In Iraq, or on any battlefield today, this Stryker Brigade [Combat Team] can move farther and bring more power and situational awareness to the fight faster than any other formation in our Army—and by constantly trying new concepts and equipment, we are also the Army’s bridge to the future force.

Colonel Stephen Townsend
Commander, 3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division (SBCT)
Fort Lewis, Washington, 18 May 2006

Accelerating Momentum:
The Stryker Brigade Combat Team
As a Learning Organization

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An AUSA Torchbearerer Issue
June 2006
In an article entitled “Leadership, Versatility and All That Jazz” in the August 1994 issue of Military Review, the authors reflect upon a quotation from Margaret J. Wheatley’s entry in the March 1994 Journal for Quality and Participation: “America’s Army is a learning organization, rich in connections and relationships that make it possible to know what it knows.”

The U.S. Army has always been—and will continue to be—a learning, teaching and adapting organization. In the late 1990s, the Army knew the nation had a strategic void in its military force structure and went about developing unique operational capabilities—the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT)—to reduce that vulnerability. It also knew it had to transform and modernize to become a more capable, relevant and vital member of the 21st century Joint Force. The SBCT was at the heart of this effort, not only serving as an agent for change across the entire Army but also helping to accelerate momentum to its future Modular Force.

In this latest installment of AUSA’s signature Torchbearer series, we provide an in-depth analysis of the Army’s leveraging of the capabilities of the SBCT and application of the lessons learned from its combat experience to change the culture of the Army and pave the way for the future Modular Force. We hope you find this report a useful resource and that you will continue to look to AUSA for thoughtful, credible analysis of contemporary national security issues.

Gordon R. Sullivan
General, U.S. Army Retired
President, AUSA

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Adversaries and potential adversaries of the United States are hard at work learning about and adapting to current U.S. operations. The U.S. Army, in its quest to provide relevant and ready landpower to combatant commanders, continues to improve its capabilities to prevail in the war on terrorism, sustain all of its global commitments and leap ahead of increasing enemy capabilities. For the Army, to stand still is to go backwards.

The Army is transforming to create an active and reserve component pool of 70 modular brigade combat teams, reinforced by more than 200 modular support brigades. It is also modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field Future Combat Systems (FCS) and other advanced technologies. The Army is building a modular force in which brigades—not divisions—can “plug into” joint and coalition task forces in expeditionary and campaign settings. It is building depth (more) and breadth (more kinds) of capabilities to ensure Soldiers and units can adapt to the challenges of the complex evolving joint operational environment.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) is playing a vital role in accelerating the momentum of Army transformation and modernization. It is serving three purposes (and serving them all extremely well):

- validating operational requirements in the crucible of war by providing a new operational capability specifically designed to operate in complex urban terrain, against shadowy enemies not easily distinguished from the civilian population; all playing live on round-the-clock satellite television (middle of the spectrum of operations);

- affirming the Army azimuth of transformation and sparking the innovation required for expedient change, causing the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed; and

- building a future Modular Force with a broad portfolio of capabilities by providing a learning platform/organization for the future Modular Force, setting the stage for the Evaluation Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) to be the primary means for preparing Soldiers, leaders and Army institutions to operate with and support the FCS BCT.

FCS BCTs will represent a revolutionary advance in operational capability, combining heavy forces’ ability to dominate an even more complex and dangerous battle space with the strategic responsiveness and deployability of current light formations. Designed from the ground up expressly for the conduct of information-enabled operations in the complex physical, cybernetic and moral domains, the FCS comprises a family of advanced, networked air and ground systems, knit together by a networked operations, sensors, Battle Command Systems and embedded training capability. Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBCTs paves the way for Soldier and leaders of the future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT.

The Army is making enormous progress in executing a fully integrated, carefully crafted plan to guide its efforts to transform, support combatant commanders and sustain Soldiers and their families in this time of war. Now is a pivotal time; progress made over the next 12 to 18 months will determine the Army’s ability to position itself properly for the 21st century. The window of opportunity is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will face stiff competition for resources. Therefore, it must accelerate its momentum to transform and modernize. Thanks to the SBCTs and their demonstrated performance in combat, together with the real-time dissemination of lessons learned, the Army is poised to exploit the opportunity that it has been presented. Congress and the Department of Defense must now do their part. “Hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States.
ional environment. The Stryker Brigade Combat Team has provided combatant commanders a new operational capability at the middle of the spectrum of operations. The SBCT also has led the Army to change its culture and, as a learning organization, to accelerate transformation and modernization—via the EBR—to the future Modular Force equipped with FCS and able to operate across the entire spectrum of warfare.

Potential enemies of the United States are not standing still; it is therefore imperative that the Army move forward both farther and faster than any adversary it may face. Unfortunately, the Army’s window of opportunity to make the required changes is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will likely face stiff competition for resources. For the Army to succeed, Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) must:

- increase defense budget funding to the level of 4 percent or greater of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- fully support the integrated Army Plan by increasing the Army’s shares of the DoD budget to at least 28 percent to ensure versatile and complementary capabilities are available to the combatant commanders;
- support the creation, training, basing and sustaining of 70 BCTs (to include seven SBCTs) and more than 200 support brigades;
- fully fund the FCS—the Army’s main modernization program—to include four discrete spin-outs of capabilities, at two-year increments, to the current force; and
- authorize and fund an active Army endstrength increase to 550,000 within the Army base budget, to include all associated costs, to allow “headroom” for the Army to meet its wartime requirements as well as transform and modernize for the future.

The Army continues to bear the heaviest burden for this nation’s security. FCS is the Army’s first comprehensive modernization effort in more than four decades. The Army must capitalize on an unprecedented opportunity resulting from wartime focus and levels of resources. Congress and DoD must do their part as well, or the United States faces a reduction in its presence in the world as well as challenges to homeland defense, which could place the nation’s security at risk.

**Executive Summary**

[T]he Army of tomorrow must be more deployable and capable of meeting future threats across the full spectrum of [conflict] . . . An essential element of . . . the transformation is the Army’s new Stryker Brigade Combat Team and its role as an interim solution to Army Transformation.


Before Blue Force Tracking (BFT) and Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) had demonstrated their worth in combat, the Army anticipated the potential power of information technology and built a formation around it using existing capabilities. The Army’s leveraging of the capabilities of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) and application of the lessons learned from its combat experience, are changing the culture of the Army and panning the way for the future Modular Force. The experience of the SBCT—from concept development to materiel fielding to rapid wartime deployment—is not only serving as a catalyst for leading change across the Army, it is also accelerating the speed of the entire Army’s movement from the current to the future force.

The lessons learned from the unprecedented success of the SBCT are challenging prior assumptions about land warfare; validating ideas about how to deal with battlefield complexity and uncertainty; and providing a 21st century database that is being used to update planning factors as well as Army and joint tactics, techniques and procedures. Moreover, as a force for positive change, the SBCT is playing a vital role in preparing Soldiers, leaders and commanders to adapt to the reality of irregular warfare in complex environments that the Army will face for the foreseeable future. In the face of determined adversaries, the SBCT is providing Soldiers and leaders with information, speed, protection and immediate access to combined arms and joint assets. The effect of these capabilities—reflected in the actions of Stryker Soldiers as well as in their attitude, beliefs and overall levels of confidence—is having a clearly observable and beneficial impact on the overall culture of the Army.

In implementing this concept, the Army found new ways to improve every aspect of preparing forces for war—across every dimension of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel (Soldiers) and facilities (DOTMLPF). The concept has directly impacted modularity, acquisition, unit set fielding, unit manning, predeployment training and combat employment, and it has caused the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed in logistics and movement planning.

Through structured, collaborative processes, the Army has learned a great deal about the capability it is fielding. These lessons are informing more than just the SBCTs—they are informing the Army’s thinking and collective judgment regarding the entire modular force—both current and future. The Army has also recognized that potential enemies are learning, teaching and adapting to current U.S. operations. “Hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States. While fully engaged in the war on terrorism and sustaining the range of its global commitments, the Army is transforming and modernizing to build an even more capable and relevant force—the future Modular Force—with a broad portfolio of capabilities.

The Army is modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field the Future Combat Systems (FCS) and other advanced technologies. It is expanding
the breadth of its capabilities by making the BCTs more powerful, versatile, deployable and relevant to new challenges. FCS, the Army’s main modernization program, comprises 18 manned and unmanned systems in support of the Soldier, all connected by a robust, jointly interoperable information network.

Even before the fielding of the first FCS BCT, the FCS program plans to provide advanced technologies to be integrated as they mature into current formations in two-year increments, called “spin-outs.” These new capabilities will directly benefit all U.S. ground forces, including the Marine Corps and special operations forces (SOF) from all services. They will fundamentally alter how the Army deploys, employs and sustains forces and will improve the Army’s ability to stabilize contested zones and support joint and interagency teams. FCS includes four scheduled spin-outs that enable the Army to accelerate the fielding of maturing technologies into the current force.

The SBCT serves as a pathway to the FCS BCT. Building on lessons learned from the SBCT, the Army is forming an Evaluation Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) at Fort Bliss, Texas, to be the test bed for the FCS BCT. Its purpose is to test, refine and validate FCS technologies before fielding occurs. The EBCT is scheduled to begin Soldier testing of FCS “Spin-Out One” technology in 2008, followed by fielding to the current force in 2010. The EBCT will help the Army “get it right the first time.”

Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBCTs paves the way for leaders and Soldiers of the future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT. **What is needed is a modernized Modular Force**—FCS BCTs and other BCTs with selected FCS technologies and capabilities—that is dominant across the entire spectrum of operations under conditions of the complex and evolving joint operational environment.

**Evolutionary change is leading to revolutionary outcomes.** To stand still is to go backwards. Unfortunately, the Army’s window of opportunity to make the required changes is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will likely face stiff competition for resources. For the Army to succeed, Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) must:

- increase defense budget funding to the level of 4 percent or greater of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- fully support the integrated Army Plan by increasing the Army’s shares of the DoD budget to at least 28 percent to ensure versatile and complementary capabilities are available to the combatant commanders;
- support the creation, training, basing and sustaining of 70 BCTs (to include seven SBCTs) and more than 200 support brigades;
- fully fund the FCS—the Army’s main modernization program—to include four discrete spin-outs of capabilities, at two-year increments, to the current force; and
- authorize and fund an active Army endstrength increase to 550,000 within the Army base budget, to include all associated costs, to allow “headroom” for the Army to meet its wartime requirements as well as transform and modernize for the future.

and land vehicles. FCS will optimize total combat effectiveness by connecting these new capabilities to the Soldier through a tightly integrated battle-management network.

