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## WASHINGTON IN BRIEF

### Puerto Rico Seeks End to Navy Shelling

Puerto Rico wants the Navy to stop shelling an outlying island where 9,000 people live, and the Pentagon has opened hearings to decide what to do about it.

The Navy contends Vieques Island is an Atlantic military training facility "of vital importance to our national defense policy and impacts Navy readiness."

But Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Rossello, the first witness Friday before a four-member special commission examining the Navy's use of the island and alternatives, said, "The issue is the impact that these exercises have on a community of U.S. citizens."

Navy officials are to present the service's position to the panel on July 23 after the completion of a separate review ordered by Navy Secretary Richard Danzig. The commission's recommendations to Defense Secretary William S. Cohen are due in six weeks.

The current crisis over the island was sparked by the April 19 death of a Puerto Rican security guard for the Navy, David Sanes Rodriguez, who was killed when two bombs dropped by an F-18 fighter missed their target within the Navy range.

About 30 protesters are occupying a live-fire area to demand that the Navy get out. The Navy imposed a moratorium on live-fire exercises on Vieques after the bombing accident.

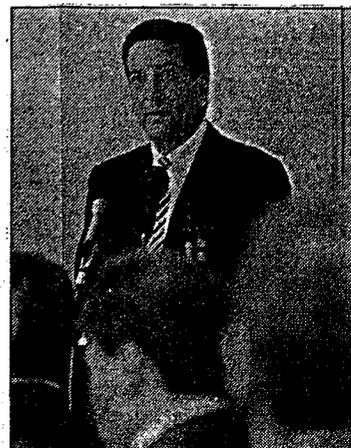
The Navy says Sanes was the first casualty in more than 50 years of training exercises on the 51-square-mile island. The Navy controls about two-thirds of Vieques, which lies eight miles east of Puerto Rico.

■ Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, ending a day and a half of testimony, asked U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth yesterday to limit court involvement in the repair of the trouble-plagued Indian trust fund program and to allow him to "get this problem nailed down and solved." With Babbitt's testimony, the government rested its defense in a class action lawsuit filed by Native Americans demanding that the courts take over the trust fund, overhaul its error-filled accounting system and make restitution to Indians who have lost

money.

■ The Defense Protective Service, the special police force that protects the 280-acre Pentagon reservation, is beset with management problems, fuzzy lines of authority and low morale, according to a report from the Defense Department's inspector general. The Pentagon acknowledged the problems and said they have been corrected since the 265-officer protective service was studied in 1997.

—Compiled from reports by staff researcher Ben White, the Associated Press and Reuters.



BY GEORGE BRIDGES—ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gov. Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico addresses Pentagon panel on Friday.