

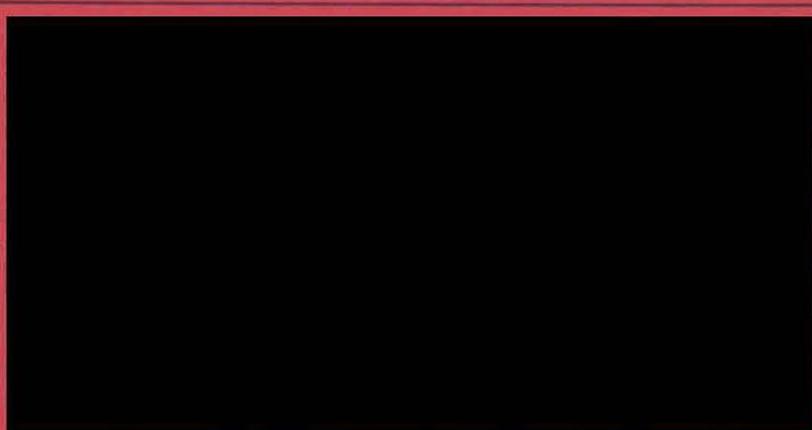
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Regional Inspector General for Audit  
WASHINGTON

IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED  
IN ADMINISTERING THE  
FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Audit Report No. 0-902-81-118

August 17, 1981

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has been effective in carrying out international emergency relief and rehabilitation activities. Some improvements for administering the foreign disaster assistance program can be made. These include:

- Defining more precisely rehabilitation activities eligible for disaster account financing;
- Clarifying OFDA's role with field missions;
- Assessing the need for mission disaster relief plans; and
- Determining the need for the Singapore stockpile.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

AID is the responsible government agency for coordinating and providing U.S. emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance to people and countries affected by international disasters. The AID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is responsible for the emergency relief and rehabilitation function. Long-term disaster reconstruction assistance is the responsibility of the respective AID Bureaus.

During the past three fiscal years, AID has expended \$60 million in emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance for some 107 disaster situations. The magnitude of disaster assistance has varied from as little as \$2,000 for a 1979 fire in Guyana to more than \$4 million for a 1980 earthquake in Italy. In addition, assistance has been rendered to developing countries to improve disaster preparedness. Programs have also been financed to develop forecasting for drought-induced food shortages, as well as storm assessment, forecasting and warning systems.

Other U.S. Government agencies are used by OFDA in disaster operations on a reimbursable basis. Because of its substantial resources available to meet disaster situations, the principal government agency used is the Department of Defense (DOD). OFDA also utilizes the services of private voluntary organizations and other private sector organizations to carry out disaster assistance functions.

### Purpose and Scope

The purposes of this review were to: (1) assess OFDA effectiveness to respond to international disasters, (2) determine if disaster assistance activities were effectively and efficiently managed, and (3) ascertain whether disaster funds were expended properly and in compliance with legislative requirements and AID regulations. Our examination included an analysis of documents and discussions with appropriate officials in Washington and Latin America. In performing this review, we visited the countries of Dominican Republic, Dominica, Haiti, Panama, and Peru. The review was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and procedures.

Our report does not deal with long-term disaster reconstruction funded by special appropriations. This phase of disaster assistance was recently reviewed by the General Accounting Office and covered in its report (No. ID-81-40) of June 10, 1981.

### Use Of The Disaster Account To Finance Some Rehabilitation Activities Is Questionable

Legislative intent limits OFDA's involvement in disaster activities to urgent, short-term assistance. We found some activities funded from the disaster account that do not meet these criteria. The activities were more in the

nature of long-term reconstruction programs than short-term assistance. Examples of these long-term reconstruction programs were found in the Dominican Republic, Dominica and Haiti. Activities in these countries substantially exceeded the 60-90 day time limitation for disaster account financing by as much as 20 months (see pp 4-7).

#### OFDA Relationship With Field Missions Needs Improvement

We found instances where missions and embassies are not fully aware of the role of OFDA, because they do not know what services OFDA provides. This can inhibit AID's effectiveness in responding to disasters. For example, some mission officials in Latin America and South Asia have commented that there is confusion and misunderstandings on their part concerning OFDA's function. Mission evaluations have reported that some delays and lost time in disaster relief operations have resulted because of an uncertainty in how to deal with OFDA (see pp 8-9).

#### Problems With Mission Disaster Relief Plans

Missions and embassies have not complied with AID requirements for the preparation of disaster relief plans. Officials at some missions visited informed us that disaster relief functions are assigned to staff as an addition to regular duties. Consequently, staff members do not have sufficient time to devote to the preparation of comprehensive disaster relief plans. Moreover, several missions questioned the need for comprehensive disaster relief plans since disaster assistance operations have been successfully carried out in the past without them (see pp 10-11).

#### Problems With Overseas Disaster Relief Stockpiles

Continued maintenance of the Singapore stockpile appears unwarranted in light of the minimal use that has been made of the facility. During the past three years the Singapore stockpile has been used only three times in disaster relief operations.

DOD personnel responsible for the Panama stockpile have raised questions as to the safety of excess U.S. Army property field cooking stoves stored in overseas stockpiles. They have also questioned the suitability of stocking sophisticated motor-run hand tools that will be used by untrained personnel.

