

Strategy Research Project

Shaping the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps: 21st Century Strategic Vision

by

Lieutenant Colonel Steven T. Greiner
United States Army



United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Shaping the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps: 21st Century Strategic Vision

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Lieutenant Colonel Steven T. Greiner
United States Army

Dr. Thomas J. Williams
Senior Leader Development and Resiliency
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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Asymmetric threats, such as man-made and natural disasters, agroterrorism, disease pandemics, attacks on the food supply and bioterrorism constitute some of the most serious challenges to U.S. national security in the 21st century. The U.S. Army Veterinary Corps (VC) serves a critical role in protecting military personnel and working animal health as the Department of Defense Executive Agent for Veterinary Services. However, better alignment to the U.S. national security vision through employment of unique and untapped capabilities transforms the VC into a more potent means to counter these asymmetric threats. The VC accomplishes this by aligning its capabilities in a more formal way with other government agencies charged with countering these threats, expanding its role in stability operations support, and regionally aligning its deployable units. Furthermore, building its capacity through training and professional education while enhancing diplomacy through its leadership development ensure a valuable, relevant and reliable VC prepared to counter these 21st century asymmetric threats.

Shaping the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps: 21st Century Strategic Vision

By definition, surprise is controlled by the enemy. He has the initiative. If this were not so, the events in question would not be surprises. But, the consequences of surprise are controlled by us, not the enemy.

—Colin S. Gray¹

Surprise is always going to be a part of the unchanging nature of warfare.

Clausewitz emphasized the significance of surprise as an element of strategy that permits an opponent to gain superiority over his adversary through the psychological effects of surprise that bring confusion and lower his morale.² History provides numerous examples where the U.S. was surprised by its enemies, such as Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, however very rarely is a surprise attack so catastrophic that recovery is not possible.³ The key to ensuring the consequences of future surprise attacks are controlled lies with anticipating our potential vulnerabilities and aligning our available *means* to either rapidly recover from such an attack, or better yet, convince our enemies they cannot prevail attacking us in that manner, even if by surprise.

Current Political and Economic Environment

The political and economic environment confronting the U.S. military today as well as the foreseeable future is forcing some difficult strategic choices that will shape the abilities and capabilities of our 21st century military forces. Transforming national security strategy combined with constrained defense spending drive the necessity to reconfigure all aspects of our military forces to align to future threats. This paper examines current U.S. strategic framework documents to recommend how the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps (VC) must align itself to ensure it is best postured to deter or mitigate consequences of future surprises to come within the 21st century.

The VC serves as the Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent for veterinary services, meaning they provide veterinary services support (VSS) for all service components of the DOD and animal care for many government agencies such as the Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.⁴ VSS, by current doctrine, includes providing food safety, food security, and quality assurance during all stages of procurement, storage, and distribution, providing complete veterinary care to all military and government owned working animals, and providing veterinary preventive medicine services to protect Soldiers from foodborne illness and zoonotic diseases.⁵ As the DOD Executive Agent for VSS, the VC is currently responsible for a sizable conventional veterinary and public health mission for the U.S. government. However, due to the significant potential risk to the U.S. homeland from future asymmetric threats, such as bioterrorism, agroterrorism, natural and man-made disasters, and disease pandemics, the VC must implement new and innovative ways to bring its knowledge and expertise to engage within the future Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) environment.⁶ Aside from the VC, there is no other U.S. governmental or non-governmental entity in existence with the manpower, expertise and resources available to address these types of future threats.

Requirements of U.S. National Security

The cornerstone document framing all other U.S. military strategic guidance is the National Security Strategy (NSS).⁷ The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 established the Presidential requirement to submit a NSS to congress annually, however few presidents have followed the annual requirement.⁸ President Barack H. Obama plans to

