

Former CJCS shares strategic leader perspective

Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs

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Retired Gen. Richard Myers, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Colin L. Powell Chair for National Security, Leadership, Character and Ethics at the National Defense University, spoke to the Army War College Class of 2012 as part of the Commandant's Lecture Series. Photo by Megan Clugh.

Feb. 9, 2012 – “When you get to the strategic level there are demands on your intellectual thinking and the way you approach problems that are different than they are at the tactical level,” said retired **Gen. Richard Myers**, 15th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Colin L. Powell Chair for National Security, Leadership, Character and Ethics at the National Defense University. He spoke to the Army War College Class of 2012 as part of the Commandant's Lecture Series.

Myers spoke about strategic leadership and outlined skills and traits he felt were vital.

- **Being intellectually open** — we live in a very complex world and the challenges are too great to be solved by just one element of national power
- **Understanding the nuances** of the issues you'll face
- **Having Intellectual agility** is necessary to handle a multitude of different issues and not apply old paradigms to new problems
- **Being the integrator**, understand more than just what you are an expert in, and integrate the elements of our national power
- **Being a team builder**

Myers commented in detail about providing military advice to political leaders. One of the key areas are

pre-and post-decision, he noted. Pre-decision is where the military advice is most vital and effective. After the decisions are made, the impacts are somewhat limited.

He also spoke about the value of his time here, saying that the relationships, faculty and the ability to learn from each other, made this year one of the “most important years of his career.”

“This is the time to reflect, to think about the skills, develop the capabilities that will allow you to go to the next level of leadership,” he said. “This is a vital year and our professional military education system is what differentiates us from all other militaries. We take this very seriously.”

He said that students will never forget the tactical world they have served the majority of their careers in, but they are now becoming part of the strategic leadership. How they approach it and if they have the skills necessary going forward will help dictate their success.

Student **Col. Barry Diehl** said he appreciated Myers comments given the uncertainty that faces the military as budget and manpower cuts loom.

“He led the military through a time of great uncertainty, leading us after 9/11 and through events like Hurricane Katrina,” he said. “He can provide excellent advice on what we can expect as strategic leaders.”