

General Raymond T. Odierno

Chief of Staff of the Army

Eisenhower Speech

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General Odierno: Good afternoon every one. It is great to see so many of you here. What a great turnout. It is always incredible to stand here and look out and see all the great supporters of our Army from other Services, other nations, and industry. It is just really wonderful to see all our other supporters throughout the country, most of them associated with the Association of the United States Army. It is really great to see you here. Thank you General Sullivan, as always. You do such a great job. Thank you and your team for this conference and for the 62 years that the Association of the United States Army has supported the entire Army family.

To our distinguished guests and Army senior leaders sitting on the dais, thank you for joining us here today. Secretary McHugh, it is especially great to have you here, sir. For the past three years you have done such a great job leading our Army. You have led us through many milestones. I thank you for your commitment to our Soldiers, your commitment to our families, and the commitment that you have to ensure we have a better Army. It is a pleasure for me having the opportunity to work with you every day, sir. Thank you so much for everything you do. (Applause).

Former Secretaries of the Army, the Honorable Martin Hoffman, Honorable Louis Caldera, and Honorable Les Brownlee, it is great to have all of you here today as well, continuing to support this great Army. Former Chiefs of Staff of the Army,

General (Retired) Dennis Reimer, General (Retired) Carl Vuono, it is great to have you here. It is always great to have your support. I also want to recognize my Vice, General Lloyd Austin, a great teammate and partner. We have been together for several durations here throughout our careers. It is great to have someone like him by your side every single day. Sergeant Major Chandler, thank you for what you do to lead the Force to help me and advise me on everything that is necessary as we continue to move forward. Thank you for your leadership. Former Sergeant Majors of the Army Robert Hall, Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley, Sergeant Major of the Army Ken Preston, I want to thank you all for being here, what you have done for our Army, and what you continue to do for our Army today. I would also like to recognize Sergeant Major (Retired) William Gainey, the First Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is great to have you as well. General Foley it is always a pleasure to see you, sir. Thank you for everything. You continue to support our Soldiers and families and set the example for our great warriors out there.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the AUSA Vice President of Education and the Executive Director of the Institute of Land Warfare, Lieutenant General (Retired) Ted Stroup, as this will be his last official AUSA function. I want to thank you, Ted, for your years of service not only to the Army, but what you continue to do after the Army and all you have done with AUSA. I wish you and Harriet the best in your second or third retirement. I wish you nothing but the best because you have dedicated so much to our Soldiers. General Stroup, please stand. (Applause)

It is my distinct honor to be here today. From where I stand I have great vantage point to see the many people here who have done so much for America's Army: Soldiers from yesterday and today who have served honorably, and those who led the very best War fighters in the world; our supporters from Capitol Hill, Members of Congress and their professional staff; our allies and multinational partners; and our partners in corporate America. Thank you all for your great

support that each of you has provided to our Army and to our Soldiers and families. Thank you very much. (Applause). I would be remiss if I did not thank my wife Linda, who has been by my side for over 36 years. In my opinion, she represents the incredible contributions, dedication, and resilience of all of our Army spouses. None of us could do what we do without the undying support and complete dedication of our spouses as we go through this. Thank you very much. (Applause).

Having just passed my one year mark as the Chief of Staff, I would like to discuss where we are as an Army, briefly reflect on the strategic environment, and close by describing the vision for the Army of the Future. Today we have many challenges ahead of us. But first and foremost in my mind, as we sit here this afternoon, is that we have over 80,000 Soldiers deployed with almost 60,000 in Afghanistan, and thousands of others deployed to places like Kuwait, Kosovo, the Sinai, and the Horn of Africa. There are also 92,000 Soldiers forward stationed in nearly 160 nations around the globe.

