

*Quality and Relevance of Research and  
Related Activities at the Gorgas Memorial  
Laboratory*

August 1983

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**QUALITY AND RELEVANCE  
OF RESEARCH AND  
RELATED ACTIVITIES AT  
THE GORGAS MEMORIAL  
LABORATORY**

A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

AUGUST 1983



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# Foreword

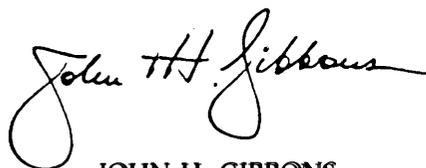
The Gorgas Memorial Institute of Tropical and Preventive Medicine, Inc. (GMI) and its operating arm, the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory (GML) have been conducting tropical research, training, and public health activities for more than half a century. Questions about GMI's continued existence were raised this spring when the National Institutes of Health requested no funds for the core support for GML. Gorgas' existence is at stake because the core support appropriation by the United States represents about three-quarters of GMI's total budget.

The Senate Committee on Appropriations and its Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education requested that the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) examine the quality and relevance of research and related activities of GML. Such information is needed in order to adequately judge whether the core support should be terminated. The subcommittee also requested that the General Accounting Office undertake a concurrent evaluation of four areas: the peer review process at GMI/GML, the extent of other federally funded tropical medicine research activities, efforts by Gorgas to broaden its financial base of support, and the possible impacts on U.S. regional relationships if funding was terminated.

This technical memorandum presents the results of OTA's examination. It reviews the quality and relevance of activities at GML, based on Gorgas' publishing record, an OTA-commissioned survey of GML's scientific reputation, a critical review of recent articles and current manuscripts, a comparison of GML's areas of effort with health problems in tropical America and with scientific opportunity, and a review of past scientific evaluations of GML.

OTA finds that GML's research and related activities are generally of high quality and relevance to the region and the United States. The United States receives excellent benefit for its contribution to GMI/GML. If Gorgas were to close down, the United States would most likely have to develop a capability to undertake many of the current activities of GML. OTA finds that there would be both health-related and international relations repercussions if the United States were to withdraw its support for GML. Although GMI could be improved in several significant respects, GML is producing important work of high quality and represents an excellent investment of health funds.

This memorandum benefited from the consultation and review of a large number of persons in the Federal Government, universities, international health organizations, and private industry. Key OTA staff involved in the analysis and writing were Hellen Gelband, Clyde J. Behney, Steven S. Bjorge, and John S. Willems.



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