FCS is now a Joint Services program with an Army and Marine Joint Program Office. It is in the System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase. In mid-2004, the Army accelerated the delivery of selected FCS capabilities to the current force. This acceleration expands the scope of the program’s SDD phase by adding four discrete spin-outs of capabilities, at two-year increments, to the current force. The Army plans to begin fielding the first spin-out, consisting of prototypes, to the EBCT in 2008.

What is needed is a modernized Modular Force—FCS BCTs and other BCTs with selected FCS technologies and capabilities—that is dominant across the entire spectrum of operations under conditions of the complex evolving joint operational environment.

**What Must Be Done**

The Army has been hard at work changing and adapting itself to the evolving complex joint opera-
with which to conduct reconnaissance, Armed Robotic Vehicles—Assault to provide direct fire support, and access to joint network fires. The FCS BCT’s capabilities will extend beyond kinetic engagements to include information operations. All FCS systems will achieve overmatch against comparable systems likely to be employed against U.S. forces. Non-infantry platoons will also have their own UAVs and Armed Robotic Vehicles—Assault to provide direct fire support to infantry in the assault. The FCS BCT’s capabilities will include Non-Line of Sight (NLOS) systems capable of both precision engagement and area-suppression; Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) systems using direct-fire engagement outside of visual range; and direct-fire systems.

To finish decisively or reengage, the FCS BCT must dictate the terms of the engagement, completing the destruction of enemy forces and enabling the attainment of friendly objectives. By acting first to destroy or neutralize the most threatening enemy capabilities, the FCS BCT will ensure overmatch against remaining enemy forces. Its Soldiers will share the SBCT’s capability for decisive, close-combat assault, but the firepower of its mounted combat systems will exceed that of today’s tanks, providing overmatch against enemy armored forces. The FCS BCT’s combination of signature reduction, active protection systems and passive armor will provide protection against enemy systems likely to have escaped prior detection and destruction. Through the FCS network, individual Soldiers will be able to employ any and all of the joint force’s capabilities in the close fight to achieve decisive results; this represents a significant enhancement of individual capability over that available to the Soldiers of today’s SBCT.

For both the FCS BCT and the Stryker Brigade Combat Team, the network is the key to the quality of firsts. Where today’s Army Battle Command System represents an amalgamation of disparate, existing systems, FCS will operate using a network designed as an integrated whole. Today, the Army Battle Command System serves as the network for the SBCT and the rest of the Modular Force. While enabling an unprecedented degree of information sharing, ABCS nonetheless comprises a number of disparate systems, separately developed for separate ends. It is neither as pervasive nor as integrated as the FCS network will be, but Soldiers and leaders of the SBCT are nonetheless learning to operate, protect and fight using the network. The FCS network they will inherit is being developed as an integrated whole. It will tie warfighters together, providing Soldiers and leaders with a tailored view of their battlespace based on a common operational picture. Because FCS is being developed as one integrated system, its component systems will have an unprecedented ability to share information. The FCS network will also facilitate sharing information outside the BCT by translating information between FCS and other Army, joint and coalition networks.

Experience in the middle of today’s spectrum of operations, where combat intersects with the war of ideas, prepares leaders and Soldiers for an environment of similar complexity but dramatically increased danger. Those Soldiers and leaders are learning to generate and employ combat power by seeing first, understanding first, acting first and finishing decisively or reengaging in the SBCTs, preparing them to employ the dramatically enhanced capabilities of the FCS BCT. Evolutionary change is leading to revolutionary outcomes.

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For the Army to remain the preeminent land-power, it must make a quantum leap ahead of its adversaries’ increased capabilities. To stand still is to go backwards. The Army’s transformed Modular Force—expected to perform across the range of military operations in a complex security environment—requires modern equipment. The Future Combat Systems will pioneer the next generation of warfighting capabilities, including the construction of a new class of manned and unmanned air

Accelerating Momentum: The Stryker Brigade Combat Team As a Learning Organization

Everybody wants to come see the Stryker Brigade [Combat Team] and see what the future looks like.


Introduction

The experience of the Stryker1 Brigade Combat Team (SBCT)—from concept development to materiel fielding to rapid wartime deployment—is not only serving as a catalyst for leading change across the Army; it is also accelerating the speed of the entire Army’s move from the current to the future force. The lessons learned from the unprecedented success of the SBCT are challenging prior assumptions about land warfare; validating ideas about how to deal with complexity and uncertainty; and providing a 21st century database that is being used to update planning factors as well as Army and joint tactics, techniques and procedures. Moreover, as a force for positive change, the SBCT is playing a vital role in preparing Soldiers, leaders and commanders to adapt to the reality of irregular warfare in complex environments that the Army will face for the foreseeable future. In the face of determined adversaries, the SBCT is providing Soldiers and leaders with information, speed, protection and immediate access to combined arms and joint assets. The effect of these capabilities—reflected in the actions of Stryker Soldiers as well as in their attitude, beliefs and overall levels of confidence—is having a clearly observable, extraordinarily beneficial impact on the overall culture of the Army.

Since it was first proposed, the SBCT has been a source of significant interest, concern and debate.

Critics doubted the utility of wheeled combat vehicles, as opposed to the tracked armored vehicles on which the Army had traditionally depended. They doubted the need for the enhanced strategic mobility enabled by the SBCT and questioned whether it could be achieved. Many asserted that the SBCT had no utility beyond much-despised “peacekeeping missions,” and that the Stryker Armored Vehicle would prove a rolling death trap for the Soldiers who rode in it.

The reality has been markedly different. The SBCT has proven ideally suited for the complex and dangerous environment in which it now operates—the middle of the spectrum of operations. It was designed specifically to operate across the spectrum of warfare,

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1 Information about the Stryker—a highly deployable wheeled armored vehicle that combines firepower, battlefield mobility, survivability and versatility with reduced logistics requirements—is available online at http://www.army.mil/features/stryker/default.htm.
The Stryker Interim Armored Combat Vehicle was named by the Army in a 27 February 2002 ceremony at AUSA’s Winter Symposium, in honor of two Medal of Honor recipients: PFC Stuart S. Stryker, who served with the 513th Parachute Infantry in World War II, and SPC Robert F. Stryker, who served with the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. PFC Stuart Stryker was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for leading an attack near Wese, Germany, that captured more than 200 enemy soldiers and freed three American pilots. SPC Robert Stryker was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for saving the lives of fellow soldiers near Loc Ninh, Vietnam.

but especially in complex urban terrain; against shadowy enemies not easily distinguished from the civilian population; all playing live on round-the-clock satellite television. In this complex human, physical and informational “terrain,” Soldiers, who are trained more as potential leaders than as followers, are facing highly adaptive and asymmetric enemies.

The SBCT’s firepower, mobility, protection and, above all, superior situational awareness have allowed it to dominate the situation in Mosul and other areas in Iraq in which it has fought. Soldiers of the Stryker BCTs are enthusiastic about their unit and its equipment, and with good reason: to this date, few Strays have been penetrated by rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), none with catastrophic effect. And while the SBCT has not had the chance to demonstrate its capabilities for strategic mobility, the Global War on Terrorism has already demonstrated the need for those capabilities, first during the initial assault into Afghanistan and then when the United States had to rely on two airborne battalions to establish the “northern front” from Bashur airfield in northern Iraq.

There is more, however, to the SBCT than just meeting a new operational capability (and meeting it very well). Developing and fielding the SBCT is helping to lay the foundation (and provide a true test bed) to accelerate the fielding of the entire future Modular Force. The SBCT experience is helping to enhance the way the Army changes, as the Army adapts its doctrine for an information-enabled force, trains for complex, full-spectrum joint operations, and rapidly and dramatically transforms a unit’s capabilities through unit set fielding. The Army is already applying these lessons to the entire force, both operational and institutional. The SBCT is a forcing function for change.

The SBCT also serves as a learning platform/organization upon which to build for the future—the Army’s future Modular Force including the Future Combat Systems (FCS). Today’s SBCTs are pioneering new platforms to detect enemy systems, especially anti-armour systems, at extended ranges.

FCS technology will augment the human and organizational capabilities of current modular formations to create understanding. To understand first means to assimilate and analyze information to determine what effects must be achieved and how best to achieve them. It is not enough to know where the enemy is; commanders must also understand the implications of engaging him in a particular manner. The Army has improved the Stryker Brigades’ capability to achieve understanding by providing human and organizational capabilities for analysis. In the FCS BCT, the Army will add enhanced technological capabilities. Enhanced analytical capabilities will reside in the brigade intelligence and communications company. The FCS battle command network will include applications that automate some analytical functions. The network will be able to deduce the enemy order of battle using the time and location enemy systems were detected, infer enemy intentions from the combination of that order of battle with the capabilities of enemy forces, and even assess the accuracy of the fusion process itself. Such automated systems will never be able to replace human analysts, but by accomplishing preliminary and rudimentary analysis, the battle command network can free analysts to create a deeper and broader understanding of the battlespace context.

Where the SBCT relies on joint capabilities to act first against adversaries, the FCS BCT will have even greater ability to leverage those joint capabilities while using its own powerful organic capabilities to engage and destroy enemies from standoff. Just as the FCS network will provide automated support to intelligence analysis, it will provide applications to support planning and decisionmaking, including nominating targets and methods of engagement. This pervasive network enables Soldiers to employ the best weapon—not just the ones they have in their hands—to engage a particular target. The network will even allow Soldiers to employ joint forces to engage the enemy beyond the range or capability of organic weapon systems.

Moreover, the FCS BCT possesses potent capabilities to engage and destroy enemy forces from rough the range of those weapon systems. FCS BCTs will contain combined-arms formations to the lowest tactical level, as well as considerably more organic firepower and protection than the SBCT. Infantry platoons will have UAVs...
as insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan employ IEDs to attrit forces and sap national will, future adversaries will attack relative weaknesses with asymmetric and highly adaptive methods, often achieving tactical overmatch. IEDs in Iraq are getting powerful enough to possibly defeat even the Army’s most heavily armored vehicle, the Abrams tank.

The future Modular Force will have to dominate much more deadly adversaries. Those adversaries, with access to advanced and rapidly proliferating military technologies, will employ advanced air and missile systems, including unmanned combat aerial vehicles. They will have more lethal anti-armor weapons, such as side- and top-attack systems like the U.S. Javelin antitank missile or hyperkinetic missiles like the Line-of-Sight Anti-Tank (LOSAT) missile. In tests, the kinetic energy imparted from such missiles has been able to penetrate and destroy the most heavily armored tanks and to move 70-ton objects several meters. This proliferation of advanced technology calls into question the old paradigm of passive protection. General William E. DePuy’s aphorism, “What can be seen can be hit; what can be hit can be killed,” will assume even greater relevance. Future enemies will be both harder to find and better able to kill. To master this future operational environment, the FCS BCT will have to rely as never before on information and striking power rather than mass and weight of metal.