DOD personnel also expressed concern with the fact that notification on the stockpile replacement commodities was not always received sufficiently in advance of arrival. This causes logistics problems in arranging ground transportation on short notice (see pp 12-14).

#### Need For Evaluation Of Disaster Preparedness Activities

OFDA needs to increase its evaluation efforts of disaster preparedness activities. A substantial number of evaluations have been performed on emergency

disaster relief and rehabilitation activities, but few have been performed on preparedness activities. Although OFDA has developed an activity evaluation plan, it has never been implemented. With the substantial amount of funds currently being programmed for disaster preparedness, OFDA should implement its evaluation plan in order to determine the effectiveness of these activities (see page 15).

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

A number of administrative aspects of OFDA operations are in need of improvement. The most important of these is the need to more precisely define rehabilitation activities that can be financed with disaster account funds. This is needed to ensure compliance with legislative intent and to eliminate confusion among missions on types of rehabilitation activities that OFDA can finance. A closer OFDA relationship with missions is needed to ensure that mission officials are fully aware of the type of disaster assistance that can be expected from OFDA in the most expeditious manner. OFDA should also determine if current requirements for disaster plans are reasonable and cost effective in relationship to the size of individual mission staffs.

We have made eight recommendations, listed in Exhibit D, addressing these and other issues.

#### Management Comments

In their comments to us on the draft report, OFDA officials stated that it is permissible to go beyond the 60-90 day disaster financing time limit because regulations state only that "normally assistance will be rendered within the 60-90 day time period." Moreover, OFDA's involvement sometimes slips beyond the 60-90 day time limit because funds from other sources are slow in coming. Also, it sometimes happens that final appropriations on congressional emergency supplemental legislation are less than what was authorized.

Nevertheless, OFDA officials do agree that there is a need to clarify what it can fund and have formed a task force to review the matter. OFDA officials did express agreement with the eight recommendations contained in the report.

## BACKGROUND

Since 1812, when the U.S. Congress appropriated funds to help earthquake victims in Venezuela, foreign disaster relief assistance has been a popular aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Coordination of all U.S. Government participation for disaster relief has been the responsibility of AID since 1964. The AID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is assigned the disaster relief function. Until May 29, 1981, OFDA was organizationally located within the Bureau for Private and Development Cooperation. Since then, it reports directly to the Office of the Administrator.

OFDA's authority and funding for relief and rehabilitation of peoples and countries affected by international disasters are contained in Sections 491, 492 and 493 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The Act authorizes assistance to any foreign country, international organization or private voluntary organization for international disaster relief and rehabilitation, including assistance relating to disaster preparedness and prediction for natural disasters abroad. Funds from the Contingency Fund, Section 451, if available, can also be used for disaster assistance normally after all regular appropriated funds have been depleted. In the case of a massive disaster, the Congress may make a special appropriation tied to a particular disaster or may authorize diversion of funds originally programmed for other purposes for disaster relief and rehabilitation assistance.

Three major goals with appropriate strategies have been identified by OFDA to carry out the congressional mandate. The first of these goals is:

"To alleviate the suffering of disaster victims by providing an efficient, rapid, relevant and accurate response to official requests for emergency assistance."

The strategy to meet this goal is the maintenance and continued improvement of rapid, objective U.S. response capability with full access to all appropriate agencies and resources of the Government. The second goal is:

"To prevent or to alleviate the suffering of disaster victims by helping developing countries achieve an adequate level of disaster preparedness."

The strategy to meet this goal is the provision of technical assistance, especially to developing countries: (a) to raise the level of awareness of the need for preparedness, (b) to train disaster managers, and (c) to strengthen national disaster infrastructures with relevant technologies. The third goal is:

"To prevent the suffering and death of disaster victims by providing sufficient warning of the occurrence of natural disaster causing events, especially in developing countries."

The strategy to meet this goal is the development of reliable operational prediction, monitoring, and warning systems and the transfer of such systems to organizations capable of maintaining them.

Under the leadership of its director, OFDA is organized into two divisions to perform functions designed to achieve these goals.

- The Operations Division's principal functions are to evaluate disaster situations, mobilize and provide direction to foreign disaster responses, coordinating U.S. Government efforts with those of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), Red Cross, and the private sector; responds to request for financial, material, personnel and logistical support to meet foreign disaster situations; and maintain and monitor overseas disaster relief stockpiles.
- The Preparedness Division's principal functions are to provide technical assistance to disaster-prone countries in matters of disaster preparedness; monitor and support development in the area of disaster prediction; promote use of disaster warning systems; conduct seminars to stimulate disaster preparedness planning; and develop printed data on disaster preparedness for disaster-prone countries.

Funds obligated to carry out OFDA disaster assistance activities for the fiscal years 1979, 1980 and 1981 were as follows:

	(\$000)		
	<u>FY 79</u>	<u>FY 80</u>	<u>FY 81 Thru 3/31/81</u>
Disaster Relief Operations	28.9	32.3	9.2
Stockpile Costs	.5	1.2	.5
Preparedness & Early Warning Activities	<u>1.6</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>.2</u>
Total	<u>31.0</u>	<u>35.6</u>	<u>9.9</u>

Exhibits A, B, and C contain listings of disaster relief activities for which U.S. assistance was provided from October 1, 1979 through March 31, 1981. Stockpile costs include maintenance expenses and increases in stock levels. The replacement costs of stockpile inventory items used for a particular disaster are charged to that disaster under the category of Disaster Relief Operations.

