

## RELEVANCE OF THE FCS PROGRAM TO OUR FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

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**RELEVANCE OF THE FCS PROGRAM TO OUR FUTURE OPERATING  
ENVIRONMENT**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The Army's Future Combat System Brigade Combat Team (FCS BCT) program was launched as the Army's number one modernization effort and represented a significant revolution in military affairs. The FCS concept was to design a lighter, more agile force while incorporating the latest technology to build a fully networked organization that could be employed and communicate in any joint environment. The FCS BCT incorporated the latest joint requirements and through enablers could operate and communicate across the full spectrum of conflict in any joint operating environment. This would enable the Army to meet future military challenges and new emerging threats in support of the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy. In June 2009 a major portion of the FCS BCT program was terminated and replaced with the development of capability packages for fielding to existing brigade combat teams. This monograph will examine the termination of the program and conclude whether this course of action was the best strategic decision for the Army. The examination will analyze the rising capabilities of China's military as a potential adversary in a future traditional confrontation as a basis for the conclusion.

## RELEVANCE OF THE FCS PROGRAM TO OUR FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

. . . the events which happened in the past will at some time or other and in much the same way be repeated in the future . . .

—Thucydides<sup>1</sup>

The Army's Future Combat System Brigade Combat Team (FCS BCT) program was launched as the Army's number one modernization effort and represented a significant revolution in military affairs. The FCS concept was to design a lighter, more agile force while incorporating the latest technology to build a fully networked organization that could be employed and communicate in any joint area of operation. The FCS BCT incorporated the latest joint requirements and through enablers could operate and communicate across the full spectrum of conflict. One of the key and essential capabilities is to provide the commander on the ground with increased real time situational awareness by synthesizing the enormous amount of information available and assist him in making quick, decisive, and informed decisions on the battlefield. In June 2009 a major portion of the FCS BCT program was terminated and replaced with the development of capability packages for fielding to existing brigade combat teams.

One of the reasons for the termination of the manned ground vehicle program was the perception that the future of conflict will most likely mirror today's warfare of counterinsurgency and the less likely threat of traditional warfare. As a result, our current legacy equipment was good enough for the distant future as long as capability packages continue to enhance brigade capabilities. This monograph will examine the termination of the manned ground vehicle program and conclude whether this course of

action was the best strategic decision for the Army. The examination will analyze the rising capabilities of China's military as a potential adversary in a future traditional confrontation as a basis for the conclusion. The insightful words from Thucydides in the epitaph serve as the basic foundation of the argument that some time in the future, it is likely that traditional warfare will once again repeat itself and the Army should not abandon the development of a FCS BCT. A quick look at capability packages will be useful in understanding that these are quick fixes to current problems but do not replace the need for new combat vehicles with these technologies already incorporated.

Capability packages are designed to modernize current Heavy, Stryker, and Infantry brigade combat teams. The process ensures the timely identification, analysis, selection and prioritization of relevant solutions into incremental capability packages for integration into the force via the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle.<sup>2</sup> The development of capability packages is based upon a three phase strategy. The first phase is near-term objective phase and consists of packages built into two year increments within the initial two years of the program objective memorandum (POM) cycle. This is the current TRADOC main effort. Some equipment designated for these first two packages include: the Vehicle Network Integration Kit, Class I Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Non-Line of Sight Launch System (NLOS-LS), Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle (SUGV), Urban Unattended Ground Sensors (U-UGS), and the Tactical Unattended Ground Sensors (T-UGS). These items were well into development and testing when the manned ground vehicle portion was terminated from the FCS BCT program. The second phase is mid-term objective. This phase includes future capabilities that once developed will mitigate current capability gaps. These capabilities

are already in the design and development process and should be available by FY 13-14. The final phase is the far-term objective for capabilities that are most likely still in research and development. All items considered for additions to the program are based on TRADOC's annual capability needs assessment (CNA) that addresses high risk capability gaps identified from the field. These potential solutions undergo a rigid feasibility, acceptability, suitability, and sustainability (FASS) criteria. While these capabilities are required and can be incorporated into existing equipment, it does not substitute for the requirement to develop new ground combat vehicles to replace our aging legacy fleets that will have all these technologies incorporated.

