

Leland Lazarus

Miami, Florida | [REDACTED] | llazarus@fiu.edu | [REDACTED] <https://www.linkedin.com/in/leland-lazarus-b2533a27/>

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

November 2022 – Present, 40 hr/wk (Top Secret/ Sensitive Compartmentalized Information)

Associate Director of National Security, Florida International University, Miami, FL

- Leads a team of researchers and interns of the National Security Program, which includes the \$2 million FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership.
- Serves as Professor of Chinese Foreign Policy for the undergraduate FIU Honors College, and U.S.-China Relations for the Masters Program in the Green School of International and Public Affairs.
- Serves as an internationally-renowned expert on China-Latin America relations and manages the collection of data and analysis regarding areas of U.S. and China national security, economics and governance in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Led the roll-out of the AI-driven Chinese Activities in Latin America Dashboard, which aggregates and visualizes all PRC projects in the Western Hemisphere, including dual use ports, space facilities and problematic projects.
- Spearheaded new international initiatives, such as MOUs with National Cheng Chi University and Shih Chien University in Taiwan, the French shipping company CMA CGM, and the Africa-Americas Forum on China.
- Gives TV and podcast interviews in Mandarin and Spanish for BBC News, Voice of America and NBC Universal/Telemundo, and has been published or quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, *Global Americans*, *The National Interest*, and the *Diplomat*.

February 2021 – November 2022, 40 hr/wk

Special Assistant/ Speechwriter, U.S. Southern Command, Dept. of Defense, Doral, FL

- Drafted and prepared the four-star Commander for over 200 public speaking engagements, including the Reagan National Defense Forum, a Hoover Institution event with former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, and a speech on U.S.-China strategic competition in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) for the think tank Project 2049.
- Accompanied the Commander to Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, Colombia (2x), and Brazil (2x), coordinating public events and prepping the Commander for media engagements.
- Planned and organized first in-person interagency China Watchers Conference at SOUTHCOM, where more than 100 U.S. officials shared best practices and discussed our whole-of-government counter-PRC strategy.
- Used Mandarin skills to foster relations between SOUTHCOM and the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Miami and facilitated the first-ever meeting amongst U.S. ambassadors of Taiwan-recognizing countries in LAC.
- Gave a TV interview in Mandarin for Voice of America about China's vaccine diplomacy in LAC, discussed U.S.-China competition in Latin America at the Duke/UNC China Leadership Conference, Georgetown University, Virginia Military Institute, and the Atlantic Council, and the think tank Project 2049.

- Published articles in Foreign Policy, The Diplomat, and Spanish news outlet Infobae about PRC malign influence in LAC, reaching over 50 million potential readers.

August 2019 – February 2021, 40 hr/wk

Deputy Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State, Embassy Bridgetown, Barbados

- Served as 2nd in command in a 9-person team that raised public awareness of U.S. foreign assistance to 7 Eastern Caribbean countries, and persuade local citizens to see the United States as the partner of choice.
- Prepared approximately 50 speeches, talking points, briefings, op-eds, press releases, and statements for the Ambassador and principal officers, including the Military Liaison Office.
- Collaborated with SOUTHCOM Public Affairs to craft a TV, radio, and social media strategy promoting the USNS Comfort deployment to Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts in 2019. The media blitz encouraged almost 15,000 citizens from the three countries to receive medical care, and quickly dispelled misinformation about its mission.
- Produced reports to the State Department on China's growing influence in the Eastern Caribbean, drafted and executed the Embassy's public messaging strategy to counter China.
- Implemented an artificial intelligence "chatbot" on the Embassy Facebook page, enabling the State Department to immediately direct hundreds of U.S. citizens to travel alerts and repatriation flight information during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Installed Cision, a media monitoring tool to analyze the Embassy's 60,000 followers, and help reach a wider online audience; Instagram traffic increased by 93%, Twitter by 33%, and Facebook by 22%.