release an updated NSS in 2014.⁹ In the current NSS dated May 2010, President Obama establishes the U.S. enduring national interests as security for our citizens, allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.¹⁰ In support of these *ends*, President Obama emphasizes protecting the nation's critical infrastructure and key resources and specifically directs the military to rebalance its capabilities to excel at stability operations.¹¹ He further lays out a broad, *whole-of-government* strategy that includes countering violent extremism and insurgency, helping other countries feed themselves, spurring economic growth, combating epidemic diseases, and responding to and recovering from disasters.¹² Through its current utilization, the VC mainly focuses its efforts on the security aspect of the enduring national interests through its protection of the military food supply and healthcare of government owned working animals. Yet, by tapping its broad expertise, utility and adaptability, the VC is uniquely postured to impact and influence all of the enduring national interests. How this might transpire is discussed later in this paper. However, to better appreciate how to realign the VC to achieve this strategic vision, it is important to first examine the underlying purpose for the NSS, which was developed in response to the assessment of the nature and character of 21st century warfare.

Nature and Character of 21st Century Warfare

From its origin, warfare has always been comprised of violence, danger, complexity, fluidity, disorder, uncertainty, surprise, risk and friction in what is essentially

a contest of human will.¹³ Ralph Peters, a retired U.S. Army officer and military analyst, postulates: “The nature of warfare never changes, only its superficial manifestations; the uniforms evolve, bronze gives way to titanium, arrows may be replaced by laser-guided bombs, but the heart of the matter is still killing your enemies until any survivors surrender and do your will.”¹⁴

Since its very beginning, the true nature of warfare is constant; however, the character of warfare is continuously evolving.¹⁵ Changing political, economic and social conditions coupled with ever-advancing technology ensure that its future manifestations will be vastly different from what we know today. The only thing that is certain regarding future warfare is that its character will not be the same as warfare of the past. Some strategists believe that future wars will be more lethal due to new weapons and novel applications.¹⁶ Future combat will likely see the incorporation of cyber-attacks, space weapons, lasers, electromagnetic pulse and directed energy beams.¹⁷ Other strategists point to changing environmental trends that drive the expansion of developing world populations to concentrate disproportionately in littoral urban areas.¹⁸

Improved access to ideas and information, through electronic connectivity, enhances their capability to form non-state organizations.¹⁹ The ultimate supremacy and lethality of America’s military power over the last 40 years lead some to believe that our enemies will never attempt to fight us force-on-force again.²⁰ When considering the current political and economic constraints imposed today, the U.S. military might again become vulnerable to direct military threats from our enemies. However, integrating the lessons learned from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan; prolonged, asymmetrical, irregular, hybrid warfare holds the greatest potential to exhaust the will of the American people. If

not opposed effectively, this type of warfare results in loss of political will to continue the fight, followed by disengagement of the military and defeat of U.S. strategy. In order to counter this future character of warfare, it is important to first understand what it is.

Asymmetric, Irregular and Hybrid Warfare

Distinguishing differences between asymmetric, irregular and hybrid warfare is challenging because the various nuances are subtle and they are often used interchangeably. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) define asymmetric warfare as “the application of dissimilar strategies, tactics, capabilities, and methods to circumvent or negate an opponent’s strengths while exploiting his weaknesses.”²¹ Major General Kenneth McKenzie, U.S. Marine Corps representative to the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), places asymmetry within U.S. strategy and further describes asymmetric warfare as “leveraging inferior tactical or operational strength against American vulnerabilities to achieve disproportionate effect with the aim of undermining American will in order to achieve the asymmetric actor’s strategic objectives.”²² So in essence, asymmetric warfare involves enemies exploiting whatever tactics and techniques they can to attack real and perceived military vulnerabilities in order to strategically target the adversary’s will.

A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations is the accepted joint definition of irregular warfare.²³ Irregular warfare targets the adversary’s power, influence and will, mainly through indirect and asymmetric methods, but a belligerent engaged in irregular warfare can also use any and all capabilities at their disposal.²⁴ Therefore, irregular warfare may employ asymmetric warfare as a method of achieving its influence over a population.

Finally, U.S. Army Training Circular 7-100 defines hybrid threats or hybrid warfare as using diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, and/or criminal elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects.²⁵ In order to be considered a hybrid threat, a combination of at least two of the following components must work together toward a common goal. These hybrid components include conventional state military forces, paramilitary forces, such as police, or border guards, insurgent groups, guerilla units and criminal organizations such as gangs, drug cartels, or hackers.²⁶ Therefore conducting warfare using two or more regular, paramilitary, insurgent, guerilla or criminal groups united in purpose against an adversary constitutes hybrid warfare. When engaging in hybrid warfare, these various elements can engage in regular warfare, asymmetric warfare or irregular warfare at different times or even simultaneously which makes hybrid warfare the most challenging threat to defeat.

