United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Fact Sheet for the Honorable
Charles B. Rangel
House of Representatives

August 1993

HAITI

Costs of U.S. Programs and Activities Since the 1991 Military Coup

149871

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GAO/NSIAD-93-252FS

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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-254215

August 5, 1993

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Rangel:

As you requested, we identified the costs of U.S. involvement in Haiti since the overthrow of its president by a military coup in September 1991. Our objectives were to identify (1) the various operations and activities the United States has initiated since the overthrow, (2) the U.S. agencies involved in Haitian programs, and (3) the costs to the United States for its involvement in these operations and activities.

Background

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected president, was overthrown by a military coup on September 30, 1991. In October 1991, President Bush (1) suspended all direct U.S. assistance to Haiti, (2) blocked the export of all arms and ammunition to the Haitian police and military, (3) signed an executive order freezing all U.S.-held assets of the Haitian government and prohibiting U.S. citizens and companies from executing financial transfers to the de facto authorities in Haiti, and (4) issued an executive order strengthening U.S. support of the Organization of American States (OAS) trade embargo against Haiti. The State Department also ordered all non-essential U.S. government personnel to depart Haiti. In November 1991, the Agency for International Development (AID) reactivated direct feeding and health programs, and the Department of Defense (DOD) began setting up camps at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo for interdicted Haitians. In February 1992, the de facto Haitian regime agreed to accept an OAS/United Nations (UN) civilian observer mission to assist in the restoration of democratic constitutional order and to monitor human rights conditions. A reduced AID mission staff began returning to Haiti in spring 1992 to reactivate a limited humanitarian assistance program.

In May 1992, the U.S. government began returning all Haitians interdicted on the high seas directly to Haiti and arranging for them to apply for asylum at the U.S. Embassy, and this policy has continued to be in effect. The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld this policy; however, on June 8, 1993, a New York U.S. District Court directed the U.S. government to release about 158 HIV-positive asylum seekers who had been detained at Guantanamo Bay. All of these HIV-postive Haitians entered the United

States by June 21, 1993. DOD closed its Haitian-related operations at Guantanamo Bay on July 2, 1993.

Results in Brief

Since the overthrow of Haiti's president, the U.S. government has been involved in a variety of efforts designed to interdict, detain, process, and/or repatriate Haitian asylum seekers, and provide humanitarian assistance to Haiti. The U.S. government has also participated in the OAS-recommended embargo of Haiti and contributed financial support to the OAS/UN Observer Mission.

As shown in table 1, 10 U.S. government agencies expended or obligated about $211 million for Haitian-related activities between October 1, 1991, and March 31, 1993, and will incur an additional $14 million by September 30, 1993.

Table 1: Total U.S. Government Agency Costs for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 Related to the Haitian Crisis

Dollars in thousands

	Costs			
Departments	**Actual: Oct. 1991-Mar. 1993**	**Estimated: Apr.-Sept. 1993**	**Total**	**Percent**
Agency for International Development	$69,350	[a]	$69,350	30.8
Department of Defense	57,160	$1,960	59,120	26.2
Department of Health and Human Services	34,200	720	34,920	15.5
Department of Justice (including INS)	19,600	4,460	24,060	10.7
Department of Transportation (solely Coast Guard variable costs)	19,560	4,950	24,510	10.9
Department of State (including UN and OAS)	9,750	2,190	11,940	5.3
Department of Treasury	1,510	[a]	1,510	0.7
Department of Commerce (Bureau of Export Administration)	50	[a]	50	*
National Security Council	20	[a]	20	*
Federal Reserve Bank of New York	10	[a]	10	*
Total	**$211,210**	**$14,280**	**$225,490**	**100[b]**

*Less than 0.1 percent.

[a]Not available.

[b]Due to rounding the percents do not add to 100.

Most of the money spent or to be spent by the agencies listed in table 1 was for items such as travel, food, medical supplies, tents, vehicle maintenance, and overtime pay. In most cases, these costs were incremental —those over and above normal operating costs—and usually exclude such expenses as regular salaries, which would be paid regardless of the activities in which the employees were engaged. (See app. I for further details.)

Interdiction and Processing of Asylum Seekers

The largest U.S. expenditures were related to the interdiction, detention, processing, and/or repatriation of asylum seekers. Through September 1993, DOD and the Coast Guard will have incurred estimated costs of $59.12 and $24.51 million, respectively, for patrolling, by sea and

air, the waters surrounding Haiti, picking up thousands of migrants fleeing by boat and providing them food, clothing, and medical attention enroute to Guantanamo Bay or back to Haiti. DOD also incurred costs for setting up camps and supplying various services to Haitians on Guantanamo Bay. The Coast Guard currently has the primary responsibility for patrolling the Windward Channel and interdicting Haitian migrants.

Humanitarian Assistance in Haiti

AID has expended over $69 million during the Haiti crisis for humanitarian assistance. AID reactivated its direct feeding and health programs, and implemented them through private voluntary organizations. AID has been feeding an average 500,000 Haitians per day and providing medical care for 1.9 million. AID has also funded such projects as seed production, training, and democratic initiatives.

