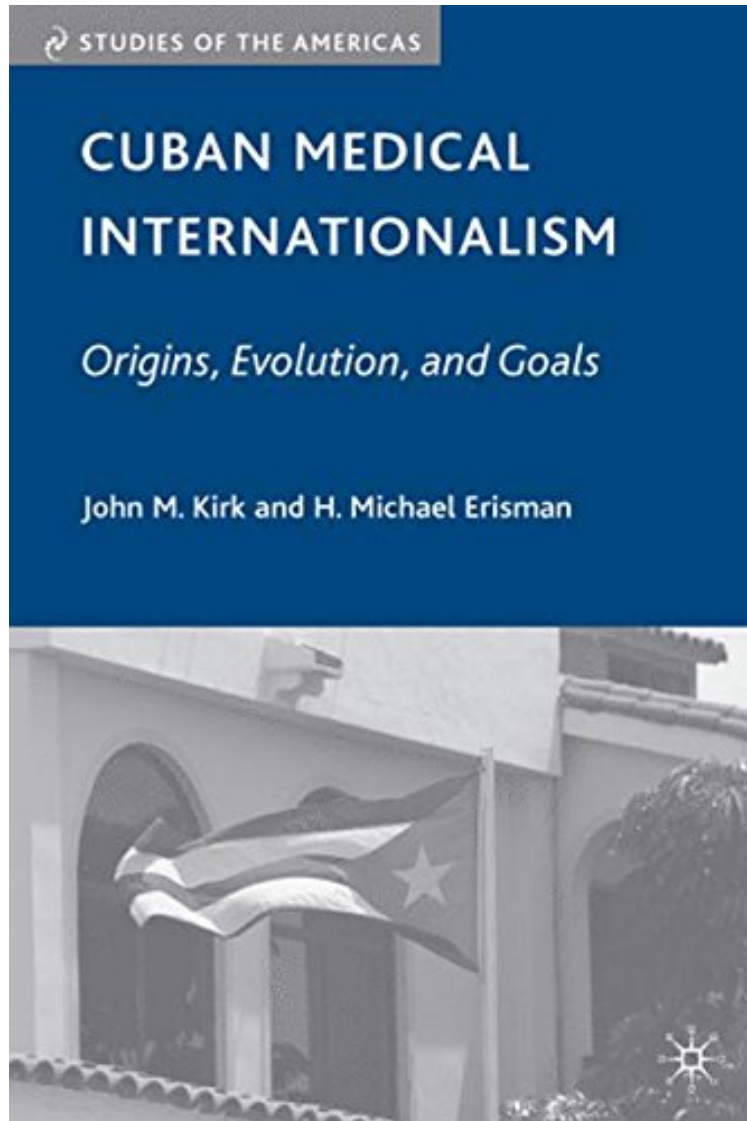


Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution, and Goals (Studies of the Americas)

J. Kirk, H. Michael Erisman

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J. Kirk, H. Michael Erisman : Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution, and Goals (Studies of the Americas) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution, and Goals (Studies of the Americas):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Everything you wanted to know about Cuba and its international medical aid programmes By K. Edyvane With an international medical workforce of ~40,000 doctors and nurses,