Learning to Fight with the Quality of Firsts. Lessons

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1 General William E. DePuy was the first Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (1973–77).
more rapidly than contemporary heavy forces, but with the same degree of lethality, firepower and protection. More important, this technologically-advanced force would be able to perform a much broader range of missions across the entire spectrum of military operations, ranging from humanitarian assistance to major combat operations against a near peer competitor. The most immediate challenge lay in the deployment of this spectrum, where a threatening variety of adversaries, from rogue states to shadowy terrorist and international criminal organizations, threatened to overmatch rapidly deployable light forces yet elude strategically ponderous heavy forces. Army leaders remembered the window of vulnerability during Operation Desert Shield between the deployment of the light forces of the 82d Airborne Division and the arrival of the heavy 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized). The Army intended to fill that gap in the middle of the spectrum immediately, developing the SBCTs using the best available capabilities. While the SBCTs’ armored protection and firepower were not equal to those of heavy formations, they significantly exceeded those of the Army’s light forces. Equally important, SBCTs were to be able to deploy almost as quickly as light forces. The Army was facing new threats in a changed world and needed to become a force that could better perform the vital ground component mission of the nation’s defense.

**Filling the Void: Identifying Operational Solutions to Strategic Challenges**

The operational capabilities inherent to the SBCT were determined in response to broad, a family of advanced, networked air and ground systems, knit together by a networked C4ISR architecture that includes communications, network operations, sensors, Battle Command systems and embedded training capability. As FCS provides the FCS BCT with a revolutionary advance in combat capability, it will operate using the same concept of information-enabled operations, the quality of firsts. Though the FCS BCT will be more capable across the full range of military operations than the SBCT, there are similarities in the context of kinetic operations in complex environments. The SBCT has set the stage for the EBCT to serve as the primary means for preparing Soldiers, leaders and Army institutions to operate with and support the FCS BCT. Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBC-Ts paves the way for leaders and Soldiers of the Future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT.

**A Complex and Evolving Joint Operational Environment.** Like the SBCTs in Tal Afar and Mosul, the FCS BCT will fight in cities, because adversaries will hide there. More pertinent, future conflicts caused by ethnic, political, economic and religious tensions will arise where people are concentrated. The future Modular Force will have to contend with complex problems spanning the entire spectrum of operations: natural catastrophes, large-scale criminal activity, terrorism, insurgency, civil war and state-on-state conflict. Just as in Iraq today, several separate conflicts will probably be ongoing simultaneously. Just
itself, the Army as an institution is learning the value of acquiring, sharing and understanding information to increase operational capability. The total experience of fielding, training and deploying SBCTs has significantly driven change across the Army and has had a direct impact on the Army’s readiness model, Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN).

Third Stryker Purpose—Learning Platform/Organiza-

Third Stryker Purpose—Learning Platform/Organization for the Future Modular Force

Potential adversaries of this nation are not standing still; they are learning, teaching and adapting to current U.S. operations, and their capabilities are increasing accordingly. Therefore, “hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States.

While fully engaged in the Global War on Ter-

While fully engaged in the Global War on Terrorism and sustaining the range of its global commitments, the Army is moving forward, transforming and modernizing to build an even more capable and relevant force—the future Modular Force—with a broad portfolio of capabilities. The Army is transforming from a force dependent upon divisions, built to deter and to wage war against traditional adversaries, to a force built upon modular brigades, specially designed for the full range of military operations. These modular brigades are designed to “plug into” joint and coalition task forces in expeditionary and campaign settings and to accept advanced new capabilities as technology matures.

The Army is modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field FCS and other advanced technologies. It is expanding the breadth of its capabilities by making the BCTs more powerful, versatile, deployable and relevant to new challenges. FCS, the Army’s main modernization program, comprises 18 manned and unmanned systems in support of the Soldier, all connected by a robust, jointly interoperable information network. FCS extends the information revolution, which has transformed air and naval warfare, to the realm of ground warfare. It enables command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) integration and seamless connectivity in a joint and expeditionary environment. Last but not least, it integrates Soldiers into the network for unprecedented situational awareness and empowers them to defeat asymmetrical threats.

Even before the fielding of the first FCS BCT, the FCS program plans to provide advanced technologies to be integrated as they mature into current formations in two-year increments, called “spin-outs.” These new capabilities will directly benefit all U.S. ground forces, including the Marine Corps and special operations forces (SOF) from all services. They will fundamentally alter how the Army deploys, employs and sustains forces and will improve the Army’s ability to stabilize contested zones and support joint and interagency teams. FCS includes four scheduled spin-outs that enable the Army to accelerate the fielding of maturing technologies into the current force.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Teams serve as a path- way to the FCS BCT. Building on lessons learned from the SBCTs, the Army is forming an Evaluation Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) at Fort Bliss, Texas, to be the test bed for the FCS BCT. Its purpose is to test, refine and validate FCS technologies before fielding occurs. The EBCT is scheduled to begin Soldier testing of FCS “Spin-Out One” technology in 2008, followed by fielding to the current force in 2010. The EBCT will help the Army “get it right the first time.”

FCS BCTs will represent a revolutionary advance in operational capability, combining heavy forces’ deployability to dominate an even more complex and dangerous battlespace with the strategic responsiveness and deployability of current light formations. Designed from the ground up expressly for the conduct of information-enabled operations in the complex physical, cybernetic and moral domains, the FCS comprises open-ended questions that centered on characterizing the environment and the attendant operational requirements; how the SBCT should be organized and equipped; and, of greatest importance, what leader competencies would be required for the SBCT to be successful.

- In what kind of environment will SBCTs have to operate and succeed (win?)? The Army formations of the 1990s had been organized and trained to counter the threat posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Increasingly, however, after the Cold War, military forces were faced with a growing number of peacekeeping operations and small-scale contingencies that demanded a new approach. The battlefield was no longer one of large tank formations maneuvering predictably across broad plains. It was now going to be more often one of elusive enemies operating on city streets and alleyways and seeking shelter among civilian populations. It was often to be one of cloudy political or fanatic ideological objectives—difficult to comprehend. It could well contain chemical and biological agents.

- To win in that environment, how will the SBCTs have to operate? What was needed was a new combat formation to fill the gap between existing heavy force combat power and light force mobility, and do so under the conditions of the emerging contemporary operating environment. It would be an early-entry force with sufficient combat power to conduct immediate combat operations on arrival in theater. It would therefore need to increase deployability without sacrificing survivability and lethality. The SBCT would certainly have to be able to fight for and exploit the power of information. Most important, the new force would have to adopt a new mindset, a true intellectual transformation in the art and science of warfare. The desired end-state was a unit that could fight like Army Rangers and think like Special Forces, with better mobility than mechanized and armored forces. To achieve this end, the Army immediately identified several critical operational capability requirements:
- improved strategic, operational and tactical mobility;
- increased situational understanding through enhanced reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition (RSTA) capabilities;
- organic combined arms integration down to company level; and
- lethal and nonlethal joint effects employment capabilities.

- To achieve such operational capability, how will the SBCTs have to be organized? At that time, the SBCTs’ organization would differ significantly from those found in existing divisional infantry brigades, primarily due to an impressive array of units organic to the SBCT. In addition to its Stryker infantry battalions, the SBCT would be given a cavalry squadron for RSTA, a brigade support battalion, a field artillery battalion, a military intelligence company, an engineer company, a signal company, an antitank company and a headquarters company. The existing divisional infantry brigades were organized with these capabilities only for large training exercises or for war. The SBCT was organized as a BCT at all times.

- What equipment will the SBCTs require? Stryker formations would have to move about the battlefield space in vehicles that would allow the execution of the strategic, operational and tactical SBCT concepts. Other new equipment would be needed as well. To shape the area of operation (AO) and achieve decisive outcomes, the SBCT would also be outfitted with the tube-launched, optically tracked wire-guided (TOW) II/A/B anti-tank missiles; Javelin anti-tank missiles; 120mm,
81mm and 60mm mortars; and 155mm artillery. It was envisioned that the Mobile Gun System (MGS), once fielded, would replace other antitank guided missile (ATGM) systems in the mobile gun platoon. Direct-fire systems were to be the focus for destroying hardened and fortified positions in support of infantry assaults. Precision weapons would allow restraint in the application of firepower and minimize collateral damage. Battalion- and company-level organic mortars could enhance timely and effective indirect-fire engagements by providing immediate support and the ability to maximize the effects of high-angle fires. The anti-armor capability (the antitank company and the Javelin missiles) within the SBCT would mitigate the threat from enemy armored forces within the area of operations. Furthermore, small arms would be matched to task, and the employment of sniper rifles in the SBCT would allow the highly accurate placement of individual fire.

Finally, the SBCT would require a multilevel, integrated suite of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, coupled with an array of digital information systems that became known as the Army Battle Command System (ABCS), to develop and continuously distribute an enhanced decision picture. This would allow unit leaders to make better and faster decisions. This need also drove the development of the Command Post Computer System (CPCS), which would provide the leaders with all the information they needed to make decisions in real time.

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manned in accordance with the new Unit Manning System personnel policies. For the 172d, the new approach:

- enhanced recruitment and retention of Soldiers and leaders;
- provided the right mix of personnel at the right place and the right time;
- enhanced Soldier and leader development;
- improved individual, unit and organizational readiness; and
- enhanced the well-being of Soldiers and their families.

The 172d Infantry Brigade commenced deployment to Iraq in October 2005, having successfully demonstrated the Unit Manning System. Because the SBCTs were manned as units, they provided valuable lessons in designing and implementing life cycle management throughout the rest of the operational force.

The SBCT’s reliance on joint assets, along with its expanded battlespace, prompted changes in the way the Army conducts training and leader development. At Fort Lewis, the SBCTs effectively demonstrated the utility of integrating live, virtual and constructive training to replicate the full range of effects without requiring the commitment of all the relevant joint assets. A suite of simulations residing in the Battle Command Training Center allowed staffs to train repetitively on critical tasks. The Mission Support Training Facility (MSTF) provided training to individuals in operating and fully exploiting the capabilities of all components of the Army’s digital Battle Command System.

The SBCT is an acquisition success story that has changed the way the Army develops and fields equipment. It took less than four years from the identification of the requirement for this organization to its deployment into combat. That period not only included the acquisition of an entirely new system, the Stryker Armored Vehicle, but also required the parallel development and acquisition of many other items, especially battle command systems. The fielding of the SBCT has also changed the way the Army fields developmental items. Previously, the Army planned to issue only equipment that already emerged from the acquisition process. Soldiers of the SBCT received the opportunity to work with equipment still under development. This not only allowed the unit to train but also enhanced the further development of such systems. Moreover, the SBCT was also the Army’s first venture into unit set fielding, a process in which a unit receives all of its equipment, and its new equipment training, at once. The idea behind unit set fielding is to field systems not when the equipment is ready but when the unit is.

