

# Leland Lazarus

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

May 2025 – Present, 40 hr/wk (Top Secret/ Sensitive Compartmentalized Information)

### Founder and CEO, Lazarus Consulting, LLC, Miami, FL

- Advises U.S. Special Operations Command and private sector clients on navigating the U.S.-China and China-LatAm relations, mitigating geopolitical risks.
- Engages as an internationally recognized thought leader, with public speaking, writing, and media appearances in English, Mandarin, and Spanish to educate on these topics.
- Expertise in geopolitical analysis, cross-cultural communication, and strategic decision-making.
- Building an AI-powered dashboard to track China's global diplomatic, information, military, and economic activities for Western government and private sector clients.
- Testified before the Senate and House committees on Chinese malign influence in the Western Hemisphere.

November 2022 – May 2025, 40 hr/wk (Top Secret/ Sensitive Compartmentalized Information)

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

- Led a team of researchers and interns of the National Security Program, which includes the \$2 million FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership.
- 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 Shih Chien University in Taiwan and the French shipping company CMA CGM, as well as the Africa-Americas Forum on China in Kenya.
- Served as Professor for Chinese Foreign Policy and U.S.-China Relations for the FIU School of International and Public Affairs and the FIU Honors College.
- Gave TV and podcast interviews in Mandarin and Spanish for NBC News, Fox News, BBC, Univision and Telemundo, and was been published or quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, and various international outlets.

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 TV interviews 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 persuaded 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.

## Volunteer Work and Memberships

Jan. 2021 – Present, 10 hr/wk

### **President and Chair, Fulbright Association**

- Serves as the Chair of the 25-member National Board of Directors, which represents and sets strategy for more than 140,000 U.S. alumni, 400,000 international alumni, and 54 local chapters across the country.
- Manages a \$4 million endowment for the Fulbright Association by leveraging deep networks across government, private sector, and foundations.
- Led the creation of the annual Fulbright Youth Summits for hundreds of disadvantaged high school students to learn about international exchange opportunities in Denver, DC, Miami, and Little Rock, AK

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.

### **Other Affiliations**

- National Committee on U.S.-China Relations Public Intellectuals Program (2024-2025)
- Harvard Business School Young American Leaders Program (2025)
- Atlantic Council Global China Hub Non-Resident Fellow
- International Career Advancement Program in Aspen, CO (2023)
- Center for a New American Security Shawn Brimley Next Gen Program (2023)

## 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