Asymmetric Threats and Government Agencies

Some examples of asymmetric threats to our homeland include man-made and natural disasters. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) serves as the lead domestic agency to coordinate the preparation, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery from all domestic natural or man-made disasters, to include acts of terror.²⁷ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is lead agency for coordinating U.S. disaster and humanitarian assistance to foreign countries.²⁸ Other asymmetric threats may include infectious disease pandemics, such as avian influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome or bioterrorism, which involves the intentional release of infectious disease agents within a population. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the agency that investigates, researches, prevents, identifies and responds to all human disease threats, whether they originate

domestically or abroad, are naturally occurring, from human error or from deliberate attack.²⁹ The Office of Health Affairs, within Department of Homeland Security, works with the CDC to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards affecting U.S. health security.³⁰ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) are two agencies that protect against asymmetric attacks on the safety of the domestic food supply.³¹ One last asymmetric threat is agroterrorism or the intentional introduction of an animal or plant disease in order to cause fear, economic losses, and erosion of social stability.³² The U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) is the primary government agency charged with protection against domestic agroterrorism threats.³³ All of the aforementioned asymmetric threats represent potential vulnerabilities the VC is best suited to help prevent and when necessary respond to.

Battle of *Will*

One additional facet where the VC wields a significant capability involves the battle for *will*, which is essential to the constructs of asymmetric, irregular and hybrid warfare. This might involve the battle for the *will* of the local population and their support for the insurgent, guerilla or criminal elements, the *will* of the population back home to continue to support the strategy of their elected officials, or the *will* of politicians to continue support for their own military engaged in the fight. The battle for the *will* of a population remains a critical aspect that is actively targeted by our military in order to achieve victory. One method our military uses to target the *will* of the population is through stability operations. Joint Publication 1-02 defines stability operations as the “various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in

coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”³⁴ Stability operations conducted by land forces are the foundation in winning the support of the populace which is critical to achieving success in asymmetric, irregular, hybrid warfare.³⁵ The VC, through its expertise in animal health, herd production and preventive medicine, can also play a substantial role in supporting future stability operations to target a population’s *will*.

In summary, analysis of the unchanging nature of warfare with its constantly evolving character indicates that asymmetric, irregular and hybrid warfare constitute the most likely threats to U.S. national security in the 21st century. These threats may include natural and man-made disasters, disease pandemics, bioterrorism, agroterrorism and attacks on the safety of the U.S. food supply. A number of government agencies, each with various responsibilities, exist to prevent and respond to these attacks, but there is no single agency that can influence and respond to all of these threats. Additionally, with asymmetric, irregular and hybrid warfare, the battle for *will* becomes paramount to military victory and stability operations are an essential tool in targeting *will*. The NSS, designed out of necessity to respond to these threats, is codified in our enduring national interests of security, prosperity, universal values and international order. Because of its unique and diverse capabilities, and assigned national security role as executive agent within the DOD, the VC can reconfigure to support every one of these enduring national interests. That being said, let us analyze the other various U.S. strategic documents derived from the NSS that establish the *ends* supported by a realigned VC.

National Defense Strategy

The January 2012 National Defense Strategy (NDS) is the most recent strategic guidance document released by then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to guide DOD. It establishes, specifically, among its stated missions for the U.S. military, counterterrorism and irregular warfare, support to civil authorities, providing a stabilizing presence, conduct of stability and counterinsurgency operations, humanitarian and disaster relief operations to support the achievement of the national interests.³⁶

The VC currently contributes to the NDS through its core mission of providing comprehensive veterinary care to military working dogs that play a significant force protection role through their patrol, counter-explosive and counter-drug operations. The VC also plays a major role in the protection and quality assurance of the food supply for all forces stationed and deployed overseas, filling the inspection and protection roles of the USDA-FSIS and FDA in these overseas missions. Through its assignment to the Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive Response Force (DCRF) mission and Severe Weather mission, the VC fulfills a role in the Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) realm, providing veterinary support to domestic humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations. It supports foreign HADR missions, such as Operation Unified Response following the Haiti earthquake in 2010.³⁷ The VC also plays a small role in stability operations that usually occur through assignments with Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Civil Affairs units.

