Future Combat System Risks Underscore the Importance of Oversight

The Army’s Future Combat System (FCS) is a program characterized by bold goals and innovative concepts—transformational capabilities, system-of-systems approach, new technologies, a first-of-a-kind information network, and a total investment cost of more than $200 billion. As such, the FCS program is considered high risk and in need of special oversight and review.

Today’s testimony is based on work conducted over the past year in response to (1) the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, which requires GAO to report annually on the FCS acquisition; and (2) the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, which requires GAO to report on the role of the lead systems integrator in the Army’s FCS program. Accordingly, this statement discusses (1) the business case for FCS to be successful and (2) the business arrangements for the FCS program.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has recently recommended that the Secretary of Defense (1) establish specific criteria for evaluating the FCS program at a key 2009 decision and (2) analyze alternative courses of action in the event FCS is unlikely to deliver needed capabilities. DOD concurred with GAO’s recommendations.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Paul L. Francis at (202) 512-4841 or francisp@gao.gov.