

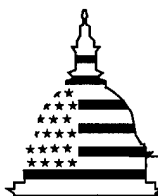
September 1999

PRESIDENTIAL  
TRAVEL

Costs and Accounting  
For the President's  
1998 Trips to Africa,  
Chile, and China



19990928 030



G A O

Accountability \* Integrity \* Reliability

---

# Contents

---

---

Letter	3
--------	---

---

Appendix I	Support Provided for the President's Trip to Africa	20
Appendix II	Support Provided for the President's Trip to Chile	23
Appendix III	Support Provided for the President's Trip to China	25
Appendix IV	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	27
Appendix V	Comments From the White House	30
Appendix VI	Comments From the Department of State	31
Appendix VII	Comments From the Department of Defense	32
Appendix VIII	GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments	33

---

Table 1:	Estimated Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to Africa	9
Table 2:	Estimated Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to Chile	13
Table 3:	Estimate of the Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to China	16
Table 4:	Travelers on the Africa Trip	20
Table 5:	DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Africa	21
Table 6:	DOD-Provided Rotary-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Africa	22
Table 7:	Travelers on the Chile Trip	23
Table 8:	DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Chile	24
Table 9:	DOD-Provided Rotary-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Chile	24
Table 10:	Travelers on the China Trip	25
Table 11:	DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to China	26

---

Figure 1:	Itinerary of the Official Delegation in Africa	8
Figure 2:	Itinerary of the Official Delegation in Chile	12
Figure 3:	Itinerary of the Official Delegation in China	15

---

## Abbreviations

DOD      Department of Defense

---

**Contents**

---



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

National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-282773

September 21, 1999

The Honorable Larry E. Craig  
The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
The Honorable Craig Thomas  
United States Senate

At your request, we are providing information related to the (1) estimated costs and the nature of the costs of President Clinton's 1998 trips to Africa, Chile, and China and (2) executive branch accounting procedures for such expenses. This information is based on available agency records.

---

## Results in Brief

Presidential travel to foreign destinations requires planning, coordination, and logistical and personnel support. The estimated incremental costs of President Clinton's trips to Africa, Chile, and China were at least \$42.8 million, \$10.5 million, and \$18.8 million, respectively. The largest of these costs consisted of (1) operating expenses of the President's aircraft and other military passenger and cargo aircraft; (2) travel expenses, including lodging for the travelers; and (3) telecommunications, vehicle, and other equipment rentals and procurement in the countries visited. These estimates exclude (1) Secret Service expenses, which are classified; (2) regular salaries and benefits of U.S. government civil and military travelers; and (3) agency planning expenses that may have been incurred in preparing to travel.

The executive branch does not have a single system to account for the cost of presidential travel overseas, and the agencies involved use a variety of means to account for expenses. The Department of State routinely accounts for travel, equipment rental, and other costs to support presidential travel. Other agencies that incurred costs in support of the Africa, Chile, and China trips had records available on their costs as well.

---

## Background

A series of planning activities precedes overseas presidential travel. Once a decision is made to visit a foreign country, White House, Department of State, Secret Service, and, depending on the trip agenda or purpose, other federal agency staff begin planning the trip. Staff from these agencies

generally make at least three trips to the country or countries to be visited before the President arrives.

The first trip, known as a site survey, permits officials to visit sites at which presidential events may be held. During the second trip, known as a preadvance visit, officials narrow down the choice of sites, plan for the events, and make final site selections. During the third trip, an advance trip taken about 7 days before the President arrives, officials set up needed equipment at event locations and make final preparations for the President's arrival. Hereafter, we refer to these trips collectively as advance trips, and the teams as advance teams.

---

### Certain Agencies Support All of the President's Foreign Trips

The Department of Defense (DOD) and some of the military services support presidential overseas trips. For example, the Air Force's 89th Airlift Wing at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, flies the President's plane, known as Air Force One, and certain support aircraft. DOD also transports vehicles and other equipment to the countries to be visited on its cargo aircraft and provides aerial refueling when needed. DOD may also deploy servicemembers to provide other support such as maintenance, logistics, explosive ordnance disposal, and medical and other support.

In addition, the White House Military Office sends officials from the White House Communications Agency to establish and maintain communications; the White House Mess to prepare some meals for the President and members of the first family; the White House Transportation Agency primarily to support security of cargo and materials on the President's plane and the support planes; the White House Medical Unit to provide health services, if needed; and the Marine Corps' Helicopter Squadron One to provide in-country movement of the President and members of the official delegation when needed. Staff from these White House support offices are generally active duty servicemembers, and DOD pays their travel expenses.

The Department of State provides a variety of support for presidential travel to foreign destinations. First, State's Presidential Travel Support Services Office provides administrative support to White House and State members of an advance team. This support includes making travel arrangements, communicating with the embassy in the country to be visited, and processing travel orders and vouchers required for White House and some State travelers. In addition, State pays the travel expenses of most White House and State officials on the advance trips or on the trip with the President. The U.S. embassy in the country to be visited (1) procures in-country support such as lodging, telecommunications, transportation, and other equipment and (2) assists White House and State employees in coordinating the agenda with the host government. The State Department's regional financial service centers<sup>1</sup> disburse other agencies' funds to pay the agencies' hotel, telecommunications, and other in-country expenses.

The Secret Service, the U.S. Information Agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Customs Service also generally support all presidential trips. The Secret Service provides personal security for the President and protectees. The U.S. Information Agency supports U.S. news media organizations whose representatives accompany the President. This support usually consists of organizing press briefings and arranging for lodging, transportation, telecommunications, and interpreters. Under agency guidelines, some of the cost of logistical support for the news media is to be reimbursed to the government by media organizations. The Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Customs Service generally send inspectors to accompany the presidential party and facilitate reentry into the United States by stamping passports and collecting import duties from officials, news media representatives, and any private citizens accompanying the President.

---

### Other Agency Support for Presidential Foreign Travel

While some agencies participate in all foreign trips, other federal agencies may participate in or otherwise support certain trips but not others. This support varies from trip to trip and is somewhat dependent on the goals and agenda of the planned trip. For example, if trade relations are a trip agenda item, the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture and officials from the U.S. Trade Representative may accompany the President. Cabinet

---

<sup>1</sup>These centers are located in Paris, France; Bangkok, Thailand; and Charleston, South Carolina.