Assistance to Haitians in the United States

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimated that from October 1991 through June 1993, Haitians seeking asylum in the United States received about $34.2 million of HHS funded services. This estimate is based on 11,400 Haitian entrants using the full range of services provided by states and reimbursed by HHS. HHS officials told us that they did not know the full extent of the services provided by states to each entrant. According to HHS officials, the estimate does not include such costs as Aid to Families with Dependent Children or food stamps. HHS officials said that these costs were not available at the federal government level and the states we contacted said that the data could not be compiled by individual immigrant group.

The Justice Department's Community Relations Service expended over $11 million between October 1991 and June 1993, through non-profit organizations such as the U.S. Catholic Conference, to provide resettlement assistance to Haitians in the United States. The Community Relations Service activities were funded by an agreement with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

U.S. Contributions to the OAS/UN Observer Mission

The State Department contributed $6 million to the OAS/UN observer mission to (1)support civilian observers, (2)assist in the restoration of democratic constitutional order, and (3) monitor human rights conditions in Haiti. Currently, there are 161 observers in Haiti.

The State Department pledged $1 million in March 1993 to be provided to the OAS/UN mission in Haiti; however, the UN has not determined how these funds will be used. State also incurred costs of $4.94 million for other Haitian-related activities, such as refugee processing.

Scope and Methodology

We met with officials at AID and the Departments of Transportation (Coast Guard), Treasury, Justice (INS), State, Defense, and HHS to identify their agencies' involvement in the Haiti crisis and the associated costs to their agencies. We also interviewed AID officials at the mission in Haiti by telephone. We obtained and reviewed documents detailing the agencies' costs for activities related to Haiti.

We focused primarily on incremental costs because this represented additional cost to the U.S. government related to activities associated with Haiti. We were not able to categorize all agency costs related to sanctions enforcement, migrant interdiction or repatriation activities because the primary agencies involved were unable to categorize all expenditures by program activity. We relied upon the agencies to define and provide us incremental cost data, but we did not independently verify the accuracy of the data provided by the agencies.

We conducted our review from April through June 1993, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We did not obtain written agency comments. However, we discussed a draft of this fact sheet with responsible officials from each of the involved agencies and have included their comments as appropriate.

Unless you announce its contents earlier, we plan to make no further distribution of this fact sheet until 30 days after its issue date. At that time, we well send copies to the Secretaries of Defense, State, Justice, Commerce, Transportation, Treasury, and Health and Human Services, and the Administrator of the Agency for International Development. We will also send copies to interested congressional committees and to others upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 512-4128 if you or your staff have any questions. The major contributors to this fact sheet were David Martin, Assistant Director; Joseph C. Brown, Evaluator-in-Charge; and Eugene Beye, Evaluator.

Sincerely yours,

Harold J. Johnson, Director
International Affairs Issues

U.S.-Haiti-Related Activities and Related Costs

Agency for International Development

AID suspended its assistance programs to Haiti following the September 1991 coup. However, on November 10, 1991, AID began reactivating, through private voluntary organizations, those assistance programs that did not involve the Haitian government. From January through April 1992, a reduced mission staff began returning to Haiti to reactivate a limited humanitarian program designed to ameliorate the effects of sanctions on the Haitian poor. Thus, according to AID officials, the post-coup humanitarian program was implemented out of AID's existing nongovernmental organizations portfolio for those activities that met the needs and conditions of humanitarian assistance. As a result, the entire assistance program has been characterized in terms of incremental costs.

AID incurred total costs of $69.35 million for Haitian assistance during October 1, 1991, to March 31, 1993. Mission-funded project costs totaled $32.75 million, or 47 percent of AID's total costs. This figure represents actual expenditures reported to AID by the organizations running the projects. Food assistance provided through Public Law 480, Title II, cost $33.14 million, or 48 percent of the total. Centrally and regionally funded projects totaled $3.14 million. Finally, the costs of the AID mission's evacuation and reactivation following the coup, including transportation and subsistence of direct hire personnel and their dependents, totaled $322,300.

Salaries for AID direct hire personnel are not included in the above figures. These salaries are paid from an appropriated Operations and Expense account and would have been paid regardless of where the personnel were posted. The salaries of contractors and others paid out of project funds are included as incremental costs.

Department of Defense

Total DOD costs for activities associated with the Haitian crisis were $59.12 million for October 1, 1991, through July 2, 1993. These activities included interdiction, detention, and/or repatriation of asylum seekers, as well as setting up camps and supplying services for Haitians. Of the $59.12 million, the Navy incurred costs of $29.39 million, the Air Force—$22.02 million, the Marines—$3.79 million, and the Army—$3.17 million. The remaining $750,000 is an estimate of DOD costs incurred during the last 2 months at Guantanamo Bay and had not been allocated to a specific military service.

