Time For An Army Transformation

SGM Desiré P. Edmond

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class 35

SGM Greg Taylor

August 15, 2009

Abstract

The Iraq War has led to the recognition that land power alone is not sufficient to win a prolonged engagement or war. While executing Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) it became obvious that heavy forces are not the most efficient forces in an Operational Environment (OE) of irregular warfare. This is further exacerbated by the current era of persistent conflicts. General David Petraeus recognized the need to transform how we fight in current and future OE and for the first time in over 20 years co-published a manual dedicated to counterinsurgency operations. These and other doctrinal changes support the Army's transformation from a Division based Army to a Brigade centric Modular Army that is lighter, faster and more agile.

We will discover that as our contemporary Army transforms, there are many similarities with the interwar period (WW I - WW II) transformation regarding Future Combat Systems (FCS). However, the policy support and development during the two transformations differ exactly opposite.

The Reluctance to Transform from Cavalry

During the interwar period, Army leadership in the most mechanized nation in the world, viewed the Cavalry romantically and were unwilling to accept any transformation that would replace the use of horses. J. F. C. Fuller, the military historian and close student of doctrine, was more insightful. The cavalry is doomed, he said, and must give way to the tank. With his general knowledge of history, however, he foresaw conflicts in substituting the horse with armored forces. "To establish a new invention," he cautioned, "is like establishing a new religion—it usually demands the conversion or

destruction of an entire priesthood." In the United States, the cavalry priesthood showed evidence of being remarkably tenacious. As late as 1938 General Walter Krueger, the Chief of the U.S. Army War Plans Division, was still in opposition of the formation of a mechanized cavalry division. The Chief of Cavalry, Major General J. K. Herr, was more open-minded. He favored the establishment of mechanized cavalry provided this were done not by replacing the existence of the horse. It was this type of thinking that led to the presence of two regular horse cavalry divisions at the Army maneuvers in Louisiana in 1940, long after confident but futile Polish cavalry lancers had been destroyed when charging invading Nazi panzer columns.

The engagement of a spontaneous armored division without artillery or strong infantry during the 1940 Louisiana maneuvers reacquainted the Army with earlier lessons about the stability of tank, infantry, and artillery forces in a combined arms organization. After the maneuvers, when the War Department formed a two-division Armored Force, the combined arms organization was again adopted. Each armored division TO&E had a combination of tank, infantry, and artillery battalions.

July 15, 1940 brought about a new day when the Armored Force was reorganized as I Armored Corps. The decision to deliberate US armored forces was driven by the recognition that Germany's intense armor divisions had just defeated France's infantry-dominated Army in six weeks. This decision seemed to suggest something more than either a replacement for the cavalry horse or mobile fire support for the infantry by the role of the tank. Whatever new role the decision suggested, it did not fit in with the concept of future war expressed by the Army in the 1920s and put into effect in the 1940s.

Transformation Supported by Revised Doctrine

The new counterinsurgency(COIN) manual FM 3-24 described operations which combined offensive, defensive, and stability operations to achieve a steady environment for the growth of government authority. Incorporating a joint, interagency, and multinational team working with a host nation(HN) government is how COIN operations are conducted. Using a medical analogy, we can envision the weight of effort in COIN operations which generally progress through three vague stages of development. In order to understand this evolution and recognize the relative maturity of the operational environment, operational design, planning, and execution are important. With this information, leaders can ensure that their actions are appropriate to the current situation.

INITIAL STAGE: "STOP THE BLEEDING"

Originally, COIN operations are characterized by emergency first aid for the patient. Setting the insurgency back and setting the conditions for further engagement are the intent to protect the people from further injury. While undertaking restricted offensive operations, ensure it is not at the expense of stability operations focused on civil security. In this stage, civil security, force protection, the common operational picture, intelligence collection, and initial assessments and estimates are being evolved. Incorporating the expectations of the general public, COIN forces also begin shaping the information environment.

