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WHAT "RESTORING DEMOCRACY" IN HAITI IS COSTING THE U.S. MILITARY

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Even before Saddam Hussein's recent belligerence in the Persian Gulf, Americans were skeptical of President Clinton's attempts to justify a United States occupation of Haiti. Indeed, as late as September 25, just two weeks before Saddam moved his forces toward Kuwait, 48 percent of Americans disapproved of the President's handling of the situation in Haiti, while 55 percent disapproved of his handling of foreign affairs overall.¹

Americans remain unconvinced that events in Haiti have much to do with American security interests. The absence of such interests there is only highlighted by the clear threat to national security posed by recent events in the Persian Gulf. And if events in Haiti turn violent now that exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has been returned to office, the public's concern will be heightened.²

Given these concerns, it is only right to wonder what the occupation of Haiti is costing the United States. Estimates are hard to establish, but it is clear that the costs are large and are mounting quickly. These include:

§ Military Operations: \$772 Million. On September 22, Defense Secretary William Perry announced that the U.S. effort in Haiti will cost about \$250 million over the rest of the year: \$50 million by the end of September and another \$200 million through December. Perry acknowledged that money being drawn from existing Defense Department funds will strain the already over-burdened budget, and that the Pentagon will be forced to ask for additional appropriations from Congress.³

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- 1 CNN/USA Today/Gallup Survey, September 23-25, 1994, as cited in *The White House Bulletin*, October 4, 1994.
 - 2 See Lawrence T. DiRita, "Now Comes the Hard Part: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 391, September 20, 1994.
 - 3 Robert Burns, "U.S. Cost in Haiti Put At \$250 Million for Remainder of 1994," Associated Press, September 22, 1994.

But the entire military operation in Haiti is likely to cost even more than this amount. According to one estimate, the cost of maintaining one U.S. soldier per month in Haiti is \$7,800 more than the cost of a soldier stationed in the U.S.⁴ Assuming 20,000 troops remain through December 1994, this will mean \$468 million in additional U.S. troop costs. Beginning in January 1995, a U.N. force of 6,000 will remain in Haiti through the presidential inauguration in February 1996. The 3,000 U.S. troops in the U.N. force will cost an additional \$304 million. Thus, the total cost of U.S. troops will be \$772 million.

§ Support of International Forces: \$85 Million. In addition to paying for its own force, the U.S. is footing much of the bill for foreign troops. The Clinton Administration has shifted \$50 million from Pentagon operations and maintenance (O&M) funds to pay for the salaries, supplies, and training for the 3,000 troops from two dozen countries that have lent support to the Haitian operation. This money will come from Pentagon funds that are supposed to be used to replenish equipment stocks, pay daily bills for fuel and operating costs, and train U.S. forces for war.⁵

After the U.S. force is replaced with U.N. peacekeepers, the U.S. will pay to foreign governments the \$900 monthly rate for each foreign peacekeeping soldier, as required by the United Nations.⁶ Thus, for a 6,000-member U.N. force that includes 3,000 foreign peacekeepers, the bill would be \$2.7 million per month. If such a U.N. force begins operations in January 1995 and remains in Haiti until February 1996, the U.S. will owe \$35 million in foreign peacekeeping support alone. Thus, the total cost of foreign troops will be at least the \$50 million for the U.S.-led phase, plus \$35 million more for the U.N. phase, for a total of \$85 million.

§ Refugee Support: \$124 Million. The Pentagon is also bearing the brunt of the costs of handling the tens of thousands of Haitian refugees that have been housed by the U.S. since the refugee crisis began in June 1994. According to Pentagon estimates, pre-occupation Defense Department costs for Haiti were estimated at \$187 million, \$63 million of which is designated for maintaining the naval blockade. The remaining \$124 million was designated for "migrant" operations, referring to care of the Haitian refugees themselves.⁷

Hidden Costs? Other costs of the Haiti operation are measured in terms of lost training time and additional maintenance. Under normal peacetime circumstances, troops and ships have rigorous training and maintenance schedules that must be maintained to keep combat readiness high. Some troops are on patrol, demonstrating U.S. military presence to deter potential enemies and respond to crises if necessary. When forces are pulled out of their regular cycle, their training, maintenance and scheduled patrols are postponed; this causes a "ripple effect," as other units move to fill the gaps and their own schedules are disrupted.