#### Purpose of the FCS Program

The Army's strategy for the future is encompassed in a document known as the Army Campaign Plan (ACP). One of the aspects of the ACP is transformation of our Army at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. At the tactical level one of the modernization efforts is the Future Combat System (FCS) program.<sup>3</sup> The FCS program was originally designed to enhance the capabilities in current brigade combat team (BCT) formations in the near term, while designing and developing a new organization in the form of the FCS BCT for the long term. The Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC), a component of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), was the Army's lead agent for the FCS Program. The Army's BCT modernization program is managed by the Future Force Integration Directorate (FFID) in conjunction with the TRADOC capabilities manager for FCS and the Program Manager (PM) for FCS at Fort Bliss, Texas. These new formations were to have the newest technology and weaponry that the Army deems necessary for the successful resolution of future conflicts that will allow

for quick and decisive engagements while limiting casualties. Sounds like a great idea, but something went very wrong. So why is it necessary to build a force for the future? A look back in history reveals how over the years warfare continues to evolve and as a result organizations must also evolve.

### A Historical Perspective

The study of history gives an appreciation of how strategic leaders develop theories for the future of warfare and then set the wheels in motion to make it a reality. Additionally, theories of war and an estimation of what war is expected to look like in the future are used to develop a strategy that drives Army modernization efforts. As such, this section will suggest a theory for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond to demonstrate the FCS program relevance to the future of warfare.

The Army has often been accused of fighting the last war when it comes to transforming the force after a major conflict. The many comparisons between Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan are recent cases in point. It seems difficult to fathom with as many lessons the Army has in history that many would discount the potential of another traditional war. It is naive to think the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was the last major force on force war this nation will face. While counterinsurgency may be the current manner of warfare, there is no guarantee that we will not face another traditional war in the future. Senior military officers develop a theory of war from history and these theories shape how they see the future of conflict. From these theories senior leaders provide strategic guidance for the development of future forces and equipment.

There are many papers, articles, and books written on the theory of war. There is a long and rich history from which examples are cited on why one theory of war may

be better or more accepted than another. For the military officer it is important to formulate a personal theory of war based on his understanding of the current complex environment in which we fight today, however, he must draw on the experiences and writings of the past to set the foundation of military thought. Theory is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not to accompany him to the battlefield.<sup>4</sup> Whether you are a student of Clausewitz, Jomini, Sun Tzu or some other well known theorist is not important. What is important for the military officer is to have an appreciation for all aspects of war, draw your own conclusions, and then formulate a theory of war that is both practical and applicable in today's Army and the future.

Clausewitz offers a theory of war that suggests war as a continuation of policy by other means. In the book *On War*, Clausewitz states that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.<sup>5</sup> As such, the military has the responsibility to develop a strategy for military power to be used as an extension of policy to achieve political objectives. This requires senior leaders to build, train, and equip forces to secure those objectives as a continuation of policy. The FCS program meets the requirement for the military to build a force that can achieve political objectives with the most advanced and technologically superior equipment.

Sun Tzu asserted the use of armed force should only be applied after an attempt to use other methods. Sowing dissension, using spies to gather data against the enemy, and getting into your opponents mind were his recommendations to try and break the enemy's will to fight without having to resort to military action. Sun Tzu

asserted that only when the enemy could not be overcome by these means was there recourse to armed force, which was to be applied so that victory was gained in the shortest amount of time, and the least cost of lives and effort, and inflicting the fewest number of casualties on the enemy.<sup>6</sup> Sun Tzu's ideas would become a major premise behind the development of the FCS program.

The decision to commit forces to war is not one to be taken lightly, but once vital interests are at stake and diplomacy fails drastic measures may become necessary and therefore forces appropriately committed. War is a clash between major interests that is resolved by bloodshed.<sup>7</sup> Why and how wars are fought has changed throughout history. Wars in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the era of Frederick the Great, were typically limited and fought to expand control of a nation state.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century warfare took a drastic change when Napoleon took France to war in the aftermath of the French Revolution. This era was characterized by "total war" and for Napoleon the only way to victory was total destruction of the enemy. This changed the face of warfare and lasted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Vietnam War resurrected limited war, insurgency and counterinsurgency theory. Limited war theory has been considered throughout history; however, the Vietnam War gave this type of warfare new meaning since Vietnam had become so prominent.