Some of the services' larger expenses were: transportation costs by the Military Airlift Command, $16.24 million; food costs, $12.11 million; miscellaneous supplies, $7.64 million; Navy steaming costs, $3.54 million; public works costs, $3.52 million; tents, $2.73 million; medical supplies, $2.68 million; and temporarily assigned personnel and reservists, $2.49 million. DOD cost estimates do not include military pay and allowances.

Department of Health and Human Services

HHS incurred costs of $34.92 million for Haiti-related activities during October 1991 to June 1993. In HHS, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Office of Refugee Health incurred costs. The Office of Refugee Resettlement incurred the largest costs—$34.2 million, or 98 percent of the HHS total. This office compensates states for money spent on certain services for Haitians resettled within their borders. The $34.2 million is an estimate based on data from the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department on the number of Haitians it resettled and the Office of Refugee Resettlement's estimated cost of $3,000 per person. We contacted officials of government offices in three states for more detailed estimates; however, none of them were able to readily provide more exact data.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention incurred costs of $372,300 performing services as part of the multidepartmental task force to process the Haitian migrants for resettlement, most of which was for salaries and benefits. The Office of Refugee Health spent $345,800 during October 1991 to June 1993 in support of INS activities by providing health services, including medical screening for excludable conditions, to asylum seekers.

Department of Justice

The Justice Department incurred costs of $24.06 million dealing with Haiti issues following the coup. The Department spent $9.83 million, or 41 percent, on Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) activities. These activities included interviewing Haitians and making preliminary assessments of their claims for asylum at Guantanamo Bay and on board ships, and providing interpreters. The $9.83 million excludes the cost of processing the refugee claims of Haitians who arrived in the United States on their own, but were detained at one of the INS detention centers. INS's method of gathering statistics does not enable us to readily measure that extra cost.[1]

[1]Some data on the normal flow of Haitians into Krome is available in Immigration Control: Immigration Policies Affect INS Detention Efforts (GAO/GGD-92-85, June 1992).

The Justice Department's Community Relations Service was responsible for processing, receiving, and placing Haitian entrants from Guantanamo Bay in the United States. It reported $12.93 million in incremental costs, 54 percent of the Justice Department's total costs. This excludes $110,000 that Community Relations Service reimbursed the Navy. This reimbursement is reflected in reported DOD costs. Of the $12.93 million, the Community Relations Service reported spending $11.69 million for grants and cooperative agreements with private voluntary organizations for resettlement services, $923,000 for incremental personnel expenses, and $317,000 in other costs.

Costs to the Justice Department's Civil Division, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the Office of the Solicitor General totaled $1.29 million, or 5 percent of total costs.

Department of Transportation: U.S. Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard was the only organization within the Transportation Department that incurred costs related to Haiti. Its activities included patrolling the high seas surrounding Haiti, interdicting asylum seekers and transporting them to either Guantanamo Bay or back to Haiti, or sometimes to the United States, and providing food and medical services enroute. The Coast Guard's incremental costs for these activities were $24.51 million for October 1991 through June 1993.

Air activities were the Coast Guard's greatest expense—$11.65 million, followed by cutter operating expenses—$9.73 million. Mission support expenses for reservists, temporary duty assignments, and communications totaled $2 million. Direct migrant expenses for items such as food, medical supplies, and clothing totaled $1.13 million.

The Coast Guard data does not include salaries or administrative costs at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Maintenance and Logistics Command in New York, or the Coast Guard Seventh District in Miami.

Department of State

The State Department estimated the costs of its Haitian-related activities to be $11.94 million for October 1, 1991 to September 30, 1993. State Department used $4.14 million to assist refugee applicants, of which $2.63 million came from the Migration and Refugee Assistance account and $1.51 million from the Emergency Refugee and Migration fund. These funds were contributed primarily to the International Organization for Migration, for transportation and processing costs, the International

Federation of the Red Cross, and private voluntary organizations. Funds were also made available to improve Department of State in-country refugee processing programs. This excludes the $155,000 reimbursement to INS by State. This reimbursement is reflected in reported INS costs. State Department costs for salaries and expenses directly related to repatriation monitoring in Haiti are $360,000. The estimated cost to evacuate some of the Embassy staff and dependents was $277,000. State also incurred $165,000 in administrative costs associated with the enforcement of sanctions against Haiti.

In addition, State gave $6 million to the OAS/UN civilian observer mission to Haiti. It has also pledged $1 million to the UN mission to Haiti but has withheld disbursement pending a determination on how that money can be most effectively used.

Department of Treasury

The Treasury Department reported total costs related to Haitian sanctions enforcement of $1.5 million for October 1, 1991, through March 30, 1993. These costs were incurred by the Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, Customs Service, and Office of General Counsel. They include salaries and travel costs. According to Treasury Department Officials, these costs reflect the lost opportunity costs to the government of employing personnel for Haiti duties as opposed to other duties. The Custom's Service incurred $915,000, the largest proportion of Treasury's costs.

Other Agencies

The Department of Commerce's Bureau of Export Administration reported costs of $49,600 for the Haiti emergency. The National Security Council reported costs of $22,000 and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported costs of $10,000.

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