HEIDELBERG, Germany – Senior land forces commanders from across Europe wrapped up three days of discussion of military partnerships and security cooperation as the U.S. Army Europe-led Conference of European Armies came to a close today.

This year’s conference, the 19th CEA, took place in Italy. Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, USAREUR commanding general, and Lt. Gen. Giuseppe Valotto, chief of staff of the Italian army co-hosted the event.

U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno took part in this year’s event. In an interview during the CEA he underscored the importance of developing relationships with America’s European allies and partners.

“"We have to continue to adapt and adjust, and so (the CEA) gives us an opportunity to discuss those issues as we move forward," Odierno said. "It's about interoperability; it's about understanding each other's doctrine; it's about understanding tactics, techniques and procedures that different nations bring. ...This eases the burden as we deploy together as a coalition, and if we're able to ease the burden in training it'll make it much easier to integrate ourselves as we're on a mission, whether it be in Afghanistan, Libya or other places around the world."

Everything is about relationships, he said, strengthening bonds with longtime colleagues and reaching out to new partners, specifically those Eastern European forces that are now working so closely with the U.S.

"In terms of U.S. security, the constant relationships that we have with these countries, the constant integration, the partnerships that are developed, the common training environments that we use, are very important as we meet the
very complex challenges that are ahead of us,” he said.

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