MIDDLE STAGE: "IN-PATIENT CARE—RECOVERY"

In this stage, we have stability which is characterized by efforts meant to

assist the patient through long-term recovery or re-establishment of health. This is where the COIN force is most active, working assertively along every line of operation. The desire in this phase is to expand and build resident potential and competence in the HN government and security forces. As civil security is certain, center of attention expands to include civil control, terms of essential services, and the encouragement of economic development. Relationships are developed and strengthened between the general public and HN. With the institution of these relationships between the local government agencies, the public, and the HN security forces comes a boost in the flow of human intelligence and other types of intelligence. These aid deliberate offensive operations against the insurgency in union with the HN security forces. The HN increases its authority through the condition of security for its people, the increase of effective HN supremacy and provision of vital services, and achieving increasing success in meeting the public's prospect.

LATE STAGE: "OUT-PATIENT CARE—MOVEMENT TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY"

The third stage is characterized by the growth of stability operations across disputed territories, preferably using HN forces. The main goal for this stage is shifting to HN leadership and completing of operations. In this developed stage, the multinational force works with the host nation in a progressively more supporting role, turning over responsibility wherever and whenever suitably. Even though reaction forces and fire support capabilities may still be needed in some areas, more functions along all lines of operations will be performed by HN forces with the modest assistance of multinational advisors. The need for foreign assistance is reduced as the governing, security, economic

power of the HN increases. During this stage, the HN has established (or re-established) the vital systems needed to provide efficient and unwavering government that supports and sustains the decree of law. The people of the government are secured constantly, as well as sustaining and building legitimacy through effectual government, also isolating the insurgency, and then the nation's entire populace is able to manage and gradually meet the expectations.

Further doctrinal changes are practical in the new Operation manual FM 3-0. Not unlike the basic changes introduced in FM 3-24, FM 3-0 describes the need for the Army to convert from a focus on Major Combat Operations(MCO) to a more unbiased focus on Full Spectrum Operations(FSO). MCO occur in situations frequently characterized as general war. Coalitions, states, or alliances usually option to war because significant national or multinational interests are endangered. Combat between big formations characterizes these operations. Even though an Army headquarters may form the base of a joint force headquarters, MCO conducted by U.S. forces are always joint operations . These operations typically involve high resource use, high tempo and high casualty rates.

A successful MCO conquers or destroys the enemy's armed forces and seizes their land. Commanders make their assessments on them in terms of statistics of military units destroyed or rendered combat ineffective, the echelon of enemy resolve, and the ground objectives seized or secured. Doctrine, to include the principles of war, was developed as the operational idea for MCO.

Continuous, concurrent combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks are all integrated in FSO. Leaders seek to seize, preserve, and take

advantage of the initiative while synchronizing their actions to achieve the best effects possible in all operations. Operations conducted outside the United States and its borders concurrently combine three basics—offense, defense, and stability. Operations merge the elements of offense, defense, and civil support in support of civil authority within the U.S. and its territories. Using equally supporting lethal and nonlethal capabilities is how the Army forces operate.

FSO involve continuous contact between friendly forces and several groups in the operational area. In addition to enemy forces and the local general population, Soldiers deal with multinational allies, adversaries, civil authorities, business leaders, and other civilian agencies. This interface is simple in theory but complex in application. An example of this is enemies and adversaries may consist of multiple rival elements. Civil authorities vary from strategic-level leaders to local government officials to religious leaders. People of conflicting tribes, ethnic groups, and nationalities make up the populace. Within the United States and its territories, the roles and responsibilities of Army forces and civil authorities are considerably different from overseas within the territories of the United States. For that reason, Army forces conduct civil support operations nationally and stability operations abroad, even though stability and civil support operations have many similar aspects.

More than combat between armed adversaries are addressed in the operational concept. Army forces conduct operations in the center of populations. This requires Army forces to overcome the enemy and at the same time form civil conditions. Offensive and defensive tasks conquer enemy forces; stability tasks form civil conditions. It is important to win battles but alone it may not be key. Determining civil conditions (in

concert with civilian organizations, civil authorities, and multinational forces) is just as significant to a campaign victory. Civil support or stability are often more important than the offense and defense in many joint operations.

