

**PEACE FOR VIEQUES: THE ROLE OF  
TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVIST NETWORKS  
IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Historically, the discipline of international relations has been dominated by theories that allocate the greatest measure of agency on the international stage to nation-states. Nation-states have traditionally been conceived as rational actors pursuing self-interested goals, either through the confrontational frameworks defined by realism or the cooperative ones promulgated by liberalism. The process of globalization, however, is reshaping our traditional notions of power and agency in the realm of international politics. Whereas nation-states were once the only significant actor on the international stage, they must now share the stage with other types of actors that challenge traditional understandings of actors and the interests they pursue. Actors and forces that previously had only minor roles to play in international politics are now increasingly important. Such is the case with transnational activist networks, whose expansion and growing influence in recent years has been facilitated by the rapid expansion and decreasing costs of information and communication technologies.

This paper is concerned with the potential for agency transnational activist networks have in the realm of international negotiations. How can transnational activist networks influence international negotiations?

It is the contention of this paper that transnational activist networks can influence both the domestic and international levels of weak-strong international negotiations through political mobilization strategies—the most important being the effective use of framing—that can constrain or expand the domestic win-sets of both parties and move the zone of agreement closer to activists' goals. The potential for influence of transna-

tional activist would depend on the level of vulnerability of strong actors to the negotiation alternatives presented by the political mobilization of the networks, which is facilitated by the degree of openness of the strong actor's political system. Furthermore, this paper argues that transnational activist networks can not only influence the outcomes of negotiations, but trigger them as well.

In order to clarify the causal relationships claimed by this paper, there are certain variables that must be conceptualized and operationalized:

*Transnational Activist Network* – a coalition of organizations and actors characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange working towards a common political goal.

*Political Mobilization Strategies* – strategies that further the political goal shared throughout the network by seeking to reconstitute identities, interests and institutions of nation-states.

*Vulnerability* – the level of sensitivity to political mobilization and the negotiation alternatives it provides. This vulnerability is facilitated by the degree of openness of the strong actor's political system.

*Negotiation Outcome* – the final results of a negotiation process. The attributes of this variable are two: a *gain* means that the weak actor has accomplished a negotiation goal; a *loss* means the weak actor has failed to accomplish a negotiation goal.

In order to explore the potential impact of transnational networks and actors in international negotiations, this paper will use the process of social action and negotiation that led to the United States Navy's departure from Vieques, Puerto Rico, as a case study. From the early 1940s to May 2003, the U.S. Navy maintained a significant presence on

the island municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Vieques was the site of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF). Throughout this period, activists had tried to either ameliorate the perceived ill effects of the Navy's presence or effect its departure altogether. They were largely unsuccessful until April 1999, when the accidental death of a civilian security guard caused by a couple of wayward Navy bombs triggered a widespread call for the Navy's withdrawal. After four years of negotiations between the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments, the Navy left Vieques on May 1, 2003. This paper will argue that the formation of a transnational activist network around the issue of Vieques triggered the negotiation process, constrained the domestic win-set in Puerto Rico, expanded the domestic win-set in the U.S., and brought the zone of agreement closer to their goals.

## **2. THEORETICAL APPROACH**

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Historically, theories of international order have privileged the nation-state as the most important international actor. The role of transnational actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or national Diasporas has been relegated to secondary status. As Andrew Moravcsik tells us, theories of international order have usually concentrated on two levels, or units of analysis: international (or systemic) and domestic. His critique centers on systemic theories, both "realist" and "liberal," and their inability to account for the effects of domestic influence on international relations. "Thus the question facing international relations theorists today is not *whether* to combine domestic and international explanations into a theory of "double-edged" diplomacy, but *how* best

to do so.”<sup>1</sup> Though it is important to theorize more effectively the relationship between domestic and international politics, Moravcsik’s critique fails to point out another weakness of systemic theories that has become more evident in our current era of globalization: Their inability to account for, or even significantly acknowledge, the role of transnational actors in the current international order.

Other theorists, such as James Rosenau and J.P. Singh, present a more inclusive picture of our contemporary international order that recognizes greater possibilities of agency for non-state actors such as transnational activist networks. Rosenau describes this order as a “bifurcated system in which actors in the state-centric world compete, cooperate, interact, or otherwise coexist with counterparts in a multicentric world comprised of a vast array of diverse transnational, national, and subnational actors.”<sup>2</sup>

Rosenau’s conception of the international order does not rule out the relative preponderance of states as international actors. Rather, it provides us with a more holistic model in which a multitude of actors, both national and transnational, affect each other’s behaviors and actions. Singh further develops this conception of the current world order through his introduction of the term “meta-power.” “Meta-power,” according to Singh, “refers to how networks reconfigure, constitute, or reconstitute identities, interests, and institutions.”<sup>3</sup> Singh proposes this concept as an alternative to traditional instrumental and structural notions of power.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, “Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining,” in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, eds. Peter Evans et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). 9.

<sup>2</sup> James Rosenau, “The Relocation of Authority in a Shrinking World,” *Comparative Politics* 4, No. 3 (1992): 256.

<sup>3</sup> J. P Singh, “Introduction: Information Technologies and the Changing Scope of Global Power and Governance,” in *Information Technologies and Global Politics: The Changing Scope of Power and Governance*, eds. James Rosenau and J.P. Singh (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2002) 13.

Within the specific context of international weak-strong negotiations, Singh makes a similar point when he speaks of “diffusion of power.” For Singh, diffusion of power means that “the exercise of power at the global level is not constrained to one set of actors (states) around the salient issue of security.”<sup>4</sup> This concept is contrasted with the “distribution of power” scenario, which implies a hierarchical distribution of resources and abilities simultaneously across many issue areas that always result in outcomes favorable to those at the top of the hierarchy.<sup>5</sup> The lack of a hierarchical distribution of power presented in this conception of the international negotiation environment not only opens greater possibilities of agency for weak powers, but opens new possibilities of agency for transnational actors as well.

Research suggests that these networks are predominantly *principled-issue networks*, defined by Kathryn Sikkink as “driven primarily by shared values or principled ideas – ideas about what is right and wrong – rather than shared causal or instrumental goals.”<sup>6</sup> This being the case, they side with weaker actors in the face of the state, which is driven by other considerations.<sup>7</sup> The rise of transnational activist networks therefore suggests not just a change in the repertoire of actors on the international stage, but the increasing importance of previously irrelevant motivations for action.

Sikkink’s definition of a principled-issue network suggests that these networks coalesce around commonly constructed identities. Her definition brings to mind Manuel Castells’ definitions of the concept of identity: “Identity is people’s source of meaning

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn Sikkink, “Human Rights, Principled-Issue Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America,” *International Organization* 47 no. 3 (1993) : 412.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Activist Networks,” in *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, 6th ed., eds. Robert Art and Robert Jervis (New York, NY: Longman, 2003) 558.

and experience.”<sup>8</sup> Stating that, from a sociological perspective, all identities are constructed, he further defines identity, in reference to social actors, as “the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning.”<sup>9</sup> Since the concept of values must necessarily be part of any definition of culture, a connection can be made between Sikkink’s reference to values as a binding agent of principled-issue networks and Castells’ concept of identity. Furthermore, the use of the word “culture” in Castells’ definition need not restrict us to ethnic or nationalist notions of culture and values. Castells talks, for example, of the formation of a creation of a “biological identity, a culture of the human species as a component of nature”<sup>10</sup> within the environmental movement, which possesses one of the most extensive transnational activist networks in the world. We can therefore speak of value-based “transnational cultures” as coalescing agents around which transnational activist networks congregate.

Value-based identities, however, are not the only type of identities around which transnational activist networks might coalesce. Another important type is national identity. Like any other sort of identity, national identity is constructed. Benedict Anderson refers to the nation as an “imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”<sup>11</sup> In his definition of contemporary nationalism, however, Castells decouples nationalism from territoriality.<sup>12</sup>

Castells’ deterritorialized definition of national identity suggests that nationalism can have a transnational dimension. With his idea of ‘scapes,’ Arjun Appadurai provides

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<sup>8</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell 1997) 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>11</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991) 6.

<sup>12</sup> Castells 30. In his most recent work, Anderson has acknowledged this phenomenon as well.

us with a framework that allows us to understand how national identity can have such a dimension. Appadurai refers to five ‘scapes’ that can help us make sense of the global cultural flow: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *ideoscapes*, *technoscapes*, and *financescapes*. It is the first four types of ‘scapes’ that concern us here.<sup>13</sup>

This framework is useful to help us discern how national identity can be nurtured when decoupled from the “homeland.” The increased mobility that characterizes our era (ethnoscapes) helps maintain ties with the imagined national homeland. The increased flows of technology (technoscapes) also aid this to maintain this contact. The increased flow of media images (mediascapes) nurture national identity and identification with the imagined homeland. The increased flow of political ideas (ideoscapes) nurtures political action based on national identity. Appadurai’s idea of ‘scapes’ not only helps how the commonly constructed identities that bind transnational activist networks come about; it also helps us understand how these networks have grown and spread during the current era of globalization.