Quadrennial Defense Review

The most recent QDR was issued in March 2014 by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.³⁸ The military's primary strategy consists of three pillars: protect the homeland, build global security and project power and win.³⁹ Under Protecting the Homeland; the

QDR emphasizes sustaining capabilities to assist U.S. civil authorities in protecting U.S. airspace, shores and borders as well as responding to man-made domestic and natural disasters.⁴⁰ Staying actively engaged with our global allies, helping them to build capacity and promote stability comprises the second pillar, while maintaining the capability to project power when and where we need to includes support for HADR missions.⁴¹ The military must look at rebalancing its forces in this budget-constrained environment to meet global demands from hybrid and asymmetric threats. While none of these demands are expected to include large-scale, prolonged stability operations, the U.S. military must retain its expertise gained in these missions over the past 10 years.⁴² The QDR also accentuates the importance of developing innovative approaches to align how we fight, posture our forces, leverage asymmetric strengths and technological advantages, stating that “Innovation is paramount given the increasingly complex warfighting environment we expect to encounter.”⁴³

The VC plays an important role through its current mission in supporting these QDR aims. As the DOD Executive Agent, it provides veterinary support for the working dogs of the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol protecting our borders. As noted above, it also assumes a role in DSCA response to all types of domestic disasters. However through innovative applications, there is an opportunity to posture the VC to provide an even greater contribution to national security in multiple ways.

National Military Strategy

Informed by the NDS and the QDR, the National Military Strategy (NMS) defines the *ways* and *means* used to achieve the *ends* articulated in the NSS.⁴⁴ Drafted by the JCS and signed by the Chairman of the JCS, the most recent document was issued in February 2011 by Admiral Michael Mullen.⁴⁵ Together with the QDR, the NMS guides

the establishment of our National Military Objectives: Countering violent extremism; Deter and defeat aggression; Strengthen international and regional security; and Shape the future force.⁴⁶ The NMS emphasizes approaches to countering extremism that erode terrorists' backing and legitimacy over a lengthy period of time. These ideologies are shunned and defeated when the people are secure and do not allow the extremism and violence to interrupt their lives.⁴⁷ The VC contributes to the NMS through its core missions of conserving the fighting strength of the military by providing veterinary care for government owned working animals, food safety inspection and quality assurance and veterinary public health services as discussed previously.

In addition, the NMS emphasizes the creation of Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) to enhance cultural knowledge and empower regional partnerships, while strengthening the ability to respond to natural disasters and pandemics.⁴⁸ The VC's deployable units are not currently regionally aligned. However, doing so, clearly offers great potential in supporting this QDR initiative.

Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) Strategic Planning Guidance

The most current Army Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG) issued by CSA General (GEN) Raymond Odierno and Secretary of the Army John McHugh in 2013, provides specific direction towards the future structure of the Army. Three of the four *Army Imperatives* provide guidance specifically important to the VC of the future. The first is that the Army must provide modernized and ready, tailored land force capabilities to meet combatant commanders' requirements across the range of military operations.⁴⁹ Under this imperative, the Army must train for operational adaptability which requires RAF with specialized language, regional and cultural expertise.⁵⁰ It also directs

increased integration of SOFs and Conventional Forces, continued assimilation of lessons learned and capabilities gained into the Army, and to maintain a global stabilizing presence through expanded military to military and military to civilian contacts.⁵¹ For a near to mid-term objective, this imperative also directs the force to modernize its equipment to prepare for future challenges.⁵² One approach for the VC to comply with the objectives under this, is regional alignment of its deployable units as previously mentioned. The second imperative focuses on the need to develop Army leaders to meet the challenges of the 21st century, with near-term directives to train, educate and provide leaders with experience while enhancing broadening opportunities.⁵³ The VC must make leadership education and development a priority, which not only satisfies this imperative, but also secures the ability of the VC to effectively manage the diverse challenges ahead. The final imperative important to the future VC is to adapt the Army to more effectively provide land power, with a mid-term objective of setting the conditions to expand the Army when called upon.⁵⁴ This particularly involves the readiness of the Army VCs Reserve Component (RC) forces.