The SBCTs are also helping to pioneer a change in the way the Army sustains its formations. In developing the SBCT, the Army gave considerable weight to the formation’s sustainability. The Army made a deliberate decision to pursue a family of vehicles based on a common chassis, thus reducing the variety and quantity of spare parts required. Reliability was a prime consideration in the selection of the Stryker Armored Vehicle, a consideration reflected in the fact that SBCTs in Iraq have maintained an operational readiness rate of more than 96 percent, a rate significantly better than that of other types of brigade combat teams, even though the SBCT’s vehicles have traveled more than 6.5 million miles. The Army is learning valuable lessons about the way the SBCT is maintained, including better use of contractors on the battlefield. Increased reliability means decreased consumption of spare parts. Overall, the SBCT consumes much less than a heavy BCT. This enhances the overall survivability of the force by reducing the number of vulnerable convoys that must traverse routes subject

common operational picture (COP) throughout the brigade down to individual squad vehicle. These information systems (INFOSYS) would provide the SBCT commander with a unique capability to visualize, describe and direct the brigade through the range of operations and terrain in which the unit might operate.

- What training and leader development programs will SBCTs need to maximize the equipment and human potential and to operate as envisioned? The most important question remained: how to train the SBCT and deliver the types of officers, noncommissioned officers and Soldiers who could meet the new tactical and intellectual challenges demanded. This would go to the very heart of the Army’s transformation process—real transformation was not in hardware but in operational concepts and, even more important, in the thinking of a new generation of battlefield leaders.

How then could the unit be trained to employ an SBCT, as operationally envisioned, as organized and equipped, and under the conditions existing in the very different and continuously adapting operational environment of the 21st century? The vision was to vigorously execute individual, battlefield operating systems (BOS) collective, unit collective and leader-team training. Every effort was to be made to use all the training resources available at Fort Lewis, Washington, and nearby Yakima Training Center with full integration of live, virtual and constructive training venues. The key to the entire training effort and later success in combat was clearly leader development, with every member of the SBCT to be considered a leader or potential leader. Leadership skills would be required at every level.

The Army knew well how to train tactical and technical leader competencies, and those skills would be developed and sustained as before. But the conceptual and interpersonal competencies would need special attention. Toward that end, studies were completed of multiple training venues across the United States, both civilian and military. Best training practices were adopted in the design of individual, collective and leader training programs. The concept of the leader-team was to be emphasized, and these teams were to operate at three levels of hierarchy—the directing commander, his immediate subordinates and the next level of leaders (the subordinates’ subordinates).

This leader development concept would produce leaders at all levels who were truly competent, confident, agile and adaptive. Another result would be the insurance that the commander’s intent was always clearly understood and internalized at least two levels below the commander formulating that intent. This new breed, intellectually transformed, would ensure the success of SBCTs in combat and
could subsequently lead the entire Army toward genuine transformational change.

**Meeting Combatant Commanders’ Needs . . . While Leading Change Across the Army**

**First Stryker Purpose—Validating Operational Requirements in the Crucible of War**

In urban combat, no better vehicle exists for delivering a squad of infantrymen to close in and destroy the enemy. The Stryker is fast, quiet, survivable, reliable and lethal. Most important, it delivers the most valuable weapon to the battlefield, a Soldier.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. Kurilla, then Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry (Stryker), 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Letter to the Editor, *The Washington Post*, 5 April 2005

An American helicopter was down in the middle of the Iraqi city of Tal Afar. Insurgents and paramilitary fighters were converging on the crash site, intending to make a trophy of the aircraft and take the crew prisoner, or worse. But on 13 October 2004, what the enemy got from the Stryker Brigade Combat Team was a nasty surprise. Upon learning of the crash, Lieutenant Colonel Karl Reed, commander of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry, ordered his scout platoon to secure the crash site. Using the constantly updated picture provided through their FBCB2 system, the scouts took less than five minutes to navigate through about a kilometer of unfamiliar streets. Almost immediately, they came under attack from numerically superior insurgent forces with machine guns and ample rocket-propelled grenades. Assessing the situation, the battalion commander directed his B Company to reinforce the scout platoon. He knew the scouts would be in trouble; his battle staff told him that someone in the Tal Afar police headquarters was directing enemy efforts. In about 30 minutes, B Company was in position to relieve the scouts, having assembled and moved some 1,500 meters, fighting through an ambush en route. During the fight, Stryker Armored Vehicles survived several RPG attacks, while Soldiers made good use of the extra ammunition the vehicles carried. Based on a UAV feed, the battalion commander was able to target insurgent positions precisely, in the middle of a crowded urban area, with a Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) dropped by an Air Force F-16. B Company was poised to exploit the blast, seizing the buildings commanding the crash site immediately after the explosion and effectively ending the battle. The battalion successfully evacuated the helicopter, the pilots and its own people. The enemy was left with no prisoners, no trophy and nothing to show for his efforts but scores of his own dead.

This was the kind of fight for which the Army had designed the Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Tal Afar was a complex operational environment, a city not suffice to attain the required political-military objectives. The SBCT must also conduct information operations, synchronizing nonlethal effects in the areas of civil affairs, electronic attack and psychological operations. Most critical is the ability to share information within the SBCT and with higher echelons. The ABCS knits together several automation systems and provides a common operational picture to Soldiers and leaders. The SBCT’s capability to conduct information-enabled warfare in the middle of the operational spectrum provides the Army with a critical operational capability.

**Second Stryker Purpose—Changing How the Army Changes**

The SBCT represents more than just a new operational capability. It has also served, in effect, as a catalyst for change; one that has affirmed the Army azimuth of transformation and sparked the innovation required to expediently change throughout the Army. This effect has cut across all the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel (Soldiers) and facilities (DOTMLPF). It has directly impacted modularity, acquisition, unit fielding, unit manning, predeployment training and combat employment. And it has caused the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed in logistics and movement planning.

The creation and subsequent employment of the first SBCT (3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division) affirmed the rectitude of the Army’s decision to change—to recast itself into the Modular Force taking shape today. That SBCT transformed, trained, deployed to and conducted combat operations in Iraq. There, it surpassed all expectations, validating the organizational and operational concepts on which it was founded and paving the way for the fielding of six more SBCTs (two of which—1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the 172d Infantry Brigade—have been or are in combat). Many of the transformation, training and operational lessons learned have served to inform decisions regarding the Army’s formation of modular SBCTs. New thinking is emerging about operational and logistic planning factors, movement and consumption rates, battlespace, joint and interagency issues and the tenets of stability operations.

The experience of preparing doctrine for the SBCT has changed the way the Army develops doctrine from a sequential, hierarchical process to a more open and collaborative one. Experience with the SBCTs has taught that the traditional, sequential method of doctrine development and dissemination cannot keep pace with either developments in the field or the field’s requirements for adaptation. Instead, doctrine development needs to be collaborative and simultaneous, with lessons learned being shared immediately and assessed collectively. Through real-time communications, Soldiers in the Mission Support Training Facility (MSTF) at Fort Lewis analyze lessons from ongoing combat operations and quickly disseminate them to other Stryker units, enabling them to apply those lessons.

Organizing the SBCTs precipitated change in other Army formations, from modular headquarters to support brigades. The SBCT was the first modular brigade combat team that the Army organized and fielded. The Army’s experience in adapting headquarters, support and sustainment formations for the SBCT contributed significantly to the development of the modular Army.2

When the Army decided to supplant its individual replacement system for Manning units, the third SBCT (172d Infantry Brigade in Alaska) was the first to be

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in division headquarters. Its intelligence staff is con-
siderably more robust, supplemented by analytical 
capabilities of the military intelligence company. The 
SBCT’s HUMINT teams provide not only collection 
but also analysis. Civil affairs and information opera-
tions staff officers assigned to the SBCT’s fires and 
effects coordination cell enhance the shared under-
standing of those domains.

The SBCT has improved capabilities to act first. Its 
reduced mass and logistics requirements enable rapid 
deployment, allowing the United States to preempt 
crises by deploying lethal and survivable landpower 
capabilities. Its operational mobility confers a similar 
ability on the joint force commander, as demonstrated 
by the infantry battalion’s 100-mile road march to 
Najaf when Moqtada al Sadr’s rebellion broke out. 
The battalion’s embedded battle command system 
allowed them to move out upon receipt of the initial 
order, planning, disseminating and rehearsing the 
operation while en route. That movement was enabled 
not just by the speed and range of the Stryker Armored 
Vehicles but also by the shared situational understand-
ing that allowed leaders to plan the operation and 
provide direction to subordinate units while mobile. 
That combination of enhanced situational understand-
ing and operational mobility allows SBCTs in Iraq to 
control a battlespace of up to 250 kilometers by 350 
kilometers. As with the fight in Tal Afar, networked 
battle command allows Soldiers to employ joint fires 
to strike enemy forces beyond the range or capabili-
ties of organic weapons systems. The SBCT also has 
a robust arsenal of organic capabilities to shape the 
battlespace, including the howitzers of the field artil-
ley battalion, battalion and company mortars, and an 
array of information operations and electronic warfare 
capabilities.

Having seized the initiative and set the terms of 
combat, the SBCT integrates joint and organic capabilities 
to finish decisively or reengage if necessary. The 
SBCT does this principally by focusing overwhelming 
combat support to infantry assault at identified decisive 
points. Companies are potent combined-arms organi-
zations, with organic mortars for indirect fire support, 
mobile gun system for close-in direct fire support, and 
full infantry squads for the final assault if necessary. 
These companies allow the SBCT’s battalion to deliver 
combat power on a distributed battlefield. Further, 
antitank guided missile platoons provide overmatch-
ing lethality against enemy armored systems. And, 
while the Stryker vehicle’s passive armor protection 
is not equal to that of an Abrams tank, it is still quite 
effective. Stryker vehicles have taken multiple hits 
from RPGs and kept fighting; few Strykers have been 
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Moreover, even when the vehicle is badly 
damaged, the crew tends to survive. In the complex 
battlespace in which the SBCT must operate, kinetic 
(“shoot first, ask questions later”) operations will 
of some 300,000 people in which well-armed insur-
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infantry battalion was not only fighting in a different 
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defeated this insurgent attempt to revisit Mogadishu 
with armor, firepower and information. The battalion 
commander and his subordinates saw the battle’s 
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they saw them better. They all knew instantly that 
they had a helicopter down, where it was and how 
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The Middle of the Spectrum: A Complex and Dan-
gerous Environment. The spectrum of operations 
runs from the menacing but familiar high intensity 
of major combat operations to humanitarian assistance 
and disaster relief. Crises emerge suddenly, with 
little strategic warning. As in Tal Afar, Kosovo and
Mogadishu, Army forces must contend with a very complex operational environment in the middle of the spectrum of operations. In the current environment, in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places, Soldiers must execute several separate missions simultaneously. In Mosul, the Stryker Brigades have been fighting insurgents, mentoring Iraqi security forces, securing elections and supporting reconstruction and governance. The challenges for which they must prepare extend beyond those present in Iraq. Soldiers must be able to defeat insurgents, terrorists, factional fighters and paramilitaries, with minimal disruption to surrounding civilian populations.

