

## **Anthrax for troops amounts to 'quick fix'**

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The anthrax dilemma is an issue of national importance. Soldiers in all services worldwide face a questionable order to submit to a vaccine originating from a manufacturer that has never passed an inspection by the Food and Drug administration ("Audit: Vaccine producer needs bailout," News, April 13).

In multiple reports, the FDA maintained that "the anthrax-vaccine manufacturing process is not validated." Internal Pentagon memos, U.S. laws and prudent FDA regulations concerning this issue acknowledge a soldier's right to "informed consent" or the option to deny vaccines or drugs in their research-and-development stages. Unfortunately, past prudence did not stop the mandatory nature of the anthrax policy.

In contrast, the House Government Reform Committee issued a report noting that the order is unlawful. Unfortunately, the Pentagon unilaterally rejected the recommendation, in what I consider a disturbing disregard of congressional oversight. Therefore, continued oversight is required as the U.S. military vaccinates against an ancient biological threat with a decades-old, suspect vaccine.

Protecting the troops is paramount, but having to take a "quick fix" vaccine of questionable safety, effectiveness and doctrinal necessity is beyond the call of duty for any trooper.

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