

# ***VIVA VIEQUES LIBRE!***



*The people of Vieques have waged a David vs. Goliath struggle to stop the US Navy from bombing their island. In 1979, a flotilla of fishing boats blockaded an amphibious landing in Vieques. (Left) Since April 1999, fishermen, religious leaders, teachers and activists have occupied the bombing range to form a human shield against the bombs.*

*Photo courtesy of the ;ViequesLibre! website.*

## **NOT ONE MORE BOMB! NOT ONE MORE MINUTE!**

In 1898, the U.S. military took over Puerto Rico, Hawai'i, Guam, the Philippines, American Samoa, and Cuba. In the 1940s the Navy took 3/4 of the tiny island of Vieques off the coast of Puerto Rico for military use and relocated over 9,000 residents. Intense bombing and live-fire training has damaged the environment and continue to endanger the lives of the residents. Seventy-two percent of the Vieques' population live below poverty level. Unemployment is at 50%. Cancer rates are at least 28% higher than the rest of Puerto Rico.

On April 19, 1999, two 500-pound bombs killed civilian Navy employee David Sanes Rodriguez. All of Puerto Rico erupted in protest. Since April, hundreds have occupied the impact zone, forming a human shield to protect the island from attack. On July 4, 1999, 50,000 Puerto Ricans marched on the Roosevelt Roads Naval Base to demand that the Navy leave Vieques. The people of Vieques want the Navy to stop bombing, clean up the environment, return the land to the people, and provide redress to support sustainable economic development.

President Clinton recently issued an executive order allowing the Navy to continue bombing until 2003. The US also offered an "incentive" of \$50 million in aid if Vieques residents let the Navy continue bombing. The people of Vieques rejected this bribe. In February, 2000 nearly 150,000 marched for peace in Vieques to make the point that "Vieques is not for sale." On May 4 Federal Marshals removed more than 200 people, including legislators, bishops, local fishermen, students and others. President Clinton can order a withdrawal of the Navy from Vieques and avoid a confrontation.

1. **CONTACT: John Podesta**, White House Chief of Staff, Ph. 202-456-6797, Fx. 202-456-1907; **Maria Echaveste**, White House Deputy Chief of Staff, Ph. 202-456-6594, Fx. 202-456-6703; **Jeffrey Farrow**, Co-chair, White House Interagency Working Group on Puerto Rico, Ph. 202-456-5179, Fx. 202-482-2337. Ask them to **URGE THE PRESIDENT TO ORDER THE NAVY OUT OF VIEQUES NOW**.
2. **CALL THE WHITE HOUSE TODAY AND URGE THE PRESIDENT TO "ORDER THAT THE U.S. NAVY LEAVE VIEQUES NOW"**. WHITE HOUSE COMMENT LINE: (202) 456-1111, M-F, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM EST.
3. **SEND SUPPORT AND DONATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF VIEQUES**. Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, P.O. Box 1424, Vieques, Puerto Rico 00765. (787) 741-8651. E-mail: <bieke@coqui.net>. Or visit: [www.viequeslibre.com](http://www.viequeslibre.com).
4. **GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL WORK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN HAWAI'I AS WELL AS PUERTO RICO**: Contact the American Friends Service Committee - Hawai'i Area Program, 2426 O'ahu Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822. (808) 988-6266. E-mail: <afsc@pixi.com>.