To mitigate overwhelming U.S. superiority in conventional operations, adversaries take shelter in cities and other complex terrain, hiding among civilians and in protected structures such as mosques and churches. While enemies have ample access to effective anti-armor technology, the prevalence and constantly changing nature of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) demonstrates that they will continue to employ asymmetric and adaptive tactics against U.S. forces. Against elusive and varied enemies, the primary battlespace has shifted to back alleys and city streets, to the hearts and minds of enemies and indigenous civilians, and to the global stage of mass media and cyberspace. To win, Soldiers must master this complex environment.

**Dominating a Complex Operational Environment.** The Army designed the SBCT to fight for and exploit the power of information. Robust reconnaissance capabilities and networked battle command give the SBCT unmatched capacity to see first. This capability also includes active efforts to deny or deceive the enemy information about the battlespace. The heart of this capability is the SBCT’s Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) squadron. The RSTA ground troops, equipped now with Stryker Reconnaissance Vehicles and soon with Mobile Gun Systems, provide the ability to fight for information. A surveillance troop expands coverage of the battlespace with enhanced sensors, tactical unmanned aerial vehicles and human intelligence (HUMINT) teams. The necessity for HUMINT in finding insurgents and terrorists is obvious, but these teams also provide key information about the local and regional political and social context. The SBCT can see with other eyes, as well. Its military intelligence and signal companies provide access to joint and national assets to provide a more complete picture of the battlespace. Information technology works both ways, allowing joint assets to see the same operating picture the SBCT’s Soldiers see. The SBCT’s network allows information to be shared as it is acquired, so all of its Soldiers see the battlespace equally well. These capabilities do not obviate the possibility of surprise, but they mitigate it to a level the SBCT can overcome with organic capabilities.

**Seeing first allows the SBCT to understand first** to anticipate developments rather than react to them as they occur. The SBCT embeds many analytical capabilities formerly resident in MOSUL, Iraq—The job description for Soldiers of the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team includes an entry not often linked to the military: diplomat. While patrolling polling places around this Tigris River city in northern Iraq on Wednesday, Lt. Jeremiah Parker and his platoon looked like quintessential [S]oldiers as they dismounted their Stryker vehicle in haste, moved into formation and entered the building, swiveling their heads and keeping their rifles ready.

But once inside, the [S]oldiers were welcomed by Iraqi security forces, who shook their hands boisterously. Parker knows many of them already, having patrolled this area for four months and gotten to meet local leaders.

He removed his sunglasses and Kevlar helmet and spoke a few words of Arabic to the leaders of the election committee, Iraqi police and [S]oldiers responsible for securing the polling place. . . .

It was a fairly informal conversation. Parker asked how well the forces are prepared for election day. . . . He encouraged the forces to keep a presence around polling places to deter attacks.

“That kind of show of strength, that is a sign of power against the terrorists,” he said.

The visits Wednesday were important because [on election day] U.S. forces are supposed to remain at arm’s length from the polling places, deferring to Iraqis to provide their own security.

As Parker visited with leaders, the rest of the platoon . . . mingled with their Iraqi counterparts. While waiting at one location, Pvt. Niles Harrison and Donald Terrizque sat down at a table with Iraqi Soldiers and attempted to play backgammon. Without an interpreter, the men used hand signals to communicate. As the Americans struggled to learn the game, the Iraqis laughed at the [S]oldiers and the [S]oldiers laughed at themselves.

As the day progressed, Parker and his platoon were always alert and aware, rifles strapped across their bodies, but they spent most of their time checking on friends and comrades.

At the last stop, Parker organized a combined patrol with Iraqi forces near a polling site. He was not concerned with a specific threat, but wanted to see how the Iraqis did on patrol. The Soldiers directed the Iraqis into formation and watched as they scanned side streets and rooftops. Parker explained through his interpreter how to approach a street corner and cover for a comrade crossing the street.

During the patrol, Mosul residents came to their doors to watch the patrol. Many waved and nodded to the patrol. Children in an open field behind a school stopped their soccer game and gathered on the sidewalks, waving or calling out to the [S]oldiers.

The patrol concluded without incident. But more importantly, Parker saw that the Iraqi Soldiers have the formation and tactics down.

“Good. That’s good. Perfect,” he told the Iraqis with a thumbs-up sign.

*From “Dual Roles for Strykers” by Margaret Friedelauer, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, December 15, 2005*
Mogadishu, Army forces must contend with a very complex operational environment in the middle of the spectrum of operations. In the current environment, in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places, Soldiers must execute several separate missions simultaneously. In Mosul, the Stryker Brigades have been fighting insurgents, mentoring Iraqi security forces, securing elections and supporting reconstruction and governance. The challenges for which they must prepare extend beyond those present in Iraq. Soldiers must be able to defeat insurgents, terrorists, factional fighters and paramilitaries, with minimal disruption to surrounding civilian populations.

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While Leading Change Across the Army

First Stryker Purpose—Validating Operational Requirements in the Crucible of War

In urban combat, no better vehicle exists for delivering a squad of infantrymen to close in and destroy the enemy. The Stryker is fast, quiet, survivable, reliable and lethal. Most important, it delivers the most valuable weapon to the battlefield, a Soldier.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. Kuri, then Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry (Stryker), 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Letter to the Editor, The Washington Post, 3 April 2005

An American helicopter was down in the middle of the Iraqi city of Tal Afar. Insurgents and paramilitary fighters were converging on the crash site, intending to make a trophy of the aircraft and take the crew prisoner, or worse. But on 13 October 2004, what the enemy got from the Stryker Brigade Combat Team was a nasty surprise. Upon learning of the crash, Lieutenant Colonel Karl Reed, commander of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry, ordered his scout platoon to secure the crash site. Using the constantly updated picture provided through their FBCB2 system, the scouts took less than five minutes to navigate through about a kilometer of unfamiliar streets. Almost immediately, they came under attack from numerically superior insurgent forces with machine guns and ample rocket-propelled grenades. Assessing the situation, the battalion commander directed his B Company to reinforce the scout platoon. He knew the scouts would be in trouble; his battle staff told him that someone in the Tal Afar police headquarters was directing enemy efforts. In about 30 minutes, B Company was in position to relieve the scouts, having assembled and moved some 1,500 meters, fighting through an ambush en route. During the fight, Stryker Armored Vehicles survived several RPG attacks, while Soldiers made good use of the extra ammunition the vehicles carried. Based on a UAV feed, the battalion commander was able to target insurgent positions precisely, in the middle of a crowded urban area, with a Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) dropped by an Air Force F-16. B Company was poised to exploit the blast, seizing the buildings commanding the crash site immediately after the explosion and effectively ending the battle. The battalion successfully evacuated the helicopter, the pilots and its own people. The enemy was left with no prisoners, no trophy and nothing to show for his efforts but scores of his own dead.

This was the kind of fight for which the Army had designed the Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Tal Afar was a complex operational environment, a city not suffice to attain the required political-military objectives. The SBCT must also conduct information operations, synchronizing nonlethal effects in the areas of civil affairs, electronic attack and psychological operations. Most critical is the ability to share information within the SBCT and with higher echelons. The ABCS knits together several automation systems and provides a common operational picture to Soldiers and leaders. The SBCT’s capability to conduct information-enabled warfare in the middle of the operational spectrum provides the Army with a critical operational capability.

Second Stryker Purpose—Changing How the Army Changes

The SBCT represents more than just a new operational capability. It has also served, in effect, as a catalyst for change; one that has affirmed the Army azimuth of transformation and sparked the innovation required to expeditiously change throughout the Army. This effect has cut across all the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel (Soldiers) and facilities (DOTMLPF). It has directly impacted modularity, acquisition, unit set fielding, unit manning, predeployment training and combat employment. And it has caused the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed in logistics and movement planning.

The creation and subsequent employment of the first SBCT (3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division) affirmed the rectitude of the Army’s decision to change—to recast itself into the Modular Force taking shape today. That SBCT transformed, trained, deployed to and conducted combat operations in Iraq. There, it surpassed all expectations, validating the organizational and operational concepts on which it was founded and paving the way for the fielding of six more SBCTs (two of which—1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the 172d Infantry Brigade—have been or are in combat). Many of the transformation, training and operational lessons learned have served to inform decisions regarding the Army’s formation of modular SBCTs. New thinking is emerging about operational and logistic planning factors, movement and consumption rates, battlespace, joint and interagency issues and the tenets of stability operations.

The experience of preparing doctrine for the SBCT has changed the way the Army develops doctrine from a sequential, hierarchical process to a more open and collaborative one. Experience with the SBCTs has taught that the traditional, sequential method of doctrine development and dissemination cannot keep pace with either developments in the field or the field’s requirements for adaptation. Instead, doctrine development needs to be collaborative and simultaneous, with lessons learned being shared immediately and assessed collectively. Through real-time communications, Soldiers in the Mission Support Training Facility (MSTF) at Fort Lewis analyze lessons from ongoing combat operations and quickly disseminate them to other Stryker units, enabling them to apply those lessons.

Organizing the SBCTs precipitated changes in other Army formations, from modular headquarters to support brigades. The SBCT was the first modular brigade combat team that the Army organized and fielded. The Army’s experience in adapting headquarters, support and sustainment formations for the SBCT contributed significantly to the development of the modular Army.3

When the Army decided to supplant its individual replacement system for Manning units, the third SBCT (172d Infantry Brigade in Alaska) was the first to be

manned in accordance with the new Unit Manning System personnel policies. For the 172d, the new approach:

- enhanced recruitment and retention of Soldiers and leaders;
- provided the right mix of personnel at the right place and the right time;
- enhanced Soldier and leader development;
- improved individual, unit and organizational readiness; and
- enhanced the well-being of Soldiers and their families.

The 172d Infantry Brigade commenced deployment to Iraq in October 2005, having successfully demonstrated the Unit Manning System. Because the SBCTs were manned as units, they provided valuable lessons in designing and implementing life cycle management throughout the rest of the operational force.

