

CSA challenges Army War College students to define, develop Army of the future

Lt. Col. Mark McCann, Army War College Public Affairs Office

CSA challenges Army War College students to define, develop Army of the future



Gen. Ray Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, speaks to the 368-member Army War College Class of 2012 in Bliss Hall during his visit Oct. 28. Photos by Megan Clugh.

CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. – Oct. 28, 2011

This is a great time to be thinking about the future; this was a key message the Army Chief of Staff had for the Army War College Class of 2012 here today.

Gen. Raymond Odierno challenged this class to use their time at the Army War College to reflect, think, discuss and publish papers because they will be the ones who develop solutions to the many national security challenges we face in the future.

“This is the year they take time to learn and think about the future – to take their experiences and use them to think about what challenges do we have in the future as an Army,” said Odierno about his address to the class.

He continued, “As we look to the future, whether it be the our fiscal problems, whether it be the uncertainty of our security environment throughout the world – then take that, think through those problems, help us define and develop the Army of the future.”

He noted that the future will be framed by a complex strategic environment. While we currently are a

nation at war, we must broaden our focus to view the world through a more global lens, understanding the impacts of globalization, defending and sustaining access to the global commons, and addressing the emerging challenges in the domains of space and cyberspace.

Odierno took this opportunity to discuss his priorities noting, first and foremost, that the Army will always provide trained and ready forces to defend the nation. He is committed to developing a versatile, agile, decisive, and lethal force for the future with sufficient depth to meet a broad range of contingencies while continuing to sustain a high-quality all-volunteer force.

“Very difficult decisions will require leadership courage and creative solutions,” said Army student Col. Sean Mulcahey, following the address. “We will continue the need to advocate for national security despite resource constraints.”

Commitment to the Army profession was his final priority, and Odierno spoke about trust as the bedrock of our Army profession and that we cannot lose focus of its importance. The Army is a way of life, and we must maintain trust with our fellow Soldiers, with our families, and with the American public we are privileged to serve.

Odierno, a 1995 USAWC graduate, made his first visit to the college since assuming his duties as the Chief of Staff of the Army.

He talked briefly about the art of strategic and operational leadership and how important it is to never stop learning about ourselves. One of the greatest challenges for strategic leaders in the future will be leading change. Leadership is about vision, and vision drives change.



“You guys sitting in the audience need to be part of the solution and that the skill we need as strategic leaders is leading through change,” was the message Army Lt. Col. Chris Benson heard. “The fact is we have tough times ahead that will require leadership and we have a job to do.”

Strategic leaders must understand the importance of building relationships, the limits of military power, and creating organizational climates that empower subordinate leaders to be innovative and take risk. And strategic leaders also must be skilled communicators who not only are able to communicate effectively with their own organizations, but also with a broad array of external audiences as well.

“He talked about the importance of understanding interagency and how we as leaders should depart from traditional models of thinking to make sure we can operate in complex environments, said Dr. Aubrey Butts, an Army civilian student. “You have to have more tools in your toolbox than just a hammer.



Odierno also spoke to the flag officers engaged in the Combined/Joint Force Land Component Command during his visit Oct. 28.

Earlier in his visit to Carlisle Barracks, Odierno met and spoke with U.S. and international general and flag officers attending the Combined /Joint Force Land Component Commander (C/JFLCC) Course here. This one-week seminar-based course challenges senior officers to examine key elements of functional land component commands at theater and/or operational levels. It also explores the challenges of conducting sustained land dominance operations in joint, interagency and multinational environments.