One theme that is constant throughout different theories of war is the influence of people as a contributing factor for victory. The influence of the people is not just limited to the will of the people being attacked, but also the will of the people who are attacking. The will of the people is the one factor that can never be overlooked or overshadowed by other aspects of war. The human element and the associated psychological factors

is the one enduring factor that can determine how wars are won. As stated earlier, the decision to commit forces to combat is not to be taken lightly. In America the commitment of forces has a direct impact on the ability to sustain the fight, especially when war becomes protracted. The Vietnam War is a classic example how failure to mobilize the people played a key role in our defeat. Today, however, will of the people takes on a different form. The will of the American people today is predicated on the ability of the military to limit American casualties, which is why new modern combat vehicles are a necessary part of our future.

The future of war is likely to be consistent with today's environment, where non-state actors will continue to threaten our vital interests and require the commitment of military forces. There will be small wars, most likely protracted, and require the will of the people to sustain the effort. Counterinsurgency doctrine will remain in the forefront of military operations; however, counterinsurgency should not dominate military training. Irregular warfare matters, but it matters a great deal less than would, or will, the return of great-power rivalry and antagonism. We have to be careful lest we overreact to the menace of the decade—irregular warfare—only to discover that the COIN challenge was a distraction from more serious security international business.<sup>8</sup> The current war on terror continues to be the Army's main focus with no end in sight. However, the Army must be careful not to discount the potential of future traditional conflicts as countries like China, North Korea, and Iran continue to pose credible threats in the future.

Putting theory into practice requires a strategy at all levels of war; strategic, operational, and tactical. The Army's military strategy at the strategic level is to

simultaneously prepare for future wars and sustainment of the current fight. This requires the development of forces and equipment that are technologically superior to potential future super powers that can match our military capability. The Army will continue to produce weapons that can strike with precision, while reducing casualties and limiting collateral damage. Additionally, combat platforms will maintain their superior fire power and increase their survivability. Commanders on the ground will require near complete situational awareness to enhance tactical decision making. These are just a few concepts that were being applied in the FCS program. The FCS program, managed by FFID, was at the forefront of our military strategy for future warfare and was the Army's number one modernization effort. LTG Vane, director of ARCIC, remarked, "The Future Force Integration Directorate has been, and will continue to be, the keystone in our Army strategy to meet the demands of modernization in the complex environment while at war."<sup>9</sup>

History demonstrates that events of the past can shape the events of the future. Additionally, history has a way of repeating itself and as such how an organization is structured, trained and equipped to meet past threats cannot be discounted in the future but these organizations and their equipment must evolve. While the Army currently executes the war on terror and wages counterinsurgency warfare, senior leaders must not discount the past. Strategic military leaders must champion the continued development of new ground combat organizations that could meet a future traditional threat. The theory suggested is that history may in fact repeat itself and the Army must prepare to meet a traditional adversary with improved FCS type combat platforms.

Even though the FCS program has transitioned to an overarching modernization effort for current brigade combat team formations, its tenants remain relevant to the future of warfare and should shape the next generation of combat platforms. Will incorporating these technologies into already aging combat platforms sustain the Army into the future as other countries continue to modernize their fleets? What capabilities are America's adversaries developing that will compete with our current platforms? A look at China's rising capabilities will attempt to answer these thought provoking questions and demonstrate the future strategic environment could come in the form of traditional war against a rising super power.

### China's Rise in Power

While it will be argued by many scholars that the potential of facing China in a traditional conflict is very slim, it is the responsibility of the military and the Army to build a force that can uphold America's foreign policy against any possible adversary in the future. It is not suggested that China would wage war directly with the United States, however, China's rising status as a potential superpower coupled with their increasing economic status and ambitions abroad make it likely that we could face a threat by China against one of our allies. It is to this end that the argument is made that the Army must continue to modernize and replace our aging combat fleets with new and improved ground combat vehicles. How likely it is that America could face China in a traditional conflict can be evaluated through Douglas Lemke's power transition theory.