The SBCT’s reliance on joint assets, along with its expanded battlespace, prompted changes in the way the Army conducts training and leader development. At Fort Lewis, the SBCTs effectively demonstrated the utility of integrating live, virtual and constructive training to replicate the full range of effects without requiring the commitment of all the relevant joint assets. A suite of simulations residing in the Battle Command Training Center allowed staffs to train repetitively on critical tasks. The Mission Support Training Facility (MSTF) provided training to individuals in operating and fully exploiting the capabilities of all components of the Army’s digital Battle Command System.

The SBCT is an acquisition success story that has changed the way the Army develops and fields equipment. It took less than four years from the identification of the requirement for this organization to its deployment into combat. That period not only included the acquisition of an entirely new system, the Stryker Armored Vehicle, but also required the parallel development and acquisition of many other items, especially battle command systems. The fielding of the SBCT has also changed the way the Army fields developmental items. Previously, the Army planned to issue only equipment that already emerged from the acquisition process. Soldiers of the SBCT received the opportunity to work with equipment still under development. This not only allowed the unit to train but also enhanced the further development of such systems. Moreover, the SBCT was also the Army’s first venture into unit set fielding, a process in which a unit receives all of its equipment, and its new equipment training, at once. The idea behind unit set fielding is to field systems not when the equipment is ready but when the unit is.

The SBCTs are also helping to pioneer a change in the way the Army sustains its formations. In developing the SBCT, the Army gave considerable weight to the formation’s sustainability. The Army made a deliberate decision to pursue a family of vehicles based on a common chassis, thus reducing the variety and quantity of spare parts required. Reliability was a prime consideration in the selection of the Stryker Armored Vehicle, a consideration reflected in the fact that SBCTs in Iraq have maintained an operational readiness rate of more than 90 percent, a rate significantly better than that of other types of brigade combat teams, even though the SBCTs’ vehicles have traveled more than 6.5 million miles. The Army is learning valuable lessons about the way the SBCT is maintained, including better use of contractors on the battlefield. Increased reliability means decreased consumption of spare parts. Overall, the SBCT consumes much less than a heavy BCT. This enhances the overall survivability of the force by reducing the number of vulnerable convoys that must traverse routes subject common operational picture (COP) throughout the brigade down to individual squad vehicle. These information systems (INFOSYS) would provide the SBCT commander with a unique capability to visualize, describe and direct the brigade through the range of operations and terrain in which the unit might operate.

- What training and leader development programs will SBCTs need to maximize the equipment and human potential and to operate as envisioned? The most important question remained: how to train the SBCT and deliver the types of officers, noncommissioned officers and Soldiers who could meet the new tactical and intellectual challenges demanded. This would go to the very heart of the Army’s transformation process—real transformation was not in hardware but in operational concepts and, even more important, in the thinking of a new generation of battlefield leaders.

How then could the unit be trained to employ an SBCT, as operationally envisioned, as organized and equipped, and under the conditions existing in the very different and continuously adapting operational environment of the 21st century? The vision was to vigorously execute individual, battlefield operating systems (BOS) collective, unit collective and leader-team training. Every effort was to be made to use all the training resources available at Fort Lewis, Washington, and nearby Yakima Training Center with full integration of live, virtual and constructive training venues. The key to the entire training effort and later success in combat was clearly leader development, with every member of the SBCT to be considered a leader or potential leader. Leadership skills would be required at every level.

The Army knew well how to train tactical and technical leader competencies, and those skills would be developed and sustained as before. But the conceptual and interpersonal competencies would need special attention. Toward that end, studies were completed of multiple training venues across the United States, both civilian and military. Best training practices were adopted in the design of individual, collective and leader training programs. The concept of the leader-team was to be emphasized, and these teams were to operate at three levels of hierarchy—the directing commander, his immediate subordinates and the next level of leaders (the subordinates’ subordinates).

This leader development concept would produce leaders at all levels who were truly competent, confident, agile and adaptive. Another result would be the assurance that the commander’s intent was always clearly understood and internalized at least two levels below the commander formulating that intent. This new breed, intellectually transformed, would ensure the success of SBCTs in combat and
81mm and 60mm mortars; and 155mm artillery. It was envisioned that the Mobile Gun System (MGS), once fielded, would replace other antitank guided missile (ATGM) systems in the mobile gun platoon. Direct-fire systems were to be the focus for destroying hardened and fortified positions in support of infantry assaults. Precision weapons would allow restraint in the application of firepower and minimize collateral damage. Battalion- and company-level organic mortars could enhance timely and effective indirect-fire engagements by providing immediate support and the ability to maximize the effects of high-angle fires. The anti-armor capability (the antitank company and the Javelin missiles) within the SBCT would mitigate the threat from enemy armored forces within the area of operations. Furthermore, small arms would be matched to task, and the employment of sniper rifles in the SBCT would allow the highly accurate placement of individual fire.

Finally, the SBCT would require a multilevel, integrated suite of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, coupled with an array of digital information systems that became known as the Army Battle Command System (ABCS), to develop and continuously distribute an enhanced

The most lethal part of our fast, quiet Stryker vehicles is the superbly trained, rested and aware nine-man rifle squad that comes out of the back.

Colonel Stephen Townsend
Commander, 3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division (SBCT)
itself, the Army as an institution is learning the value of acquiring, sharing and understanding information to increase operational capability. The total experience of fielding, training and deploying SBCTs has significantly driven change across the Army and has had a direct impact on the Army’s readiness model: Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN).

Third Stryker Purpose—Learning Platform/Organization for the Future Modular Force

Potential adversaries of this nation are not standing still; they are learning, teaching and adapting to current U.S. operations, and their capabilities are increasing accordingly. Therefore, “hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States.

While fully engaged in the Global War on Terrorism and sustaining the range of its global commitments, the Army is moving forward, transforming and modernizing to build an even more capable and relevant force—the future Modular Force—with a broad portfolio of capabilities. The Army is transforming from a force dependent upon divisions, built to deter and to wage war against traditional adversaries, to a force built upon modular brigades, specially designed for the full range of military operations. These modular brigades are designed to “plug into” joint and coalition task forces in expeditionary and campaign settings and to accept advanced new capabilities as technology matures.

The Army is modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field FCS and other advanced technologies. It is expanding the breadth of its capabilities by making the BCTs more powerful, versatile, deployable and relevant to new challenges. FCS, the Army’s main modernization program, comprises 18 manned and unmanned systems in support of the Soldier, all connected by a robust, jointly interoperable information network. FCS extends the information revolution, which has transformed air and naval warfare, to the realm of ground warfare. It enables command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) integration and seamless connectivity in a joint and expeditionary environment. Last but not least, it integrates Soldiers into the network for unprecedented situational awareness and empowers them to defeat asymmetrical threats.

Even before the fielding of the first FCS BCT, the FCS program plans to provide advanced technologies to be integrated as they mature into current formations in two-year increments, called “spin-outs.” These new capabilities will directly benefit all U.S. ground forces, including the Marine Corps and special operations forces (SOF) from all services. They will fundamentally alter how the Army deploys, employs and sustains forces and will improve the Army’s ability to stabilize contested zones and support joint and interagency teams. FCS includes four scheduled spin-outs that enable the Army to accelerate the fielding of maturing technologies into the current force.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Teams serve as a pathway to the FCS BCT. Building on lessons learned from the SBCTs, the Army is forming an Expeditionary Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) at Fort Bliss, Texas, to be the test bed for the FCS BCT. Its purpose is to test, refine and validate FCS technologies before fielding occurs. The EBCT is scheduled to begin Soldier testing of FCS “Spin-Out One” technology in 2008, followed by fielding to the current force in 2010. The EBCT will help the Army “get it right the first time.”

FCS BCTs will represent a revolutionary advance in operational capability, combining heavy forces’ deployability to dominate an even more complex and dangerous battlespace with the strategic responsiveness and deployability of current light formations. Designed from the ground up expressly for the conduct of information-enabled operations in the complex physical, cyberspace and moral domains, the FCS comprises open-ended questions that centered on characterizing the environment and the attendant operational requirements; how the SBCT should be organized and equipped; and, of greatest importance, what leader competencies were required for the SBCT to be successful.

- In what kind of environment will SBCTs have to operate and succeed (win)? The Army formations of the 1990s had been organized and trained to counter the threat posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Increasingly, however, after the Cold War, military forces were faced with a growing number of peacekeeping operations and small-scale contingencies that demanded a new approach. The battlefield was no longer one of large tank formations maneuvering predictably across broad plains. It was now going to be more often one of elusive enemies operating on city streets and alleyways and seeking shelter among civilian populations. It was often to be one of cloudy political or fanatic ideological objectives—difficult to comprehend. It could well contain chemical and biological agents.

- To win in that environment, how will the SBCTs have to operate? What was needed was a new combat formation to fill the gap between existing heavy force combat power and light force mobility, and do so under the conditions of the emerging contemporary operating environment. It would be an early-entry force with sufficient combat power to conduct immediate combat operations on arrival in theater. It would therefore need to increase deployability without sacrificing survivability and lethality. The SBCT would certainly have to be able to fight for and exploit the power of information. Most important, the new force would have to adopt a new mindset, a true intellectual transformation in the art and science of warfare. The desired end-state was a unit that could fight like Army Rangers and think like Special Forces, with better mobility than mechanized and armored forces. To achieve this end, the Army immediately identified several critical operational capability requirements:
  - improved strategic, operational and tactical mobility;
  - increased situational understanding through enhanced reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition (RSTA) capabilities;
  - organic combined arms integration down to company level; and
  - lethal and nonlethal joint effects employment capabilities.

- To achieve such operational capability, how will the SBCTs have to be organized? At that time, the SBCTs’ organization would differ significantly from those found in existing divisional infantry brigades, primarily due to an impressive array of units organic to the SBCT. In addition to its Stryker infantry battalions, the SBCT would be given a cavalry squadron for RSTA, a brigade support battalion, a field artillery battalion, a military intelligence company, an engineer company, a signal company, an antitank company and a headquarters company. The existing divisional infantry brigades were organized with these capabilities only for large training exercises or for war. The SBCT was organized as a BCT at all times.

- What equipment will the SBCTs require? Stryker formations would have to move about the battlefield space in vehicles that would allow the execution of the strategic, operational and tactical SBCT concepts. Other new equipment would be needed as well. To shape the area of operation (AO) and achieve decisive outcomes, the SBCT would also be outfitted with the tube-launched, optically tracked wire-guided (TOW) IIA/B anti-tank missiles; Javelin anti-tank missiles; 120mm,
more rapidly than contemporary heavy forces, but with the same degree of lethality, firepower and protection. More important, this technologically-advanced force would be able to perform a much broader range of missions across the entire spectrum of military operations, ranging from humanitarian assistance to major combat operations against a near peer competitor. The most immediate challenge is the deployment of such forces across that spectrum, where a threatening variety of adversaries, from rogue states to shadowy terrorist and international criminal organizations, threatened to overwhelm rapidly deployable light forces yet elude strategically ponderous heavy forces. Army leaders remembered the window of vulnerability during Operation Desert Shield wherein small deployments of the light forces of the 82nd Airborne Division and the arrival of the heavy 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized). The Army intended to fill that gap in the middle of the spectrum immediately, developing the SBCTs using the best available capabilities. While the SBCTs’ armored protection and firepower were not equal to those of heavy formations, they significantly exceeded those of the Army’s light forces. Equally important, SBCTs were to be able to deploy almost as quickly as light forces. The Army was facing new threats in a changed world and needed to become a force that could better perform the vital ground component mission of the nation’s defense.