During the past three fiscal years OFDA's staff costs and applicable operating expenses, funded from AID's operating expense budget, were as follows:

	(\$000)		
	<u>FY 79</u>	<u>FY 80</u>	<u>FY 81</u>
Total.	.907	1.555	1.753

As of January 31, 1981, OFDA had 22 authorized full-time staff positions of which 18 were staffed. In addition, a medical advisor from the Department of Health and Human Services is assigned to OFDA under a resources support service agreement.

### Purpose and Scope

The purposes of this review were to assess OFDA's effectiveness to respond to international disasters, to determine if disaster assistance activities were effectively and efficiently managed and to ascertain whether disaster funds were expended properly and in compliance with legislative requirements and AID regulations. Our examination included an analysis of documents and discussions with appropriate officials in Washington and Latin America. In performing this review, we visited the countries of Dominican Republic, Dominica, Haiti, Panama, and Peru. The review was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and procedures.

Our report does not deal with long-term disaster reconstruction funded by special appropriations. This phase of disaster assistance was recently reviewed by the General Accounting Office and covered in its report (No. ID-81-40) of June 10, 1981.

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### USE OF THE DISASTER ACCOUNT TO FINANCE SOME REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES IS QUESTIONABLE

Some rehabilitation activities funded from the disaster account do not conform with legislative requirements and AID regulations. The activities appeared to be more in the nature of longer-term reconstruction programs, which, in our view, should not have been funded from the disaster account.

The basic authorities and guidelines for AID involvement in disaster assistance are contained in the FAA of 1961, as amended, Sections 491 and 492. Funds under Section 491 authorize the President to furnish assistance:

" . . . to any foreign country, international organization, or private voluntary organization, on such terms and conditions as he may determine, for international disaster relief and rehabilitation, including assistance relating to disaster preparedness, and to the prediction of, and contingency planning for, natural disasters abroad."

Section 492 contains the fiscal year amount authorized and appropriated to carry out Section 491. This amount is commonly referred to as the "disaster account."

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (Report 95-161 dated May 13, 1977) defines the type of assistance to be rendered under Section 491 as follows:

"The Committee intends emergency disaster relief to be used to alleviate the suffering of disaster victims or to repair and restore essential services. Normally the emergency period should not exceed 60 days after the chief or mission exercises his or her disaster relief authority. Short-run rehabilitation is help given to repair homes, roads, bridges, schools, communications or other facilities necessary to restore a country's equilibrium and to assist disaster victims to return to self-reliance. This phase should normally be concurrent with the overall emergency relief period of 60 days.

"Long-term reconstruction may cover a period of several years. Its objective is to bring the system of public facilities, infrastructure, agriculture and the economy in general back to its predisaster level. In some cases, reconstruction efforts may help to improve a sector of the damaged economy beyond its predisaster condition. Unless specifically authorized by law, long-term reconstruction is not to be funded under the international disaster relief authorities."

AID Handbook 8, "Foreign Disaster Assistance," generally incorporates the Committee's definition as AID policy for disaster relief. One exception is the period for short-run rehabilitation. AID policy provides that the rehabilitation phase can be concurrent with the emergency relief period or extend beyond

the first 60 days. It is normally limited, however, to an additional 90 days after plans are drawn and funds made available.

In reviewing several disasters in Latin America, we found that the disaster account should not have been used to fund the rehabilitation activities discussed below.

### Dominican Republic

Hurricane David penetrated the Dominican Republic on the afternoon of August 31, 1979, on the southeastern side of the island. Its effects were devastating, causing major loss of human life and destroying agriculture, housing, schools, other public and private buildings, as well as infrastructure and services. Five days later, Tropical Storm Frederick entered the island in about the same trajectory as David. The additional rain brought on by David fell on already saturated land, causing serious flooding and corresponding destruction of bridges, roads, drainage systems, dams and irrigation systems as well as hydroelectric plants.

Immediately following the disaster, the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) requested U.S. Government assistance through the U.S. Ambassador. Relief activities were immediately initiated by the U.S. Government and were conducted by personnel from the Department of Defense (DOD), Peace Corps, State Department and AID. The assistance provided during the emergency phase of this disaster continued through October 25, 1979.

Almost immediately following the hurricane, and concurrent with immediate relief efforts, the USAID began planning and considering long-range reconstruction requirements. Assistance provided from the disaster account for this program included \$3.5 million for an electric power transmission project and grants totaling \$1 million for other projects.

The electric power transmission project was for the reconstruction of the major 69 KV transmission line between San Cristobal, Valdesia and Bani. The engineering and construction services were furnished by the Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority (PREPA) under a contract (\$3.1 million) with AID and funded from the disaster account. A grant of \$400,000 was also made to the GODR for materials. This project, which was initiated in December 1979 and completed in July 1980, resulted in virtually a new transmission line, and thus should not have been financed from the disaster account. It is relevant to note that AID's General Counsel stated in State Cable No. 274343 dated October 22, 1979, that disaster account funds should not be used to finance this project.