---

secretaries or other agency heads may also take some agency staff to assist the agency heads in preparing for discussions of issues with representatives of the host government or to perform other duties. Agencies whose officials are part of the official delegation may also, on occasion, have missions of their own to address while accompanying the President.

---

## The Cost of the President's Trip to Africa

Beginning March 22, 1998, through April 2, 1998, the President and his delegation visited Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana, and Senegal. According to the administration, the purpose of the trip was to (1) help reshape the way Americans think about Africa; (2) show U.S. support for emerging democracies; (3) promote U.S. investment, trade, and economic growth in Africa; (4) promote education; and (5) promote conflict resolution and human rights. White House officials stated that this was the most extensive trip by an American President to the African continent.

They also stated that the President held summit meetings with the heads of states of the six countries visited, and cohosted, with Uganda's President Museveni, a regional summit meeting with the heads of state or governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity. In addition, the President participated in other events that included an open-air speech to about 500,000 people in Ghana; visits to schools and housing projects; and meetings with human rights activists, environmentalists, and survivors of the Rwandan genocide. He also dedicated the first U.S. Trade Center on the African continent in Johannesburg, South Africa; signed agreements; and announced a number of initiatives.

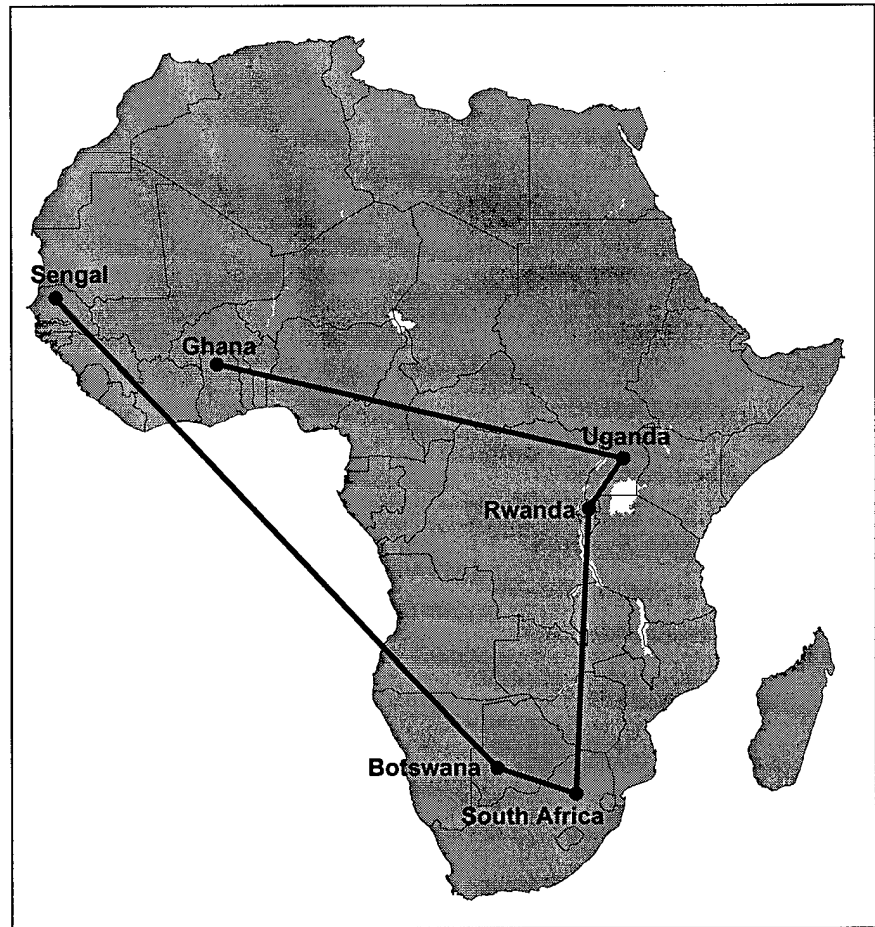
---

State, White House, Secret Service, and/or DOD officials were members of 10 separate advance teams that traveled from January 1998 to March 1998 to prepare for the President's arrival in the six countries to be visited. According to agency records, the federal agencies represented on the trip paid for about 1,300 individuals to travel to Africa as advance team members, to accompany the President, or to provide other support to his delegation.<sup>2</sup> (See app. I, table 4 for a breakout by agency of the travelers.) Figure 1 shows the six countries the President visited, beginning with the stop in Ghana.

---

<sup>2</sup>This excludes Secret Service travelers. It also excludes Peace Corps officials assigned to posts in Africa that incurred local travel expenses, and nonfederal officials and/or private citizens that, according to the Department of State, reimbursed the government for their travel expenses.

Figure 1: Itinerary of the Official Delegation in Africa



The estimated incremental cost of the President's trip to Africa was at least \$42.8 million, excluding Secret Service costs, which are classified. The estimated cost of the Africa trip is shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Estimated Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to Africa**

Agency	Amount	Percent of total
DOD	\$37,738,016	88.2
Department of State	3,665,155 <sup>a</sup>	8.6
U.S. Information Agency	986,606	2.3
Executive Office of the President	122,235 <sup>b</sup>	0.3
Department of Commerce	120,101	0.3
Agency for International Development	57,298	0.1
Department of Transportation	53,896	0.1
Department of Labor	40,430	0.1
Peace Corps	11,977	<sup>c</sup>
Department of the Treasury	7,450	<sup>c</sup>
Department of Agriculture	1,071	<sup>c</sup>
Immigration and Naturalization Service	928	<sup>c</sup>
Customs Service	829	<sup>c</sup>
<b>Total reported to GAO</b>	<b>\$42,805,992<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>a</sup>The State Department paid the travel costs of Members of Congress that accompanied the President. Where information was incomplete, we used the amount State obligated to pay for specific travelers rather than actual amounts in this estimate.

<sup>b</sup>Includes expenses incurred by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

<sup>c</sup>Less than 0.1 percent.

<sup>d</sup>Excludes Secret Service costs.

Source: Agencies shown in the table.

