

Editorial

Saving lives

In Washington, D.C. the International Monetary Fund Interim Committee went ahead on April 19 and did exactly what we warned it would do: It formally declared for the first time that advanced sector countries, including by implication the United States, must submit to IMF surveillance. An official communiqué announced that the Interim Committee "urged that steps be taken to strengthen surveillance over the policies of all Fund members." The communiqué hailed recent U.S. government deficit-reduction efforts, but demanded that further cuts are necessary. Finally, it stated that so-called "adjustment policies" forced on the debtor countries must be continued.

This week's cover story offers a glimpse into horrifying reality of what is already occurring as the direct, calculated result of those "adjustment policies."

Representatives from six leading medical institutions have told *EIR* that Third World diseases such as cholera and meningitis are running out of control, and probably at levels five times worse than are being reported. The holocaust killing Africa is being repeated in Ibero-America, while the "authorities" are doing everything possible to cover up the dimensions of the disaster.

The ecological holocaust may be far worse than the catastrophe most people fear—thermonuclear war. Yet, just as it is within the means of human science to master a new defense that will make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete, we have at our disposal the means to reverse the ecological holocaust—provided we remove the ideological blinders of the "free market" and take these steps to stop the catastrophe.

First, to stem the cholera epidemic now spreading through Africa, we must deploy the necessary resources for oral rehydration therapy, and other necessary medical supplies such as intravenous fluids, as quickly as possible to the areas known to be affected by cholera. At the same time, we must quickly dispatch survey teams to determine the full extent and severity of the problem.

Having done this, acute treatment resources and

personnel should be sent where needed by military transport, and medical evacuation facilities established for serious cases. Tetracycline, a widely available, inexpensive, and highly effective antibiotic, would be given to active cases to shorten the course and communicability of the disease.

The next immediate consideration is the provision of safe drinking water. A number of inexpensive and highly effective portable water-purification systems are now available, and production of these could be rapidly scaled up.

In the meantime, military field sanitation equipment would be used. Concurrent with this, portable water-testing laboratories would be used to identify sources of safe and contaminated water, and vaccination of the populations at risk would be carried out. Adequate latrine facilities would be built, and necessary tent shelter provided.

With the foregoing measures underway, Army Corps of Engineers surveys would have to be conducted to plan out a crash program of building transportation, irrigation and sanitary infrastructure in the context of major water-management projects. Such a program would not only break the pattern of famine and disease in Africa, but, in combination with proper economic policy, would revitalize our agriculture and capital-goods-production sectors and enable us to reverse the present devastation of the population of the so-called advanced sector countries.

With the technological spinoffs from the Strategic Defense Initiatives flowing into the civilian economy, the potential for revolutionizing medicine and agricultural production to raise the entire world's living standards to that of the advanced sector also exists.

Some moral imbeciles may ask if, under current depression conditions, such programs can be afforded. We can and must afford to save the millions of lives immediately threatened, just as we must spend the money to build the SDI at a moment when the Soviet drive for world domination is more evident than ever. The only thing we cannot afford is the IMF.