Entering into our 12th consecutive year of war, approximately 1.5 million Soldiers have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a large majority of their leaders have served multiple times. These young men and women have earned nearly 16,000 Medals of Valor to include 6 Medals of Honor, 26 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 660 Silver Stars, and these numbers continue to grow. The Soldiers who have earned these medals for bravery, courage, and selfless service have told me, with striking humility that “they were just doing their job. They did what any Soldier would have done.” That the medal they received represents and honors those who have served beside them. That is what our Army is all about. That is why I love to serve in this great Army of ours.

In these wars, we have built adaptive and agile formations and leaders that have adjusted tactics and missions while in contact with the enemy in two very different operating environments. As we said earlier, we successfully concluded combat operations in Iraq and turned over responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces just a few years after prognosticators and pundits widely asserted all was lost in

Iraq. The retrograde of personnel and equipment out of Iraq upon the completion of Operation New Dawn was enormously complex endeavor led by General Lloyd Austin. It was made successful by skilled leaders, and a professional drive towards mission accomplishment.

Today, Afghanistan remains our top priority. We continue to ensure that the nearly 60,000 Soldiers deployed there are fully trained, equipped, and ready. I was in Afghanistan just a few short weeks ago to visit with U.S. and Afghan leaders and to hear what was on the minds of our Soldiers. And I was extremely impressed with the courage and dedication of our Soldiers, as well as the quality and commitment of our leaders. The on-going transition is putting trained and equipped Afghan Security Forces in the lead as we continue to defeat the enemy and deny safe haven to those who mean us harm. We will not allow desperate tactics such as suicide bombers or insider threats to derail our efforts because we have dedicated young men and women to ensure that simply will not happen.

Equally important are the missions the Army responded to at home in support of our civil authorities, such as disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Isaac and fighting wildfires across the western United States. In addition, this year the Army sent 13 Soldier-Athletes, the most ever, to compete in the 2012 London Olympics. SSG Vincent Hancock earned his second Olympic gold medal in skeet shooting, and Army spouse Jamie Gray brought home Olympic gold in marksmanship. I am glad I am not married to her, by the way. (Laughter). We also celebrated the performance of 20 military Veterans on the U.S. Paralympics team who competed in the 2012 London Games.

In uniform and out of uniform, in combat and closer to home, our Soldiers and Veterans remain the strength of our Army. It is Soldiers like SPC Kevin Holt, a medic with the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, who epitomize the character and quality of our Soldiers and Veterans today. SPC Holt returned last fall from his first deployment to Iraq. This past June, he took leave to spend time with his family in Florida. Out on the golf course one day, he and his dad heard a woman screaming

and saw a couple engaged in a heated argument that quickly turned violent. SPC Holt rushed to the scene, where he discovered the woman had been stabbed. He forced the attacker off and provided life-saving medical assistance until emergency services arrived. The City Police Chief declared that "if it weren't for SPC Holt's heroic and selfless act of bravery, this woman would have been a victim of murder." This past Friday, SPC Holt was awarded the Soldier's Medal for his courageous act of heroism. Soldiers like SPC Holt embody the values that make us the best Army in the world and make our American society stronger merely by their presence.

As we reflect upon the strength, courage and sacrifice of our Soldiers, it is important to recognize what has changed and what has remained constant over the last 11 years of war. The strategic environment in which we operate is constantly evolving. Indeed, the character of conflict itself is changing, even as the nature of warfare remains the same. Across the globe, the balance of two superpowers has been replaced by an increasingly crowded international stage. Regional powers exert influence locally, often unconstrained by superpower influence. Strong social movements have successfully challenged long-entrenched regimes. Loosely affiliated groups, united often only by ideology, operate in ungoverned spaces on land and in cyberspace.

Technological advances have revolutionized the way people and governments interact. A wide variety of non-state actors can combine primitive tactics with advanced weapons to create instability in free societies and failing states. These actors do not replace the more conventional threats posed by nations such as North Korea, but they require the military to maintain a much broader range of capabilities to respond.

Yet the fundamental nature of war remains the same. War remains a struggle to influence key terrain, populations, and governance. Preventing conflict is better than reacting to it, and to prevent it you must understand its causes. But understanding in a lot of ways can only be gained through presence.