## DOD Expenses

DOD records show that DOD spent about \$37.7 million in support of the trip. About \$32.7 million of the \$37.7 million was spent for passenger and strategic lift and aerial refueling operations. According to the U.S. Transportation Command, DOD flew 98 airlift missions using strategic lift aircraft, including C-17s and C-5s, to move vehicles and other equipment from various locations in the United States and Europe to Africa at a cost of about \$29.2 million. The Transportation Command's data shows that DOD also flew 110 aerial refueling missions using KC-135 and KC-10 tanker aircraft at a cost of just over \$1 million. The airlift and aerial refueling missions were made to transport 13 Army and Marine Corps helicopters; to establish at least four maintenance support teams on Cape Verde and Ascension Islands and at two locations in South Africa; and to establish temporary medical evacuation units in Ghana, Uganda, South Africa,

Botswana, and Senegal. The 89th Airlift Wing flew the President's aircraft and five other aircraft to transport the advance teams or the official delegation at a reported cost of about \$2.5 million. The Marine Helicopter Squadron One reported helicopter and related support costs of about \$555,000. (See app. I, tables 5 and 6 for more information on fixed-wing and rotary-wing airlift and aerial refueling operations costs.)

In addition to airlift and aerial refueling costs, DOD incurred costs to deploy troops in support of the Africa trip. DOD established (1) Joint Task Force Eagle Vista under the command of an Air Force major general and deployed over 400 servicemembers representing 4 services from bases in Europe and the United States and (2) a joint task force headquarters of 30 people. These troops engaged in a variety of activities, including providing medical services and aircraft maintenance and erecting temporary aviation support facilities such as a dome shelter for helicopters. The U.S. European Command and the service components in Europe estimated the incremental direct cost of the joint task force to be \$633,369, primarily for travel expenses. The U.S. Atlantic Command deployed about 190 military personnel from U.S. bases to provide aircraft maintenance and aviation services at a cost the Command estimated at over \$775,000. DOD explained that the complexity of the trip, that is, visits to six countries, and the need to provide some temporary infrastructure contributed to the cost of its operations. The State Department disbursed an additional \$2.9 million of DOD funds for other in-country expenses such as vehicle and equipment rentals, lodging, landing fees, and transportation. DOD's reported expenses also included about \$200,000 in travel costs for servicemembers assigned to the White House Military Office or Air Force servicemembers that provided advance services for the President's plane.

---

Department of State  
Expenses

On the basis of data provided to us by the State Department and the U.S. embassies in the six countries visited, we estimated that State's incremental direct costs were about \$3.7 million. The expenses were for lodging, vehicle and other equipment rentals, telecommunications equipment and services, and procurement of miscellaneous items. The State Department paid about \$1.3 million in travel costs for most White House and all State staff members traveling to support one or more advance trips to the six countries visited or to accompany the President during his trip, and 16 Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

---

## Other Support Agency Expenses

Other agencies participated in and incurred costs associated with the President's trip to Africa. For example, U.S. Information Agency records showed that it incurred incremental direct costs of about \$1 million for telecommunication and meeting rooms for support of press operations and for staff travel. The executive branch bills the news media for logistical support costs, and the cost estimate of expenses for the U.S. Information Agency was the net amount after receipt of the reimbursement. The other agencies' expenses included travel, lodging, and vehicle and equipment rentals for staff that accompanied the President, agency heads, or staff that participated in other events. For example, the Department of Transportation sent staff to work on an aviation safety and security initiative in Africa and to promote aviation services between countries in Africa and the United States. Also, Department of Commerce staff and the President participated in the opening of a trade center in South Africa named after the late Secretary of Commerce, Ronald Brown.

---

## The Cost of the President's Trip to Chile

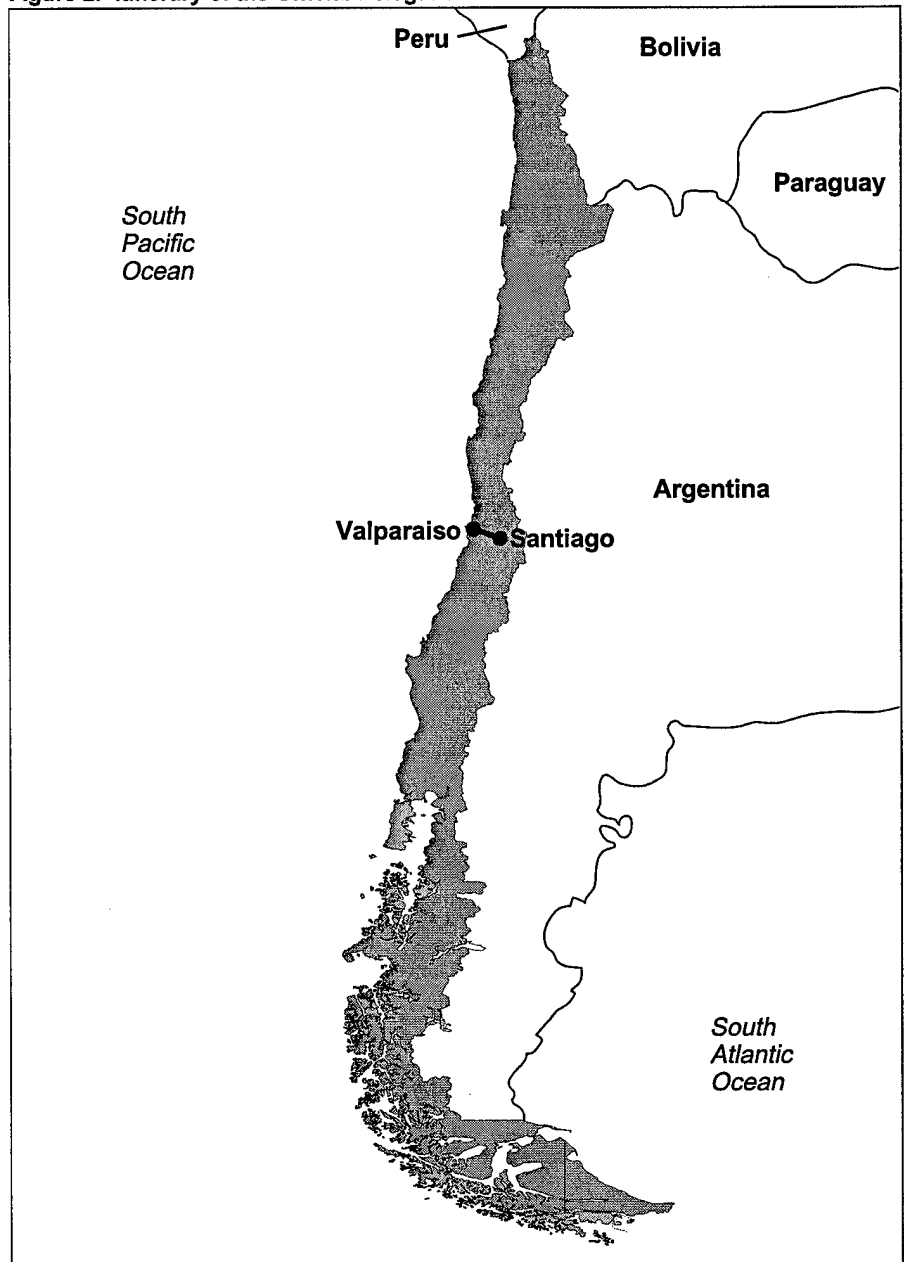
The President and his delegation visited Chile from April 16, 1998, through April 20, 1998, to attend the second Summit of the Americas and hold bilateral meetings with the President of Chile. The Summit of the Americas was a scheduled meeting of 34 heads of state or governments from countries in North, Central, and South America. Agenda items at the summit included a discussion of the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas, the promotion of democracy, and the eradication of poverty in the Americas.