The analytical framework to be used in this paper is the metaphor of the two-level game in international negotiations, as originally posited by Robert Putnam:

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring their governments to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national govern-

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<sup>13</sup> *Ethnoscapes* refer to “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live” that “...appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.” *Mediascapes* refer both to the “distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information” and to “the images of the world created by these media.” *Technoscapes* refer to the “configuration...of technology and the fact that technology...now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries.” Finally, *ideoscapes* refers to the “concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capture state power or a piece of it.” Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 33-36.



ments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments.<sup>14</sup>

In a world where transnational actors and networks can reach across borders and boundaries and influence policy alternatives, it is conceivable that transnational activist networks could reconstitute the domestic win-sets of both actors and bring their zone of agreement closer to activists' goals. Putnam defines a "win-set" as "the set of all possible Level I agreements that would "win" – that is, gain the necessary majority among the constituents – when simply voted up or down."<sup>15</sup>

Transnational activist networks can affect the size of these domestic win-sets by calling on a wide array of tactics of political mobilization, as identified by Keck and Sikkink, which include:

(1) *Information politics*, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it will have the most impact; (2) *symbolic politics*, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away; (3) *leverage politics*, of the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where the weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and (4) *accountability politics*, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies of principles.<sup>16</sup>

There is a high degree of correlation between social movements theory, which underpins Keck and Sikkink's arguments, and negotiation theory. For example, the con-

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42 no. 3, (summer 1988) : 434.

<sup>15</sup> Putnam 437.

<sup>16</sup> Keck and Sikkink 2003, 559.

cept of “frames” in social movement theory correlates with the tactic of agenda setting in international negotiations. For a particular issue, “network members actively seek ways to bring issues to the public agenda by framing them in innovative ways and by seeking hospitable venues.”<sup>17</sup> Such a practice is essentially agenda setting, for effective framing can serve to spark negotiations and determine their agenda. John Odell and Susan Sell highlight why the use of framing by developing countries during the negotiation can be so effective. They argue that actors make decisions using “bounded rationality,” which reflects their lack of total information about an issue and their necessary reliance on mental shortcuts to make sense of it. The more compelling the mental shortcut or frame, the more successful it is as a tool for political mobilization and agenda setting.<sup>18</sup>

We can also draw a correlation between Keck and Sikkink’s definition of leverage politics, as defined above, and the negotiation tactic of coalition building. Singh (2001) tells us that diffusion of power scenarios allow weaker powers to participate in coalitions that help them offset weaknesses that would probably predetermine negotiation outcomes under distribution of power scenarios. Such a conception of the usefulness of coalition building in the realm of negotiations correlates with the potential for transnational activist networks to offset power asymmetries posited by this paper.

Another negotiation tactic that correlates with the strategies of political mobilization outlined above is the use of technocratic and legalistic strategies. We can make a connection between Keck and Sikkink’s conception of information politics and Singh’s description of technocratic and legalistic tactics. “Negotiations are now becoming inher-

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<sup>17</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1998, 17

<sup>18</sup> John Odell and Susan Sell, “Reframing the Issue: The WTO Coalition on Intellectual Property and Public Health, 1991,” *Conference on Developing Countries and the Trade Negotiation Process*, UNCTAD, 6-7 November 2003, Geneva, 2003.

ently biased toward persuasion. The type of persuasion most likely to effect an accommodating response from the other actor is usually one that is based on knowledge and effected by a technically competent negotiating team.”<sup>19</sup> Both information politics and technocratic/legalistic tactics rely heavily on the timely delivery of accurate and reliable information that leads to persuasion of the target actor.

Finally, there is the negotiation tactic of direct lobbying. The very process of globalization, with its increased flows of people and information, facilitates the use of direct lobbying as a negotiation tactic. It is this very same phenomenon of increased global flows that gives transnational activist networks their current relevance in the international arena. While discussing direct lobbying, Singh tells us that “transnational alliances may also weaken the ability of powerful actors while enhancing the ability of those from developing countries,” a conception we can extend to weak actors in general.<sup>20</sup> It is not a stretch to envision how all the political mobilization strategies outlined by Keck and Sikkink might be useful in direct lobbying campaigns. In the end, the reconstitution of domestic win-sets affected by political mobilization amounts to a manifestation of meta-power: a reconstitution of identities and institutions,

The effectiveness of these strategies is especially dependent on one of the intervening variables express above: vulnerability. The more vulnerable the strong actor is to the introduction of negotiation alternatives, the more susceptible it should be to these strategies of political mobilization. The American political system, for example, should theoretically be more vulnerable because of its openness and relatively transparent structure that provides multiple points of access to it.

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<sup>19</sup> Singh, “Weak Powers,” 475.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 476.

Other theorists have used the two-level game framework as a point of departure to hypothesize on how transnational can affect international negotiations. In their study of separate human rights negotiations between the U.S. government and the military regimes of Guatemala and Argentina between 1973 and 1981, Lisa Martin and Kathryn Sikkink point to “transnational cross-border lobbying by international and domestic human rights organizations” as one of the key explanatory factors for Argentina’s decision to improve its human rights record.<sup>21</sup> While this case study points in the direction of a greater role for transnational activist networks in the realm of international negotiations, it falls short of the more central role this paper seeks to establish for this sort of actor. Transnational action by international and domestic activists was crucial in the outcome of these negotiations, but they were not the instigating factor; the Carter Administration’s determination to make human rights a cornerstone of American foreign policy was. This paper will claim that transnational activist networks, through the implementation of various types of civil action and using the tactics outlined above, can transcend the role of contributors to the negotiation process to become the primary instigators of these negotiations and affect negotiation outcomes beneficial to weak actors.

### **3. THE VIEQUES CASE BEFORE 1999**

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*“The powerful do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”*

*– Thucydides*

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<sup>21</sup> Lisa Martin and Kathryn Sikkink, “U.S. Policy and Human Rights in Argentina and Guatemala, 1973-1981,” in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, eds. Peter Evans et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 333.

Thucydides' assessment of the nature of international relations accurately describes many aspects of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. This relationship is a classic example of the distribution of power scenario described in the introduction. On the part of the U.S., the relationship has been dominated by the traditional considerations that characterize a distribution of power scenario, among which security has been the most important. The case of Vieques must be understood within the context of the U.S.–Puerto Rico relationship.

The U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898—stemming from the Spanish–American War—raised hopes that the arrival of the Americans would bring about more liberty and improved economic conditions.<sup>22</sup> Instead, the island remained under military rule for two years, a time during which local industry languished due to the political limbo created by the change of sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> As for its political status, Puerto Rico was kept once again in limbo. The motivations behind this limbo were twofold: First, there was truly a belief among American officials that Puerto Ricans were not yet ready to govern themselves and needed to learn the art of self-governance from their American tutors.<sup>24</sup> Second, a lack of political definition allowed for better control of Puerto Rico and Vieques as strategic assets: Statehood might put too many inhibitions on what the government could do with its new possession, while independence, or even greater autonomy, could jeopardize American sovereignty over the islands.

The lack of political progress, along economic distress caused by the monopolization of arable land by American absentee sugar cane plantation owners and exacerbated by the Great Depression, stirred anti-American feelings and radicalized a sector of the

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<sup>22</sup> Morales Carrión 132.

<sup>23</sup> Picó 230-231.

population that demanded independence and was willing to resort to violence to achieve it. These sectors of the population were systematically repressed during the 1930s and 1950s by federal and local authorities.<sup>25</sup> Concerned about the possibility of continued social unrest in a possession that was an important strategic asset, the U.S. government allied itself with moderate political elements in Puerto Rico to improve economic conditions and enact limited political reforms. In 1948 Puerto Ricans were allowed to elect their own governor, and in 1952 they were allowed to enact their own constitution that established the current status of Commonwealth (*Estado Libre Asociado* or “Free Associated State” in Spanish) and allowed for greater self-government on local matters. This constitution altered in no way the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico; the Congress still retained complete power over the island.<sup>26</sup>

As war with Germany and its allies loomed large during the late 1930s, Congress accelerated plans to enlarge U.S. military presence in Puerto Rican soil by appropriating \$30 million for the construction of air and naval bases, whose main purpose would be the defense of the Panama Canal. To this end, the U.S. military expropriated large tracts of land across Puerto Rico, including 21,020 acres of land in Vieques in order to build a naval base that would rival Pearl Harbor. Subsequent expropriations by the Navy left residents with only one third of the island to live on. Figure 3 shows the land distribution at the peak of the Navy’s presence in Vieques in 2000. The dark gray areas were occupied by the Navy, while the white sector in the middle by civilians.

