 seats in the House of Assembly. The initial lack of a majority sparked intense speculation about whether the VIP could convince at least one of the other parliamentarians to join them, or whether the 7 elected representatives split across the

three other parties could coalesce into a majority caucus and thus form the government.

As the hours passed, rumors began to emerge that Lorna Smith, who was elected as a territorial at-large representative, would be formally joining the VIP in order to give them the needed majority. Mrs. Smith, whose husband Dr. D. Orlando Smith served as premier from 2003-2007 and then again from 2011-2019, had initially campaigned as an independent before aligning herself with the National Democratic Party, which her husband had chaired for almost two decades..

Before the announcement became official, Mrs. Smith released a statement in which she reassured voters that “your objectives in electing me will be at the top of my mind.”

A short while later, the VIP released a statement of its own announcing that it would be forming the new Government of the BVI. “Elected members of the Virgin Islands Party and Territorial At-Large member Lorna G. Smith, OBE have signed official documents in the presence of His Excellency John James Rankin CMG,” the statement read in part.

Mrs. Smith was sworn in as deputy premier in the new government, under Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley. Both Wheatley and Smith will hold ministerial portfolios, as will Kye Rymer, Sharie de Castro and Vincent Wheatley. Luce Hodge-Smith and Dr. Karl Dawson will be appointed junior ministers. Portfolio assignments will reportedly be announced in the coming days.

Now that Mrs. Smith has chosen to be a part of the administration; her pledge to “question, scrutinize and probe every government policy to ensure it achieves the best” will have to be fulfilled even as she helps shape, advocate, and implement these very same policies.