Five advance teams of State, White House, Secret Service, and/or DOD officials made five trips from November 1997 through April 1998 to prepare for the President's arrival. Advance team members visited the Chilean capital of Santiago and at least three other cities to plan for presidential events at those locations. According to agency records, the federal agencies represented on the trip paid for about 600 individuals to travel to Chile as advance team members, to accompany the President, or to provide other support to his delegation.<sup>3</sup> (See appendix II, table 7 for a breakout of the travelers by agency.) Figure 2 shows the cities the President visited in Chile in 1998.

---

<sup>3</sup>This excludes Secret Service travelers. It also excludes nonfederal officials and/or private citizens that, according to the Department of State, reimbursed the government for their travel expenses.

Figure 2: Itinerary of the Official Delegation in Chile



The estimated incremental cost of the President's trip to Chile was at least \$10.5 million excluding Secret Service costs. The estimated cost by agency of the Chile trip is shown in table 2.

**Table 2: Estimated Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to Chile**

Agency	Amount	Percent of total
DOD	\$8,814,346	83.6
Department of State	1,322,004 <sup>a</sup>	12.5
U.S. Information Agency	222,279	2.1
Executive Office of the President	54,037	0.5
Department of Education	26,421	0.3
Drug Enforcement Administration	24,188	0.2
Department of Commerce	22,039	0.2
Department of Energy	20,690	0.2
Department of Justice	13,194	0.1
Small Business Administration	11,450	0.1
Overseas Private Investment Corporation	6,726	0.1
Agency for International Development	1,771	<sup>b</sup>
Immigration and Naturalization Service	589	<sup>b</sup>
Customs Service	492	<sup>b</sup>
<b>Total reported to GAO</b>	<b>\$10,540,226<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>100<sup>d</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup>The State Department paid the travel costs of Members of Congress that accompanied the President. Where information was incomplete, we used the amount State obligated to pay for specific travelers rather than actual amounts in this estimate.

<sup>b</sup>Less than 0.1 percent.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes Secret Service costs.

<sup>d</sup>May not add due to rounding.

Source: Agencies shown in the table.

## DOD Expenses

DOD records show about \$8.8 million was spent in support of this trip. Of the \$8.8 million, about \$7.8 million was for passenger and strategic lift and aerial refueling support. The U.S. Transportation Command used C-5 and C-141 aircraft for 24 airlift missions to move vehicles and other equipment from various locations in the United States to Chile at a cost of about \$6.7 million. The Command's data also shows that KC-135 tanker aircraft flew nine aerial refueling missions at a cost of about \$152,000 and that the

89th Airlift Wing flew the President's plane and two others at a cost of about \$948,000. The remaining approximately \$1 million in costs consisted of helicopter support from the Marine Helicopter Squadron One; travel for DOD staff assigned to the White House Military Office, Joint Staff, and Air Force headquarters; and other support. (See app. II, tables 8 and 9, for more information on fixed- and rotary-wing airlift and aerial refueling costs.)

---

**Department of State Expenses**

On the basis of data provided to us by the State Department and the U.S. embassy in Chile, we estimated that State's incremental direct costs were about \$1.3 million to support the Chile trip. The expenses were for lodging, vehicle rentals and other transportation services, telecommunications equipment rentals and services, and a variety of other items. The State Department paid over \$300,000 for most White House and all State staff members traveling to support one or more of the advance trips to Chile or to accompany the President during his trip, and 5 Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

---

**Other Support Agency Expenses**

Other agencies participated in and incurred costs associated with the President's trip to Chile. For example, the U.S. Information Agency spent about \$222,000 to support the trip. The agency's support expenses included rentals of rooms for the press and telecommunications services to support press operations and staff travel. The executive branch billed the news media for the cost of logistical support provided to them, and the estimate of expenses for the U.S. Information Agency was the net amount after receipt of the reimbursement. The expenses included travel, lodging, and vehicle and equipment rentals for staff that accompanied the President, agency heads, or staff that participated in other events. For example, Department of Education staff provided support because an education initiative was an agenda item for the Summit of the Americas.

---

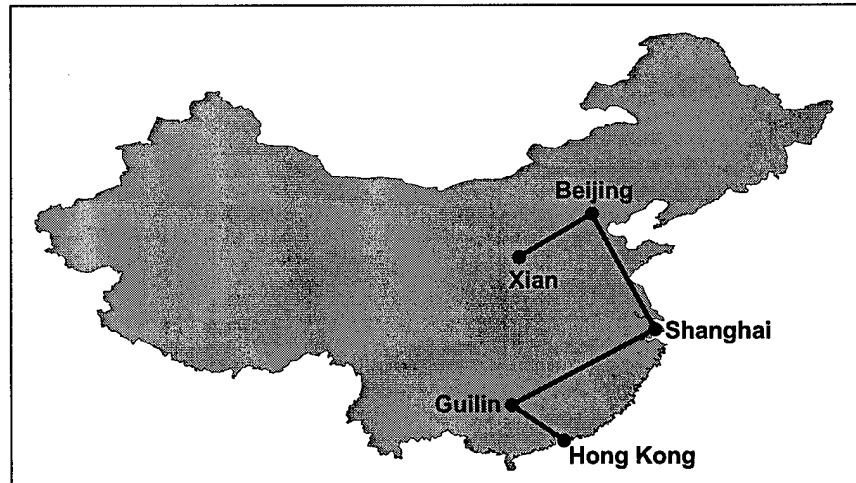
**The Cost of the President's Trip to China**

The President and his delegation visited China from June 25, 1998, through July 3, 1998, to conduct bilateral talks with the President of China and for other purposes. According to the White House, the President traveled to China to build on discussions at the October 1997 summit held in Washington, D.C., with President Jiang Zemin. Issues discussed were security, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, economics and trade, energy and environment, science and technology, and law

enforcement. Each of the accompanying agencies represented on the trip had specific missions designed to further the overall agenda or was tasked to provide logistical support.