Army Medicine 2020

Another strategic directive document considered in this analysis is the Army Surgeon General's *Army Medicine 2020*, released by Lieutenant General (LTG) Patricia Horoho in August 2012. While focused primarily on improving healthcare delivery to the military, LTG Horoho established three lines of effort, two are of particular relevance to the future strategic direction and the future needs of the VC. She directed the creation of *capacity* as one line of effort. Used in this context, capacity does not mean simply doing more, but doing things better, which requires innovation and use of existing resources and knowledge to create value.⁵⁵ The VC must consider a range of creative,

“outside-the-box” thinking to develop new *ways* to expand their contributions to national defense. The remaining VC-pertinent line of effort is *enhancing diplomacy*, which calls for establishing partnerships, both internally and externally to develop communication, collaboration and innovation.⁵⁶

The U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Chief guidance, from Brigadier General John Poppe, comes through unpublished guidance that mirrors the Surgeon General's *Army Medicine 2020* guidance. His established lines of effort are to *build capacity, enhance diplomacy, improve veterinary services culture and develop leaders and organizations*.⁵⁷ Specific recommendations toward *building capacity* and *enhancing diplomacy* through leadership development are discussed in a later section.

Restated Means

Based on the threat environment, required capabilities and national strategic guidance documents, the ultimate *ends* which shape the *ways* and *means* for the VC is the promotion of security, economic prosperity, universal values and international order. Distilling the expected character of future warfare with the aforementioned strategic guidance documents, yields three *ways* and two *means* for the VC to focus its efforts to help our military achieve these *ends* and to remain relevant for the 21st century and beyond. The three *ways* are: 1) VC integration into, and mission support for, selected U.S. government agencies charged with defending the homeland from asymmetric threats; 2) expanding VC support to stability operations; and 3) regional alignment of VC deployable units. The two *means* that the VC must cultivate to develop these *ways* are building capacity and enhancing diplomacy, with specific change recommendations to more align (e.g., to both interagency requirements and RAF) the VC for the future. The

next section provides an overview of the specific alignments proposed and identifies the improvements these bring to the strategic alignment of the VC.

Specific Alignments

Way 1 - VC-Government Agency Integration

Asymmetric threats directed against the U.S., such as manmade and natural disasters, pandemics, bioterrorism, attacks on the safety of the food supply and agroterrorism, and the corresponding government agencies charged with identifying, preventing and responding to those threats were addressed above. This discussion culminated in the important conclusion that no single governmental agency has oversight that spans all of these threats as depicted below in Table 1.

Table 1. U.S. Government Agencies & Responsibility for Threats

<i>Owning Higher Agency</i>	<i>U.S. Government Agency</i>	<i>Threat</i>
White House	USDA-APHIS	Agroterrorism Bioterrorism Zoonotic Disease Pandemics
White House	USDA-FSIS	Food Safety
Health and Human Services	FDA	Agroterrorism Bioterrorism Food Safety
Health and Human Services	CDC	Bioterrorism Disease Pandemics Food Safety
Homeland Security	FEMA	(Domestic) Manmade Disasters Natural Disasters
State Department	USAID	(Foreign) Manmade Disasters Natural Disasters

The VC, however, has the unique diversity and capability to provide different aspects of support for every one of these threats as depicted in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Asymmetric Threats and VC Capabilities