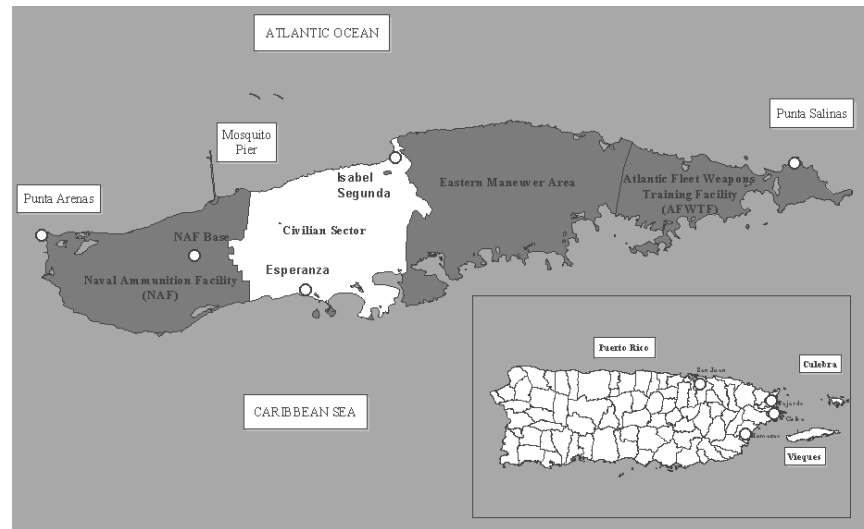
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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Trías Monge 41.

<sup>25</sup> Ivonne Acosta, *La Mordaza: Puerto Rico 1948-1957* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Edil, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed account of the evolution of Commonwealth status and how the U.S. – Puerto Rico relationship remained essentially unaltered by it, see Trías Monge 107-118.

**Figure 3: Land Distribution on the Island of Vieques, 2000.**<sup>27</sup>



Indeed, the Navy always saw the Vieques population as an impediment to its national security mission, especially during the tense years of the Cold War. During the 1960s, the Navy drafted a plan called the *Vieques-Culebra Plan* or *V-C Plan* (Culebra is another island that is part of Puerto Rican territory). The plan called for the resettlement of all inhabitants of Vieques and Culebra elsewhere so that the Navy could use the islands as it saw fit. As part of the depopulation of Vieques, even the dead would be resettled; their bodies would be dug up and buried somewhere else. Only Governor Luis Muñoz Marín's personal appeals to President Kennedy, with whom he had a close friendship, spared Vieques from the Navy's plans.<sup>28</sup>

Faced with their government's inability to improve their lot, the people of Vieques decided to take matters into their own hands. They formed activist networks at home, in Puerto Rico and the U.S.; they attempted different tactics of political mobiliza-

<sup>27</sup> César Ayala, "Vieques, Puerto Rico: Las Expropiaciones de La Marina de Guerra en la Década de 1940," *University of California-Los Angeles*. [Web site]; available from <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/ayala/Vieques/images/vieques2000.gif>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Néstor Duprey Salgado, *Crónica De Una Guerra Anunciada* (San Juan, PR: 2002) 43-71

tion, including civil disobedience; they even managed some short-lived success. But they were ultimately unsuccessful in their ultimate goals. Why was this?

Several key factors that were present during 1999 and beyond were not in place during the 1970s and 80s. Keck and Sikkink tell us that the new relevance of transnational activist networks is due in part to the proliferation of transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as information and communication technologies (ICTs) that facilitate the transfer of information accurately and quickly.<sup>29</sup> During the initial stirrings of activism in Vieques these two factors had not reached the point of saturation we know today. For example, in 1953 only 33 human rights NGOs existed; in 1973 there were 41 and in 1983, 79; by 1993 the number had reached 168.<sup>30</sup> Tools such as personal computers, fax machines and the Internet were not available at the time. It was therefore harder for coalitions to form between transnational and local activists. In other words, the network was not dense enough for the strategies of political mobilization to have anything but a limited impact. Because transnational networks did not form, the power asymmetry remained basically intact during negotiations. The international situation also made the U.S. less vulnerable to political mobilization by Vieques activists. During the Cold War, national security considerations overrode virtually all others in the shaping of foreign policy, especially in the case of Puerto Rico. This left little space for other considerations to be leveraged against U.S. policy towards Vieques. Finally, the Hispanic community, which would become a major domestic constituency in the United States and a strong advocate of the Navy's departure from Vieques, had not yet acquired the kind of political clout it now has. Even if dense and extensive transnational networks

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<sup>29</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1-37.

<sup>30</sup> Keck and Sikkink 11.



had been formed on behalf of Vieques and had attempted to mobilize Hispanic on behalf of their cause, this constituency did not have the clout at the time to affect the process the way it did post-1999. By the time David Sanes met his untimely death, the international situation would be much different.

#### **4. TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVIST NETWORKS, POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND THE FRAMING OF VIEQUES**

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In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vieques residents and activists had some reason to be optimistic about a possible departure from Vieques by the Navy. The geopolitical situation that had long been the military's justification for its presence in Vieques had changed dramatically since the late 1980s. After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the U.S. military significantly curtailed its military capabilities at home and abroad. According to GlobalSecurity.Org, from 1989 to 1997, the Department of Defense (DoD) reduced total active duty military end strength by 32 percent, while by 1997 the DoD had already reduced its overseas base structure by almost 60 percent, including the closure of 960 overseas structures.<sup>31</sup> Among these facilities was the bombing range at Kaho'olawe, the smallest of Hawaii's eight major islands, which was used by the Pacific Fleet from 1950 to 1990. As it did for Vieques, the Navy claimed Kaho'olawe was essential to its combat readiness.<sup>32</sup> Despite this claim, when it was decided the base would close, the Navy simply moved its Pacific Fleet training to California's San Clemente Island.<sup>33</sup> This precedent

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<sup>31</sup> John Pike, "Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)," *GlobalSecurity.org*, 29 February 2004 [Web site]; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/brac.htm>; accessed 3 March 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Almícar Antonio Barreto, *Vieques, the Navy, and Puerto Rican Politics* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002) 40.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

undermined the Navy's latter claim that Vieques was essential for combat readiness, thus undermining the national security frame it constantly used to justify its presence on the island. Overall, the post-Cold War scenario deprived the Navy and its supporters, both in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico of its more powerful frame for its presence in Vieques: national security.

The end of the Cold War coincided with the zenith of Puerto Rican cultural nationalism on the island and the mainland.<sup>34</sup> Since the inception of the Commonwealth in 1952, cultural nationalism had been exulted by the ruling *Partido Popular Democrático* (Popular Democratic Party – PPD) and its associated elites as a way of simultaneously deflating pro-independence momentum while creating a dike against statehood.<sup>35</sup> By the 1990s cultural nationalism had become the ruling ideology for the Puerto Rican nation, which Jorge Duany argues has become a transnational nation, a “nation on the move.” The constant flow of people, goods and information between the island and major Puerto Rican enclaves like New York City, Chicago and Hartford has created a deterritorialized nation that nevertheless retains a strong identity. The transnational nature of the Puerto Rican nation has precluded the development of a traditional political nationalism, but it has not diminished the sense of cultural nationalism amongst Puerto Ricans.<sup>36</sup> This cultural nationalism played a role in the eventual resolution of the Vieques conflict. As this

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<sup>34</sup> Puerto Rican scholar Jorge Duany differentiates between cultural nationalism, which is “based on the assertion of the moral and spiritual autonomy of each people,” and political nationalism, which is “based on the doctrine that every people should have its own sovereign national government.” See: Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002) 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-285.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

form of nationalism matured, the Navy's perceived indifference towards the concerns of the people of Vieques became more intolerable.<sup>37</sup>

Though the end of the Cold War undermined its most powerful frame for justifying its presence in Vieques, the Navy maintained its position regarding the island. In 1994, Carlos Romero Barceló, then the Puerto Rican non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, introduced a bill to return to the municipality of Vieques a portion of the lands used by the Navy to store munitions.<sup>38</sup> The Navy firmly opposed this bill.<sup>39</sup>

Though the failure of H.R. 3831 was a setback for the Vieques cause, activists continued to reemerge throughout the 1990s, consciously trying to avoid the mistakes that had hindered their efforts in the past. In 1993, a group of longtime Vieques activists formed the *Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques* (Committee Pro Rescue and Development of Vieques – CPRDV), an organization dedicated to recovering the entire island for its residents and to implementing a model of sustainable economic development.<sup>40</sup> What distinguished this group from prior organizations was its pragmatism. Though the core of the organization was composed of *independentistas* (advocates of independence) and other sorts of leftists, the group sought to build bridges to more moderate individuals and constituencies in order to deflect charges during previous campaigns

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<sup>37</sup> Barreto 37.

<sup>38</sup> Congress, House, *Vieques Lands Transfer Act of 1994*, 103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., H.R. 3831, *Congressional Record*, Vol. 140, Page H410.

<sup>39</sup> Congress, Senate, U.S. House Insular and International Affairs Subcommittee of the House Committee on Natural Resources, *Vieques Lands Transfer Act of 1994*, 103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 4 October 1994.