Eight separate teams from the State Department, White House, Secret Service, and/or DOD made advance trips to Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Guilin, and Hong Kong from April 1998 through June 1998. According to agency records, the federal agencies represented on the trip paid for about 500 individuals to travel to China as advance team members, to accompany the President, or provide other support to his delegation.<sup>4</sup> (See app. III, table 10 for a breakout by agency of the travelers.) Figure 3 shows the major locations visited by the President, beginning with the delegation's stop in Xi'an.

**Figure 3: Itinerary of the Official Delegation in China**



The estimated incremental cost of the President's trip to China was at least \$18.8 million, excluding Secret Service costs. The estimated cost of the China trip by agency is shown in table 3.

<sup>4</sup>This excludes Secret Service travelers. It also excludes nonfederal officials and/or private citizens that, according to the Department of State, reimbursed the government for their travel expenses.

**Table 3: Estimate of the Cost of the President's 1998 Trip to China**

Agency	Amount	Percent of total
DOD	\$14,007,128	74.4
Department of State	3,601,588 <sup>a</sup>	19.1
U.S. Information Agency	983,835	5.2
Department of the Treasury	70,517	0.4
Executive Office of the President	63,099 <sup>b</sup>	0.3
Department of Agriculture	57,250	0.3
Department of Commerce	39,098	0.2
Department of Energy	2,534	<sup>c</sup>
Peace Corps	2,254	<sup>c</sup>
Customs Service	1,942	<sup>c</sup>
Immigration and Naturalization Service	847	<sup>c</sup>
Total reported to GAO	\$18,830,092 <sup>d</sup>	100 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>State paid the travel costs of Members of Congress that accompanied the President. Where information was incomplete, we used the amount State obligated to pay for specific travelers rather than actual amounts in this estimate.

<sup>b</sup>Includes expenses incurred by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

<sup>c</sup>Less than 0.1 percent.

<sup>d</sup>Excludes Secret Service costs.

<sup>e</sup>May not add due to rounding.

Source: Agencies shown in the table.

## DOD Expenses

DOD records show about \$14 million was spent in support of the trip. Of the \$14 million, passenger and strategic lift and aerial refueling operations accounted for about \$12.8 million. The Transportation Command's data shows that the Air Force flew 36 airlift missions using C-5 and C-141 aircraft to move vehicles and other equipment to China at a cost of about \$10.3 million. The data also show that the Air Force flew seven aerial refueling missions at a cost of just over \$79,000 and that the 89th Airlift Wing flew the President's aircraft plus three others at a cost of about \$2.5 million. The remaining approximately \$1.2 million in DOD expenses were accounted for by deployments or travel of servicemembers to China to provide other support required during the President's visit or for other

---

costs incurred in China by deployed servicemembers.<sup>5</sup> (See app. III, table 11, for more information on fixed-wing airlift and aerial refueling costs.)

---

**Department of State Expenses**

On the basis of data provided to us by the State Department and the U.S. embassy in Beijing, we estimate that State spent about \$3.6 million. The expenses were for lodging, vehicle and other equipment rentals, telecommunications equipment and services, and procurement of miscellaneous items such as aviation ground handling services. The State Department paid about \$1.3 million in travel costs for most White House and all State staff members traveling to support one or more advance trips to China or to accompany the President, and 6 Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

---

**Other Support Agency Expenses**

Other agencies participated in and incurred costs associated with the President's trip to China. For example, the U.S. Information Agency reported an expenditure of just under \$1 million that consisted primarily of support for press operations and staff travel. The executive branch billed the news media for the cost of logistical support provided to them, and the estimate of expenses for the U.S. Information Agency was the net amount after receipt of the reimbursement. The other agencies' expenses included travel, lodging, and transportation or other support for staff that accompanied the President, agency heads, or staff that participated in other events. For example, the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Trade Representative discussed trade and economic development with officials of the host government.

---

**Agencies Use a Variety of Means to Account for the Cost of Presidential Travel**

The executive branch does not maintain a single cost accounting system or a set of procedures to track all costs of presidential travel. Nonetheless, the agencies supporting or participating in the three presidential trips that we reviewed accounted for their travel or support costs in a variety of ways.

The State Department and its embassies have their own procedures for gathering data on the costs they incur in supporting presidential trips. State's Presidential Travel Support Services Office collects and maintains

---

<sup>5</sup>According to officials from the Office of the White House Counsel, the Marine Helicopter Squadron One did not fly any missions during the China trip.

files that have been organized individually for each presidential trip. These files contain the travel vouchers of certain White House and State travelers that participated in one or more of the advance trips and/or accompanied the President during his trip. The embassies that we contacted in Africa, Chile, and China also maintained files containing such documents as bills for hotels and equipment rentals and for aircraft servicing contracts. The files contain sufficient detail to show the amount disbursed by State for the other agencies' share of the costs of support procured under these contracts. These records were obtained and summed to determine the cost of presidential travel on specific trips.

DOD components that support presidential travel also have information on individual costs. For example, the U.S. Transportation Command maintains data that can be used to identify strategic airlift and aerial refueling missions that support presidential trips. However, the data system does not readily account for presidential missions by trip. To account for the cost of a particular trip, one has to review the mission dates and itineraries throughout the database to identify the support. Other DOD components maintain records that while not specifically designed to account for the cost of presidential support can be used to identify the cost of a mission that supported presidential travel. For example, U.S. European Command officials said that they can account for incremental direct costs by military operation and thus can determine support costs for a presidential trip.

Other agencies or DOD components provide an accounting code to the State Department, which the Department uses to disburse the agencies' funds electronically for costs incurred. For example, the Department of the Treasury provided its accounting code to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China, for the cost of hotels and other expenses that Treasury staff would incur during the trip. The Treasury Department also limited the amount of funds that State could obligate. In addition, each of the agencies that participated in the presidential trips could provide travel vouchers or other documents showing costs or obligations incurred.