A \$110,000 grant funded from the disaster account was made to the GODR Institute Agrario Dominicano for a Small Farm Agriculture and Livestock Project. Technical assistance was rendered by Peace Corps volunteers. The project started in November 1979 and was completed October 1980. Under the project, seven production and training centers have been established. The centers include the production of chickens and other poultry, eggs, rabbits and goats. Principal outputs of the project include construction of 17 animal shelters with storage, water and classroom facilities as needed, 6 incubators, 5 brooders, 60 rabbit cages and stocks of animals and foodstuffs. Neither the infrastructure nor facilities for these production centers existed at the time of

Hurricane David. Therefore, in our view, these activities should not have been classified and financed as rehabilitation activities.

Grants of \$538,000 funded from the disaster account were made to six PVOs for an emergency housing program to repair and rebuild rural homes destroyed or badly damaged by the hurricanes. Included was a grant of \$76,000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS made a decision not to participate in the housing repair portion of USAID's emergency housing program, but rather to construct completed units. The CRS project, which was still in process at the time of our visit in March 1981, will provide housing for 84 families who lost their homes and land due to flooding from the hurricanes. This CRS project, consisting of new housing on a new site, clearly does not meet the rehabilitation criteria for disaster account financing.

### Dominica

On August 29, 1979, Hurricane David, which had devastated the Dominican Republic, also swept across the Island of Dominica causing loss of lives and widespread destruction of property. Hurricane Frederic followed a week later, causing flooding and erosion on many exposed slopes. The U.S. Government responded with disaster relief assistance provided primarily by the DOD which was funded from the disaster account.

In connection with the disaster, AID proposed an emergency housing repair program. The program was to rehabilitate the housing of 4,000 to 6,000 rural households most seriously affected. On December 12, 1979, the AID Administrator approved \$2.8 million of disaster account funds for the program. The justification for the program was that it was of the utmost urgency that repairs be made as soon as possible in order that they be completed before the rainy season started in April 1980. The proposal further stated that for humanitarian reasons the effected households in Dominica could not wait to restore their homes until congressional passage of the special appropriations for disaster relief and reconstruction of the Caribbean area. This program was the largest single assistance project from any source and is widely considered to have been the most effective. The USAID estimates that by mid-May 1981, about 80 percent of the program will have been completed, which means the program has been in process for 20 months. In our view, this program should not have been classified as short-term rehabilitation and thus made eligible for disaster account financing.

### Haiti

In early August 1980, Hurricane Allen struck the southwestern peninsula of Haiti causing severe damage to property and agricultural crops. Immediate emergency assistance was provided by the U.S. Government, primarily through DOD personnel.

Disaster account funds of \$1.35 million were used to cover costs of rehabilitation in the disaster area, the funds being used to purchase fertilizer, seeds, pesticides and small hand tools. In addition, a grant of \$450,000 was made to CRS for an emergency feeding program in the disaster area. As of January 27, 1981, CRS had incurred expenses of \$92,000 under this program. We were informed.

by USAID officials in Haiti that the program was initially delayed two months because CRS and other participating PVOs could not agree on accountability for program commodities. Additional delays were incurred because of late arrival of commodities and difficulties of securing transportation to get commodities from port of entry to the disaster area. USAID officials informed us that there has been a shortage of transportation because of congestion at the port of entry. The program was to be completed by March 31, 1981. The USAID now estimates, however, that the program will not be completed before June 30, 1981. In view of the delays and apparent non-urgency to implement this program, we question whether disaster account funds should have been used.

### Conclusion

OFDA is responsible for implementing AID's international disaster emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance. This role, as defined by legislative intent, is limited to involvement in disaster activities requiring urgent and short-term assistance. Flexibility is given to OFDA to carry out this function by waiving many of the cumbersome and time consuming procedures involved in procurement, contracting and project programming. Yet OFDA has had an apparent problem differentiating between those activities that are short-term rehabilitation and those that are long-term reconstruction. Both rehabilitation and reconstruction have the same meaning of restoring to an original state. The most significant definition of legislative intent for the use of Section 491 appropriated funds is the period of time that disaster account funds can be used to finance such activities. The legislative intent of "short-term rehabilitation" and "period of 60 days" would suggest that activities requiring longer periods of time to restore something to its original state should be classified as long-term reconstruction. Accordingly, in our view, OFDA needs to define rehabilitation activities more precisely to ensure that disaster account funds are properly used.

### Recommendation No. 1

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) clearly define and advise missions of eligible rehabilitation activities that it can fund.

## OFDA RELATIONSHIP WITH FIELD MISSIONS NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

There are instances of USAID missions or embassies not being fully aware of the role of OFDA, how to deal with it effectively or what services it provides.

AID Handbook 8, in addition to containing instructions and guidelines on disaster assistance relief, provides that each USAID mission or embassy will appoint a Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO). Usually this is an AID official if AID has a representative in the country. Otherwise, a U.S. Embassy official is appointed to the position. The MDRO, together with the Chief of Mission, selects a mission disaster relief team ready to spring into action as soon as a disaster of significant proportions occurs. The MDRO is usually the contact with OFDA for disaster assistance.