Before I reflect on what the future holds, let me share with you what I believe are the enduring missions the U.S. Army provides to the Nation. First, decisive defeat of any enemy on land remains our top priority. The Army represents one of America's most credible deterrents against future hostility. We prevent miscalculations from erupting into war, and we defeat an adversary when it does. No other nation can match the U.S. Army's ability to rapidly deploy large numbers of troops over extended distances, sustain them, and deliver precise, discriminate results. We must be prepared to take decisive action ourselves if necessary, but we must also set the conditions for our allies and partners to do so as well.

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the Army also plays a critical role in shaping the strategic environment. Our Force has honed its tremendous skills not only in battle, but also quelling civil unrest, countering terror, demilitarizing former combat zones, protecting vulnerable populations, and providing disaster relief. These contributions have endured through the Task Force Sinai observer mission since 1982 and Peace Support Operations in Kosovo since 1998. They include building partners through standing organizations such as Joint Task Force Bravo in Central America since 1984 and Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa since 2002.

Finally, the Army is an indispensable provider to the Joint Force. Army Commanders lead Joint Task Forces, plan operations, and command and control units across the range of military operations. Army units build and operate the networks connecting our own units, the joint community, interagency and multinational partners on austere battlefields.

Soldiers deliver food, fuel, ammunition, and medical support necessary to sustain joint operations from combat to humanitarian assistance. The Army collects and analyzes the intelligence that informs our actions and measures our progress. It delivers vital supplies to communities, at home and abroad, impacted by natural disasters. And finally, the Army provides 75% of the operators in U.S. Special

Operations Command, who are essential to our national counter-terrorism and security force assistance operations.

In January 1958, President Eisenhower remarked upon the growing strength and experience of America's military in his 6th State of the Union address. He stated, "Gratifying though this rate of progress is, we must still do more. Our real problem is not our strength today; it is rather the vital necessity of action today to ensure our strength tomorrow."

Today we face many of these same challenges. We must build an Army of the Future. We must develop adaptive leaders and employ regionally-responsive, mission-tailored strategic land power Forces to ensure our strength for tomorrow.

Our current and future leaders must deal with an increasingly complex environment. Globalization was once expected to lead to peace through greater understanding as the boundaries between individuals and societies were broken down by technological advances in communications, access to the internet, and a pervasive global media. What we have seen, in many cases, is just the opposite. These changes have often sharpened differences, exposed groups to the shortcomings in their own society, and facilitated dangerous linkages outside the control of weak and ineffective governments.

Our ability to respond effectively to these complex new dynamics hinges on the quality of our Soldiers and leaders' mental agility and strategic vision. As we face an uncertain future and declining operational demand, we must develop leaders with the breadth and depth of experience necessary to meet tomorrow's demands. First, this requires embedding Mission Command in our professional culture. We must empower Soldiers, Squads, and Commanders at every level so that they may rapidly respond to the demands of the environment in which they operate. This includes fostering a climate in which shared understanding, mutual trust, and a common sense of purpose are the standard every single day.

Second, our leaders must be the stewards of the Army Profession. Each one of us is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of character, competence, and resiliency in ourselves, our families, and our Soldiers. Mentorship of Soldiers is critical so that leaders help Soldiers grow from their experiences and deal with periods of personal adversity within an environment of mutual trust. Our Ready and Resilient Campaign will integrate and expand the Army's efforts to enhance the performance of our Soldiers, Civilians and their families across the physical, emotional, spiritual, family, and social dimensions of strength.

Finally, we must evolve our leader development and talent management from the team and squad level all the way to the very top. We are refining professional military education from the Warrior Leaders Course to the Army War College. The latter I see should be the premier institution for strategic land power. We are expanding leaders' opportunities and encouraging broadening assignments in academia, interagency, and multinational settings to prepare them for the complex and uncertain global environment. And we are managing talent in a manner that leverages our great diversity to select the right Soldier for the right assignment at the right time. If we don't match our "Headware" to our hardware, we will have technologically advanced formations without the benefit of adaptive and innovative leadership.