---

## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In separate written comments on a draft of this report, the White House stated it had no comments, and the Department of State provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate (see apps. V and VI). The Department of Defense stated it found no areas of significant disagreement (see app. VII). The White House and Department of Defense provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

---

For the other agencies participating in the President's trips, we conducted exit conferences with each agency to discuss how we arrived at the costs and numbers of travelers attributed to them. The agency officials concurred with the information as presented. We also discussed their accounting processes when accompanying the President on trips to foreign countries.

---

## Scope and Methodology

We discuss our scope and methodology in appendix IV.

---

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we will not distribute it until 30 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies of this report to interested congressional committees; John Podesta, the President's Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the President; the Honorable William S. Cohen, the Secretary of Defense; and the Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, the Secretary of State. We are also sending copies of this report to the other agencies that participated in these trips.

Key contacts and contributors on this assignment are listed in appendix VIII.



Mark E. Gebicke  
Director, National Security  
Preparedness Issues

# Support Provided for the President's Trip to Africa

A number of federal departments or agencies were represented in the official delegation on the President's trip to Africa. Table 4 displays the number of official travelers that each agency reported sending or that reported incurring expenses on the trip, excluding Secret Service travelers. The table also excludes non-federal officials or private citizens that, according to the Department of State, paid their own travel expenses.

**Table 4: Travelers on the Africa Trip**

Department or agency	Number of travelers
Department of Defense	904
Executive Office of the President	205 <sup>a</sup>
U.S. Information Agency	103
Department of State	60 <sup>b</sup>
Department of Transportation	9
Agency for International Development	6
Department of Labor	6
Department of Agriculture	3
Department of Commerce	3
Customs Service	1
Immigration and Naturalization Service	1
Department of the Treasury	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,302<sup>c</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes one official from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

<sup>b</sup>Includes 16 Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

<sup>c</sup>Some official travelers may have spent part of their time attending to agency business apart from the President's trip. Others may have been traveling in support of their cabinet secretary or agency head. This also includes officials that may have participated in one or more of the advance trips. This excludes Peace Corps officials that traveled within Africa and incurred some expenses.

Source: The agencies shown in the table.

DOD provided passenger and strategic airlift and aerial refueling using fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft to support the Africa trip. Table 5 displays the fixed-wing support for the Africa trip, and table 6 displays rotary-wing support to the trip.

**Appendix I**  
**Support Provided for the President's Trip to**  
**Africa**

**Table 5: DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Africa**

<b>Aircraft model<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Primary mission</b>	<b>Missions flown<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Flight hours</b>	<b>Hourly rate</b>	<b>Mission cost</b>
VC-25A	Passengers	1	38.0	\$34,400	\$1,307,200
C-137	Passengers	2	77.5	9,935	769,963
C-20B	Passengers	1	40.7	3,348	136,264
C-9A	Passengers	1	46.5	2,005	93,233
C-9C	Passengers	1	48.7	4,092	199,280
C-5	Strategic lift	66	1,975.6	12,605	24,902,438
KC-135	Strategic lift	8	104.4	4,051 <sup>c</sup>	422,924
C-141	Strategic lift	19	568.4	5,349	3,040,372
C-17	Strategic lift	5	116.4	7,025	817,710
KC-135	Aerial refueling	104	456.9	2,075 <sup>c</sup>	948,068
KC-10	Aerial refueling	6	35.8	2,692	96,374
<b>Total</b>		<b>214</b>	<b>3,508.9</b>		<b>\$32,733,826</b>

<sup>a</sup>Civilian aircraft variants of the passenger aircraft shown are as follows: (1) VC-25A (Boeing 747), which is the President's plane, and (2) C-137 (Boeing 707), C-20B (Gulfstream III), and C-9A and C-9C (Douglas DC-9).

<sup>b</sup>A mission may include one or more flight segments, such as a round trip flight to a foreign destination and a return flight to home base. It may also include multiple flight segments. Also, the number of missions does not necessarily reflect the number of aircraft used because a given aircraft may have flown more than one mission.

<sup>c</sup>According to Air Force officials, the flying hour rates for the KC-135 aircraft differ depending on the type of mission due to differences in the accounting based on the type of mission.

Source: Air Mobility Command and the White House Airlift Operations Office.

---

**Appendix I**  
**Support Provided for the President's Trip to**  
**Africa**

---

---

**Table 6: DOD-Provided Rotary-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Africa**

<b>Helicopter model</b>	<b>Flight hours</b>	<b>Hourly rate</b>	<b>Cost</b>
VH-3D	28.7	\$5,597	\$160,634
UH-53E	27.3	3,658	99,863
VH-60N	22.1	4,252	93,969
CH-53E	31.0	3,658	113,398
UH-60A	38.9	2,236	86,980
<b>Total</b>	<b>148.0</b>		<b>\$554,844</b>

Note: The number of missions flown was not available.

Source: White House Airlift Operations Office.

# Support Provided for the President's Trip to Chile

A number of federal departments or agencies were represented in the official delegation on the President's trip to Chile. Table 7 displays the number of official travelers that each agency reported sending on the trip, excluding Secret Service travelers. The table also excludes nonfederal officials or private citizens that, according to the Department of State, paid their own travel expenses.

**Table 7: Travelers on the Chile Trip**

Department or agency	Number of travelers
Department of Defense	193
Department of State	175 <sup>a</sup>
Executive Office of the President	109 <sup>b</sup>
U.S. Information Agency	67
Department of Justice <sup>c</sup>	14
Department of Commerce	10
Department of Education	7
Department of Energy	7
Small Business Administration	5
Overseas Private Investment Corporation	2
Agency for International Development	1
Customs Service	1
Immigration and Naturalization Service	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>592<sup>d</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes five Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

<sup>b</sup>Includes officials from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

<sup>c</sup>Includes travelers from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

<sup>d</sup>Some official travelers may have spent part of their time attending to agency business apart from the President's trip. Others may have been traveling in support of their cabinet secretary or agency head. This also includes officials that may have participated in one or more of the advance trips.

Source: The agencies shown in the table.

DOD provided passenger and strategic airlift and aerial refueling using fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft to support the Chile trip. Table 8 displays the fixed-wing support for the Chile trip, and table 9 displays rotary-wing support for the trip.