December 2016 – May 2019, 40 hr/wk

Fraud Prevention Consular Officer, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Consulate, Shenyang, China

- Led a 3-person team that protected national security, investigating hundreds of visa and passport fraud cases for potential Chinese intelligence operatives, human smugglers, and illegal migrants; interviewed over 15,000 Chinese visa applicants in Mandarin Chinese.
- Created outreach plans and conducted trips to small cities and towns to share U.S. history, culture, and values to 107.81 million inhabitants in three Northeastern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang.
- Served as interpreter for a Congressional delegation of 10 U.S. senators during their fact-finding visit to the Chinese-North Korean border. Participated in advanced planning, site inspection, and logistics for the delegation.

June 2016 – August 2016 and June 2015 – August 2015, 40 hr/wk

Pickering Fellow Intern, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy, Beijing, China

- Served as interpreter for U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice during her trip to the Forbidden City. Led advanced planning, site security inspection with the Secret Service, and logistics for her visit.
- Planned and organized weekly public events on U.S. history, culture, and values for hundreds of Chinese citizens at the Embassy's Beijing American Center.
- Drafted and edited the daily media summary of all Chinese news, which was distributed to hundreds of embassies and consulates worldwide.

- Created and implemented the social media strategy for the State Department’s annual 2015 U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue and the Consultation on People to People Exchanges.

January 2014 – August 2014 and May 2012 – February 2013, 40 hr/wk

Associate Producer, China Central Television (CCTV), Washington, DC

- Produced programs for *The Heat*, an English-language international news talk show for China’s premier state-owned news agency. Compiled research, pitched stories, and wrote scripts about pertinent international news, such as China’s ambitions in the South China Sea, the rise of ISIS, and political turmoil in Turkey. Helped plan episodes for VIP guests such as former Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

Volunteer Work and Memberships

Jan. 2021 – Present, 4 hr/wk

Vice Chair, Fulbright Association

- Serves as the youngest Vice Chair of the 25-member Board of Directors, which represents more than 140,000 U.S. alumni, 230 regional and national programs, and 54 local chapters.
- Has raised nearly \$100,000 for the nationwide Fulbright Association
- Spearheaded the first ever Fulbright Youth Summit, where over 100 diverse high school students learned about international exchange opportunities.
- Leads the Programs Committee, which plans and implements nationwide programs such as the National Conference, Annual Prize ceremony.

June. 2023 – Present

Term Member, Council on Foreign Relations

- This five-year program provides young professionals in government, media, nongovernmental organizations, law, business, finance, and academia the opportunity to participate in a sustained conversation on international affairs and U.S. foreign policy.
- Spoke on China-Latin America relations at the 2023 CFR Term Member Conference in New York.
- Planned and organized three CFR engagements at FIU.

Dec. 2023 – Present

Public Intellectual, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations

- This two-year program offers fellows unique opportunities for professional and personal development, mentoring by senior scholars, networking, media exposure, and more. An underlying objective is to increase Americans understanding of China by strengthening links among U.S. academics, policymakers, opinion leaders, and the public.
- Engaged in trips to DC, San Francisco, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Jan. 2021 – Present, 4 hr/wk

Founder, National Association for Black Engagement in Asia’s Chinese Language Group

- Leads discussions and drafts biweekly lesson plans in Mandarin for 68 professionals of color who have lived or studied in China. Previous discussion topics included Racism in China, Climate Change, COVID-19, Tech Competition, and China-Taiwan Relations.

SKILLS

ILR & DLPT: Fluency in Mandarin (3/3) and Spanish (3+/3), Social Media

EDUCATION

March 2025

MIT Sloan School of Management (Online Executive Certificate)

Artificial Intelligence: Implications for Business Strategy

November 2018

MIT Sloan School of Management (Online Executive Certificate)

Blockchain Technologies: Business Innovation and Applications

May 2016

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, MA

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD), Pacific Asia and International Organizations

May 2012

Brown University, Providence, RI

Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Chinese and Latin American Studies