<sup>40</sup> For documents about the sustainable development plan, see “Guías Para el Desarrollo Sostenible de Vieques,” *Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques* [Web site]; available from <http://www.prorescatevieques.org/guias.htm>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2004.

that these were led by communists and anti-American leftists.<sup>41</sup> For example, at the founding meeting of the organization, the committee drew in people who had not experience with earlier activist campaigns and did not subscribe to any separatist ideology. This early effort by the CPRDV to reach across the traditional political divides of Puerto Rican society would set the tone for the post-April 1999 campaign, during which the vast majority of the organizations involved went to great lengths to maintain unity. Another facet of the CPRDV's pragmatism was the development of an alternative vision for the future after the Navy's departure.<sup>42</sup>

The CPRDV's first actions confirmed the pragmatic and moderate image it wished to convey. The Committee collected signatures for a petition to Secretary of Defense Les Aspin to close the military installations in Vieques. The petition was ignored until the errant bomb incident of October 1993, after which it served to help convince the mayor of Vieques to sponsor a resolution calling for a halt to the bombing and a return of the land to *viequenses* hands. A similar resolution was approved in Puerto Rico and sent to Capitol Hill, prompting Romero Barceló to propose his land return bill.<sup>43</sup>

The transnational activist network that emerged around the issue of Vieques was composed of three levels: local activists, the Puerto Rican diaspora and the U.S. Hispanic community, and long-standing transnational activists, which are termed here "vocational."<sup>44</sup> The relationship between these levels of activists is expressed in the graphic below.

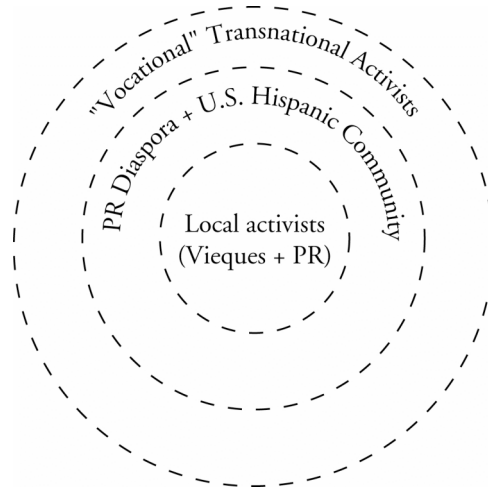
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<sup>41</sup> McCaffrey 126.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in McCaffrey 127.

<sup>43</sup> Mullenneaux 39, Barreto 35, McCaffrey 126.

**Figure 4: Illustration of the Pro-Vieques Transnational Activist Network**



The inner circle represents the coalition forged between *viequense* and Puerto Rican activists, the origins of which can be traced back to the Fishermen’s War and matured during the Radar Over the Horizon (ROTHR) campaign. This coalition provided both the factual information that would become vital to the campaign’s success, such as information about the health, safety and environmental risks the Navy’s activities carried for the Vieques population. They also provided the network with the most compelling frames of the campaign, such as “Peace for Vieques,” which would help enlarge the network and thus disseminate these frames even further. Perhaps more importantly, they provided some of the most dramatic symbols of the campaign. The most dramatic symbol, however, was the occupation of the bombing range and the mass arrests this action provoked.

The middle circle represents the coalition forged between the Puerto Rican diaspora in the U.S. and the Hispanic community in general. This political alliance already existed and was activated on behalf of the Vieques campaign. It provided the power to

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<sup>44</sup> This paper uses the term “vocational” to define “full time” transnational activists who involve themselves in various campaigns out of a moral sense of right and wrong and are not primarily moved by national, cultural or ethnic identities.

mobilize Hispanic constituencies within the U.S. on behalf of the Vieques cause. Their mobilization was based on cultural and ethnic identities. The Puerto Rican diaspora, being an integral part of the Puerto Rican nation and having reached political maturity in the U.S., rallied to the Vieques cause. Various Hispanic communities in the U.S. rallied to the Vieques cause as well out of a sense of solidarity under a shared macro-cultural identity.

The outer circle represents the multiple, religious, environmental, antimilitary, civil rights and human rights organizations that joined the Vieques campaign. These “vocational” transnational activists mobilized public opinion to put pressure on the U.S. government to withdraw the Navy from Vieques.

In the figure above, the dashed lines that form the circles are meant to represent the porous nature of this relationship. Different levels of activism influenced each other throughout the campaign. The order of the circles is meant to convey the progression of the activism from local to transnational as well as the centrality of local activists in their role as providers of information and symbolic power; it is not meant to convey a rigid hierarchical structure for the campaign.

On April 19, 1999, David Sanes Rodríguez, 35, was standing outside Observation Post 1 (OP1) of the live-fire range located on the eastern tip of Vieques. As he performed his duties as a security guard, patrolling the range for possible intruders, the pilot of a FA-18C Hornet accidentally dropped two Mark-82 500-pound bombs a mile and a half off target. The bombs exploded 35 feet and 55 feet from where Sanes was standing,

knocking him unconscious. Four civilians inside OP1 were injured. Sanes was not so lucky; he bled to death from his injuries.<sup>45</sup>

The death of Sanes, one of seventeen children and a native of Barrio La Mina, Vieques, proved to be for *viequenses* and Puerto Ricans alike the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.<sup>46</sup> A few days after Sanes' death, hundreds attended a memorial in his honor at a local Catholic church. Afterwards, the CPRDV led a group of fishermen, anti-Navy activists and members of the Sanes family members to the military lands in order to erect a twelve-foot cross in Sanes' honor. What was supposed to be a quiet religious ceremony quickly took an unexpected turn. Alberto de Jesús, also known as "Tito Kayak," a self-proclaimed environmental "warrior" legendary for his pro-environment stunts, gave an impassioned speech, after which he declared his intention to stay in the bombing range.<sup>47</sup> De Jesús expressed his intentions quite succinctly: "I'm staying until the Navy leaves."<sup>48</sup> Other activists, at first leery of such confrontational tactics, left De Jesús alone the first night, but came back the next, with more activists soon to follow.<sup>49</sup> De Jesús' act of activist entrepreneurship sparked one of the most important components of the Vieques campaign: the acts of civil disobedience through the illegal occupation of the Navy bombing range.

The civil disobedience campaign experienced a surge when the president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), Rubén Berríos Martínez, announced that he and other members of his party would set up camp at the bombing range.<sup>50</sup> Soon other orga-

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<sup>45</sup> Mullenneaux 13-14, McCaffrey 147.

<sup>46</sup> Barreto 41.

<sup>47</sup> McCaffrey 147-148.

<sup>48</sup> Mullenneaux 42.

<sup>49</sup> McCaffrey 148.

<sup>50</sup> Angel José De León, "Rumbo a Vieques Berríos," *El Mundo*, 30 April 1999 [Web site]; [http://www.independencia.net/viequesBerr\\_mundo.html](http://www.independencia.net/viequesBerr_mundo.html); Internet; accessed 6 March 2004.

nizations representing a diverse sampling of Puerto Rican society set up disobedience camps in the bombing range. By late February 2000, there were fourteen distinct civil disobedience camps.<sup>51</sup>

The civil disobedience camps became the central hub of the transnational network that emerged around the issue of Vieques.<sup>52</sup> Local activists supported the activities of the trespassers through various types of political mobilization, such as marches, rallies and vigils. On February 21, 2000, religious leaders organized a march to protest Gov. Rosselló's decision to accept the resumption of naval maneuvers in Vieques. Between eighty thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand people attended the rally, one of the biggest political demonstrations in the island's history.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, the trespassers successfully halted naval exercises on the bombing range from April 1999 until May 2000. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, 300 federal agents descended on the bombing range and arrested over 200 demonstrators, who presented no resistance.<sup>54</sup> The arrests were featured prominently in the local, U.S. and international media. The cycle would repeat itself many more times between 2000 and 2003. Trespassers, some prominent, some not, would enter the bombing range, be arrested by federal law enforcement, arraigned, tried, convicted and sentenced in federal court to serve terms

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Jeffrey, "Protest Camps Grow on Vieques," *National Catholic Reporter*, 10 March 2000 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n11/ProtestsGrow-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 6 March 2004.

<sup>52</sup> McCaffrey 152.

<sup>53</sup> "Tens Of Thousands March In Puerto Rico To Protest Vieques Accord; Religious Leaders Oppose Navy Training Plans," *Associated Press*, 22 Feb. 2000 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n08/March-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 7 March 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Don Bohning, "Vieques Protesters Evicted; U.S. Agents Remove Demonstrators from Bombing Range Off Puerto Rico," *Miami Herald*, 5 May 2000 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n18/ProtEvicted-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 7 March 2004.



some judged to be excessive.<sup>55</sup> Supporters would rally in front of federal jails in Puerto Rico and receive those convicted as heroes when they were released. Substantial press coverage would surround these events, adding to the public's support in Puerto Rico, the U.S. and around the world for the Vieques cause.<sup>56</sup> Civil disobedience provided strong symbolic value that activists and citizens around the world could understand and to which they could relate.