A review of recent selected emergency disaster assistance activities disclosed that missions have carried out disaster relief operations in a timely and effective manner. Some missions, however, have commented that their dealings with OFDA during a disaster, particularly in the early stages, could be improved. For example, the AID mission in Dominican Republic, in its evaluation on the August 1979 disaster relief operations, reported:

"Most Mission employees had had no experience in managing a disaster reconstruction program and consequently, were not knowledgeable about nor familiar with the primary U.S. Government disaster response mechanism, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. As a result, some time was lost during the learning process. Our experience with OFDA in the David/Frederick disasters, although extremely helpful in most respects, could have been easier for us to relate to had we felt that OFDA's responses to our needs were concentrated in one or only a few officers. We recall hearing from numerous officers from OFDA during the first several weeks, sometimes resulting in time-consuming periods of uncertainty as to who was speaking with what authority from OFDA. Later on that situation was relieved as we found one or at most two officers to be retaining the focus of OFDA's interest as far as our emergency was concerned."

USAID officials in Haiti informed us that during the Hurricane David disaster in August 1980, USAID personnel were unsure and unaware of what people to contact in OFDA, or who had what responsibilities and authority. Once contacts were established, OFDA was very responsive to the USAID's needs. Similar views were expressed by officials of the Regional Development Office/Caribbean in Barbados on relief operations for disasters in Dominica and St. Lucia.

USAIDs have also experienced some problems with OFDA on longer-term disaster assistance projects. An evaluation by the USAID in the Dominican Republic reported on the emergency power transmission project as follows:

" . . . there was a period of about 6-8 weeks following the hurricanes when the Mission was groping for guidance and assistance from AID/W in getting a disaster assistance program off the ground.

" . . . basic questions had to be answered such as: What is the nature, source and availability of disaster assistance funds? What documentation is required to initiate a disaster assistance program or project? Which offices in AID/W get involved in the authorization/obligation process for disaster funds? What is OFDA and what is its role? What TDY, if any, can or should we request?

"In the case of this project, it took almost two months to find the right people in AID/W who knew the answers to these questions and were able to help get the project development/approval/implementation process underway."

An AID-financed assessment by a private concern was recently made of an OFDA-sponsored disaster preparedness seminar conducted in South Asia. The assessment included interviews with officials of USAIDs in several of these countries concerning attitudes and capabilities with respect to disaster situations. Several of these interviews revealed that there is some confusion and misunderstanding on the part of the USAIDs concerning the role of OFDA. For example, the MDRO in Pakistan commented:

"I haven't any idea what my job is as MDRO. I haven't read Handbook 8; it's not worth any investment of my time if the activity is an occasional request for \$25,000 . . . We have little relations with OFDA. I don't see what my job is or what OFDA expects. What kind of involvement does OFDA see for itself in the field? To what end does it seek a role? If OFDA wants to do something, they should at least ask us to read Handbook 8 and offer a three-day seminar on our roles."

The MDRO in Sri Lanka observed that Handbook 8 is "helpful but theoretical" and recommended a week-long seminar on preparedness planning for USAID MDROs. The MDRO in Nepal when asked if there was any assistance that OFDA could provide him responded, "No, not even during disasters. Not on preplanning. OFDA exists to serve me, not vice versa."

There is a wide diversity of opinion among the USAIDs concerning their relationship with OFDA. We believe that OFDA needs to establish a closer relationship with the USAIDs' and embassies' officials responsible for disaster relief operations. Several means are available to accomplish this end. These include: seminars for MDROs; improved lines of communications; and more specific information in Handbook 8. Disaster assistance relief operations fall directly upon USAID and embassy officials in the field. OFDA's function is to assist them in this endeavor. Thus, it is essential that the USAIDs and embassies are fully aware of OFDA's role, officials it should deal with and the type of assistance that OFDA can provide.

#### Recommendation No. 2

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) take steps to strengthen its relationships with USAIDs and embassies concerned with disaster relief operations to ensure that the officials are knowledgeable about the operation of the program.

PROBLEMS WITH MISSION DISASTER RELIEF PLANS

USAIDs and embassies have not been complying with AID requirements for the preparation of mission disaster relief plans.

AID Handbook 8, Chapter 4, requires that all USAIDs and embassies prepare and have on hand a mission disaster relief plan. Plans should be reviewed frequently at a mission policy level as to relevance and currency of information contained therein. For developing and disaster-prone countries, each mission plan should set forth definitive actions to be taken when the U.S. Government becomes involved in an emergency relief action. In addition, the plan is to include an inventory of in-country material resources. Types of resources to be inventoried would include:

- Health - i.e., hospitals, clinics or other health facilities
- Food - i.e., grain silos, food storage sheds or warehouses
- Transportation - i.e., roads, highways and bridges, airports, port facilities
- Heavy Equipment - i.e., road construction, building, military
- Disaster Supplies - i.e., wholesale and large retail outlets for tents, materials, blankets
- Communications - i.e., police stations, fire stations, military bases, TV, radio
- Scientific and Professional Organizations - i.e., engineering and related skills
- Other - i.e., buildings for emergency shelter, water supply, sewage systems

The plan should also include a list of supplies and services likely to be required from outside sources when disasters strike. For example, this might include health services and supplies, transportation equipment, heavy equipment, tools and other survival supplies.