The Haiti operation illustrates this problem. For example, the U.S.S. *Wasp*, an amphibious assault ship designed to carry Marines, has been deployed for the past five months off the coast of Haiti. Prior to deploying, it was to have spent six months training its own crew, and another six months training with the rest of the ships and Marines in its battle group.⁸ While some training value will

4 *Potential Costs of a U.S. Invasion and Occupation of Haiti*, Defense Budget Project, September 16, 1994, p. 2.

5 Pat Towell, "Even A Peaceful Mission Will Be Costly," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 24, 1994, p. 2702.

6 Drinkard, *op. cit.*

7 Author's conversation with Office of Public Affairs, Department of Defense, September 7, 1994.

come from the Haiti operation, other important training and maintenance will be missed. As a result, the Navy will have three options when the *Wasp's* March deployment date arrives: send out a ship whose crew is not fully trained; send another ship in its place, which will cause its own ripple effect in the schedule; or delay the deployment date. Each of these alternatives will result in inadequate U.S. readiness.

In another example, the operation in Haiti is consuming both time and money which units had planned to spend training for operations against more formidable foes. In a September 19 interview, for example, Air Force Brigadier General Michael Short, who directs all training for U.S.-based forces, admitted that "Something like Haiti happens and the extra time set aside for joint exercises is gobbled up.... [A]ll of our [units] are spending a lot of money on this Haiti operation. In many cases it is money that was planned for some other use."⁹ Referring to the \$140 million which the Navy's Atlantic fleet has spent on operations in Haiti and Cuba, Rear Admiral Harold Gehman, chief of staff of the Atlantic Fleet, observed: "We are going to pay that bill by deferring maintenance, not by deferring training...."¹⁰

What is left unsaid is the effect on the fleet of postponing maintenance in this manner. As ships, aircraft, and other equipment are used, they need regular maintenance. Without it, the risk of accidents and the costs of repairs go up. Accidents cause unnecessary injury and loss of life, which lower morale and reduce fighting effectiveness. Putting off costs in this way actually can cost more money over time, while readiness declines in the meantime. While these additional risks might be warranted in a time of real national crisis, there are no important U.S. interests in Haiti that justify this damage to American military readiness. Moreover, this may reduce the military's ability to respond to a real threat, such as Saddam Hussein's recent moves toward Kuwait.

The Solution: Additional Funding From Congress. The President's decision to commit forces to Haiti must be accompanied by congressional action to pay for the costs of such a commitment. But supplemental appropriations may be misleading. For example, Congress passed a supplemental funding bill of \$1.15 billion to cover part of the \$1.5 billion which the Defense Department spent on peacekeeping operations in fiscal 1994. This total cost did not include most of the expense of the Haiti occupation, which started before the end of the fiscal year. Around \$850 million of this was "rescinded" (returned to Congress unspent). In short, the Pentagon has had to pay \$1.2 billion out of the \$1.5 billion from existing accounts, mostly by deferring spending on routine operations and maintenance. The results, admitted Deputy Secretary John Deutch, were canceled Army training, curtailed Navy operations, and reduced flying time for some Air Force and Navy squadrons.¹¹

Congress should fully fund all unprogrammed military expenditures with additional appropriations. This will force the Administration to argue its case for further occupation of Haiti before the American people, whose representatives in Congress will have to approve such a measure. Above all, it will help to prevent further degradation of U.S. military effectiveness.

