

Gen. Odierno to War College students: Education, adaptability key to future of Army

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Gen. Ray Odierno, Army Chief of Staff, spoke to the Army War College Class of 2013 Aug. 13 in Bliss Hall.

Aug. 13, 2012 -- Today at the Army War College, the Army Chief of Staff spoke to the student body about strategic leadership and the strategic environment, through the lens of Army Initiatives.

Gen. Ray Odierno initiated the students to the program of keynote speakers who will engage the students throughout the year. He commended them for their accomplishments; he charged them with the urgency of applying their experience and education to the strategic level.

During an hour-long address to the class, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army laid out his priorities and the students' key roles. Fiscal constraints, an armed forces coming out of more than a decade at war and the increased pressure of globalization will be their challenges. They will need to be prepared, and know how, to lead change and to surround themselves with people who will give them different perspectives and challenges them.

It begins here.

The experience here is the beginning of developing a joint, interagency, multinational culture necessary for us to come together to solve problems, said Odierno, urging them engage the outstanding faculty and form relationships with fellows students, especially the 71 international officers.

Education needs to be back in the forefront of everything the Army does as it is fundamental to developing key leaders, he said.

His vision for The War College is that it is considered the “finest strategic thinking institution in the country.”

Each time the students engage with a senior leader in Bliss Hall auditorium, they continue their own discussion in seminar – 24 seminars, each populated with a cross section of US military, federal agencies, and international officers that foster joint-interagency-multinational exchanges.

In the first full week of classes, students are testing themselves and their understanding of fellow students, discussing, for example, the services’ perspective on the role of doctrine. Group development coexists with the Strategic Thinking course – a 10-day focus on the fundamental thinking skills

The first 10 days of resident classes are devoted to the Strategic Thinking course. Today’s Introduction to Strategic Thinking was informed by the Chief’s comments and the students’ reading of Gen. Martin Dempsey’s “[Developing Strategic Leaders](#),” written while commander of US Army Training and Doctrine Command; and Douglas E. Waters’ lesson, “Strategic Thinking and Developing Strategic Thinkers.”

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