Filling the Void: Identifying Operational Solutions to Strategic Challenges

The operational capabilities inherent to the SBCT were determined in response to broad, a family of advanced, networked air and ground systems, knit together by a networked C4ISR architecture that includes communications, network operations, sensors, Battle Command systems and embedded training capability. As FCS provides the FCS BCT with a revolutionary advance in combat capability, it will operate using the same concept of information-enabled operations, the quality of firsts. Though the FCS BCT will be more capable across the full range of military operations than the SBCT, there are similarities in the context of kinetic operations in complex environments. The SBCT has set the stage for the EBCT to serve as the primary means for preparing Soldiers, leaders and Army institutions to operate with and support the FCS BCT. Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBCTs paves the way for leaders and Soldiers of the future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT.

A Complex and Evolving Joint Operational Environment. Like the SBCTs in Tal Afar and Mosul, the FCS BCT will fight in cities, because adversaries will hide there. More pertinent, future conflicts caused by ethnic, political, economic and religious tensions will arise where people are concentrated. The future Modular Force will have to contend with complex problems spanning the entire spectrum of operations: natural catastrophes, large-scale criminal activity, terrorism, insurgency, civil war and state-on-state conflict. Just as in Iraq today, separate conflicts will probably be ongoing simultaneously. Just
as insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan employ IEDs to attrit forces and sap national will, future adversaries will attack relative weaknesses with asymmetric and highly adaptive methods, often achieving tactical overmatch. IEDs in Iraq are getting powerful enough to possibly defeat even the Army’s most heavily armored vehicle, the Abrams tank.

The future Modular Force will have to dominate much more deadly adversaries. Those adversaries, with access to advanced and rapidly proliferating military technologies, will employ advanced air and missile systems, including unmanned combat aerial vehicles. They will have more lethal anti-armor weapons, such as side- and top-attack systems like the U.S. Javelin antitank missile or hyperkinetic missiles like the Line-of-Sight Anti-Tank (LOSAT) missile. In tests, the kinetic energy imparted from such missiles has been able to penetrate and destroy the most heavily armored tanks and to move 70-ton objects several meters.

This proliferation of advanced technology calls into question the old paradigm of passive protection. General William E. DePuy’s aphorism, “What can be seen can be hit; what can be hit can be killed,” will assume even greater relevance. Future enemies will be both harder to find and better able to kill. To master this future operational environment, the FCS BCT will have to rely as never before on information and striking power rather than mass and weight of metal.

Learning to Fight with the Quality of Firsts. Lessons

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1 General William E. DePuy was the first Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (1973–77).
The Stryker Interim Armored Combat Vehicle was named by the Army in a 2002 event at AUSA's Winter Symposium, in honor of two Medal of Honor recipients: PFC Stuart S. Stryker, who served with the 513th Parachute Infantry in World War II, and SPC Robert E. Stryker, who served with the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. PFC Stuart Stryker was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for leading an attack near Wiesel, Germany, that captured more than 200 enemy soldiers and freed three American pilots. SPC Robert Stryker was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for saving the lives of fellow soldiers near Loc Ninh, Vietnam. 

but especially in complex urban terrain; against shadowy enemies not easily distinguished from the civilian population; all playing live on round-the-clock satellite television. In this complex human, physical and informational “terrain,” Soldiers, who are trained more as potential leaders than as followers, are facing highly adaptive and asymmetric enemies.

The Stryker’s firepower, mobility, protection and, above all, superior situational awareness have allowed it to dominate the situation in Mosul and other areas in Iraq in which it has fought. Soldiers of the Stryker BCTs are enthusiastic about their unit and its equipment, and with good reason: to this date, few Strykers have been penetrated by rocket-propelled grenades (RGPs), none with catastrophic effect. And while the SBCT has not had the chance to demonstrate its capabilities for strategic mobility, the Global War on Terrorism has already demonstrated the need for those capabilities, first during the initial assault into Afghanistan and then when the United States had to rely on two airborne battalions to establish the “northern front” from Bashur airfield in northern Iraq.

There is more, however, to the SBCT than just meeting a new operational capability (and meeting it very well). Developing and fielding the SBCT is helping to lay the foundation (and provide a true test bed) to accelerate the fielding of the entire future Modular Force. The SBCT experience is helping to enhance the way the Army changes, as the Army adapts its doctrine for an information-enabled force, trains for complex, full-spectrum joint operations, and rapidly and dramatically transforms a unit’s capabilities through unit set fielding. The Army is already applying these lessons to the entire force, both operational and institutional. The SBCT is a forcing function for change.

The SBCT also serves as a learning platform/organization upon which to build for the future—the Army’s future Modular Force including the Future Combat Systems (FCS). Today’s SBCTs are pioneering new platforms to detect enemy systems, especially anti-armour systems, at extended ranges.

FCS technology will augment the human and organizational capabilities of current modular formations to create understanding. To act first means to assimilate and analyze information to determine what effects must be achieved and how best to achieve them. It is not enough to know where the enemy is; commanders must also understand the implications of engaging him in a particular manner. The Army has improved the Stryker Brigades’ capability to achieve understanding by providing human and organizational capabilities for analysis. In the FCS BCT, the Army will add enhanced technological capabilities. Enhanced analytical capabilities will reside in the brigade intelligence and communications company. The FCS battle command network will include applications that automate some analytical functions. The network will be able to deduce the enemy order of battle using the time and location enemy systems were detected, infer enemy intentions from the combination of that order of battle with the capabilities of enemy forces, and even assess the accuracy of the fusion process itself. Such automated systems will never be able to replace human analysts, but by accomplishing preliminary and rudimentary analysis, the battle command network can free analysts to create a deeper and broader understanding of the battlespace context.

Where the SBCT relies on joint capabilities to act first against adversaries, the FCS BCT will have even greater ability to leverage those joint capabilities while using its own powerful organic capabilities to engage and destroy enemies from standoff. Just as the FCS network will provide automated support to intelligence analysis, it will provide applications to support planning and decisionmaking, including nominating targets and methods of engagement. This pervasive network enables Soldiers to employ the best weapon—not just the ones they have in their hands—to engage a particular target. The network will even allow Soldiers to employ joint fires to engage the enemy beyond the range or capability of organic weapon systems.

Moreover, the FCS BCT possesses potent capabilities to engage and destroy enemy forces from outside the range of those weapon systems. FCS BCTs will contain combined-arms formations to the lowest tactical level, as well as considerably more organic firepower and protection than the SBCT. Infantry platoons will have UAVs...
Today, the Army Battle Command System serves a network designed as an integrated whole. FCS will operate using direct-fire systems using direct-fire engagement outside of visual range; and area-suppression; Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) systems capable of both precision engagement and area-suppression; Non-Line of Sight (NLOS) systems capable of both precision engagement and area-suppression; Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) systems using direct-fire engagement outside of visual range; and direct-fire systems.

To finish decisively or reengage, the FCS BCT must dictate the terms of the engagement, completing the destruction of enemy forces and enabling the attainment of friendly objectives. By acting first to destroy or neutralize the most threatening enemy capabilities, the FCS BCT will ensure overmatch against remaining enemy forces. Its Soldiers will share the SBCT’s capability for decisive, close-combat assault, but the firepower of its mounted combat systems will exceed that of today’s tanks, providing overmatch against enemy armored forces. The FCS BCT’s combination of signature reduction, active protection systems and passive armor will provide protection against enemy systems likely to have escaped prior detection and destruction. Through the FCS network, individual Soldiers will be able to employ any and all of the joint force’s capabilities in the close fight to achieve decisive results; this represents a significant enhancement of individual capability over that available to the Soldiers of today’s SBCT.

Experience in the middle of today’s spectrum of operations, where combat intersects with the war of ideas, prepares leaders and Soldiers for an environment of similar complexity but dramatically increased danger. Those Soldiers and leaders are learning to generate and employ combat power by seeing first, understanding first, acting first and finishing decisively or reengaging in the SBCTs, preparing them to employ the dramatically enhanced capabilities of the FCS BCT. Evolutionary change is leading to revolutionary outcomes.

What is Needed

For the Army to remain the preeminent landpower, it must make a quantum leap ahead of its adversaries’ increased capabilities. To stand still is to go backwards. The Army’s transformed Modular Force—expected to perform across the range of military operations in a complex security environment—requires modern equipment. The Future Combat Systems will pioneer the next generation of warfighting capabilities, including the construction of a new class of manned and unmanned air with which to conduct reconnaissance, Armed Robotic Vehicles—Assault to provide direct fire support, and access to joint network fires. The FCS BCT’s capabilities will extend beyond kinetic engagements to include information operations. All FCS systems will achieve overmatch against comparable systems likely to be employed against U.S. forces. Non-infantry platoons will also have their own UAVs and Armed Robotic Vehicles—Assault to provide direct fire support to infantry in the assault. The FCS BCT’s capabilities will include Non-Line of Sight (NLOS) systems capable of both precision engagement and area-suppression; Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) systems using direct-fire engagement outside of visual range; and direct-fire systems.

Accelerating Brigade Combat Team
As a Learning Organization

Everybody wants to see the Stryker Brigade Combat Team and see what the future looks like.


Introduction

The experience of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT)—from concept development to materiel fielding to rapid wartime deployment—is not only serving as a catalyst for leading change across the Army; it is also accelerating the speed of the entire Army’s move from the current to the future force. The lessons learned from the unprecedented success of the SBCT are challenging prior assumptions about land warfare; validating ideas about how to deal with complexity and uncertainty; and providing a 21st century database that is being used to update planning factors as well as Army and joint tactics, techniques and procedures. Moreover, as a force for positive change, the SBCT is playing a vital role in preparing Soldiers, leaders and commanders to adapt to the reality of irregular warfare in complex environments that the Army will face for the foreseeable future. In the face of determined adversaries, the SBCT is providing Soldiers and leaders with information, speed, protection and immediate access to combined arms and joint assets. The effect of these capabilities—reflected in the actions of Stryker Soldiers as well as in their attitude, beliefs and overall levels of confidence—is having a clearly observable, extraordinarily beneficial impact on the overall culture of the Army.