Another political mobilization tactic in which local activists heavily engaged was information politics.<sup>57</sup> The CPRDV (Cumpiano's organization) engaged heavily in information politics. For example, CPRDV members established two Internet discussion groups through Yahoo! Groups, totaling 1,972 members as of March, 2004.<sup>58</sup> More than 700 messages were sent to group members, containing information about the allegedly harmful effects of the Navy's presence in Vieques, as well as press releases about pro-Vieques activities in Puerto Rico and the U.S., and the latest developments from the civil disobedience encampments. The CPRDV also disseminated information through press conferences and forums, and engaged in direct lobbying, focusing its attention on the White House through a letter-writing campaign.

The local activists' efforts had put public opinion in Vieques and Puerto Rico firmly on their side. In November 1999, support in Puerto Rico for the Navy's departure stood at fifty-six percent; by May 2000, seventy percent of Puerto Ricans wanted the

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<sup>55</sup> Karen Matthews, "Governors Decry 'Excessive' Sentences For Vieques Protesters," *Associated Press*, 24 May 2001 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n21/Media1-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 7 March 2004.

<sup>56</sup> A LexisNexis search for this paper, using the keywords "Vieques" and "Navy," yielded 891 major U.S. newspaper articles, 71 magazine and journal articles, over one thousand television transcripts, over one-thousand wire reports, 233 stories in the European press, ninety two in the Asian press and thirty in the Middle East/African press.

<sup>57</sup> Cumpiano 2004.

Navy to leave Vieques.<sup>59</sup> *Viequense* public opinion was even more unified; a poll conducted in June 2000 revealed eighty-eight percent of Vieques residents wanted the Navy to leave the island.<sup>60</sup>

As has been noted above, the Puerto Rican nation today can be best characterized using Duany's phrase: a nation on the move. "The Puerto Rican nation is no longer restricted to the Island but instead is constituted by two distinct yet closely intertwined fragments: that of Puerto Rico itself and that of the diasporic communities settled in the continental United States."<sup>61</sup> This being the case, prominent members of the Puerto Rican diaspora became involved in the Vieques struggle soon after David Sanes' death and remained active throughout the struggle. All three U.S. Representatives of Puerto Rican descent were arrested during the Vieques campaign: Nydia Velázquez (NY) and Luis Gutiérrez (IL) were detained during the May 2000 federal raid on the civil disobedience camps;<sup>62</sup> José Serrano (NY) was detained that same day inside White House grounds while protesting the arrests in Vieques.<sup>63</sup> Leaders like Bronx Borough Assemblyman José Rivera, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1199 President Dennis

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<sup>58</sup> "bieke\_pr," *CPRDV* [Web site]; [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bieke\\_pr/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bieke_pr/); Internet; accessed 8 March 2004; "ViequesLibre," *CPRDV* [Web site]; <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/viequeslibre/>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2004.

<sup>59</sup> "Poll Suggests Lukewarm Support for Ending Navy Presence; 56% Want Navy To Leave," *Associated Press*, 19 Nov. 1999 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol3n48/ClintonClose-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2004; Juan Gonzalez, "Vieques Libre," *Alternet.org* [Web site]; available from <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=1011>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Proviana Colon Diaz, "Caguas Diocese Poll: 88.5% Of Vieques Wants Navy Out Now," *PuertoRicoWOW News Service* [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n26/VQHeads-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Duany 5.

<sup>62</sup> Chris Hawley, "Vieques Protesters Arrested," *Associated Press* [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n17/ProtesArrested-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2004.

<sup>63</sup> Leonor Mulero, "Serrano Protesta y Lo Arrestan," *El Nuevo Día*, 5 May 2000 [Web site]; <http://www.adendi.com>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2004.

Rivera, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión and others provided what he refers to as “political muscle,” putting political pressure on state and federal officials to support the Navy’s withdrawal from Vieques.<sup>64</sup>

The Puerto Rican diaspora was part of a larger coalition of American Hispanics who became involved in the Vieques campaign. In fact, support for the Vieques cause was widespread within the Hispanic community. When U.S. senators threatened to close down the Roosevelt Roads Naval Base unless Puerto Rico acquiesced on Vieques, the Hispanic Coalition for Puerto Rico Self-Determination, a group composed of national Hispanic organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the American G.I. Forum, the National Association of Hispanic Publications, the National Hispanic Policy Forum and the Hispanic National Bar Association, came to the defense of Vieques and Puerto Rico. In a statement, Rick Dovalina, President of LULAC, said, "U.S. Hispanics deplore the manner in which Puerto Rico has been threatened with economic reprisals by some Republican senators. This is no way to be treating people who have served valiantly in the defense of our country."<sup>65</sup> This same statement by the Coalition suggest an underlying element of ethnic and cultural solidarity in the Hispanic community’s support for the Vieques campaign when it states that "any disparagement or censure of the American citizens of Puerto Rico will be treated by Hispanic Americans as an insult to us all."<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus lobbied both their fellow members as well as the

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<sup>64</sup> Cumpiano 2004.

<sup>65</sup> “Hispanics Warn Congress: Stop Threats to Puerto Rico Over Vieques,” *The Puerto Rico Herald*, 26 January 2000 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n04/HispWarnCongress-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2004.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

White House to support the Navy's exit.<sup>67</sup> In a letter addressed to President Bush and dated October 16, 2002, the CHC asked the president to, among other things, to commit to a timetable for the Navy's withdrawal from Vieques. One of the last lines of the letter read: "Hispanics throughout the United States are following this issue very closely."<sup>68</sup>

According to Cumpiano, these "vocational" transnational activists, such as the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, Robert Kennedy, Jr., Edwards James Olmos, the Dalai Lama, Rigoberta Menchú and Oscar Arias, among others, were "key" to the success of the campaign.<sup>69</sup> Because of the frames local activists had adopted for the Vieques cause, which emphasized the health and environmental effects of the Navy's presence on the island as well as issues of human rights and quality of life issue ("Peace for Vieques"), the campaign had broad appeal for transnational activists of many different stripes. Because of the alleged use of depleted uranium in Navy munitions fired in Vieques, environmental activists concerned about depleted uranium supported the campaign, linking it to the use of such munitions in Kosovo.<sup>70</sup> Religious organizations, mobilized by their ties to religious groups in Puerto Rico as well as the "peace" frame, provided much of the pro-Vieques transnational activism. A variety of religious groups amplified the pleas for peace from local Vieques activists.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Robert Becker, "Vieques Flexes Potent Political Muscle," *The Puerto Rico Herald*, 13 July 2001 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n28/PRR528-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2004.

<sup>68</sup> "Congressional Hispanic Caucus Members Demand Action from Bush on Vieques," *Yorkshire Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* [Web site]; available from <http://cndyorks.gn.apc.org/caab/articles/vieques175.htm>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Cumpiano 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Toby Eglund, "Depleted Uranium: The Vieques-Kosovo Connection," *The Gully*, 12 Feb. 2001 [Web site]; [http://www.thegully.com/essays/puertorico/010212depleted\\_uranium.html](http://www.thegully.com/essays/puertorico/010212depleted_uranium.html); Internet; accessed 10 March 2004.

<sup>71</sup> "NCC Emphasizes Peaceful Nature of Vieques Protests, Presses Clinton for an Immediate End to War Exercises There," *National Council of Churches*, 2 May 2000 [Web site]; available from <http://www.wfn.org/2000/05/msg00016.html>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2004.

The mass arrests of trespassers at the bombing range brought about support from civil and human rights organizations concerned about alleged abuses committed by federal authorities. Amnesty International sent observers to the island to investigate allegations that military police used excessive force against activists,<sup>72</sup> while the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the Navy “behalf of peaceful crowds protesting the United States Navy’s bombing exercises on Vieques Island who were repeatedly assaulted with tear gas and rubber bullets by Naval personnel in riot gear.”<sup>73</sup> The intervention of these groups in the campaign not only highlighted the treatment of activists by the government, but shone a light on the larger Vieques campaign as well, building public support for the campaign’s objectives. The role of this mobilization of public opinion both in the U.S. and abroad in the Vieques negotiations will be examined in greater detail in the following section.

## **5. A TWO-LEVEL GAME ANALYSIS OF THE VIEQUES NEGOTIATIONS**

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The U.S. Navy maintained a significant presence in Vieques from 1941 to 2003. During that period of time, local and Puerto Rican activists made numerous attempts to either ameliorate the perceived harm caused by the Navy’s presence, or to affect the Navy’s departure from the island. With few exceptions, these attempts were largely unsuccessful. Yet in 2003, after facing a lengthy period of pro-Vieques activism begun in 1999, the U.S. Navy left Vieques.

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<sup>72</sup> “Puerto Rico: Amnesty International Sends Observer to Vieques,” *Amnesty International*, 9 May 2001 [Web site]; <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAMR47f0012001>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2004.