<i>Asymmetric Threat</i>	<i>VC Support Capability</i>
Agroterrorism	Prevention: Research & Biosecurity Consultation Detection: Surveillance Sampling Identification: Laboratory Testing Containment: Quarantine, Vaccination & Depopulation
Bioterrorism	Prevention: Research & Biosecurity Consultation Detection: Surveillance Sampling Identification: Diagnosis, Laboratory Testing Containment: Quarantine, Vaccination & Depopulation
Natural & Manmade Disasters	Veterinary Care for Injured & Displaced Animals Food Reclamation / Salvage Consultation Zoonotic Disease Surveillance / Prevention Support to Feral Animal Control Foodborne Disease Outbreak Investigation Agricultural Development Consultation Animal Decontamination
Disease Pandemics	Prevention: Research & Biosecurity Consultation Detection: Surveillance Sampling Identification: Diagnosis, Laboratory Testing & Epidemiology Containment: Quarantine & Isolation
Food Safety	Prevention: Research & Food Facility Process Analysis & Consultation Detection: Surveillance Sampling, Inspection & Quality Assurance Identification: Foodborne Disease Outbreak Investigation Containment: ALFOODACT, FDA, USDA-FSIS Food Recalls

It is apparent that the VC has an exceptional set of capabilities it can bring to bear against these asymmetric threats. However, I would argue the VC is not being utilized to its full potential. While there have been continuing efforts to incorporate VC units into DSCA and HADR operations, true and thorough integration of the VC is lacking with regard to all the associated government agencies to maximize their capabilities against

these future threats. When considering how to appropriately address this potential misalignment of requirements and capabilities, the justification and model used to stand-up Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) may offer a ready analogy. Similar to the VC, CYBERCOM must remain vigilant and proactively reduce risks of serious and debilitating threats to U.S. national security and needs to ensure these threats are not being individually addressed by the various services in an uncoordinated and unsynchronized manner. That is, CYBERCOM was created to organize and synchronize the individual efforts to create a unified cyber threat response that coordinates with other civilian agencies dealing with the same threats.

In order to effectively counter the asymmetric threats described above, I propose the integration of VC personnel and cooperative mission sharing across the spectrum of responsible government agencies in order to strengthen our nation's ability to prevent and respond to these threats. This proposal directly supports President Obama's *whole-of-government* approach laid out in his NSS, as well as fosters strong civilian-military relationships that are critical to effective JIIM operations. This concept facilitates the aims of the NDS in better supporting HADR and DSCA operations, as well as responding to natural disasters and pandemics directed by the NMS. It stands as a model of innovation that the QDR maintains as paramount to countering future threats. VC integration should contemplate the approach that USAID employed in its reorganization several years ago through its *USAID Forward* initiative. In a much needed restructuring, USAID sought to strengthen itself by embracing new partnerships, investing in innovation and focusing on generating results.⁵⁸ The USAID's successful reorganization efforts offer critical insights into how to implement this proposed

integration. Ultimately, VC-governmental agency integration would involve more than just embedding personnel into these various agencies to serve as liaison officers. Rather, effective integration must eventually include mutual sharing of the daily duties and responsibilities of the respective agencies.

Recognizing and aligning VC capabilities related to NSS in a more formal way with other government agencies is by no means a simple task. This level of integration can only occur through legislative action with executive branch support, because it involves more closely aligning a DOD entity with civilian government agencies having defined responsibilities. Enabling the VC to partner and share in the accomplishment of these responsibilities is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders.

Our citizens benefit from a more responsive and effective government and, the agencies benefit by tapping into the manpower, resources and expertise of the VC in addressing these challenges. The VC benefits from the training and diversified experiences obtained through its more frequent performance of these core missions. A closer alignment leading to a more integrated and synchronized approach does not come without risk.

Part of this difficulty involves the integration of very distinct cultures, with each civilian agency differing from military culture. Successful alignment to address NSS issues also requires the right combination of key leaders on both sides to navigate through the potential bureaucratic inertia. Success would take time to bear fruit to work out all the problems that will no doubt arise. By allowing the VC to address the roles and responsibilities as DOD's executive agent, a collaborative exploration of the issues will help identify the specific responsibilities delineated to avoid misunderstandings, before

any action is implemented. The benefits derived from this integration effort will yield significant synergistic results due to enhanced synchronization of resources more effectively arrayed against the associated asymmetric threats this country faces. It also serves to reinforce and set the conditions to successfully expand the role of VC in supporting stability operations.