Power transition theory focuses on the strongest states, and draws implications from their interactions for war, and for the maintenance of and changes to the structure of the international system.<sup>10</sup> In the current international order the United States is the

dominant state which establishes the status quo for the rest of the international community. Power transition theory takes into account the satisfaction level of the rest of the international community with the status quo and their ability to change the status quo. Additionally, it is assumed that real power comes from within a country's internal growth and at some point a country may achieve an equal standing in the international community through economic, military, and diplomatic means. When a country achieves equal status it is now in the position to challenge the status quo as established by the dominant state. This is the point where war could be waged against the dominant country or against the national interests of the dominant country. The combination of power parity between challenger and dominant state combined with the challenger's negative evaluation of the status quo provides the necessary condition for war.<sup>11</sup>

Over the past ten years China has continually increased their GDP growth and in the year 2010 it is expected to grow another 9.5 percent. While China is still far from reaching the United States in GDP, their growth rate far surpasses that of the United States. A look at several major indexes reveals that China is rapidly gaining parity with the United States economically.<sup>12</sup>

China also continues to modernize its military capability in all respects. A National Public Radio article posted in 2008 reported:

The evidence of China's military modernization is ample; double-digit increases for military spending since 1989; the rapid expansion of China's cruise and ballistic missile force and the deployment of hundreds of missiles along China's coast across from Taiwan; the rapid expansion of China's submarine force and the modernization of the missiles those submarines carry; and last year China's destruction of one of its own satellites by a land-based missile, announcing China's unexpected capability in anti-satellite warfare.<sup>13</sup>

These statistics alone are a concern for many in the United States and are an indication that China is well on its way to reaching parity with the United States. A former defense department official, Kurt Campbell noted that, “No country has risen to a status of great power as rapidly as China over the last 20 years.”<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Susan Shirk wrote in her book, *China: Fragile Superpower*, “History teaches us that rising powers are likely to provoke wars.”<sup>15</sup>

If there is in fact credence to power transition theory then the case is made that the United States cannot rule out the possibility of a future traditional war against a potential rising superpower similar to China. Based on the potential of traditional warfare, the Army is obligated to build and equip a joint enabled force to meet future threats. The Army must continue modernization efforts and look for ways to build a new ground combat fleet to meet these future challenges. Senior leadership obviously saw the benefits of the FCS BCT since they made it the Army’s number one modernization effort. So why did a program with so much potential fail? What follows is a theory on what caused the eventual termination of the FCS ground combat vehicle program.

#### Termination of the Program

The failure of the FCS program could be assessed as a failure in strategic leadership. Strategic leaders have the responsibility to lead and manage change in our Army. Strategic leaders must possess certain strategic leader competencies that fall into three distinct categories: conceptual, technical, and interpersonal. The FCS program was publicized as the Army’s number one modernization effort; however, on Jun 23, 2009 an acquisition decision memorandum was published by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics that abruptly terminated

major aspects of this multi-billion dollar program. Why did this happen? One reason is simple; a recurring trend in many organizations characterized as a resistance to organizational change. The failure of the FCS BCT program will be analyzed using a basic organizational change model introduced by Warner Burke, author of the book *Organizational Change: Theory and Practice*. Using Burke's model in addition to analyzing specific subcomponents of strategic leader competencies will demonstrate and explain how a resistance to organizational change contributed to the termination of a major element of the FCS program. The organizational change that led to the beginning of the FCS program began with the vision of GEN Eric Shinseki. As the Cold War ended, he realized the Army needed to modernize to meet potential challenges for an uncertain future.

GEN Shinseki outlined a strategic vision for a future force design that looked beyond the current global environment and anticipated what the Army must do to prepare the Army to fight America's next major war. The U.S. Army War College strategic leadership primer states:

Strategic leaders develop and communicate a compelling, understandable strategic vision for the organization. That strategic vision is a means of focusing effort and progressing toward a desired future—what ought to be. While the vision is an image of a future state, it is also a process the organization uses to guide future development. An effective vision also requires an implementing strategy or plan to ensure its attainment—how to get there.<sup>16</sup>

General Shinseki communicated his vision as he began the Army's transformation from the Cold War era, as he feared the Army had become irrelevant for future conflicts. However, as the Army's transformation effort evolved over the past seven years, many people seemed to discount the fact that the Army could face another superpower force and therefore suggested the need to transform the Army with a future combat system

brigade was not required. General Shinseki provided the vision and the strategy to achieve it; however his vision was unable to stand the test of time. What follows is an examination of the factors that contributed to the failure of the FCS program.