The status of mission plans that we reviewed in April 1981 for selected disaster-prone countries was as follows:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Status</u>
Pakistan	) No plans
Indonesia	
Sri Lanka	
8 Antilles Countries	No plan - Currently being prepared
Peru	) Current plan but limited primarily to role of mission personnel in a disaster action
Dominican Republic	
Haiti	) Plans have not been up-dated since 1977
Guatemala	

Officials at some USAIDs we visited informed us that disaster relief functions assigned to staff are additional to their regular duties. The staff consequently have limited time to devote to the preparation of a comprehensive mission disaster relief plan, thus explaining why this task is not being performed. The Regional Development Office/Caribbean has engaged a contractor to prepare country disaster plans for the Antilles Island Countries. Perhaps USAIDs could use contract technical assistance to prepare mission disaster relief plans. Another solution might be for OFDA to render needed technical assistance to missions requiring help in this area. Yet, having said this, we should note that the lack of a disaster plan in those countries receiving U.S. disaster assistance has not impeded the carrying out of relief operations. Comments recently made by several MDROs regarding the effectiveness of mission disaster relief plans were as follows:

"We put no emphasis on advance planning. If we prepare 58 scenarios, the disaster will be the 59th. The U.S. mission should not emphasize pre-disaster planning in the absence of Government of Nepal activity. There is none, and the mission has demonstrated its ability to respond. Our time is better spent in prompt response rather than detailed preplanning. In the drought and earthquake disasters, the U.S. Ambassador has been right on the spot."

"We have responded to a wide variety of disaster relief needs in Indonesia, with no apparent adverse effects because of the absence of a formal Disaster Relief Plan."

OFDA personnel informed us that mission disaster relief plans are not used when carrying out disaster relief operations. Therefore, in our view, the value of a comprehensive plan for each mission as required by the AID Handbook seems to be questionable. Accordingly, we believe that OFDA needs to determine if current requirements for disaster plans are valid and reasonable in relationship to USAID abilities to prepare them and costs involved.

### Recommendation No. 3

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) reassess the requirement for mission disaster relief plans and if deemed necessary, OFDA should develop a tracking system to assure that plans are prepared and up-dated in a timely manner.

PROBLEMS WITH OVERSEAS DISASTER RELIEF STOCKPILES

OFDA maintains four overseas stockpiles as a source of emergency relief supplies. Stockpiles are located in Panama, Italy, Guam and Singapore. The Singapore stockpile is managed by a commercial contractor and the others by the Department of Defense. Major items stocked in these stockpiles include tents and tent covers, cots, blankets, water containers and various small hand tools.

The costs of maintaining these stockpiles, exclusive of the cost of inventory stock, are as follows:

	<u>FY 79</u>	<u>FY 80</u>	<u>FY 81</u>
Panama	30,000	30,000	30,000
Italy	13,000	17,600	15,000
Guam	13,750	36,750	21,250
Singapore	16,000	35,000	40,000

Singapore Stockpile

The maintenance of the Singapore stockpile appears to be unwarranted in light of the minimal use of this facility during the past three fiscal years.

The Singapore disaster relief stockpile was established in 1975 for the purpose of providing emergency relief supplies for those countries in the South Asia region requiring disaster assistance. The basis for establishing the stockpile was that emergency supplies could be dispatched rapidly and costs of emergency air lift would be less costly than directly from the U.S. However, in analyzing the use of the Singapore stockpile since 1978, we found that it had been used only three times as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Disaster</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Commodities Dispatched</u>
Sri Lanka	Cyclone	10/78	25 Sheets Muslin 1,000 Water Containers
Bangkok	Refugees	10/79	800 Tents & Flies
Mauritius	Cyclone	12/79	300 Tents & Flies

Our analysis of the Guam stockpile discloses that this facility was used six times since 1978 to furnish supplies for disaster assistance. One of these uses was for the Sri Lanka cyclone which also received supplies from the Singapore stockpile.

Emergency air lifts are usually provided by DOD in the Pacific region with aircraft based in the Philippines. Therefore, it would appear that the stockpile in Guam could readily handle disaster assistance in the South Asia region. Transferring the Singapore stockpile to Guam could thus result in cost savings.

#### Recommendation No. 4

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) phase out the Singapore stockpile.

#### Panama Stockpile

We visited the Panama stockpile in March 1981, and found that the facility was being well managed. DOD personnel responsible for managing the stockpile raised some concerns that we feel need to be addressed. Comments on these concerns are discussed below.

#### Stoves

DOD personnel informed us that field cooking outfits in stock were unsafe. The units, which were acquired from excess property, were manufactured in 1944 for the U.S. Army. The fuel to operate these stoves works on a drip system. If operated improperly, pools of fuel collect in the base of the stove. When ignited, an explosion can occur. DOD personnel are of the opinion that these stoves could be quite dangerous if issued to untrained people in a disaster situation. The number of units in stock at Panama and other locations as of April 1981 was: Panama 78, Guam 54, and Italy 150.

#### Recommendation No. 5

We recommend the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), in conjunction with DOD, determine if the specific field cooking units in stock are safe for use in potential disasters. If not, they should be sent to disposal.

#### Chainsaws

DOD personnel stated that the stockpile contains chainsaws which have not been effective. Local people are not familiar with the operation of these saws and consequently burn them out after only a few hours use. It was stated that the chainsaws can also be dangerous in the hands of untrained personnel. The DOD After Action Report, Caribbean Disaster Relief Operations identified as a problem area "providing sophisticated tools for use by civilian population." The report stated that "simple, but good quality hand tools such as two-man saws, axes, hammers, and pry bars are more practical for use by the local population, who are clearing debris in self-help projects."

#### Recommendation No. 6

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) stop stocking sophisticated motor-run hand tools such as chainsaws and replace them with manually-operated hand tools.

