

Votel talks leadership from the strategic level

By Curt Keester 01 February 2019



Gen. Joseph Votel, Commander of USCENTCOM, talked about issues facing CENTCOM and the concept of 'command and feedback', during his lecture to the War College Class of 2019 in Bliss Hall Jan. 31.

CARLISLE, Pa. (Jan. 31, 2019) – Today, in what was likely his last address to Army War College students, the commander of United States Central Command talked about issues facing CENTCOM and the concept of 'command and feedback', which he described as a shared awareness, alignment, and action up and down the chain of command.

Command-and-feedback is a means of managing complexity, managing risk and decision-making, said Gen. Joseph Votel, Commander of USCENTCOM, in his lecture to the War College Class of 2019 in Bliss Hall Jan. 31.

He described the composition and demographics of CENTCOM's area of responsibility and the need for leaders to understand the culture and people of their region. He said leaders need to listen to what people are

saying and understand what is happening before they act.

CENTCOM is an area of great contradiction and conflict, he said, but also an area of great opportunity. Four key regional trends concern him as a strategic leader, he said, listing great power competition, authoritative stability and grassroots political movements, Iran's growing influence and capability, and questioning of U.S. commitment in the area. Great power competition will have a significant impact on CENTCOM, and require that the United States focus its efforts on maintaining competitive advantages against adversaries.

There are essential skills War College students should master, he said. They should endeavor to be a relationship builder, an effective communicator and an effective advisor. As example of relationship building, Votel mentioned his breakfast that morning with the International Fellows of the War College class, many from countries in CENTCOM's area of operation.

Trust your instincts, take care of yourselves and families, use future assignments for good, and be a happy leader who will inspire your subordinates, he recommended.