The successful conclusion of operations in Iraq and our on-going transition in Afghanistan, as well as the significant fiscal challenges this country faces, make it essential that our Army reorients itself toward a broader array of missions and regions across the globe. Our ability to deliver truly strategic land power, however, requires an improved understanding of the convergence of the human, cyber and geographic terrain in which we will operate. Today's global connectivity and its impact on a changing operational environment reinforce that lasting strategic results can only be achieved by effectively influencing people. Success depends as much on understanding the social and political fabric of the surroundings as it does on the ability to physically dominate them.

We must take full advantage of the growth and development of new technologies to educate and train the Force for operations on land as well as in cyberspace. Over the last 11 years of war, our Army has become a world leader in basic scientific research and applied technology in areas such as armaments, life-saving medical advances, nanotechnology, robotics, fuel-efficient initiatives and simulation. Our efforts to develop the Force must keep pace with this technology. This requires continued investment in our institutional Army to take full advantage of these technological advances in learning. Creation of new Centers of Excellence, such as the Army Cyber Center at West Point, will ensure we adapt to new information realities so that we do not cede the advantage to future enemies.

Throughout this period of great change, the Army stands ready to fight and win our nation's wars. However, we must be capable of doing much more to prevent conflict and shape the environment. Therefore, we must organize and employ our Forces to be more agile and responsive to the needs of our Combatant Commanders. In the future, our Forces must be tailored to local requirements, rapidly deployable at the lower echelons, and scalable from Squad to Corps level.

As we move towards the future, our Army begins from a position of strength. We have the most experienced and combat ready Force in our Army history, and are considered by all the world's greatest land power, which employs the most effective, discriminate weapon on the battlefield...the American Soldier. We must approach operational tasks by organizing our missions around highly trained Squads and Platoons that are the foundation for our Company, Battalion or Brigade Combat Teams, organized for specific mission sets and regional conditions. No other Service can provide the mix of Forces, from heavy to medium to light, tailored to meet mission requirements. None can match the synergy that results from the close integration of our Special Purpose and Conventional Forces, particularly in the complex human dimension of modern conflict. And none can match the breadth and depth of experience provided by a balanced mix of Active, National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve Forces. We will leverage these strengths through the regional

alignment of Forces, providing the Combatant Commanders full access to the range of capabilities resident in Army today.

We are building this effort on a great foundation. Army Forces always provide a wide range of medical, intelligence, logistical and signal support to the Combatant Commands through Forces both forward deployed and based here in the United States. By aligning unit headquarters and rotational units to Combatant Commands and tailoring our combat training centers and exercises to plan for their greatest contingencies, units will gain invaluable expertise and cultural awareness and be better prepared to meet the regional requirements more rapidly and effectively than ever before. Efforts are already underway with U.S. Pacific Command, Africa Command and European Command to designate Forces, align headquarters, and increase integration with allies and multinational forces such as the NATO Response Force.

To truly become a Force capable of engaging around the world also requires a modernization strategy that is centered on our Soldiers and Squad. We must empower them with unmatched lethality, protection, and situational awareness to achieve tactical dominance. It entails an overarching network architecture that connects all echelons - from Squad to Joint Task Force - to ensure leaders have the right information at the right time to make the best possible decisions, therefore enabling Mission Command. It includes network-ready combat and tactical wheeled vehicles designed to maneuver our formations with increased lethality and mobility, while optimizing survivability. In total, our modernization efforts will prepare the entire Force for the complex and uncertain battlefield by putting Squads with precise information and overmatch capability at the decisive time and place to achieve dominance of the operational environment. At the same time, we must preserve the ability to reassemble our Forces rapidly, building the mass necessary to decisively defeat a determined enemy. In pursuing these goals, we ensure that we remain an Army capable of many missions, at many speeds, under many conditions.

