

Odierno spotlights leader development strategy at Army War College ceremony

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Graduation speaker Gen. Odierno spotlights leader development strategy at Army War College ceremony



Gen. Ray Odierno, Army Chief of Staff, discusses the Army War College education in context of the Army's new Leader Development Strategy 2013 -- emphasizing the graduates' role in developing the next generation of young leaders through training, education and experience.

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<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/banner/PhotoAlbum/Graduation2013/default.cfm>

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The Army War College graduation ceremony June 8 at historic Carlisle Barracks parade field celebrated the academic achievements of senior leaders and underscored the significance of leader development, as guest speaker Gen. Raymond Odierno introduced the graduates to the new Army Leader Development Strategy.

“As we begin our transition following 12 years of war, we must rededicate ourselves to the development of our leaders as our best hedge against complexity and uncertainty,” said the Chief of Staff of the Army to the resident Class of 2013.

“Developing leaders is a competitive advantage the Army possesses that cannot be replaced by

technology or substituted for with weaponry and platforms,” said Odierno. “That is why today, we are releasing the 2013 Army Leader Development Strategy across the Army.

The Army Chief defined leader development as the deliberate, continuous, and progressive process that grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into competent, committed professional leaders of character. The strategy will focus on career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experience; it addresses opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains.

“We are implementing this leader development strategy with the advantage of having the most combat-seasoned force the Army has ever had. Virtually every leader at every echelon has led in combat. We must harness our experience in conducting complex operations with joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational partners to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives on the ground,” said Odierno.

The Army War College class of 2013 reflects the diversity of national security partners. Graduates include U.S. officers – 225 Army, 32 Air Force, 15 Navy, 17 Marine Corps, 1 Coast Guard -- including Reserve and National Guard officers; 24 Civilian Students; and 71 International Officers. They average 22 years service with extensive campaign experience in Operations Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom, among others of the past two decades.

“The U.S. Army has historically been in the business of building leaders,” said the Army Chief to the 385 leaders who celebrated a “tremendous milestone in their career,” according to Odierno. Most students earned a master’s degree in Strategic Studies as well as Joint Professional Military Education level II credit.

“I am relying on each of you here today, particularly U.S. Army officers, not only to be guided by the Army Leader Development Strategy but to implement it. At its core, this strategy is about investing in our single most precious resource, our people.

“We owe it to them to ensure they are well led and prepared for the future,” said Odierno.

“I appreciate that the Chief tied our mission and the changes we’re making to strengthen The War College curriculum to the new leader development programs the school offers, said Col. Richard Lacquement, dean of the School of Strategic Landpower here. “The end of more than a dozen years of war and the knowledge that we’re transitioning to a new era of greater uncertainty puts a premium on education. Looking to the future and the challenges that we may face is a particularly demanding educational task.

War College studies incorporate core courses in strategic leadership, theory of war and strategy,

national security policy and strategy, campaigning, regional security; as well as student-driven electives and a major strategy research paper. Student research explored multiple topics relevant to their Service or Nation: suicide prevention, cyber strategy, the industrial base, stewardship of the Army Profession; weighed options with respect to targeted killing, private security companies, intelligence and regionalization, and border security; and proposed strategies with respect to Libya, Guam, China, and Malaysia.

New graduate Col. Mark O'Donnell wrote his SRP on leadership development and keyed on the Army Chief's remarks.

"He talked about things I've been putting a lot of thought into throughout the year – especially about development of junior leaders and what I hope to implement in my brigade, said O'Donnell, who will take command of the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division and, later this year, learn of the unit's regional alignment.

"Those young leaders will have leadership responsibility – this unique opportunity to lead America's sons and daughters." It may not be in combat, said O'Donnell, who noted that they will not know what's in store. "We'll be preparing for something unknown: the challenge is a little different. The end of the war is not the end of the opportunity to lead.

"This is certainly an interesting time to be in the Army. If you love to lead and love being around people, this is the best place you can possibly be," he said. "It's going to require some creativity and leveraging of the skills I learned here, to achieve the same effect in a fiscally constrained environment as we were able to achieve in the last years. Leader development is the biggest of all those challenges."