The reality has been markedly different. The SBCT has proven ideally suited for the complex and dangerous environment in which it now operates—the middle of the spectrum of operations. It was designed specifically to operate across the spectrum of warfare, as opposed to the tracked armored vehicles on which the Army had traditionally depended. They doubted the need for the enhanced strategic mobility enabled by the SBCT and questioned whether it could be achieved. Many asserted that the SBCT had no utility beyond much-despised “peacekeeping missions,” and that the Stryker Armored Vehicle would prove a rolling death trap for the Soldiers who rode in it.

Critics doubted the utility of wheeled combat vehicles, as opposed to the tracked armored vehicles on which the Army traditionally depended. They doubted the need for the enhanced strategic mobility enabled by the SBCT and questioned whether it could be achieved. Many asserted that the SBCT had no utility beyond much-despised “peacekeeping missions,” and that the Stryker Armored Vehicle would prove a rolling death trap for the Soldiers who rode in it.

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Since it was first proposed, the SBCT has been a source of significant interest, concern and debate.
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Even before the fielding of the first FCS BCT, the FCS program plans to provide advanced technologies to be integrated as they mature into current formations in two-year increments, called “spin-outs.” These new capabilities will directly benefit all U.S. ground forces, including the Marine Corps and special operations forces (SOF) from all services. They will fundamentally alter how the Army deploys, employs and sustains forces and will improve the Army’s ability to stabilize contested zones and support joint and interagency teams. FCS includes four scheduled spin-outs that enable the Army to accelerate the fielding of maturing technologies into the current force.

The SBCT serves as a pathway to the FCS BCT. Building on lessons learned from the SBCT, the Army is forming an Evaluation Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) at Fort Bliss, Texas, to be the test bed for the FCS BCT. Its purpose is to test, refine and validate FCS technologies before fielding occurs. The EBCT is scheduled to begin Soldier testing of FCS “Spin-Out One” technology in 2008, followed by fielding to the current force in 2010. The EBCT will help the Army “get it right the first time.”

Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBCTs paves the way for leaders and Soldiers of the future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT. **What is needed is a modernized Modular Force**—FCS BCTs and other BCTs with selected FCS technologies and capabilities—that is dominant across the entire spectrum of operations under conditions of the complex and evolving joint operational environment.

**Evolutionary change is leading to revolutionary outcomes.** To stand still is to go backwards. Unfortunately, the Army’s window of opportunity to make the required changes is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will likely face stiff competition for resources. For the Army to succeed, Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) must:

- increase defense budget funding to the level of 4 percent or greater of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- fully support the integrated Army Plan by increasing the Army’s shares of the DoD budget to at least 28 percent to ensure versatile and complementary capabilities are available to the combatant commanders;
- support the creation, training, basing and sustaining of 70 BCTs (to include seven SBCTs) and more than 200 support brigades;
- fully fund the FCS—the Army’s main modernization program—to include four discrete spin-outs of capabilities, at two-year increments, to the current force; and
- authorize and fund an active Army endstrength increase to 550,000 within the Army base budget, to include all associated costs, to allow “headroom” for the Army to meet its wartime requirements as well as transform and modernize for the future.

and land vehicles. FCS will optimize total combat effectiveness by connecting these new capabilities to the Soldier through a tightly integrated battle-management network.

FCS is now a Joint Services program with an Army and Marine Joint Program Office. It is in the System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase. In mid-2004, the Army accelerated the delivery of selected FCS capabilities to the current force. This acceleration expands the scope of the program’s SDD phase by adding four discrete spin-outs of capabilities, at two-year increments, to the current force. The Army plans to begin fielding the first spin-out, consisting of prototypes, to the EBCT in 2008.

What is needed is a modernized Modular Force—FCS BCTs and other BCTs with selected FCS technologies and capabilities—that is dominant across the entire spectrum of operations under conditions of the complex evolving joint operational environment.

**What Must Be Done**
The Army has been hard at work changing and adapting itself to the evolving complex joint opera-
tional environment. The Stryker Brigade Combat Team has provided combatant commanders a new operational capability at the middle of the spectrum of operations. The SBCT also has led the Army to change its culture and, as a learning organization, to accelerate transformation and modernization—via the ESBCT—to the future Modular Force equipped with FCS and able to operate across the entire spectrum of warfare.

Potential enemies of the United States are not standing still; it is therefore imperative that the Army move forward both farther and faster than any adversary it may face. Unfortunately, the Army’s window of opportunity to make the required changes is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will likely face stiff competition for resources. For the Army to succeed, Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) must:

- increase defense budget funding to the level of 4 percent or greater of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
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- authorize and fund an active Army endstrength increase to 550,000 within the Army base budget, to include all associated costs, to allow “headroom” for the Army to meet its wartime requirements as well as transform and modernize for the future.

The Army continues to bear the heaviest burden for this nation’s security. FCS is the Army’s first comprehensive modernization effort in more than four decades. The Army must capitalize on an unprecedented opportunity resulting from wartime focus and levels of resources. Congress and DoD must do their part as well, or the United States faces a reduction in its presence in the world as well as challenges to homeland defense, which could place the nation’s security at risk.

Executive Summary

[The Army of tomorrow must be more deployable and capable of meeting future threats across the full spectrum of [conflict] ... An essential element of ... the transformation is the Army’s new Stryker Brigade Combat Team and its role as an interim solution to Army Transformation.]


Before Blue Force Tracking (BFT) and Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) had demonstrated their worth in combat, the Army anticipated the potential power of information technology and built a formation around it using existing capabilities. The Army’s leveraging of the capabilities of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) and application of the lessons learned from its combat experience, are changing the culture of the Army and paving the way for the future Modular Force. The experience of the SBCT—from concept development to materiel fielding to rapid wartime deployment—is not only serving as a catalyst for leading change across the Army, it is also accelerating the speed of the entire Army’s movement from the current to the future force.

The lessons learned from the unprecedented success of the SBCT are challenging prior assumptions about land warfare; validating ideas about how to deal with battlefield complexity and uncertainty; and providing a 21st century database that is being used to update planning factors as well as Army and joint tactics, techniques and procedures. Moreover, as a force for positive change, the SBCT is playing a vital role in preparing Soldiers, leaders and commanders to adapt to the reality of irregular warfare in complex environments that the Army will face for the foreseeable future. In the face of determined adversaries, the SBCT is providing Soldiers and leaders with information, speed, protection and immediate access to combined arms and joint assets. The effect of these capabilities—reflected in the actions of Stryker Soldiers as well as in their attitude, beliefs and overall levels of confidence—is having a clearly observable and beneficial impact on the overall culture of the Army.

In implementing this concept, the Army found new ways to improve every aspect of preparing forces for war—across every dimension of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel (Soldiers) and facilities (DOTMLPF). The concept has directly impacted modularity, acquisition, unit set fielding, unit manning, peacetime training and combat employment, and it has caused the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed in logistics and movement planning.

Through structured, collaborative processes, the Army has learned a great deal about the capability it is fielding. These lessons are informing more than just the SBCTs—they are informing the Army’s thinking and collective judgment regarding the entire modular force—both current and future. The Army has also recognized that potential enemies are learning, teaching and adapting to current U.S. operations. “Hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States. While fully engaged in the war on terrorism and sustaining the range of its global commitments, the Army is transforming and modernizing to build an even more capable and relevant force—the future Modular Force—with a broad portfolio of capabilities.

The Army is modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field the Future Combat Systems (FCS) and other advanced technologies. It is expanding
Adversaries and potential adversaries of the United States are hard at work learning about and adapting to current U.S. operations. The U.S. Army, in its quest to provide relevant and ready landpower to combatant commanders, continues to improve its capabilities to prevail in the war on terrorism, sustain all of its global commitments and leap ahead of increasing enemy capabilities. For the Army, to stand still is to go backwards.

The Army is transforming to create an active and reserve component pool of 70 modular brigade combat teams, reinforced by more than 200 modular support brigades. It is also modernizing—for the first time in decades—to field Future Combat Systems (FCS) and other advanced technologies. The Army is building a modular force in which brigades—not divisions—can “plug into” joint and coalition task forces in expeditionary and campaign settings. It is building depth (more) and breadth (more kinds) of capabilities to ensure Soldiers and units can adapt to the challenges of the complex evolving joint operational environment.

The Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) is playing a vital role in accelerating the momentum of Army transformation and modernization. It is serving three purposes (and serving them all extremely well):

- validating operational requirements in the crucible of war by providing a new operational capability specifically designed to operate in complex urban terrain; against shadowy enemies not easily distinguished from the civilian population; all playing live on round-the-clock satellite television (middle of the spectrum of operations);
- affirming the Army azimuth of transformation and sparking the innovation required for expedient change, causing the Army to rethink much that was previously assumed; and
- building a future Modular Force with a broad portfolio of capabilities by providing a learning platform/organization for the future Modular Force, setting the stage for the Evaluation Brigade Combat Team (EBCT) to be the primary means for preparing Soldiers, leaders and Army institutions to operate with and support the FCS BCT.

FCS BCTs will represent a revolutionary advance in operational capability, combining heavy forces’ ability to dominate an even more complex and dangerous battle space with the strategic responsiveness and deployability of current light formations. Designed from the ground up expressly for the conduct of information-enabled operations in the complex physical, cybernetic and moral domains, the FCS comprises a family of advanced, networked air and ground systems, knit together by a networked operations, sensors, Battle Command Systems and embedded training capability. Learning to dominate the middle of the spectrum of operations with the SBCTs paves the way for Soldier and leaders of the future Modular Force to dominate the full spectrum of operations with the FCS BCT.

The Army is making enormous progress in executing a fully integrated, carefully crafted plan to guide its efforts to transform, support combatant commanders and sustain Soldiers and their families in this time of war. Now is a pivotal time; progress made over the next 12 to 18 months will determine the Army’s ability to position itself properly for the 21st century. The window of opportunity is not assured. As support for supplemental funding diminishes and budget pressures intensify, the Army will face stiff competition for resources. Therefore, it must accelerate its momentum to transform and modernize. Thanks to the SBCTs and their demonstrated performance in combat, together with the real-time dissemination of lessons learned, the Army is poised to exploit the opportunity that it has been presented. Congress and the Department of Defense must now do their part. “Hold what you have” is not a strategic option for the United States.
In Iraq, or on any battlefield today, this Stryker Brigade [Combat Team] can move farther and bring more power and situational awareness to the fight faster than any other formation in our Army—and by constantly trying new concepts and equipment, we are also the Army’s bridge to the future force.

Colonel Stephen Townsend
Commander, 3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division (SBCT)
Fort Lewis, Washington, 18 May 2006

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Torchbearer
National Security Report

Accelerating Momentum:
The Stryker Brigade Combat Team
As a Learning Organization

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