

Allegation that USN...	Facts about USN operations in Vieques
Contaminates the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to April 1999 <i>Travel and Leisure</i> and <i>Conde Nast's Traveler</i> magazines, "Preservationists credit the Navy with maintaining the island's pristine condition." • USN presence prevented over development of island because of the buffer zones and the conservation zones managed by the USN.
Endangers species Hurts conservation efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN has extensive programs to protect the endangered species in Vieques, including the mangrove forests, sea turtles, brown pelicans and the West Indies manatees. • USN efforts resulted in over 21K hatchlings of sea turtles. The turtle eggs were relocated and released to the wild with 70% success rate; higher than occurring naturally. • 50% of land maintained by USN is in a conservation status. • USN has operated in good faith as an environmental steward—going beyond the range areas to the approx. 22K acres owned. • USN is committed to minimizing the impact of its range operations on the environment.
Bombs entire island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bombing is conducted on the eastern most part of the island—an area of about 900 acres, less than 3% of the island.
Bombs daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vieques range is used approximately 180 days/year. • Any fraction of a day is considered a full day of operations, i.e., if on a given day, an aircraft drops one inert bomb, it counts as a full day of operations.
Increased bombing activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1980's, USN decreased amount of bombing by over 50%. (Supports MOU of 1983.)
Creates havoc with combat sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN installed sound-measuring equipment on Vieques and monitors the noise hazard to meet prescribed levels. When the sound level exceeds established levels, bombing operations are curtailed or terminated.
Bombs without notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Federal Notice to Mariners</i> and <i>Notice to Airmen</i> are published and posted at multiple sites on Vieques and the main island of Puerto Rico in advance of any training day. • CO, AFWTF publishes weekly schedule of operations and posts in various locations. • USN advises the Department of Natural Resources of major exercises 60 days before they begin; this matches the turtles' gestation period. • <i>The USN will also advise the Puerto Rican Secretary of State of future (major) exercises--per the 1983 MOU.</i>
Damages coral reefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bombing and gunnery targets are located inland from the beaches to avoid possible damage to the sensitive coral reefs.
Treats residents like "prisoners" by restricting them to portion of island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN maintains a large buffer zone of approximately 11,000 acres that provides 8-10 miles between the residents and the live impact range to ensure maximum safety. • USN permits residents (and tourists) the use of USN-controlled beaches when it is not operating the range. • Approximately 9,300 residents of Vieques reside in over 11,000 acres of land. • Since 1983 the USN leases –at no cost—over 6,000 acres of land to the local Vieques cattlemen's cooperative for grazing of 8,000 cattle.

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Owns “best” lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reason the USN land is considered “the best” is because of the USN’s excellent stewardship of the conservation zones and the buffer zone. • Only 900 (of the 33K total) acres comprise the area where live bombing is conducted. • Most of the 22,000 acres owned by the USN is in a conservation status.
Stifles economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN has attempted over 50 economic development projects to assist the residents of Vieques and sent the following prospects to the Puerto Rico Economic Development Administration and other Puerto Rican Government agencies. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coffee roasting plan - USN-funded study for environmental sewage treatment plant - hotels: one will <u>open</u> and another will <u>break ground</u> in 1999. - airport runway expansion project [<i>USN transferred land to the Governor of Puerto Rico for the expansion of the Vieques Airport runway from 3400 to 5300 feet. The extended runway will accommodate larger, commuter type aircraft to further economic development and tourism on the island.</i>] - leasing of agricultural parcels for cattle and hay production • The government of Puerto Rico shares some responsibility for Vieques’ economic development difficulty, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high tariff taxes on goods entering/exiting Vieques - high costs for utilities - high costs for transportation
Prohibits tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN permits the small cruise ship <i>Windjammer</i> to dock at USN-built/owned Mosquito Pier. This arrangement accommodates about 250 tourists per month.
Contributes to chronic unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vieques has one of the lowest unemployment rates for any municipality of similar size in all of Puerto Rico. • According to the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, the Vieques unemployment rate in April 1999, was 9.2%. • Vieques’ unemployment rate is lower than Puerto Rico’s overall unemployment rate of 10.9% for the same month.
Causes high(er) rates of cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, no scientific evidence exists that bombing contributes to higher cancer rates or increased health risks. If this were true, the USN would cease the harmful operations. • Puerto Rico Secretary of Health is quoted as saying, “although much has been written about the ecological effects of the military exercises on the island of Vieques, until now, there has been no attempt to assess their impact on the health of the island’s inhabitants.” • Frequently cited in the press is a 1997 descriptive epidemiological study – a medical record review—done by Dr. Diego E. Zavala, Ph.D., of reported incidents of cancer on Vieques Island. • Overall, Dr. Zavala’s review of available medical records shows lower than expected cancer rates for Vieques residents from 1960-1979 and 1990-92. For 1980-1989, cancer incidents were <u>higher</u> than expected. • There is no linkage in Dr. Zavala’s study to operations at the Vieques weapons range. • DON is supporting and cooperating with Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to study health patterns at Vieques.

