

The image shows the silhouettes of four soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets and rifles, standing in a line. They are positioned in front of a world map. Overlaid on the map and soldiers is a complex network of glowing blue lines and dots, resembling a global communication or data network. The background is a dark blue gradient.

# A Global Landpower Network Could Be the Ultimate Anti-Network

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and  
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**R**ecent events in Crimea and Ukraine remind us of our inability to predict the future and of that singular characteristic present in more than 25 centuries of documented warfare and conflict—uncertainty. From a historical standpoint, author and professor Colin S. Gray says that the challenge for defense planners “is to cope with uncertainty, not try to diminish it.” He also cites three “golden rules” of defense planning: “Try to make small mistakes rather than big ones”; “be adaptable and flexible so that you cope with the troubles your mistakes will certainly give you”; and “aim to have only minimal regrets in the future.”

If history is any guide, we should expect to be surprised. The key is planning and preparing in such a manner that the effects of surprise can be quickly recovered from and are not catastrophic. Possessing bal-

anced capabilities employed through an approach that is consistent with Gray’s golden rules enables us to anticipate, learn and adapt at a faster rate than our enemies are able. What might such an approach look like?

An approach for global integrated operations was proposed in the 2012 paper *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*. This approach will require “a globally postured Joint Force to quickly combine capabilities with itself and mission partners across domains, echelons, geographic boundaries, and organizational affiliations. These networks of forces and partners will form, evolve, dissolve, and reform in different arrangements in time and space with significantly greater fluidity than today’s Joint Force.” It is an abstract concept to be sure, yet one most veterans of the last 12 years of war can intuitively appreciate and understand. How can the Army help operationalize it?

*Soldiers assigned to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, synchronize communication equipment during Network Integration Evaluation (NIE) 14.2 at Fort Bliss, Texas.*



U.S. Army/Staff Sgt. Richard Andrade

### Using the Network

The recent past may provide a clue. When he was commanding general of Joint Special Operations Command, then-Lt. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal operationalized the theory that it takes a network to defeat a network. It required him, however, to slay a proverbial sacred cow, lifting the veil of “black special operations” secrecy and beginning openly collaborating with conventional forces, partnering nation forces, inter-agency partners and even academics to form a decentralized network of actors united by a common goal and sense of purpose. This network was employed with great effect in Iraq, effectively decimating al Qaeda there and neutralizing several other internally and externally sponsored irregular and insurgent elements.

This lesson of the value of relationship-based networks in modern warfare—person-to-person, organization-to-organization, state-to-state—is applicable across the levels of war. At the strategic level, where victory begins, we must actively and persistently engage with allies and partner nations—and in some cases nonstate, local indigenous groups—to form an interdependent network of actors bound by common security interests. Looking to the future, the Army should take the lead in codifying this lesson and develop a landpower concept in support of Force 2025 and globally integrated operations that provides additional means for asserting global leadership and achieving desired strategic defense and security outcomes in the 21st century.

### Getting It Done

Much as U.S. Special Operations Command looks to strengthen the global special operations forces network, the Army should spearhead efforts to develop, support and

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strengthen a global landpower network. This network consists of allies, expeditionary global and regional partners, and host-nation forces bound by the common interests of peace, liberty, regional stability and global prosperity. The global landpower network could be a component of an even broader global defense network framework designed to generate and provide strategic options to senior defense officials and policymakers, both domestically and abroad. These officials and policymakers can work together to determine who should lead regional security and stability efforts. They can also determine how and where military capabilities can best be integrated and applied from across the network to support a desired strategic outcome.

Ideally, this network would provide a platform for crafting, when and where appropriate, a restrained response to enable the host-nation and regional partners to shoulder as much of the burden as they possibly can. Doing so would maximize the value and use of indigenous solutions. In addition, the network may be able to hold enemies and potential rivals at risk by being positioned to impose costs directly and indirectly on resources they require or hold dear, should they choose to disrupt an otherwise tolerable strategic status quo. This capability may cause expansionist powers to think twice before acting outside their borders.