The Budget Impacts Transformation

Just as budgetary constraints are chipping away at the funding of FCS, they were even more restrictive during the interwar period magnifying the constraints on transformation.

Even though the War Department supported and budgeted for the building of substitute tanks in 1922, little beyond design work was done until 1926. The original delay was caused by lack of synchronization. The War Department General Staff had outlined requirements for a 5-ton light and a 15-ton heavy tank in 1922, but the Ordnance Department could not take action until the Chief of Infantry approved the requirements. In 1924, a Tank Board was established and collocated with the Infantry Tank School at Camp Meade, Maryland, to organize tank requirements and blueprint. By this time, the Ordnance Department tank budgets had been cut to an average $60,000 a year (between 1925 and 1931) and a chance to advance the state-of-the-art in tank design had vanished. With that type of budget, no more than one new tank could be built in any year.

The Ordnance Department managed to develop several new light and medium tanks, despite insufficient funding, and tested one of Walter Christie's models by 1929. Because each tank exceeded standards set by other Army branches, none of them were accepted. For instance, several light tank models were discarded because they exceeded the 5-ton cargo capacity of the Transportation Corps trucks, and numerous medium tank

designs were rejected because they exceeded the 15-ton bridge weight limit established by the engineers. It would have required widespread and costly equipment modernization to

revise truck and bridge standards in order to adopt new tank plans. With the start of the 1929 economic depression, it was felt that such modernization was not economically reasonable.

A $3.7 billion budget request, by the Army, for its biggest weapons plan -- a line of armored vehicles linked by drones and radio networks -- was cut about 23 percent by the House Armed Services Committee.

The panel authorized a cut made by a subcommittee in the FCS program, which is jointly managed by Chicago-based Boeing Co. and San Diego-based Science Applications International Corp. The board rejected a revision to restore $200 million. The $867 million cut is the largest since the plan was projected in 2003. In the past couple of years, there has been an averaged cut of about 10 percent in the FCS program.

Budgets are projected to tighten in a failing economy and the change of administration. The Crusader project that was killed by the former Secretary of Defense, the Hon. Mr. Rumsfeld, and the technology of which was later absorbed into the FCS program. The FCS is largely a waste of time and money and should be canceled or assigned to a research project. It’s understood the need for having a technological edge on the enemy, but the Army needs to focus on the tasks at hand, like repairing the large amounts of armored vehicles and equipment sitting in depots all over the place that was damaged in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The FCS-equipped Unit of Actions(UA) will be the Army's future strategic war combating echelon. Although designed mostly for offensive operations, the FCS-equipped UA will have the capability to perform a full spectrum of operations. FCS will improve the

tactical deployability and operational movement means of ground combat troops without sacrificing lethality or survivability. This is why we should provide the current force with FCS capabilities sooner rather than later.

In conclusion, transformation of organizational structure will continue as part of the Army's Game Plan. The expense associated with this change is minimal compared to the billions needed to fill equipment shortages and modernization of the force with FCS. As FCS Spin-Out and become available to Soldiers, it is likely that Soldiers will drive the next transformation of doctrine. Currently, the first Soldier in a squad shapes the situation as they enter a building or room. FCS may completely change Infantry tactics as technologically advanced devices are used to affect a situation instead of putting the Soldier at risk in unknown situations.

References

FM 3-0 Operations (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008)

FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2006)

Holley, Jr., I.B. (1983, September-October). Of Saber Charges, Escort Fighters, and Spacecraft. *Air University Review*

Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army. (2005, March 15). A Modular Force for the 21st Century. Retrieved November 27, 2008 from http://www.ausa.org

Lowe, C. (2007). FCS Budget Woes Continue [Online]. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from http://defensetech.org

Steadman, K. (1982). The Evolution of the Tank in the U.S. Army. *Combat Studies Institute*, p. 3

Steadman, K. (1982). The Evolution of the Tank in the U.S. Army. *Combat Studies Institute*, p. 6