Our All-Volunteer Army has been engaged in continuous combat for 11 years. The undeniable fact remains that we continue to have young men and women who raise their right hand and swear an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. They do it voluntarily and they are fighting to stay in. In 2012, we had the best recruiting year in terms of quality as far back as I can remember. We have already signed 30,000 Soldiers for this year. Reenlistment is competitive and focused on quality. We have and will continue to have a great Army, one recognized by its great people, epitomized by the men and women that continue to serve.

So I'd like to end by talking about another one of our remarkable Soldiers. 25 year-old SSG Travis Mills is from Vassar, Michigan. This past February, he deployed with Bravo Troop, 4th Battalion, 73rd Cavalry Squadron, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg. This was his third deployment in six years to Afghanistan with the 82nd. Of course, he says that is "the only Division in the United States Army." As an infantryman, his mission was to train and mentor Soldiers in the Afghan National Army. On April 10th, two months into the deployment, his world changed forever. While on a patrol, an IED tore through his 6 foot 3, 250 pound frame, and he sustained life-threatening injuries. One week later, he arrived to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Remarkably, after just a few weeks, he was in outpatient care working on his rehabilitation. SSG Mills' will to survive and determination to recover from his wounds intensified every day with his wife Kelsey and one-year old daughter Chloe at his side. Websites documenting his recovery have become a viral phenomenon. Americans everywhere are inspired and empowered by this young Staff Sergeant. He is here today with his lovely wife. I would like you both to stand, please. (Applause).

SSG Mills is one of only five quadruple amputees in the military to ever survive the severity of losing four limbs, but even that challenge has done nothing to slow him down. He does physical and occupational therapy for almost nine hours a day, and his trainers tell us he is always the last one to leave the building. Six weeks after his injury, he took his first steps, and he has been relearning to walk on his new

legs alongside his now-walking baby daughter, one-year-old Chloe. We are incredibly proud of this great team. His perseverance and his strength – that is what our Army is all about. (Applause). So when you are feeling sorry for yourself, I want you to think about SSG Mills.

Kelsey is a testament to the powerful support and unconditional love our families provide through the toughest of days. She is a great representative of the 1.4 million family members that stand beside our Soldiers every day. Our families are the true unsung heroes who wait patiently at home, all the while hoping their loved ones will safely return. Their love and unwavering support are directly linked to the strength of our nation. (Applause).

Thank you SSG Mills and Kelsey, for your service and sacrifice to the nation. As General Creighton Abrams (26th Army Chief of Staff) said, “Soldiers do not make up the Army. Soldiers are the Army.” Soldiers like you are the heart and soul of America’s Army. Though we are drawing down our Forces engaged in active combat overseas, I am committed to ensuring that our Soldiers, Veterans, and families get the best care possible so that together we may heal the visible and invisible wounds of war. We celebrate all that you and Soldiers everywhere who have accomplished and sacrificed to help keep our country free.

Let me close with this. There are some who have interpreted our new national strategy as questioning the relevance of Land Forces. There are others who would wish away a decade’s worth of hard-won sacrifice and expertise with false assumptions about the future. To them I say: Our Army was created 237 years ago to defend this great nation and to secure the interests of the United States abroad. That imperative has not changed. As I have watched the strategic environment evolve over nearly four decades in uniform, I have seen many of the characteristics of conflict change. Technology has advanced, new threats have emerged, and connections between people have increased exponentially. But through it all, the nature of conflict has remained constant. From countering terrorism to irregular warfare, from stability operations to humanitarian disasters, when people are in

trouble the United States responds. It is most frequently a U.S. Army Soldier that arrives on their doorstep. Why? Because preventing conflict demands presence, shaping the environment demands presence, restoring the peace demands presence, and more often than not, that presence proudly wears the uniform of an American Soldier. (Applause).

The strength of our Nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our Families. That is what makes us Army Strong. Thank you and God Bless America. (Applause).

End of Remarks.