In theory, the global landpower network would occupy the strategic high ground and retain a globally distributed position of advantage that effectively deters significant adversary misbehavior—a potentially useful form of strategic maneuver. As defined in Joint Publication 3-0, “Maneuver is the movement of forces in relation to the enemy to secure or retain positional advantage, usually in order to deliver—or threaten delivery of—the direct and indirect fires of the maneuvering force. Effective maneuver keeps the enemy off balance and thus also protects the friendly force. It contributes materially in exploiting successes, preserving freedom of action, and reducing vulnerability by continually posing new problems for the enemy.”

When deterrence fails, or if the situation merits other effects, the network provides flexible options to senior defense officials and policymakers for further shaping, coerc-

ing, isolating, disrupting, imposing long-term costs, or decisively destroying and defeating enemies across the threat spectrum, from traditional nation-state to irregular or hybrid. This will require structuring interdependent conventional and special operations forces—and interagency partners—to successfully implement national security and defense strategies, versus adopting strategies constrained by a suboptimized force structure with suboptimal capabilities, relationships and interoperability. In other words, more sacred cows will need to be slain.

### Getting It Done Right: The Details

The imperatives underpinning a global landpower network could include:

- *Persistent engagement*: building long-term, durable relationships and military capabilities with allies, regional partners and host-nation forces.

- *Strategic appreciation*: understanding the implications of strategic military action/inaction and the utility of force within the context of the situation and from the perspective of relevant stakeholders; being informed through persistent presence and engagement.

- *Interdependence*: mutual dependence of members on one another. Everyone has “skin in the game” to varying degrees, as required by the situation.

- *Trust*: built slowly and deliberately, before a crisis occurs; enabled through persistent presence and engagement.

- *Collaboration*: enabled by trust and exercised continuously throughout the network.

The tenets of a global landpower network might include:

- *Versatility*: the ability to provide a range of viable strategic options, from overt, multinational, combined arms maneuver when decisive action is required, to small-scale, protracted, unconventional warfare campaigns that support cost-imposing strategies that influence our enemies to change their behavior or risk culminating over time.

- *Adaptability*: the ability to rapidly and coherently aggregate and disaggregate forces and capabilities—military and nonmilitary—according to changing situations or conditions. Future “hybrid problems” will require hybrid, adaptive, nondoctrinal solutions.

- *Scalability*: aggregating only what is required to form and support viable and sustainable indigenous solutions without irreparably distorting the culture of the affected peoples.

- *Anticipation*: as a hedge against surprise, the ability to detect significant threats or crises before they emerge or fully manifest, providing time to prepare and respond with viable options accordingly.

To be clear, building a global land-

power network will neither guarantee victory nor vanquish the timeless specters of surprise and uncertainty. Across the levels of war and spectrum of conflict, however, the imperatives and tenets underpinning a global landpower network make it a potentially useful tool. The 2012 Capstone paper on Joint Operations says such a tool will “enable commanders to cope with uncertainty, complexity and rapid change. It will improve a commander’s ability to tailor the force to the situation. It will aid a commander’s ability to scale military force as required. It will help commanders down to the lowest echelons exercise initiative and coordinate locally while maintaining broader situational awareness.” In addition, it may provide a platform for our Army and those of our allies to better contest against our enemies in the human domain.

At its fullest potential, envision Force 2025 as a critical node of a global landpower network. Take it a step further, however, and envision this network consisting of joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, nongovernmental and commercial partners. They can cooperate with and trust one another, combining their statutory authorities and functional expertise to provide national leadership with viable defense and security options capable of achieving desired strategic outcomes on land. The ultimate expression of this idea would be the realization of Sun Tzu’s famous quote, “Ultimate excellence lies not in winning every battle but in defeating the enemy without ever fighting.”

While certainly easier said than done, this is the ideal we as a nation should consistently strive to achieve in our national defense and security strategies. Building and strengthening a global landpower network—as an Army Force 2025 concept in support of globally integrated operations—is a positive step toward achieving that ideal, while simultaneously enabling our nation and our allies to better respond and adapt to the timeless realities of surprise and uncertainty. ★



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, center, visited NIE 14.2.

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