<sup>73</sup> “Navy Violated Free Speech Rights of Vieques Protesters, ACLU Charges in Lawsuit,” *American Civil Liberties Union*, 18 June 2001, <http://www.aclu.org/FreeSpeech/FreeSpeech.cfm?ID=7320&amp;c=86>.

Why did this happen? Theories of international relations that privilege distribution of power scenarios would have predicted that, due to the power asymmetry embedded in the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, the U.S. government would not be susceptible to pressure from Puerto Rico to withdraw the Navy from Vieques. Yet the outcome of the Vieques negotiations proved to be much closer to Puerto Rican interests than to original American interests. A distribution of power scenario cannot, by itself, explain this outcome.

There are two main factors that contributed to the outcome of the negotiation. First, the broad-based coalition of *viequenses* and Puerto Ricans (island and U.S. mainland alike) forged at Level II (the domestic level) constrained the win-set for Puerto Rican negotiators at Level I (the international level). Second, the emergence of a transnational activist network on behalf of Vieques at Level II eventually enlarged the U.S. government's win-set at Level I enough so that it overlapped with the small Puerto Rican win-set. During negotiations under President Clinton, intense lobbying by mainland Puerto Ricans, Hispanics and vocational transnational activists convinced Clinton to consider withdrawing the Navy from Vieques as an alternative. During negotiations under President Bush, his desire to make political inroads with the Hispanic population allowed him to promise the Navy's withdrawal without suffering significant political damage from his pro-Navy constituencies. Throughout these two periods, transnational activists consistently deployed an effective use of framing, bolstered by political mobilization tactics such as information politics, technocratic and legalistic tactics and direct lobbying. The two factors outlined here are analyzed in greater detail below.

The death of David Sanes triggered a widespread reaction in Vieques and Puerto Rico. This reaction prompted pro-statehood governor Pedro Rosselló to appoint a Special Commission on Vieques, chaired by Secretary of State Norma Burgos and composed of representatives from the three major political parties (the pro-statehood New Progressive Party, the pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party and the Puerto Rican Independence Party), the mayor of San Juan and future pro-commonwealth governor Sila Calderón, pro-statehood Vieques mayor Manuela Santiago, representatives of civic organizations such as the Vieques Fishermen's Association and others, and the Archbishop of San Juan.

Considering the reluctance of most political sectors in the past to directly criticize the U.S. government and the Navy, the report produced by the commission was remarkable for its willingness to do just that. After holding forty-five days of hearings, it placed the blame for the situation in Vieques squarely on the Navy's shoulders. The report charged the Navy with causing the economic stagnation prevalent in Vieques, threatening the survival of endangered species and archeological sites, and with violating the fundamental rights of *viequenses* to the enjoyment of life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness as enshrined in the U.S. and Puerto Rican constitutions and international law. Among other things, it called for the immediate cessation of all military activity on the island of Vieques, while simultaneously dismissing the Navy's contention that Vieques was unique and irreplaceable as a training facility. Finally, the commission called for a government working group that would present the Puerto Rican government's position to U.S. public opinion, the White House, Congress and other forums, and for this group to

identify and form alliances with groups sympathetic to the government's position.<sup>74</sup> The commission's recommendations were remarkably similar to the demands made by local activists such as the CPRDV.<sup>75</sup> Governor Rosselló adopted the commission's recommendations as Puerto Rican government's official policy.<sup>76</sup> Since the commission's creation was a direct result of the political mobilization achieved by activists, the adoption of the commission's report by Rosselló was a victory for activists seeking to constrain the Puerto Rican domestic win-set and trigger negotiations for the Navy's withdrawal from Vieques.

During his handling of the Vieques situation, Rosselló faced competing pressures that were at times difficult to reconcile. His party's statehood proposal had recently lost a political status plebiscite in which "none of the above" defeated three other alternatives with fifty percent of the vote.<sup>77</sup> Heading into the 2000 election, Rosselló and his party were also weakened by allegations of corruption, including the embezzlement of federal funds.<sup>78</sup> Another incentive was the cultural nationalism that permeated the pro-Vieques campaign in Puerto Rico. Historically, the PNP has been closely associated with the military.<sup>79</sup> Yet due to the widespread adoption of cultural nationalism in Puerto Rico, the

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<sup>74</sup> "Resumen Ejecutivo," *Comisión Especial de Vieques para Estudiar la Situación Existente en la Isla Municipio con Relación a las Actividades de la Marina de los Estados Unidos*, (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> "Declaration of Ultimatum of the People of Vieques to the United States Navy," *Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques*, 31 July 1999 [Web site]; available from <http://www.viequeslibre.addr.com/ultimatum.htm>; Internet; accessed 2 April 2004.

<sup>76</sup> Chris Hawley, "Rosselló Calls on U.S. Navy to Leave Bombing Range," *Associated Press*, 1 July 1999 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol3n28/APLeaveVieques-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 3 April 2004.

<sup>77</sup> "Consulta de Resultados: Plebiscito de Status del 13 de Diciembre de 1998," *Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico*, 13 December 1998 [Web site]; <http://www.ceepur.net/cgi-bin/eventos.pl?evento=1998>; Internet; accessed 3 April 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Christopher H. Schmitt, "A Wave of Scandals in Puerto Rico," *Business Week Online*, 27 November 2000 [Web site]; available from [http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00\\_48/b3709132.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_48/b3709132.htm); Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

<sup>79</sup> Barreto 47.



PNP has been careful to project support for Puerto Rican cultural identity while advocating statehood.<sup>80</sup> Given the widespread support in Puerto Rico for the Vieques cause and the cultural nationalist overtones of this support, Rosselló had powerful incentives to support a hard line on the issue.

Other pressures, however, would come to influence Rosselló's negotiating position later in the game. Rosselló faced pressure from a faction of conservative statehood advocates within his party who, fearful of sending Washington an anti-American message, did not want the Navy to leave Vieques. This raised the specter of division within his party in the 2000 elections, as well as potential obstacles for statehood in the future. In all, Vieques presented both political opportunities and perils for Rosselló.

Given the broad support in Puerto Rico for the immediate cessation of military exercises in Vieques and the Navy's departure, Rosselló initially followed the Special Commission's hard line. During congressional hearings, he used one of the pro-Vieques campaign's slogans, "not one more bomb," and declared, "Any bombing of Vieques is unacceptable to us."<sup>81</sup> He also charged the Navy with blocking negotiations between his government and the White House regarding the future of Vieques.<sup>82</sup> As time passed, however, Rosselló moderated his position, declaring his willingness to support the Penta-

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>81</sup> Tamara Lytle, "Not One More Bomb" – Rosselló," *The Orlando Sentinel*, 20 October 1999 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol3n43/NoMoreBombs-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

<sup>82</sup> "Rosselló: U.S. Navy Impeding Vieques Bombing Range Talks," *The Orlando Sentinel*, 9 January 2000 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n02/NavyImpeding-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

gon's limited use of Vieques if the Clinton Administration abandoned it as a bombing range and ceded the property to the commonwealth.<sup>83</sup>

On February 1, 2000, Puerto Ricans found a surprising development in their morning papers. The White House and Rosselló's government had quietly negotiated an accord that they hoped would end the Vieques standoff. In exchange for \$40 million in economic aid up front, Puerto Rican officials agreed to let the Navy conduct exercises this spring with "dummy" bombs containing no explosives. But at a date still to be determined--sometime between this August and February 2002--the people of Vieques would vote in a referendum on whether to permit the Navy to resume using live ammunition. If the voters said yes, the people of Vieques would get an additional \$50 million in aid, for a total of \$90 million. If they vote "no," the Navy would clean up its practice range and halt all training by May 1, 2003.<sup>84</sup>

The announcement of the accord brought with it an unprecedented event: a personal appeal by President Clinton to the people of Vieques via television. In a message taped in the White House's Map Room, Clinton asked *viequenses* to support the deal.<sup>85</sup>

The accord was harshly criticized by a broad cross-section of Level II constituencies. A February 2000 survey showed that *viequenses* overwhelmingly believed the accord protected the Navy (93 percent), that it violated the governor's promise of "not one more bomb" (82 percent), and that the protestors should remain on the island municipal-

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<sup>83</sup> Carol Rosenberg, "Rosselló Willing To Deal On Vieques," *The Miami Herald*, 23 October 1999 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol3n44/RosselloWilling-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Roberto Suro, "Navy Bombing Range Deal Reached: Puerto Rico Negotiates Aid And A Vote On Vieques' Future," *The Washington Post*, 1 February 2000 [Web site] available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n04/ViequesPact-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 5 April 2004.