Way 2 - Expansion of VC Stability Operations

Even though the QDR imparts that prolonged large scale stability operations are not anticipated in the future, both it and the SPG, emphasize that the hard-learned lessons from over ten years of stability operations must be retained and integrated. The call by the NSS to support stability operations through its goal of helping other countries feed themselves and spur economic growth, has a direct nexus to VC capabilities.

The NMS directing the countering of extremism, supports stability operations as a *means* to undermine a population's support for extremists. Thus, future warfare and the current strategic guidance reflect the significant role of stability operations. Although the VC has taken some definitive positive steps to acknowledge this vital mission, through its creation of tailored stability operations training courses, more effort is needed to better prepare the VC for these demands.⁵⁹

The VC must update and align doctrine and policy to incorporate veterinary stability operations as a designated mission alongside food safety, food security, and quality assurance, veterinary care and veterinary public health. This expanded role of veterinary support to stability operations also enhances the next *way* of regionally aligning its deployable VC units.

Way 3 - Regional Alignment of VC Units

The NMS and SPG direct the RAF concept which must also be applied to the VC deployable units in order to gain language and cultural skills expertise inherent to RAF. RAF also permits the ability to focus on indigenous veterinary livestock species, diseases, production methods and problems of a geographically defined area. That, in turn, then fosters more thorough understanding of the precise issues faced in that area leading to more responsive and better solutions. Language and cultural training is vital to supporting effective stability operations.

Currently, VC deployable units are not regionally focused, presumably due to small number of units in the active inventory. However, the final decision to regionally align rests with the commander of U.S. Army Forces Command. The risk in regionally aligning VC deployable units presents itself mainly if there is another lengthy conflict that requires multiple deployments of multiple VC units. Units not regionally aligned to the conflict area are likely to find themselves less prepared to perform in an unfamiliar environment. As the Army embraces RAF it makes sense for all units (e.g., VC and medical units) to follow suit. The VC must support the regional alignment of its deployable units and develop a strategy to support specialized veterinary training for each aligned region.

In summary, the three ways that the VC must realign to enhance its support of the current strategic guidance for 21st century challenges, involve the better alignment and synchronization of the VC into and with respectively, associated government agencies in support of countering the asymmetric threats this country faces. It also involves the expansion of the VC role in supporting stability operations and regionally aligning the deployable VC units to ensure they are responsive to risk. True

responsiveness of the VC requires aligning the *means* with associated specific recommendations that the VC must address to become more effective for the 21st century challenges.

Means 1 - Building Capacity

Training

One of the prominent challenges I witnessed in my two recent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan concerned the lack of standardized practices between eight different VC deployable units, primarily in their food inspection responsibilities. In most cases, each unit's performance was a reflection on how their commander trained them. That is to say that the training emphasis shifted according to the experience of the commander and Food Safety Warrant Officer.

Unfortunately, this training disparity created a perception of inconsistency of approaches among the VC unit customer base (Cass I subsistence yard managers, Dining Facility managers, Army Air Force Exchange Service establishments), negating the value of any workload data collected since the data reporting parameters were different from unit to unit. Lacking consistent data across units eliminated any ability to formulate conclusions or adjust strategy based on data comparison.

Some units focused on conducting appropriate and thorough subsistence receipt inspections; knowing that 100% inspection is not feasible due to manning constraints. Others just checked 100% security seals on conveyances, while some drifted into the preventive medicine mission and were inspecting dining facility kitchens and food concessionaires' sanitation practices and holding temperatures. While all of these practices may have contributed in some manner to the veterinary service support

mission, the lack of consistency serves to promote a vulnerability due to the inevitable gaps in mission coverage.

Concerns about the disparity in training for VC deployments indicates the need for an experienced training cell to assist VC deployable unit commanders in preparing their units for assigned missions. This training cell, comprised of deployment experienced members, functions as the focal point for collecting, evaluating and incorporating veterinary lessons-learned back into training. They perform duties as observer/controllers and evaluators for VC deployable units executing their culminating training events prior to assuming missions. They also serve to develop a standardized workload reporting system and best practices to ensure future workload data collected remains relevant when new commanders take control. The training cell also serves as a central focus for new veterinary equipment fielding, training, use and feedback.

