

MEDICINE

Cold War of Health

Medicine, increasingly used to establish international goodwill, is practiced by American as well as Communist teams in troubled areas throughout the world—By Faye Marley

► MEDICAL and health services are being used all over the world by Communists and democratic peoples alike in a so-called non-political effort to earn international goodwill.

Medicine is increasingly recognized as a "positive force" for people-to-people cooperation, Lt. Gen. Leonard D. Heaton, U.S. Army Surgeon General, stated in an evaluation on the Army Medical Service's 188th anniversary coming up July 27.

He pointed not only to disaster relief operations in various countries, but also to continuous aid and health training being given.

Consultant teams and qualified preventive medicine officers have been sent to Military Assistance Advisory Groups, Gen. Heaton explained. U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command personnel are conducting special studies of nutrition and disease at the invitation of host governments.

Aggressive dedication to peace and to the "health and welfare of mankind" is the aim of the U.S. Army Medical Service, Gen. Heaton said.

Dr. Peter D. Comanduras, head of the Medico division of CARE, reported that 176 medical men and women have been serving in one-month shifts in Algiers under an emergency program supported by the

State Department. Medico is so called from the title, Medical International Cooperation Organization.

American doctors and nurses who sped to troubled Algeria in response to a major medical crisis have found themselves in the midst of a cold war, Dr. Comanduras believes.

Dr. Comanduras, who with the late Dr. Thomas Dooley founded Medico in 1957, said the American medical teams are completely non-political.

But wherever Medico goes, shortly thereafter Communist medical missions stream into the country.

"The great majority of these are from Communist nations," he said. "The first Chinese team arrived in Algeria the week I was there. Other Communist teams consist of Russians, Poles, Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs and Bulgarians."

Cuba is also represented in this cold war of health, State Department officials told SCIENCE SERVICE.

American teams were rushed to Algeria in June, 1962, when French doctors, nurses and technicians left in what Dr. Comanduras calls a pre-independence exodus.

Washington, acting on a plea from the Algerian Provisional Government, urged Medico to organize a rescue mission, and within weeks, the first American unit from

the University of Chicago Medical School arrived at the Beni Messous Hospital in Algiers.

What started a year ago in June as a three-month emergency mission has been extended four times by the State Department. The Agency for International Development (AID) has agreed to continue this medical assistance program through the end of 1963.

Assistant Secretary of State G. Mennen Williams, now on a trip to Africa, as well as Premier Ben Bella, visiting the Medico-staffed Beni Messous Hospital, has praised Medico's work.

"With the University Medical School resuming in Algiers," Dr. Comanduras says, "we hope additional Arab doctors can be made available to us at Beni Messous Hospital for training in the latest Western medical techniques."

Whether the techniques are the latest from the Western democracies or Communist countries, it is to be hoped that the cold war in health will turn out to be a scientific success, regardless of its motivation.

• Science News Letter, 84:35 July 20, 1963

COMMUNICATIONS

Varied Achievements For Year-Old Telstar

► JULY 10 marked the first anniversary of the launching of Telstar, the "magic star" that racked up an impressive list of scientific and technological achievements, in its few months of operation before it "died" of radiation sickness.

The TV broadcasts to and from France, England, and later all of Europe were not only a high point in communications science, but also produced a psychological gain in U.S. prestige and popularity abroad. Built and operated by the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., the satellite was a hit in the U.S.

The communications satellite carried television "specials," telephone calls, and photofacsimiles and technical information between the continents at the speed of light. On-the-spot newscasts, "People to People" broadcasts, and telecasts of major state events helped contribute to better understanding between people on both sides of the ocean.

In late November Telstar became "sick" due to exposure to the high-intensity radiation of the Van Allen belts. Delicate electronic instruments had become damaged from the radiation, and were refusing to answer when called by scientists at the main tracking station at Andover, Maine.

The satellite was "cured" by remote control in early January, but the cure was only temporary, and in late February, Telstar went permanently dead. Now, a year after launching, it continues to orbit around the earth, as it will do for hundreds of years to come, visible only to the most powerful telescopes.

A second, improved Telstar was launched May 7 of this year. It is still functioning, and is being used to continue the work of the first Telstar.

• Science News Letter, 84:35 July 20, 1963



Medico

OPEN AIR CLINIC—A Malayan patient gets a physical examination from Dr. David Henriksen, a Medico physician. Working in an open air clinic in the village of SangGang, Dr. Henriksen is assisted by Sabariah Bte Yusoff, a Malayan nurse who doubles as interpreter.