North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Special Issue

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IN SEPTEMBER OF 2010, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Human Factors and Medicine (HFM)–195, “Integrative Medicine Interventions for Military Personnel” began to form under the leadership of Jean Belard, MD, PhD, COL (ret), of the French Medical Corp, consisting of experts from several NATO countries and one guest representative from South Korea. The first meeting took place in March 2011 in Paris, France. In the subsequent years that followed, I had the distinct honor and pleasure of representing the United States Air Force. As a result of the retirement of COL (ret) Dr. Belard in August 2013, COL (Dr) Richard Petri, Jr. of the U.S. Army Medical Corps was named as the new chairperson of this distinguished committee on September 1, 2013. Under the auspices of COL (Dr) Petri, Jr., and with the consensus of the Committee, it was decided to accept the invitation from the *Medical Acupuncture* Journal to publish the first NATO report on integrative medicine (IM). This indeed is a distinct privilege—and perhaps an historic event—for both the Journal and NATO to publish an “Official Committee Report on Integrative Medicine.”

Why is there a NATO Committee on Integrative Medicine? The health and welfare of all Military armed forces is crucial to their ability to fight and win wars, but disease compromises the readiness of the Soldiers. Perhaps the most dreaded fear of any Military commander is compromise in the physical and mental health state of the troops. In this modern era, NATO is not immune to challenging health problems—not only for the Soldiers but also for their families.

Turning to IM is not new for our readership. However, this shift is new to NATO. The fact that NATO established an official Integrative Medicine Committee to make recommendations demonstrates this organization’s desire to seek better health solutions for the Alliance.

Colonel (Dr) Petri, Jr. has taken a very active role in working on this NATO report. He has provided the leadership to help organize this Special Issue of *Medical Acupuncture* that presents the first guidelines for NATO to incorporate IM into medical systems to meet future health challenges.

I am very pleased to present to the readership this unique Special Issue. Most importantly, I wish to thank Yael Ben-Porat, LAc, MPH, Managing Editor, Anne Hendren, PhD, Consulting Editor, and Vicki Cohn, Vice President, Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers. Finally, COL (Dr) Petri, Jr., receives my utmost gratitude for his very hard labor to mastermind this NATO Special Edition.

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