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Stole land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN paid market value of approximately \$1.5 million for over 22,000 acres of land on Vieques between 1941-1950.
Killed a civilian resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tragic accident that resulted in the death of a Navy contract guard, Mr. David Sanes Rodriguez, is the first non-military death in over 50 years of operation. • Mr. Sanes Rodriguez was a government employee who was killed in the performance of his duties. • Mr. Sanes Rodriguez was on the range. • Mr. Sanes Rodriguez was over 7.5 miles from the nearest civilian population center.
Controls destiny of Vieques...creates an uncertain future for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN has drafted and proposed a significant economic development plan to assist the residents of Vieques. • USN is willing to work with Government of Puerto Rico to return land that is no longer needed by the Navy.
Causes fear among residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The residents of Vieques are not in danger from the range. • USN has strict safety regulations in place. • In over 50 years of range operations, no civilian casualty has occurred off range. • USN maintains a large buffer zone --8 x 10 miles (11,000 acres)-- to protect the residents of Vieques. • Safety and security of residents has been and always will be of paramount importance to the USN.
Is no longer welcome in Vieques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USN is prepared to work with the government of Puerto Rico to return land/ensure that the plight of the residents of Vieques is improved. • USN has been unable to discuss these ideas with the elected officials in Puerto Rico due to the intense emotional issues and divergent views on the use of Vieques Island. • The success of our military forces around the world depends on regular access to our national training facilities at Vieques Island and other sites that provide these essential training opportunities. • Decreasing, restricting, or eliminating access to such facilities as a result of a once-in-a-generation accident will result in reduced combat skills proficiency of our servicemen and could cause loss of American lives in future conflicts.
Uses depleted uranium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depleted uranium is not authorized at the Vieques range. • There was a one-time use of depleted uranium in Feb 1999 when a Marine Corps jet accidentally fired 263 rounds of armored piercing incendiary depleted uranium ammunition. • 57 of the 263 rounds were recovered. • Further recovery of the rounds is <u>currently</u> not possible while protestors remain illegally in the live impact area of the range. • There is no public health risk to the residents of Vieques or to the island's natural resources. • Depleted uranium is not harmful unless ingested in very large amounts. Depleted uranium rounds possess very low levels of radioactivity.

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Uses Napalm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last time Napalm was used on the Vieques range was in Oct 1992 when Marine aircrews dropped 24 canisters of napalm during routine training. • Extensive record verification has revealed 3 other documented uses of air-to-ground MK-77 Napalm at the Vieques live impact area in Feb 1977, July 1977 and Mar 1979. • Navy's use of Napalm was consistent with regulations (and permits). • U.S. Navy has no requirement to use napalm; when Navy's permit for use in Vieques expired, it was not renewed. • The Marine Corps has a requirement and uses it at ranges in Yuma and Twenty-Nine Palms. • Napalm used today is different from earlier versions. Today's napalm is non-caustic, non-toxic.
Over burdens residents of Vieques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vieques is one of 57 unit level air-drop ranges operated by the Department of Defense; 28 of these ranges are "live fire." • As U.S. citizens, residents of Vieques have a responsibility to contribute to the national security needs of the United States. • The burden of hosting defense facilities is not limited to the residents of Vieques alone. Around the U.S., every day, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines train with live ammunition near populated areas. [Integrated live fire and maneuver ranges are critical to the maintenance of essential warfighting skills.] • Many residents and interest groups would prefer that these activities not take place near their communities. The "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) movement is a phenomenon that, if it succeeds in Vieques, could greatly undermine training opportunities everywhere for our men and women in uniform. • Residents of Avon Park, Florida live closer to the Navy's Pinecastle Range –7 miles. Residents of Isabel Segunda and Esperanza live 8-10 miles from the Vieques weapons range. • Residents of Lawton, Oklahoma live within 3000 yards of the army's ranges at Fort Sill. • Over 100,000 people live within 10 miles of the Oklahoma ranges.
Solicits foreign use of range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 10 days/year dedicated to the joint use of the range by U.S. and foreign forces. • Five of those days represent the U.S. phase of the annual UNITAS exercise with South American Navies. • The remaining days are such to test anti-ship cruise missiles with allies, i.e. Federal Republic of Germany.
Drops bombs within buffer zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five bombs were inadvertently dropped west of LIA. • Bombs fell within 8-10 mile buffer zone; zone established to protect residents. • Bombs were recovered three miles from the nearest town. • Safety and security of residents has been and always will be of paramount important.

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Burns ammunitions unlawfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy burns old or unexploded ammunition in the open burn ordnance disposal (OBOD) pit located on the LIA per permit issued by EPA. • Permit does not have maximum level, but uses approximately “10,000 pounds” or ordnance per hear. • DON had an emergent situation in 1998 when it need to burn approximately 16,000 pounds. • DON has requested that EPA increase the amount to no more than 50,000 pounds/year; this would be consistent with burn permits at other facilities. • To date (16 Oct 99), EPA has not responded to our request.
Pollutes water Violates EPA permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally ordnance falls into the waters near LIA. • Navy conducts water sampling and analysis per a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from EPA to ensure that ordnance does not degrade the water. • Current NPDES permit expires Nov 99. EPA indicates no renewal forthcoming; no specific reason provided, but would “prefer” Navy move one target inland to minimize risk of ordnance landing in the water. • DON’s sampling and analysis indicates some “exceedances” in water quality over past 15 years. • EPA issued DON a notice of violation for the exceedances. • EPA permitting scheme for Vieques is unique; there is no SOP for water sampling under these circumstances (munitions). • DON-EPA negotiations are ongoing for an alternative regime and permit renewal. • DON is conducting additional sampling/testing to determine whether exceedances reflect problems with sampling/analysis or change in water quality.