<sup>85</sup> "Transcript of Clinton Remarks To The People Of Puerto Rico Concerning Navy Training on Vieques," *U.S. Newswire*, 1 February 2000 [Web site]; available from <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n05/PresTranscript-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

ity (79 percent).<sup>86</sup> The biggest demonstration of repudiation for the accord came on February 21, when a non-partisan march called by religious leaders drew between eighty five thousand and one hundred thousand demonstrators. The organizers drew on the frames that had been effective thus far in keeping the pro-Vieques network together and public opinion on their side. Since the accord did not require a formal ratification procedure in Puerto Rico (such as a referendum or a legislative vote), the widespread repudiation of the accord by activists, *viequenses* and Puerto Rican public opinion amounted to a *de facto* failure of ratification and an involuntary defection by the Rosselló Administration due to its inability to deliver support at Level II for the agreement reached at Level I. By mobilizing public opinion against the Clinton-Rosselló agreement, activists had once again been successful in constraining the Puerto Rican domestic win-set, causing an involuntary defection for the Rosselló administration.

With the evidence available it is not possible to determine with certitude the reasons for Rosselló's acceptance of the accord. Perhaps he thought it was truly the best deal Puerto Rico could hope for and decided to take it. Perhaps he was trying to shore up his base in anticipation of the 2000 election (in which he chose not to run). Perhaps, also with an eye towards the election, he decided to make a deal and try to remove the issue from the table while claiming credit for its resolution and removing it off the table. Finally, rumors circulated at the time that Rosselló had moderated his position on Vieques in exchange for a side payment in the form of a promise from the White House to press Congress for action on the political status question.<sup>87</sup> Regardless of his reasons for reaching the accord with Clinton, it is clear that Rosselló either underestimated the attachment

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<sup>86</sup> Barreto 61.

<sup>87</sup> Barreto 61.

of his Level II constituencies to the goals stated by activists and the Special Commission, or overestimated his ability to garner support for his Level I agreement.

Despite the failure of ratification of the Clinton-Rosselló accord, this agreement yielded gains for activists and their supporters. It inserted the alternative of the Navy's full withdrawal from Vieques, an option that had never been seriously considered before. It also elicited a tacit acknowledgement from the President of the United States of the effects of the Navy's presence on Vieques: "we have not always been good neighbors on Vieques."<sup>88</sup> Finally, it triggered the gradual devolution of certain Vieques lands to Puerto Rico, a gain congruent with the CPRDV's pragmatic approach.

Though President Clinton's Level II win-set was larger than Rosselló's, it did not sufficiently overlap with Puerto Rico's for both sides to reach a ratifiable agreement. Clinton faced two competing constituencies at Level II. On one side there was a transnational activist network composed of the Puerto Rican diaspora, Hispanics and left-wing activists (environmentalists, civil and human rights advocates, etc.). On the other, there was the Navy itself (which doubled as party to the negotiation at times) and pro-military constituencies, which were particularly strong in Congress. Though pressure from pro-Vieques activists provided Clinton with incentives to consider the Navy's complete withdrawal as an alternative, politically he was not strong enough to completely overcome objections by pro-Navy constituencies.

Clinton had significant incentives to strike a deal that would satisfy mainland Puerto Rican and Hispanic constituencies. Hispanics are an increasingly important component of the Democratic Party's coalition, one that they must assiduously court if they

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<sup>88</sup> "Transcript of Clinton Remarks" 2000.

are to form a governing majority in the near future.<sup>89</sup> In 1996, for example, seventy per cent of Hispanics voted for Clinton.<sup>90</sup> It is therefore reasonable to say that, during his negotiations with the Puerto Rican government, he was looking to please this important Level II constituency.

There was a limit, however, to how far Clinton could go in trying to please this constituency. Since the beginning of his presidency, Clinton was vulnerable to attacks from pro-military constituencies, mostly due to his support for the right of homosexuals to serve in the military and to his military record (or lack thereof). Clinton's accord was met with considerable skepticism in Congress, particularly in the Senate.<sup>91</sup> Clinton was able to strike a ratifiable deal because his proposal did not arouse the level of intensity of the issue among pro-military constituencies to the point that their reaction could derail ratification. In the end, however, Clinton's weakness in relation to his pro-military constituencies did not allow his Level II win-set to overlap sufficiently with its Puerto Rican counterpart, thereby discouraging a deal that could be ratified at both domestic tables. This would change after the 2000 election, when two different chief negotiators would take charge.

On November 7, 2000, Puerto Ricans elected for the first a woman, San Juan Mayor Sila Calderón, as their governor. While the issue of government corruption dominated the campaign, Vieques also played a role in Calderon's victory. Initially, Calderón took a moderate posture on Vieques, adopting the Special Commission's hard line and

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<sup>89</sup> John B. Judis and Ruy Texera, *The Emerging Democratic Majority* (New York: A Lisa Drew Book, 2002) 57-59.

<sup>90</sup> "Economy Contributed To Clinton's Victory," *CNN*, 5 November 1996 [Web site]; <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/news/9611/06/exitpoll2/exitpoll2.shtml>; Internet; accessed 1 April 2004.

rejecting the Clinton-Rosselló accord but vacillating on her support for the acts of civil disobedience occurring in Vieques. Still, because of her party's longstanding support for cultural (if not political) nationalism, Calderón had enough credibility to use Vieques as a political weapon. Calderón's effective use of the Vieques issue allowed her to hold on to her political base while attracting enough moderates to win the election.<sup>92</sup> Because of the political mobilization deployed by activists, the Vieques cause had become a salient issue in the gubernatorial election and the electorate favored a candidate with a harder line on the issue.

Due to her party's association with both cultural nationalism and a pragmatic approach to U.S.-Puerto Rico relations, Calderón was a better fit as chief negotiator for the prevailing win-set than Rosselló. This meant that Calderón could negotiate without looking over her shoulder at Level II for constituencies that, due to their long-term goals regarding Puerto Rico's political status, worried about the detrimental effect of the Vieques issue on their cause. Calderón could adopt the Special Commission's hard line with fewer reservations than Rosselló.

Calderón's negotiation strategy was much less structured than Rosselló. At no point between her inauguration and the Navy's exit in May 2003 was a new accord formally negotiated. Rather, her efforts consisted of ad hoc efforts aimed at pressuring the Navy, the Secretary of Defense and President Bush in order to achieve two objectives: to ensure an immediate Navy withdrawal, and to ensure compliance by the Navy with any agreement. Fear of non-compliance had long permeated pro-Vieques Level II constitu-

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<sup>91</sup> Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services and the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, *Vieques and the Future of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility*, 106<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 22 September and 19 October 1999.

encies' perceptions in Puerto Rico and the U.S. The emergence of new administrations in the U.S. and Puerto Rico meant a change in tactics on the Puerto Rican side. Because of her political background, Calderón could afford to be relatively more confrontational towards the Navy. At the same time, because she wasn't as closely identified with the Democratic Party as her predecessor, Calderón could more easily build alliances with mainland Republicans in order to influence the new president.

Calderón's first attempt at speeding the Navy's withdrawal actually involved the Clinton Administration. Soon after her election but before taking office, Calderón and her counterparts in the opposition parties, as well as religious and civic leaders, sent a joint letter to President Clinton demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Navy.<sup>93</sup> She also enlisted the help of Puerto Rican politicians from New York to lobby the president and New York's Senator-elect Hillary Clinton. Through this lobbying campaign, Calderón hoped to convince Clinton to sign an executive order to withdraw the Navy from Vieques. Clinton left office on January 21, 2001, without signing the order. Thus the decision was passed on to Clinton's successor, George W. Bush.

The Calderón Administration's next attempt at hastening the Navy's departure was to take it to court, suing the Navy for violating a local environmental noise regulation. Transnational activists bolstered these legalistic tactics with lawsuits of their own. The Waterkeeper Alliance, an environmental group headed by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF, a mainland organization) filed a federal lawsuit against the Navy for environmental damage. Such actions not

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<sup>92</sup> Barreto 66.

only compounded the Navy's legal woes, but drew attention to and amplified media coverage of the Vieques cause.

Next, Calderón enlisted the help of select Republicans to bolster her direct lobbying campaign. Her most prominent ally was Republican New York Governor George Pataki, whom she endorsed for reelection. Pataki visited Vieques, and then lobbied Bush hard on its behalf.<sup>94</sup> Calderón also hired Charlie Black, a Republican strategist and long-time ally of the Bush family, as her principal lobbyist in Washington.<sup>95</sup> The lobbying campaign worked: on June 14, 2001, President Bush announced his decision to definitively withdraw the Navy from Vieques by May 1, 2003.

Despite Bush's decision, Calderón deployed a form of political mobilization of shame through the electoral process. As noted above, the Clinton-Rosselló deal called for a referendum on the Navy's status. Bush's initial position was to endorse the accord. The referendum, however, did not include what was known to be the choice of the vast majority of *viequenses*: the immediate cessation of naval exercises and departure of the Navy. The Navy set the referendum for November 6, 2001., Calderón sought to preempt the binding referendum with a local, non-binding referendum that included the option missing in the Clinton-Rosselló accord. Though Bush preempted the native referendum by announcing his decision, the vote went ahead as planned. The results were conclusive: over sixty eight percent of Vieques residents voted for "the immediate and perma-

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<sup>93</sup> "All Three Parties Ask Clinton To Order Navy Out Of Vieques," *Associated Press*, 13 November 2000 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n46/Media-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2004.

