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12/31/2001	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 1244

Resolution calling for the establishment of a sister-city relationship between New York City and Vieques, Puerto Rico.

By Council Members Robles, Rivera, Lopez, Carrion, Eisland, Espada, Linares, Marshall, Perkins, Reed, Rodriguez, Golden, Ognibene and Provenzano; also Council Members DiBrienza, McCaffrey, Michels, Quinn, Robinson and Sabini

Whereas, The Island of Vieques, off the mainland of Puerto Rico, is home to a vibrant community of approximately 9,000 people who have lived side-by-side with the United States Military since 1941, when the Navy built a base and training ground on three-fourths of the 52-square mile island; and

Whereas, The civilian population of Vieques is concentrated between the Navy Munitions Storage Area on the West Coast of the Island and Navy Military Lands and a Firing Range on the East Coast; and

Whereas, Throughout the residency of the U.S. Navy in Vieques, Puerto Ricans have voiced numerous concerns on issues that have ranged from environmental and human rights to education and economic development; and

Whereas, Throughout the decades since World War II, when the Navy first arrived on the Island, the people of Vieques have protested what they felt to be the impediment of economic development due to the Naval presence on the Island and a lack of appropriate concern for the well-being and growth of the Island, which was once a thriving source of sugar cane; and

Whereas, The population of Vieques is indeed small, yet despite its small numbers, the people have never let up in their struggle to fight for what they have perceived as right, which in the past has meant protests, lobbying government officials and organizing campaigns for justice, most recently pertaining to the death of a security guard who fell victim to a misguided bomb dropped during a U.S. Navy target practice; and

Whereas, New York City as a whole can certainly appreciate the stamina and determination of the people of Vieques, not merely because so many people of Puerto Rican heritage live within the five boroughs but because New Yorkers have always stood their ground and fought for their beliefs; and

Whereas, The people of Vieques can learn a great deal from the successes of New Yorkers in the areas of education, economic development, human rights and the environment, particularly now that they will be faced with a referendum commissioned by President Clinton, deciding the fate of the role of the U.S. Navy in Vieques; and

Whereas, New Yorkers, a large group of over seven million people from all over the country and the world, often work together to seek and

achieve justice on issues regarding our health, our freedom and our well-being and can stand to learn a great deal from the people of Vieques; now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for the establishment of a sister-city relationship between New York City and Vieques, Puerto Rico.

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