The FCS BCT program was established to build a future force designed to include new formations and new modernized networked equipment that would enable the Army to fight and win in future wars through 2025. The program consisted of fourteen systems, plus a network, plus the Soldier (often referred to as 14+1+1). The FCS program was the beginning of Army transformation as originally envisioned by the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General Eric Shinseki, and carried forward by his successor General Peter Schoomaker. General Shinseki introduced the FCS program in October 1999. The program was originally designed for the transformation of the Army's Legacy Forces into a lighter, modular organization called the Objective Force.<sup>17</sup> The legacy force refers to the organizational design, equipment and material that was developed to fight and win the Cold War. During this period very little upgrade to existing equipment was accomplished and newer technologies were not incorporated. This led to the development of the Objective force. In the interim the Army recapitalized existing equipment until the objective force was designed and fielded. The Objective Force is the Army's future full-spectrum force that is organized, manned, equipped and trained to be more strategically responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable and sustainable than the legacy force across the full spectrum of military operations.<sup>18</sup> This was the beginning of modularity and the transformation of brigades into brigade combat teams, giving combatant commanders more flexible options for the employment of combat forces without utilizing entire divisions. General Schoomaker

changed portions of the FCS program in 2003. He started by renaming the Objective Force as the Future Force and called for spiral development and fielding of functional FCS capabilities as they became available.<sup>19</sup> The spiral concept combines both design and prototyping to take advantage of top down and bottom up refinements to enhance the future end product. The intent is to develop equipment that meets warfighter requirements and can be rapidly fielded to the current force. This equipment would be organic to the FCS BCT but their capabilities are required to meet current force capability gaps. The equipment designated for spiral development and the network enhancements for FCS are the only components of the original FCS program that remain today; the additions of eight new manned ground systems were terminated.

How does a program that has so much invested in the future of the Army not come to fruition? A functional approach to analyzing the failure of the FCS program is to examine some principles of basic organizational change as outline by Warner Burke in the book "Organizational Change: Theory and Practice". Burke explains four phases of organizational change: *Prelaunch, Launch, Post launch, and Sustaining the Change*. These phases will provide the necessary framework for discussing the downfalls in the FCS program.

The first phase is *The Prelaunch*. In the prelaunch phase a vision is expressed providing clarity regarding the organizational change, purpose and direction. "We want to make the message stick, so it is cast in the form of a story that can easily be remembered."<sup>20</sup> General Shinseki provided that vision and the message, therefore, making the first phase of organizational change successful. He used the Association of United States Army as a forum for his launch of Army transformation and the FCS

program. The message he conveyed to make the program stick was, “If you don’t like change, you will like irrelevance even less.”<sup>21</sup>

The next phase is *The Launch*. In this phase, Burke describes the use of three types of people: connectors, mavens, and salespeople. Connectors are those few people that can bring others together for the common cause, mavens are those that have all the expert knowledge of the program and enjoy sharing what they know, and the salesmen have the power of persuasion to carry the message home.<sup>22</sup> Within the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), these connectors, mavens, and salesmen were resident within ARCIC, but more specifically within FFID and the TRADOC proponent schools and centers of excellence. These organizations continually advanced the FCS program and held quarterly integrated concept team (ICT) forums, followed by a strategic communications campaign to keep the program in the forefront of Army modernization.

The *post launch* phase relies on these same connectors, mavens, and salesmen to keep the vision alive by continuing to repeat the message and gain consensus from potential opponents of the program. FFID was initially successful in post launch operations through constant strategic communications and hosting numerous distinguished congressional delegations. However, as time passed it became increasingly difficult to maintain the momentum and opponents of the FCS program began to spread the seeds of doubt as to the value of the program. Dissension will be a key factor in the downfall of the program to be examined next.