working in ~73 countries, Cuba is currently the unacknowledged global medical superpower of international medical aid and development. In this book, Kirk and Erisman, 2 Canadian academics have provided perhaps the first detailed history (in English) of post-1960 revolutionary Cuba, its aims and achievements in improving global health care, in the emergency setting, and in the longer term, through medical aid programmes. This 190 page book is an easy read for academic and non-academics, and is well resourced. The chapters cover a range of topics from Cuba's Initial Cold War Medical Aid Programs in Africa (the laboratory which resulted in their primary health care model to developing countries), to more contemporary programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is the text book that explains the history and philosophy of Cuba and its commitment to improving global health care. Dr Katherine Edyvane⁴ of 4 people found the following review helpful. A key reference on Cuban doctors abroad programmes. By Mark R. Rushton Cuba is rarely assessed objectively by external critics, typically being viewed through leftover Cold War filters or dismissed as an anachronism for its continuing effort to make socialism work. This book provides an excellent survey and analysis of Cuba's deeds in the international arena of health care, disaster relief and South-South cooperation. Kirk and Erisman effectively answer those critics who see Cuba's international medical programme as having foundations in the economic crisis of the 1990s (i.e., selling medical services to keep the money flowing) and instead provide a comprehensive historical accounting of Cuba's assistance to the developing world. The case is effectively made that Cuba's global health initiatives arise from a commitment to solidarity rather than any profit motive. Of particular interest is the revelation that in situations where Cuban military or technical support has been requested (Algeria, Angola, Congo, etc.), the Cubans ensured that medical and educational staff were significant components of any agreement. One looks forward to a followup study on Cuba's activities in Haiti, as this book was published before the January, 2010 earthquake. Cuban assistance to Haiti pre-dates the disaster by a decade, and is a prime example of the enduring benefits Cuban assistance provides: Cuba's medical teams were on the ground when the quake struck, were and continue to be the largest single medical team working on the island. This is development in practice, rather than empty words.³ of 5 people found the following review helpful. Superb study of Cuba's magnificent medical aid programs. By William Podmore John Kirk, Professor of Latin American Studies at Dalhousie University in Canada, and Michael Erisman, Professor of Political Science at Indiana State University, have written a most important book on Cuba's medical internationalism. As the authors write, Cuba "has resolutely promoted public health as a fundamental human right for all, regardless of wealth, socioeconomic status, race, or geographical origin." So Cuba has a better infant mortality rate, 5/1,000, than the USA's 7/1,000. In 1958, before the revolution, it had been 60/1,000. Life expectancy then was 55 years; it is now 78, better than the USA's. The authors note, "Cuba has devoted most of its energy and resources to developmental assistance, with health care at the forefront of such efforts. Indeed, the provision of medical aid has been a fundamental principle of the Cuban Revolution from the very beginning, a principle that has flowed from the conviction that medicine should not be perceived as a business, but rather as a right of the citizens and a duty for physicians, regardless of the ability of the patient to pay." They point out, "the Revolution's commitment to and success in building a world-class health care system on the island represents the foundation upon which Havana's medical diplomacy rests." Cuba's medical schools graduated 83,982 people between 1960 and 2004. Cuba has provided free medical education for thousands of Cubans (it now has 70,000 doctors) and (since 1959) for 52,000 people from 130 other countries. Its Latin American Medical School, with an enrolment of over 8,000 students from Third World countries, is the world's largest medical school. Cuba has helped to set up ten medical schools in other countries. By 2009, 38,000 Cuban medical personnel, including 17,000 doctors, were working overseas, in 73 countries, providing low-cost, sustainable primary health care, stressing preventive medicine. Cuban medical staff were caring for more than 70 million people in the world, more than the whole G8 put together, plus the World Health Organisation and Médecins Sans Frontières. 1.5 million people owe their lives to Cuba's medical aid programmes. In those areas of Ghana where Cuban medical professionals worked, infant mortality fell from 59/1,000 to 7.8/1,000. Its Operation Milagro has restored the sight of 1.5 million people, through free eye surgery (March 2009 figure). In 2004, Médecins Sans Frontières stopped working in Haiti, claiming it was too dangerous. Yet Cuba had 332 doctors working there, serving three quarters of the population, and cutting infant mortality from 80/1,000 to 28/1,000. As the authors sum up, "This level of humanitarian solidarity is unprecedented, with Cuba doing more to assist underdeveloped and developing nations than any other country in the world." President Jimmy Carter said, "Of the so-called developing countries, Cuba has by far the best health system, and their outreach program to other countries is unequalled anywhere."

While public health is important for revolutionary Cuba, providing medical services to the developing world is also a priority: 38,000 medical staff are engaged abroad; the largest medical school in the world (ELAM) has an enrollment of over 8,000 students from the Third World; and since 2004 over 1.3 million in Latin America and the Caribbean have had their eyesight restored. How has this small nation of 11.3 million people managed to save more lives in the developing world than all of the G-8 countries together? And what are its motives? This book, the result of four years

of research in Cuba, provides an updated analysis of this extraordinary record.