U.S. troops in Puerto Rico prepare for Nicaragua invasion

By Rafael Ramos

DECEMBER 27—Progressive people in Puerto Rico fear a direct U.S. military intervention of Nicaragua could come by early February, a few weeks after the inauguration of President Reagan, using the island of Puerto Rico as one of the main staging areas.

The reason for this fear is that recently there has been a large military buildup in Puerto Rico. According to Claridad, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) paper, Ramsey Air Force base in Aguadilla has been reopened and has been used for big military exercises with soldiers from the U.S. and the Puerto Rican National Guard carrying M-16's and M-60 machine guns.

The article also states that there are large numbers of C-130 Hercules transport planes that are used to carry troops and military equipment. These same huge airplanes were used in the invasion of Grenada in October 1983. These planes are also being stationed in another base in Puerto Rico—Roosevelt Roads—waiting orders from the Pentagon.

Counter-revolutionaries being trained in the U.S. for Reagan's so-called covert war against Nicaragua.

U.S. military on alert

According to Claridad, it has been revealed by someone close to the National Guard (who asked not to be identified), that the U.S. military in Puerto Rico at the present moment is on alert. This means that they could be mobilized at any moment.

A contingent of Puerto Rican National Guards with sealed orders for Honduras and a National Guard installation in Salinas, Puerto Rico, have been placed in preparation for military action. WBAI, a progressive radio station in New York City, confirmed this last week. General Luis Gonzalez Vale, head of the National Guard in Puerto Rico, denies that there is a state of alert or that the National Guard is in Honduras.

At the same time, the military hospitals in Puerto Rico were recently expanded and placed in readiness to receive large casualties.

A meeting of 26 generals

If nothing is going on, why was there a secret meeting with 26 generals of the United States being briefed on the current situation in Nicaragua? This meeting took place in a hotel where Jim Jensen of CBS News was staying in Puerto Rico. According to WBAI, Jensen was talking to a staff assistant of the elected governor, Rafael Hernandez Colon, who told him that an invasion of Nicaragua will be carried out in February 1985.

The island of Puerto Rico has been used for U.S. military intervention before: the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983.

This is nothing new to the people of Nicaragua and its 5-year-old revolution. The Reagan administration has been hostile to Nicaragua and has tried to destroy its revolution ever since it took office in 1980. It has cut economic aid and spent millions of dollars to create the counter-revolutionaries known as the contras to destroy oil depots, daycare centers, and murder and rape women. None of this has destroyed or turned around the revolution and its heroic people, but instead has made the revolution stronger.

Nicaragua no longer bows to its ex-master from the North and will not accept imperialism's version of so-called democracy, oppression and exploitation.

"Patria, libre or morir" has been the cry of Nicaraguans struggling to free their homeland from U.S. imperialism ever since the first U.S. Marines landed. And that is still their cry today.

—Increasing attacks on abortion clinics

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been picketed earlier by so-called right-to-lifers.

The Florida blasts brought to 27 the number of bombings and arsons against abortion clinics and women's health facilities in seven states this year—as compared to two such attacks last year and three in 1982.

Encouraging and emboldening the right-wing opponents of women's right to choose whether or not to have children has been the racist, sexist Reagan administration. Only days after a Maryland women's clinic and a Planned Parenthood office were devastated by bombs on Nov. 19, Reagan officials announced that abortion bombers aren't terrorists and therefore there is little need for the FBI to investigate.

Among officials virtually jumping to defend this wave of rightist terror was William H. Webster, director of the FBI, who said the attackers of abortion clinics aren't terrorists since they do not try to overthrow or "shift" the government and that investigating such attacks is a "low priority" of the Reagan administration.

What better message of support could Reagan have sent to aid and abet this rapidly escalating right-wing campaign? Certainly if police departments or army recruiting stations were being blown up at the same rate of one every two weeks for an entire year, the Reaganites would be singing another tune!

At the same time, representatives of the capitalist state have become active in reactionary organizations opposed to abortion rights. In Florida, for example, where five bombings have taken place this year alone, the rightwing Christian Action Council, which is dedicated to "an organized Christian effort nationwide to put an end to the horror of abortion," openly sports government figures among its officers. These include Tallahassee Police Department Assistant Chief William Scott, Jr. and Florida State Attorney William Meggs.

Death threats

This epidemic of bombing and arson has been accompanied by hundreds of other incidents of assault and harassment against patients and workers at women's and abortion clinics. Abortion counselors across the country report receiving as many as five or six death threats a day from those who ironically call themselves "pro-life."

Last month, an Alabama abortion counselor who had been subjected to intense harassment at the clinic where she works found her home broken into and vandalized. Her cat had been decapitated.

Other recent incidents include:

- A Feb. 28 fire that burned down the offices of Prince Georges County, Md., Reproductive Services.
- A July 4 explosion that destroyed part of the National Abortion Federation building in Washington, D.C.
- The Sept. 8 torching of Clearlake Women's Center in Webster, Tex.
- The Sept. 13 bombing of the Northside Planning Clinic in Marietta, Ga., and a simultaneous bombing of the Birth Control Institute in San Diego, Calif.
- The Nov. 19 destruction of the Metropolitan Medical and Women's Center in Wheaton, Md., and a nearby Planned Parenthood office that provided contraceptive information and counseling.

Other bombings and arsons have taken place at clinics in Everett, Wash., St. Petersburg, Fla. and Houston, Tex., to name a few.

Abortion rights won through struggle

Women won the right to abortion in 1973 after many long years of militant protest. Today the big business ruling class wants to turn back all the rights that workers and oppressed people have won through struggle. The attacks on abortion clinics benefit only the ruling class, which relies on sexism and racism to prevent working class unity.

Polls show that people who oppose all abortions for any reason are a tiny minority—about 10% of the population. Free, safe, legal abortions for all who need them coupled with no forced sterilizations and the right to choose to have children and to have adequate means to bring them up, benefits the vast majority of people.

To put an end to the rightist terrorist attacks on abortion clinics that are being egged on by the sexists in the White House and their Wall Street backers, it is necessary to launch the kind of militant struggle that legalized abortion in the first place. An excellent first step is the upcoming counter-inaugural in Washington, D.C. initiated by the All-Peoples Congress and the People's Anti-War Mobilization.

Demonstration organizers say they have been in touch with women's groups and reproductive rights activists who have joined the call for the Jan. 21 protest. Abortion rights will be among the issues raised, along with southern Africa, Central America, jobs and budget cuts.

The Jan. 21 protest coincides, organizers note, with the 11th anniversary on Jan. 22 of the Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade, which first sanctioned women's right to control their own bodies and lives.

In a press release issued by the demonstration organizers, they say that, contrary to Reagan and his supporters, they defend "women's right to reproductive freedom, which holds that every woman should be free to choose when and with whom she wishes to have a child, which assumes quality sex education, birth control information, and access to artificial insemination in addition to access to free, safe, legal abortions on demand."

"At the same time women should not be forced by poverty, racism, unemployment or low wages to become victims of sterilization abuse. Not only must any woman be free to live openly as a lesbian if she chooses, but all women must be guaranteed quality childcare and health care, as well as safe jobs at union wages so they can provide for their families."