The final phase of successful organizational change is *Sustaining the Change*. It may very well be that the most important ingredient in sustaining organization change is

the process of dealing with unanticipated, unforeseen consequences of initiatives and interventions.<sup>23</sup> Here in lies the beginning of understanding how the FCS program failed. At the onset of the program no one anticipated the potential cost overruns, delays in schedule, and inability of defense contractors to deliver on time. As the timeline for successful implementation continued to slip, in conjunction with requests for increased funding at a time when our economy was beginning to falter, the support for the program began to wane. This gave rise to dissenters of the program both within the military and outside the military. The outspokenness of Army dissenters perhaps dealt the most damaging blow to the program. Convincing others that the FCS program is viable is difficult enough outside the Army, but is further complicated when the dissent comes from within the Army. It is this aspect of internal dissent that will provide further insights into this resistance to change.

Of the three strategic competencies, (conceptual, technical, and interpersonal) it would be an unsustainable interpersonal competency over the life of the FCS manned ground vehicle program that would not withstand the test of time. A key subcomponent within the conceptual competencies for a strategic leader is the ability to envision the future. It is demonstrated to this point that Generals Shinseki and Schoomaker had this competency and enabled them to implement the organizational change required for the future force. Additionally, it can be argued that they had the technical competencies to work the implementation of the program through the various budgetary, congressional, and joint requirements. However, as explained below, a lack of interpersonal competency, consisting of consensus building, negotiation, and communication would hinder the continuation of the program.

Due to the enormous price tag of the FCS program it was imperative for our senior leaders to build consensus from congressional leaders, the sister services, and members of the Army. Initially, the Army had agreement on the program but as time passed, the consensus diminished. As a result, negotiations occurred to continue to lobby for the program and strategic communications were instrumental to maintaining the message, despite several setbacks in the program. What began to unravel the support for the program came from within the Army leadership. HR McMaster emerged as a major opponent of the FCS program, claiming that the future technologies the Army pursued were not relevant to the future of Army warfare. For a dissenter to be effective he must be credible. HR McMaster was respected for his book, *Dereliction of Duty*, and his efforts in counterinsurgency in Tal Afar, Iraq which gave him a solid reputation. His reputation was amplified in the book "The War Within", where Bob Woodward best described his celebrity like status:

Dereliction of Duty was in essence a field manual for avoiding another Vietnam and it became required reading throughout the military. Even President Bush said he had read the book. It established McMaster as the voice of a new generation of military officers who were determined not to be silent or passive, especially before and during a war. McMaster had become a kind of barometer of the military's moral conscience and the fortitude of the officer corps to speak out.<sup>24</sup>

McMaster argued that the concept of new and improved lighter combat vehicles with a reduced logistical footprint might get you into the fight quicker, but what was required once you get into the fight was the sustained and proven muscle of the Abrams tank. This ran contrary to the entire FCS concept of a lighter, more mobile force and quickly gained momentum from other opponents of the program.

McMaster's dissent, as well as others, coupled with a failing economy signaled the demise of the multi-billion dollar FCS program as the new democratic administration

took office in January 2009. It only took a few short months for the Army to announce, through the Acquisition Decision Memorandum (ADM), that the manned ground vehicle portion of the FCS program had been terminated. It would be the lack of a sustained interpersonal strategic competency that would allow this program to fail. All of the consensus building, negotiations, and strategic communications employed by the Army could not save this critical effort and the Army eventually acquiesced.

### Recommendations

The Army must continue to invest in future ground combat systems and not rely on our aging combat fleets to fight and win wars in 20 to 30 years. Failure to modernize our ground combat vehicles could potentially put the United States at a disadvantage and negate the overwhelming military power the United States enjoys today. While insurgency and counterinsurgency will continue to be at the forefront of conflicts for the distant future, the time is now to put new ideas into action and not abandon the enormous amount of time and money already invested in the FCS BCT program. The future capability starts with the Army finding budgetary means to fund the continuation of the technological developments that will be incorporated into new ground combat systems. These new ground combat systems must meet all joint requirements and have the ability to operate and communicate in any joint environment across the full spectrum of operations. The Army was well on its way to achieving this capability in the FCS BCT program; however, a failure in strategic leadership combined with anticipated budget cuts in the FCS program resulted in the premature termination of the ground combat vehicle program.