Aligning the VC deployable unit training through a training cell promotes the better integration of lessons learned and yields a more effective force sought by the SPG.⁶⁰ It also serves as another example of the innovation desired by the QDR and *Army Medicine 2020* guidance that directs doing things better.⁶¹

Education

The professional expertise of the VC lies within its commissioned officer ranks and reflects the type of capabilities required by the missions prescribed under the QDR. These capabilities range from the basic field veterinary officer, to formal specialization and board certification in preventive medicine, public health and epidemiology, laboratory animal medicine, pathology, physiology, pharmacology and toxicology, to animal medicine specialties in small animal internal medicine, small animal surgery, emergency medicine and critical care, radiology, equine and food animal medicine. This

vast diversity of veterinary expertise within the VC delivers an unrivaled combination of knowledge and resources to confront these selected asymmetric threats.

In addition to their formal specialized training, the VC potentially has the most extensive and untapped knowledge base concerning agriculture development and sustainment, food animal production and husbandry as well as herd health protection across the DOD and the inter-agencies. All of these areas play a substantial role in veterinary support to stability operations and also assimilate well with the aforementioned VC integration into other government agencies concept, particularly on the international development front with USAID.

The VC must promote and leverage this expertise and consider creating it as a new standalone formal specialty. There are existing pathways to obtain board certification as an Agricultural Consultant who would fit within the current specialization construct of the VC.⁶² Developing this agricultural development specialization of VC officers serves as yet a further example of the potential for the VC to reveal the innovation and capacity building supported by the QDR, SPG and *Army Medicine 2020* guidance.⁶³

Means 2 - Enhancing Diplomacy

Chairman of the JCS, GEN Martin Dempsey emphasized the importance of *mission command* across all aspects of the armed forces in his 2012 whitepaper.⁶⁴ Developing effective leaders is vital to the success of the *mission command* philosophy and remains equally important to the VC. The VC is not afforded many prospects to command as junior officers and many VCOs do not experience command until they reach the Lieutenant Colonel level. Without opportunities to command at lower levels,

the ramification of poor decisions resulting from lack of experience are magnified greatly at that level.

The construct of the VC requires vast specialization, with many VCOs spending most of their careers isolated and focused on positions within their own narrow specialty field. However, promotions within the VC are prominently linked to performance while in command. In some cases, VCOs leave their specialty and opt to compete for command in an attempt to be competitive for their next promotion. The problem lies when their previous positions within their specialty, while vital, did nothing to develop them for leadership positions. The VC must develop its future leaders through the selection of promising junior officers with great leadership potential, and formally matching them with compatible senior VC leaders to serve as personal and career mentors. The VC must actively manage the careers of these potential leaders while cultivating more leadership opportunities for them throughout their careers. From my personal experiences, serving as a deputy to an exceptional senior leader, provides invaluable perspective and experience for future leaders.

This concept to build VC leaders is directly supported by the *Army Medicine 2020 enhancing diplomacy* line of effort that desires the formation of more effective leaders with enhanced communication, collaboration and diplomacy skills.⁶⁵ It further answers the directive of the SPG's second imperative of the need to develop Army leaders to meet the challenges of the 21st century while enhancing broadening opportunities.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The future facing the U.S. will undoubtedly be Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous, filled with asymmetric threats. Irregular warfare appears highly likely as the method of choice by our future adversaries. With the current and future political and

economic environment forcing difficult strategic choices, our military must shape its abilities and capabilities to best achieve the directed national strategy within the constraints of available and allotted resources.

In order to maintain relevancy to our Nation now and in the future, the VC must also align its *ways* and *means* to achieve the overarching national *ends* of promoting security, prosperity, values and international order. We must: Take an innovative approach to better align and integrate mission sets with inter-agencies; Expand our support of stability operations; and Regionally align deployable units so the VC positions itself in the future as a vital and critical member supporting our National Security Strategy. Careful analysis, development and implementation of the aforementioned recommendations will: Align the VC to our national strategic vision; build its capacity through training and education while enhancing diplomacy through leadership development; and set the conditions for success of the VC while assuring its relevancy in the 21st century.

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