8 Thomas Duffy, "Haiti Detail Played Havoc With *Wasp's* Deployment Schedule," *Inside The Navy*, October 3, 1994, p. 3.

9 Robert Holzer, "Haiti Validates Joint Training, But Cost Pinches Program," *Defense News*, September 26-October 2, 1994, p. 12.

10 *Ibid.*

11 "Deutch Tells Congress DoD Has No Reliable Estimates Of Haiti Cost," *Inside The Pentagon*, September 22, 1994, p. 9.

The experience in Haiti thus far illustrates the fact that even a small operation can place a severe strain on U.S. military capabilities. The budget crunch caused by the Haiti occupation is rooted in two problems: 1) a military force suffering from the effects of ten straight years of budget cuts and 2) a commitment of American forces to a place where no important national interests are at stake. At some point, President Clinton is going to have to make a choice: either stop expanding U.S. peacekeeping commitments, or pay for a larger force. Because he is not making this choice, American military commanders are not being given enough forces with the training and properly maintained equipment they need to adequately defend themselves or American national security.

Stacey Ray contributed to this study.

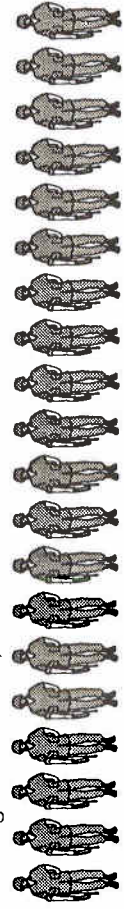
U.S. Military Costs for Operation "Restore Democracy": 1994-1996

The Three Categories of Military U.S. Costs in Haiti

1.) Direct Military Operations

Present-December 1994

U.S Regular Forces: 20,000

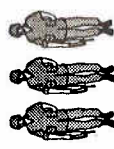


Monthly Rate for U.S. Forces: \$7,800/each per month¹

• 20,000 x \$7,800 x 3 Months = \$468 million

January 1995-December 1996

U.S. Troops in a 6,000-man U.N. Force: 3,000



Monthly Rate for U.S. Forces: \$7,800/each per month

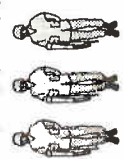
• 3,000 x \$7,800 x 13 Months = \$304 million

Total Direct Military Operations= \$772 million

2.) Support of International Forces

January 1995-December 1996

Non-U.S. Troops in a 6,000-man U.N. Force: 3,000



U.S. Support for Foreign Peacekeeping Forces: \$900/each per month²

• 6,000 x \$2.7 x 13 Months = \$35 million

• U.S.-Led Phase = \$50 million
\$ 85 million

3.) Refugee Support

Present-December 1996

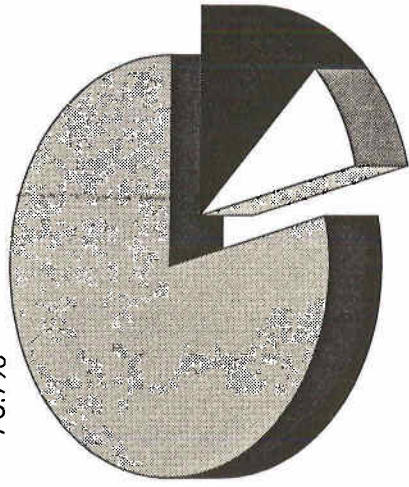
• Migrant Operations³ = \$124 million

Total Cost to U.S.

\$981 million

Breakdown of U.S. Costs

Military Operations
78.7%



Refugee Support
12.6%

International Forces
8.7%

Total U.S. Cost: \$981 Million

Legend:



= 1,000 U.S. Forces



= 1,000 Non-U.S. Forces

Notes: Cost assumptions are based on the following:

- 1) The Defense Budget Project's analysis of U.S. operations in Somalia, with allowances for Haiti's proximity to the U.S.
- 2) Announced planned force levels and the standard (\$900) cost of peacekeeping troops.
- 3) Based on Department of Defense estimates.