## Conclusion

While the FCS BCT program is terminated for now, there is still the need to continue with future projects that will replace our aging ground combat fleets. These new fleets require the ability to communicate through networked platforms with the ability to capture data, analyze data, and create near real time intelligence for the commander on the ground. Although the technology was slow to develop, the Army must not give up its obligation to build, train, and equip units with new networked ground combat platforms. The FCS BCT was relevant to the future operating environment and the continuation of the program in some fashion is still a feasible course of action, however, in this time of budgetary constraints it would appear that is not likely to happen in the near term.

History has shown, as indicated by Thucydides, that events from the past will at some point in the future repeat itself. The Army must be careful not to make the same mistakes in history and start today in preparing itself to fight our Nation's wars of the future. It is easy to be consumed by the current fight, but strategic leaders have the obligation to look into the future and provide the strategic guidance to meet future threats.

Although the Army has terminated the major aspects of the FCS BCT program, some of the original ideas are still being incorporated. The FFID now has the mission to develop at least one new ground combat vehicle (GCV) that can perform in the various types of current brigade combat teams, but developing only one new platform may not satisfy the requirements for the future. Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter W. Chiarelli, remarked at the Association of the U.S. Army Institute of Land Warfare

breakfast, “The GCV is meant to fill the capability gap left after the manned ground vehicle program was cancelled from Future Combat Systems earlier this year.”<sup>25</sup> As the Nation continues to keep its eye on China, the potential next superpower, the Army must continue to take advantage of new technologies and continue to develop new ground combat vehicles. Only time will tell if the Army made a strategic mistake in the termination of the program, but from this author’s perspective it was a premature decision and wasted millions of dollars that were already invested in the future.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. By Rex Warner (London: Penguin Books, 1954). p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Future Force Integration Directorate, *Brigade Modernization thru Incremental Capability Packages* (Fort Bliss, Texas: FFID, 7 December 2009), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Feickert, *The Army’s Future Combat System (FCS): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 2007), 1. The Future Combat System (FCS) is the U.S. Army’s multiyear, multibillion-dollar program at the heart of the Army’s Transformation efforts. It is the Army’s major research, development, and acquisition program consisting of 18 manned and unmanned systems tied together by an extensive communications and information network. FCS is intended to replace such current systems as the M-1 Abrams tank and the M-2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle with advanced, networked combat systems. The FCS has been characterized by the Army and others as a high-risk venture due to the advanced technologies involved as well as the challenge of networking all of the FCS subsystems together so the FCS-equipped units can function as intended.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *Carl Von Clausewitz On War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 141.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 39.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Howard, *Clausewitz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 33.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Army War College, *Theory of War and Strategy Selected Readings*, Vol 2, *Irregular Warfare One Nature, Many Characters*, 457.

<sup>9</sup> Annie Gammel, "Future Force Integration Directorate Gets New Leader," *Fort Bliss (TX) Monitor*, September 20, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas Lemke, "The Continuation of History: Power Transition Theory and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 1 (February 1997): 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> "China vs United States: A visual comparison," Wallstats.com, April 21, 2009, <http://www.mint.com/blog/finance-core/china-vs-united-states-a-visual-comparison/> (accessed January 2, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Mike Shuster, "China's Military Growth Creates Uncertainty for U.S.," April 6, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89376923> (accessed January 2, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College, *Strategic Leadership Primer* (Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, 2004), 20.

<sup>17</sup> Global Security.Org, "*Future Combat Systems (FCS)*," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ground/fcs.htm> (accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> United States Army Posture Statement 2003, *The Objective Force*, February 11, 2003, <http://www.army.mil/APS/2003/letter/index.html> (accessed January 28, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Global Security.Org, "*Future Combat Systems (FCS)*".

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Army War College, *Strategic Leadership Selected Readings, Organizational Change: Epidemics, Integration, and Future Needs* (Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle PA, 24 September 2009 – 15 October 2009), 34.

<sup>21</sup> Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College, 49.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Army War College, *Strategic Leadership Selected Readings*, p.30.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>24</sup> Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2008), 37.

<sup>25</sup> J.D. Leipold, "Vice Chief Outlines Need for New Ground Combat Vehicle," September 16, 2009, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/09/16/27394-vice-chief-outlines-need-for-new-ground-combat-vehicle> (accessed October 2, 2009).