### Replacement Commodities

DOD personnel stated that they are not usually notified about the arrival of replacement commodities until they have arrived at the port in Panama. It may take several weeks before DOD can arrange for transportation to move these commodities from the port to the warehouse. The result is that significant demurrage charges must be paid on the commodities until moved from the port. The cause of this problem is that OFDA is not always notified by manufacturers when commodities are shipped. Without such notification, OFDA is unable to alert DOD personnel when the shipment will arrive. It is therefore important that suppliers and manufacturers notify OFDA when shipments of stockpile commodities are made in order that OFDA can give appropriate notice to stockpile personnel.

### Recommendation No. 7

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) take appropriate action with suppliers to ensure that stockpile personnel are advised about the arrival of commodities.

## NEED FOR EVALUATION OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES

OFDA needs to increase its evaluation efforts of disaster preparedness activities financed from the disaster account.

OFDA has been involved in various disaster preparedness activities since 1976. Funding of disaster preparedness activities has dramatically increased from \$.5 million in 1976 to an estimated \$3.7 million in 1981. Major types of activities funded include:

- Predisaster planning and training seminars for officials in disaster-prone countries.
- Technical assistance provided to foreign governments for disaster preparedness programs.
- Developing forecasting for drought-induced food shortages and developing assessment systems.
- Storm forecasting and warning systems.

Although a substantial number of evaluations have been performed on emergency disaster relief and rehabilitation activities, few evaluations have been performed on preparedness activities. OFDA seemingly recognized the need for such an evaluation program when, in July 1980, it developed an activity evaluation plan. This plan, however, has never been implemented by OFDA.

OFDA recently financed an evaluation of a regional disaster preparedness seminar that it conducted in New Delhi, India, in early 1979. The evaluation report, in addition to a follow-up on the effectiveness of the seminar, also included an assessment of other aspects of disaster preparedness in South Asia. The report included numerous insights and problem areas concerning disaster preparedness and recommendations for improvements in disaster preparedness programs. A document such as this can be of value to OFDA to effectively carry out its disaster preparedness functions. With the amount of funds currently being programmed for disaster preparedness activities, we believe that OFDA should implement its activity evaluation plan in order to determine the effectiveness of these activities.

### Recommendation No. 8

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) implement its activity evaluation plan for disaster preparedness activities.

## OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Activities  
October 1, 1978 through September 30, 1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Disaster</u>	<u>Cost of Assistance</u>
Africa Wide	11/78	Conflict Victims	\$ 2,000,000
Bolivia	1/79	Floods	26,675
Burma	3/79	Fire	10,000
Djibouti	FY 78	Floods	2,614
Dominica	8/79	Hurricane David	3,610,065
Dominican Republic	8/79	Hurricane David	3,431,631
East Africa	FY 78	Locust Control	954,200
Equatorial Guinea	9/79	Civil Strife	30,880
Ethiopia	11/78	Drought/Famine	275,000
Fiji	3/79	Cyclone	285,109
Gambia	FY 78	Power Shortage	13,145
Gambia	12/78	Yellow Fever	49,499
Guyana	FY 78	Power Shortage	164
Haiti	9/79	Hurricane David	25,000
India	5/79	Cyclone	350,035
India	FY 78	Floods	200,000
Indochina	5/79	Refugees	2,000,000 <sup>1/</sup>
Indonesia	12/78	Floods	25,000
Indonesia	3/79	Floods (2nd)	25,000
Indonesia East Timor	6/79	Displaced Persons	2,124,490
Jamaica	5/79	Floods	27,157
Jamaica	5/79	Floods (2nd)	178,804
Laos	10/78	Floods	25,000
Lebanon	10/78	Conflict III	1,028,888
Lebanon	5/79	Conflict IV	27,645
Liberia	4/79	Civil Strife	103,808
Maldives	FY 78	Cholera Epidemic	1,806
Mali	1/79	Meningitis	75,650
Martinique	9/79	Hurricane David	25,000
Mauritania	4/79	Drought	405,000
Mauritius	2/79	Cyclone	3,350
Nicaragua	FY 78	Civil Strife	1,576,135
Nicaragua	5/79	Conflict	2,844,468
Paraguay	5/79	Floods	75,000
Portugal	1/79	Floods	25,000
Portugal	2/79	Floods (2nd)	50,000
Rwanda	11/78	Cholera	27,354
Senegal	12/78	Cholera	66,346
St. Vincent	4/79	Volcanic Eruption	232,866
Sri Lanka	11/79	Cyclone	1,017,434
Thailand	10/78	Floods	25,000
Thailand	5/79	Kampuchean Refugees	925,765
Uganda	5/79	Civil Strife	228,425
Upper Volta	2/79	Meningitis	98,535
Yemen	3/79	Conflict	450,000
Yugoslavia	4/79	Earthquake	1,134,404
Zaire	10/78	Drought/Famine	2,516,228
Zaire	1/79	Returnees	250,000
Zambia	10/78	Border Conflict	50,000
Total Fiscal Year 1979			<u>\$28,933,575</u>

<sup>1/</sup> Reimbursed by Department of State

OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Activities  
October 1, 1979 through September 30, 1980