**Appendix II**  
**Support Provided for the President's Trip to Chile**

**Table 8: DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Chile**

Aircraft model <sup>a</sup>	Primary mission	Missions flown <sup>b</sup>	Flight hours	Hourly rate	Mission cost
VC-25A	Passengers	1	18.5	\$34,400	\$636,400
C-137	Passengers	1	20.0	9,935	198,700
C-9C	Passengers	1	27.6	4,092	112,939
C-141	Strategic lift	4	73.5	5,349	393,152
C-5	Strategic lift	20	503.9	12,605	6,351,660
KC-135	Aerial refueling	9	73.4	2,075	152,305
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>716.9</b>		<b>\$7,845,156</b>

<sup>a</sup>Civilian aircraft variants of the passenger aircraft shown are as follows: (1) VC-25A (Boeing 747), which is the President's plane, and (2) C-137 (Boeing 707), and C-9 (Douglas DC-9).

<sup>b</sup>A mission may include one or more flight segments, such as a round trip flight to a foreign destination and a return flight to home base. It may also include multiple flight segments. Also, the number of missions does not necessarily reflect the number of aircraft used because a given aircraft may have flown more than one mission.

Source: Air Mobility Command and the White House Airlift Operations Office.

**Table 9: DOD-Provided Rotary-Wing Support to the President's Trip to Chile**

Helicopter model	Flight hours <sup>a</sup>	Hourly rate	Cost
VH-60N	25.2	\$4,252	\$107,150
CH-53E	20.1	3,658	73,526
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.3</b>		<b>\$180,676</b>

<sup>a</sup>The number of missions flown was not available.

Source: White House Airlift Operations Office.

# Support Provided for the President's Trip to China

A number of federal departments or agencies were represented in the official delegation on the President's trip to China, excluding the Secret Service. Table 10 displays the number of official travelers that each agency reported sending on the trip, excluding Secret Service travelers. The table also excludes nonfederal officials or private citizens that may have gone on the trip and who, according to the Department of State, paid their own travel expenses.

**Table 10: Travelers on the China Trip**

Department or agency	Number of travelers
Executive Office of the President	186 <sup>a</sup>
Department of Defense	123
Department of State	116 <sup>b</sup>
U.S. Information Agency	50
Department of the Treasury	14
Department of Commerce	9
Department of Agriculture	6
Peace Corps	2
Department of Energy	2
Customs Service	1
Immigration and Naturalization Service	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>510<sup>c</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes officials from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

<sup>b</sup>Includes six Members of Congress invited to accompany the President.

<sup>c</sup>Some official travelers may have spent part of their time attending to agency business apart from the President's trip. Others may have been traveling in support of their cabinet secretary or agency head. This also includes officials that may have participated in one or more of the advance trips.

Source: The agencies shown in the table.

DOD provided passenger and strategic airlift and aerial refueling using fixed-wing aircraft to support the China trip. Table 11 displays the fixed-wing support provided for the China trip. Officials from the White House Counsel's Office told us that while some helicopters were sent to China to support the trip, they were not used.

**Appendix III  
Support Provided for the President's Trip to  
China**

**Table 11: DOD-Provided Fixed-Wing Support to the President's Trip to China**

<b>Aircraft model<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Primary mission</b>	<b>Missions flown<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Flight hours</b>	<b>Hourly rate</b>	<b>Mission cost</b>
VC-25A	Passengers	1	39.2	\$34,400	\$1,348,480
C-137	Passengers	3	113.5	9,935	1,127,623
C-5	Strategic lift	33	808.2	12,605	10,187,361
C-141	Strategic lift	3	18.3	5,349	97,887
KC-135	Aerial refueling	7	38.2	2,075	79,265
<b>Total</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>1,017.4</b>		<b>\$12,840,616</b>

<sup>a</sup>Civilian aircraft variants of the passenger aircraft shown are as follows: (1) VC-25A (Boeing 747), which is the President's plane, and (2) C-137 (Boeing 707).

<sup>b</sup>A mission may include one or more flight segments, such as a round trip flight to a foreign destination and a return flight to home base. It may also include multiple flight segments. Also, the number of missions does not necessarily reflect the number of aircraft used because a given aircraft may have flown more than one mission.

Source: Air Mobility Command and the 89th Airlift Wing.

---

# Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

---

The objectives of our review were to determine (1) the estimated costs and the nature of the costs of President Clinton's 1998 trips to Africa, Chile, and China and (2) executive branch accounting procedures for such expenses.

To determine the estimated cost and nature of the costs of the President's 1998 trips to China, Chile, and Africa, we contacted each agency that was financially responsible for the conduct of the three trips based on official delegation lists and Department of State records. To determine the types of support the Department of Defense (DOD) provided, we interviewed officials and obtained messages, briefing slides, planning documents, situation reports, electronic mail, and other documents from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Office of the General Counsel); the Joint Staff; and the Office of the Vice Chief of Staff, Special Air Missions, U.S. Air Force. To determine the cost of strategic airlift and tanker support operations, we interviewed officials and obtained flight records, hourly flying rates, briefing slides, scheduling documents, excerpts from command guidance, and other documents from the U.S. Transportation Command and the Air Force's Air Mobility Command in Illinois and the Pacific Air Forces in Hawaii. To verify a sample of data collected from the Transportation and Air Mobility Commands, we visited air wings that provided significant strategic lift, the 436th Air Mobility Wing and the 512th Reserve Wing in Delaware. While there, we interviewed officials and obtained flight, budget, maintenance, and other records from the active and reserve wings. To determine the cost to operate the President's plane and supporting aircraft, we obtained (1) flight records from the 89th Airlift Wing in Maryland, (2) the flying hour rate for the President's plane from the White House Military Office, (3) the operating costs of other aircraft from the Transportation Command, and (4) certain flying costs from the Office of the White House Counsel.

To determine other DOD support costs, we obtained the flying hour rates, flight records, and other information for helicopters used on one or more of the trips from the U.S. Atlantic Command, the Marine Corps' Marine Helicopter Squadron One in Virginia, the 101st Aviation Brigade in Kentucky, the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing in California, and the 2nd Marine Air Wing in North Carolina. We also obtained the cost of technical support provided by the 49th Material Maintenance Squadron in New Mexico. In addition, to determine the cost of Operation Eagle Vista, we obtained and reviewed information showing the cost of travel and transportation, communications, contracts, and other support from the U.S. European Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Naval Forces-Europe, or U.S. Army-Europe. Similarly, we obtained travel vouchers from the U.S. Pacific

Command to determine the travel costs of 16 officials that accompanied the President to China. With the assistance of the Office of the White House Counsel, we also obtained and reviewed travel cost information from the White House Transportation Agency, the White House Communications Agency, and the White House Mess to determine the cost of travel of DOD officials assigned to these organizations.