<sup>94</sup> "Governor Pataki Announces Historic Visit to Vieques," *Office of the Governor, New York State*, 1 April 2001 [Web site] [http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/year01/april1\\_66\\_01.htm](http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/year01/april1_66_01.htm); Internet; accessed 5 April 2004.



ment termination of the military practices and bombings of the Navy in Vieques. The exit of the Navy from Vieques, the cleaning and return of viequense lands to its citizens.”<sup>96</sup>

The result was interpreted by many sectors of public opinion as a victory for activists and an embarrassment for the Bush Administration.<sup>97</sup>

George W. Bush brought to Level I a win-set similar to Clinton’s, but with important differences. For example, Bush did not have to worry about serious attempts by military constituencies in Congress to block an agreement reached by Bush at Level I. To be sure, these (mostly Republican) constituencies were not happy with Bush’s decision on Vieques.<sup>98</sup> But in the end, Bush could reasonably expect that his fellow Republicans would not challenge him on this issue as they would Clinton. Bush could also feel relatively confident on his hold on the military vote.<sup>99</sup>

While Bush had little incentive to narrow his Level I alternatives in order to satisfy his base, he had plenty of political incentives to enlarge his win-set to attract Hispanic voters. In 2000, despite a concerted effort by his campaign to court Hispanic voters, Bush only did five points better among Hispanics than his Republican predecessor, Bob Dole, did in 1996.<sup>100</sup> This made Bush susceptible to lobbying from the Hispanic and

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<sup>95</sup> Tamara Lytle, “Congress Jeers Bush on Vieques, Vows Fight,” *The Orlando Sentinel*, 15 June 2001 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n24/BushAnnoncesHalt-en.shtml#Anchor5>; Internet; accessed 1 April 2004.

<sup>96</sup> “Jul-29-2001 Vieques Referendum Canvass: Summary of Final Results,” *Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico*, 30 July 2001 [Web site] <http://www.ceepur.net/consulta2001/escrutinio/summary.html>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Juan Gonzalez, “Cries are Falling on Deaf Ears: Puerto Ricans Vote on Vieques; Bush Remains Quiet,” *New York Daily News*, 31 July 2001 [Web site]; <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n32/CriesDeafEars-en.shtml>; Internet; accessed 3 April 2004.

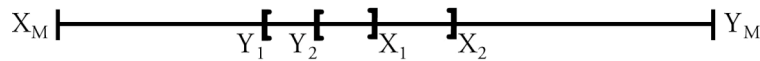
<sup>98</sup> Lytle 2001.

<sup>99</sup> “Military Vote in Florida Could Cement Bush Victory,” *Newsmax.com*, 9 November 2000 [Web site]; <http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2000/11/8/173448.shtml>; Internet; accessed 2 April 2004.

<sup>100</sup> Julie Mason, “Democratic Pollster Says Bush's Hispanic Support Stagnant,” *The Houston Chronicle*, 12 March, 2004 [Web site]; <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/politics/2445553>; Internet; accessed 30 March 2004.

Puerto Rican components of the pro-Vieques transnational activist network. There is no evidence that suggests Bush was vulnerable to pressures from environmental groups of civil and human rights advocates. Since these groups are not part of Bush's natural political constituency, this should come as no surprise. The diagram below illustrates the win-sets and zone of agreement involved in the Vieques negotiations:

**Figure 5: Win-sets and Zone of Agreement of Vieques Negotiations**



$X_M$  = The maximum ratifiable outcome in Puerto Rico (immediate withdrawal of the Navy from Puerto Rico, among other things).

$Y_M$  = The maximum ratifiable outcome in the United States (the Navy remains in Vieques indefinitely).

$X_1$  = The minimum ratifiable outcome in Puerto Rico (definitive withdrawal of the Navy from Puerto Rico in less than five years).

$Y_1$  = The minimum ratifiable outcome in the United States (eventual withdrawal of the Navy from Vieques).

$X_2$  = Agreement between President Clinton and Governor Rosselló (not ratified by Puerto Rican public opinion).

$Y_2$  = President Bush's decision to withdraw the Navy in 2003.

## CONCLUSIONS

The empirical findings outlined above strongly suggest that the arguments posited by this paper are correct. Transnational activist networks can, in fact, affect the outcomes of weak-strong international negotiations through strategies of political mobilization.

The preponderance of evidence is most conclusive at the domestic level of negotiations. It is clear that influence on the international level can come about through alterations to the domestic win-sets and the zone of agreement brought about by political mobilization.

The aforementioned findings also indicate that a healthy dose of pragmatism is key to the successful formation of an effective transnational activist network. As is as-

serted above, these networks can influence international negotiations in at least one way: by mobilizing public opinion and key constituencies at the domestic level and altering the win-sets of both domestic tables, thereby bringing the zone of agreement closer to activists' policy alternatives. In the case of Vieques, this involved constricting the domestic win-set in Puerto Rico while enlarging it in the United States, which brought the zone of agreement closer to the maximum Puerto Rican ratifiable agreement. Whatever the equation might be in other cases, the empirical findings indicate that effective political mobilization requires a relatively unified activist network. In the case of Vieques, the network subscribed to one overarching goal (immediate withdrawal of the Navy), largely agreed on tactical matters (peaceful civil disobedience and similar actions) and adopted a relatively unified set of frames (Peace for Vieques, Not One More Bomb, etc.) that conveyed a unified message to constituencies amenable to persuasion. The evidence examined here suggests that activists can achieve the level of unity outlined above through pragmatism and compromise. A willingness to compromise on tactical and ideological matters, to craft frames and political mobilization strategies that appeal to target constituencies can go a long way towards achieving the necessary changes in domestic win-sets that could result in negotiation outcomes close to the network's goals.

Finally, there is the corollary to the main hypothesis: The success of the strategies of political mobilization depends on the level of vulnerability to influence of the strong actor. From the evidence examined, a strong inference can be made that the more vulnerable the strong actor is to influence, the more effective the political mobilization would be. In the case of Vieques, a correlation can be made between the openness of the American political system and the level of success activists achieved in enlarging the

American domestic win-set, bringing the zone of agreement close to their goals.

It would be useful at this point to situate this paper within the context of current literature on transnational activism and international negotiations. The theoretical conclusions outlined above suggest larger implications for the role of transnational activists networks on the international stage. Scholars have addressed the potential influence of transnational activism on international negotiations, such as with referencing their influence on public opinion through lobbying or effective framing of issues.<sup>101</sup> Useful as this work has been, it has not specified what exactly transnational activist networks do that influence the outcomes of negotiations. This paper takes a step in that direction by positing that these networks can affect the outcomes of international negotiations by mobilizing key constituencies at the domestic level of the strong actor, thereby enlarging its Level II win-set and moving the zone of agreement closer to the weak actor's maximum ratifiable agreement. Since an increasing number of weak-strong interactions on the international stage take place within a negotiations context, understanding how transnational activist networks can influence negotiations could make coalitions between these networks and weak actors more effective. This should result in a greater proportion of favorable outcomes for weak actors.

This paper also adds to scholarship on the composition of transnational activist networks and their motivations. Keck and Sikkink emphasize the role of values and principle in the composition of these networks.<sup>102</sup> This paper, however, suggests that ethnic, cultural and national identities can also play a large role in the composition and motivations behind the network's actions, and that these identities need not exclude value-based

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<sup>101</sup> Martin and Sikkink 1993, Odell and Sell 2003.

<sup>102</sup> Keck and Sikkink 1998.

identities. These identities can be mobilized as a complement to value-based identities during a campaign on behalf of a weak actor. How can we reconcile theoretically the blend of identities borne out by the empirical evidence collected here?

Castells' work on identity is helpful in this regard. He makes a distinction between three types of identity-building: legitimizing identity, resistance identity and project identity.<sup>103</sup> It is the last type that concerns us here. Project identities emerge "when social actors...build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by doing so, seek the transformation of overall social structure."<sup>104</sup> There is a close relationship between resistance identities and contemporary nationalism. The defensive nature of contemporary cultural nationalism suggests that it often finds itself in the position of the weaker actor. Since vocational transnational activists are drawn to act on behalf of weak actors due to their value-based identities, it is therefore possible for a transnational activist network to emerge that is mobilized simultaneously by both types of identities. The success of this mobilization, however, would depend on the strategic approach adopted by activists, including their effective deployment of frames that can bridge these identities, as was the case in Vieques.

This paper seeks to advance the notion that interactions between traditionally weak and strong actors are not predetermined by distribution of power scenarios. Weak actors, in partnership with transnational activist networks, have a greater potential to affect the outcomes of their interactions with stronger actors. In our current era of globalization, the strong are not destined to do as they want and the weak are not condemned to suffer what they must.

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<sup>103</sup> Castells 8.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

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