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Disaster</u>	<u>U.S. Assistance</u>
Belize	12/79	Flood	\$ 30,000
Bolivia	5/80	Flood	18,500
Cameroon	4/80	Chad Refugees	25,000 <u>1/</u>
Central Africa Rep.	12/79	Civil Strife	39,490
Chad	11/79	Civil Strife	25,000
Colombia	12/79	Earthquake	199,931
Djibouti	11/79	Train Wreck	18,500
Djibouti	6/80	Drought	132,000
Dominica	FY 79	Hurricane	3,097,322
Dominican Republic	FY 79	Hurricane	4,512,944 <u>2/</u>
Egypt	10/79	Flood	25,000
El Salvador	3/80	Displaced Persons	25,000
Equatorial Guinea	FY 79	Civil Strife	16,219
Ethiopia	5/80	Drought	22,249
Fiji	4/80	Cyclone	275,000
Fiji	FY 79	Cyclone	15,527
Gambia	9/80	Drought	29,000
Guyana	12/79	Fire	2,000
Haiti	6/80	Fire	25,000
Haiti	8/80	Hurricane	2,225,217
Honduras	11/79	Flood	24,521
Indonesia	FY 79	Displaced Persons	3,751,000
Jamaica	8/80	Hurricane	75,000
Kenya	5/80	Drought	25,000
Liberia	4/80	Civil Strife	60,663
Liberia	9/80	Epidemic Cholera	24,207
Marshall Islands	1/80	Floods	565,890 <u>3/</u>
Mauritius	12/79	Cyclone I	242,570
Mauritius	FY 79	Cyclone	2,650
Mauritius	1/80	Cyclone II	10,884
Nepal	5/80	Drought	100,000
Nepal	8/80	Earthquake	25,000
Nicaragua	12/79	Flood	170,000
Nicaragua	FY 79	Civil Strife	537,630
Portugal (Azores)	1/80	Earthquake	669,965
Somalia	FY 80	Refugees	7,400,000 <u>4/</u>
St. Lucia	8/80	Hurricane	526,055
St. Vincent	8/80	Hurricane	46,898
St. Vincent	FY 79	Volcanic Eruption	34,809
Senegal	6/80	Drought/Famine	937,620
Thailand	6/80	Displaced Persons	25,000
Thailand	FY 80	Refugees	5,068,621
Turkey	11/79	Fire-Oil Spill	4,000
Uganda	FY 79	Civil Strife	473,746
Uganda	4/80	Drought	346,395
Uganda	9/80	Civil Strife	340,000
Total Fiscal Year 1980			<u>\$32,247,023</u>

OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Activities  
October 1, 1979 through September 30, 1980

Explanatory Notes:

- 1/ Reimbursed by Department of State.
- 2/ \$3,000,000 reimbursed from the Omnibus Supplemental for the Caribbean Hurricane David Disaster.
- 3/ Reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- 4/ \$2,200,000 reimbursed by Department of State and \$5,200,000 reimbursed from Section 495F of the FAA 1961 as amended.

## OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Activities  
October 1, 1980 through March 31, 1981

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Disaster</u>	<u>U.S. Assistance</u>
Algeria	10/80	Earthquake	\$4,056,171
Costa Rica	12/80	Floods	25,000
Djibouti	3/81	Floods	50,000
El Salvador	10/80	Displaced Persons	303,362
Greece	2/81	Earthquake	342,000
Indonesia	1/81	Earthquake	25,000
Indonesia	2/81	Floods	11,616
Italy	11/80	Earthquake	4,237,720 <u>1/</u>
Nicaragua	10/80	Flood	25,000
Saipan	1/81	Typhoon	86,510 <u>2/</u>
Thailand	11/80	Explosion	5,000
Zambia	1/81	Food Shortage	<u>25,000</u>
Total Fiscal Year 1981			
Through March 31, 1981			<u>\$9,192,379</u>

Explanatory Notes:

1/ Reimbursed from the special appropriations for Italy Reconstruction.

2/ To be reimbursed by FEMA.

LIST OF REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Page

Recommendation No. 1

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) clearly define and advise missions of eligible rehabilitation activities that it can fund.

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Recommendation No. 2

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) take steps to strengthen its relationships with USAIDs and embassies concerned with disaster relief operations to ensure that the officials are knowledgeable about the operation of the program.

9

Recommendation No. 3

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) reassess the requirement for mission disaster relief plans and if deemed necessary, OFDA should develop a tracking system to assure that plans are prepared and up-dated in a timely manner.

11

Recommendation No. 4

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) determine the feasibility of phasing out the Singapore stockpile.

13

Recommendation No. 5

We recommend the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), in conjunction with DOD, determine if the specific field cooking units in stock are safe for use in potential disasters. If not, they should be sent to disposal.

13

Recommendation No. 6

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) stop stocking sophisticated motor-run hand tools such as chainsaws and replace them with manually-operated hand tools.

13

Recommendation No. 7

We recommend that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) take appropriate action with suppliers to ensure that stockpile personnel are advised about the arrival of commodities.

14

Recommendation No. 8

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LIST OF REPORT RECIPIENTS

Deputy Administrator	1
Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance	5
Office of Legislative Affairs	1
IDCA's Legislative & Public Affairs Office	1
General Counsel	1
Office of Financial Management	1
DS/DIU/DI	4
Inspector General	1
RIG/A/Cairo	1
RIG/A/Manila	1
RIG/A/LA	1
RIG/A/Karachi	1
RIG/A/Nairobi	1
IG/PPP	1
IG/II	1
PPC/E	1