

Dr. Tom Dooley's Ties To CIA Are Chronicled

NEW YORK, July 4 (AP) — He soared swiftly to fame as a paragon of brave, compassionate works, but the late jungle doctor, Tom Dooley, left a record that has become clouded.

An "ambiguous legacy," says Notre Dame Magazine writer Jim Winters this week in detailing for Religious News Service the young doctor's meteoric rise to prominence and equally rapid fall into obscurity.

Ironically, among the anomalies cited is that a Roman Catholic sainthood investigation brought out his ties to the Central Intelligence Agency.

The article from the news service run by the National Conference of Christians and Jews says the Rev. Maynard Kegler, American promoter of Dooley's Sainthood cause, turned up his CIA connections.

Although Dooley "inspired people" to greater Christian service, Father Kegler says, nearly 500 CIA documents reveal that he kept the agency posted on troop movements and village statements around his hospital in Laos in the 1950s.

Dooley himself, in one of his highly popular books, dismissed suspicion that he was engaged in U.S. espionage activity as "absurd," blaming it on communists.

But it was not absurd, according to Kegler. "When Tom went to Laos he was contacted by the State Department and briefed, and every time he came back . . . he'd give information about troops being moved, ammunition coming in, attitudes of people — whether they were favorable to the Americans or to the communists."

CIA agents, in turn, kept the State Department posted on Dooley's own movements and sentiments, Kegler says. "The CIA looked for dirt on Dooley . . . they looked into his personal life. It was like what they did to

Martin Luther King . . . But they never found anything to discredit Dooley.

"I guess they figured he was influencing too many people and they couldn't control the guy."

Kegler obtained the documentation through the Freedom of Information Act in gathering data in behalf of making Dooley a saint.

Dooley's flashing career began in 1954, just a year after he earned his M.D., and it quickly elevated him to esteem alongside Albert Schweitzer, Winston Churchill and Pope John XXIII on the Gallup poll's 1959 list of most-admired living men.

He turned out three best-selling books and traveled 400,000 miles promoting his work. He raised more than \$1.7 million, including \$10,000 in a single appearance on Dave Garroway's "Today" show.

With the funds he established seven hospitals in four Asian countries, providing medical care for a half-million people.

"You have accomplished so much for the good of distant peoples and have inspired so many others to work for humanity," President Eisenhower wired Dooley on his 34th birthday, Jan. 17, 1961.

Dooley died of cancer the next night.

Congress voted a special gold medal and President Kennedy lauded Dooley's "splendid example." Kirk Douglas planned a film biography, but it was never made in the sudden eclipse that descended over Dooley, and his books stopped selling years ago.

And today, Winters writes, the man who once "inspired so many now is remembered by few . . . If he had stayed out of politics . . . he might still be a hero today. But he chose to politicize his books, his speeches, his medicine."