To determine the travel cost of White House and Department of State officials that participated in one or more of the advance trips and/or accompanied the President during his trips, we interviewed officials and obtained documents from the Office of the White House Counsel and the Department of State's Presidential Travel Support Services Office. Specifically, we obtained travel vouchers, staff manuals, memorandums, and official delegation lists. Where information was incomplete, we used the amount State obligated to pay for specific travelers rather than actual amounts in this estimate.

To determine other expenses incurred by the Department of State, we obtained hotel bills, equipment rental contracts, travel cost summaries, aircraft servicing contracts, staff overtime charges, and/or other information from the U.S. embassies in (1) Beijing, China; (2) Santiago, Chile; (3) Kampala, Uganda; (4) Kigali, Rwanda; (5) Gaborone, Botswana; (6) Dakar, Senegal; (7) Pretoria, South Africa; and (8) Accra, Ghana. To determine the funds disbursed by the Department of State for other federal agencies for in-country expenses related to these trips, we obtained and reviewed records from each of the eight embassies and from the Department of State's Office of International Financial Services.

To determine the cost of travel for officials that accompanied or otherwise supported the President or a cabinet secretary or agency head, we reviewed travel vouchers and related travel information from the Executive Office of the President; the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; and the Departments of State, the Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Transportation, Labor, Justice, Energy, and Education; the Peace Corps; the U.S. Information Agency; the Immigration and Naturalization Service; the Customs Service; the Secret Service; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Small Business Administration; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; and the Agency for International Development. We also obtained and reviewed the flying hour rate and flight record for a Drug Enforcement Agency aircraft used to transport the Attorney General on a portion of her trip to Chile. We had to rely on the White House, the

---

**Appendix IV**  
**Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

---

agencies, and the embassies to accurately report their costs and number of travelers participating in the selected trips.

To determine how the cost of presidential travel is accounted for, we consulted the Federal Travel Regulations issued by the General Services Administration, agency staff manuals, and agency guidance. We also interviewed officials knowledgeable about cost accounting for presidential travel in the agencies that supported or participated in the President's three trips.

We excluded the following costs from our analysis: (1) Secret Service expenses, which are classified; (2) regular salaries and benefits of U.S. government civilian and military travelers; and (3) agency planning expenses that may have been incurred in preparing to travel. We did not evaluate the need for any element of support provided on the trips that we reviewed.

We excluded past Presidents' travel costs because the records were not readily available. Finally, we did not evaluate the underlying accounting systems or independently verify certain underlying data such as the flying hour rates used to calculate DOD's flying costs associated with the trips.

We conducted our review from August 1998 to August 1999 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

# Comments From the White House

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 2, 1999

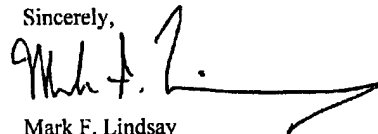
Mr. Mark E. Gebicke, Director  
National Security and Preparedness Issues  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Gebicke:

I am in receipt of your letter of June 25 accompanying the GAO draft report of the costs of President Clinton's trips to China, Chile, and Africa.

Thank you for your request for written comments related to the report; however, I have no comments at this time.

Sincerely,



Mark F. Lindsay  
Deputy Assistant to the President and  
Director, Office of Administration

MFL/sp

# Comments From the Department of State



**United States Department of State**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**Washington, D.C. 20520-7427**

July 2, 1999

Dear Mr. Hinton:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL: Costs and Accounting For the President's 1998 Trips to China, Chile, and Africa," GAO/NSIAD-99-64, GAO Job Code 703259.

The Department of State provided technical changes to your staff that were, for the most part, accepted and incorporated in the final document.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Mr. Patrick F. Kennedy, Assistant Secretary for Administration, at (202) 647-1492.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bert Edwards".

Bert T. Edwards

cc:  
GAO/NSIAD – Mr. Gebicke/Mr. Solis  
State/A – Mr. Kennedy

Mr. Henry L. Hinton, Jr.,  
Assistant Comptroller General,  
National Security and International Affairs,  
U.S. General Accounting Office.

# Comments From the Department of Defense



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
1600 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1600



08 JUL 1999

Mr. Mark E. Gebicke  
Director  
National Security and Preparedness Issues  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

re: GAO Code 703259

Dear Mr. Gebicke:

This letter responds to your letter to Secretary Cohen requesting our review and comments on your draft report addressing the estimated cost and nature of costs of President Clinton's 1998 trips to Chile, China and Africa.

All the elements of the Department of Defense that were involved in the provision of information for the report have reviewed it and find no areas of significant disagreement with those sections that deal with the Department of Defense. We note that the report contains no recommendations, therefore, our comments are limited to a review of the methodology and computation of those costs attributed to the Department of Defense.

We have certain minor corrections and suggestions. These items are set forth in Appendix A. Col. Michael Sevier has already raised all these matters with your staff.

We hope that in the future our relations with your office will continue to be as cordial and cooperative as they were during the preparation of this report.

Harold J. Kwilwasser  
Deputy General Counsel - Legal Counsel

Attachment  
Appendix A



---

# GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

---

---

## GAO Contacts

Mark E. Gebicke (202) 512-5140  
William M. Solis (202) 512-8365

---

## Acknowledgments

In addition to the contacts named above, Carol R. Schuster, Brian J. Lepore, James A. Driggins, and Penny A. Berrier made key contributions to this report.

---

---

**Ordering Information**

The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary, VISA and MasterCard credit cards are accepted, also.

Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

Orders by mail:

U.S. General Accounting Office  
P.O. Box 37050  
Washington, DC 20013

or visit:

Room 1100  
700 4th St. NW (corner of 4th and G Sts. NW)  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, DC

Orders may also be placed by calling (202) 512-6000 or by using fax number (202) 512-6061, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Each day, GAO issues a list of newly available reports and testimony. To receive facsimile copies of the daily list or any list from the past 30 days, please call (202) 512-6000 using a touchtone phone. A recorded menu will provide information on how to obtain these lists.

For information on how to access GAO reports on the INTERNET, send an e-mail message with "info" in the body to:

[info@www.gao.gov](mailto:info@www.gao.gov)

or visit GAO's World Wide Web Home Page at:

<http://www.gao.gov>