28 March 2019.

 **Panel discussion**

 ***"Cultural and 'Soft Power' Influences of China and Russia in the Americas."***

**Sponsored by the Cultural and Area Studies Office (CASO) Command and General Staff College in conjunction with Kimberly Green Latin American/Caribbean Center (LACC), Florida International University (FIU) and U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute.**

 ***Bios of the panel members***

1. Dr. Frank O. Mora is the Director of the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) and Professor of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University (FIU). Dr. Mora served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Western Hemisphere. He has held several teaching positions, including Professor of National Security Strategy and Latin American Studies at the National War College, National Defense University among others.

During the last twenty years Dr. Mora worked as a consultant to the Library of Congress, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), the National Democratic Institute, U.S. State Department, the Organization of American States, and U.S. Southern Command. Dr. Mora is the author or editor of four books and over thirty academic and policy articles, book chapters and monographs on hemispheric security, U.S.-Latin American relations, civil-military relations, Cuban politics and military and Latin American political economy and integration.

He received a Ph.D. in International Affairs from the University of Miami. He also completed studies at universities in Peru and Costa Rica. He is a recipient of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service, Department of Defense.

2. Dr. Evan Ellis is a research professor of Latin American Studies at the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute with a focus on the region’s relationships with China and other non-Western Hemisphere actors, as well as transnational organized crime and populism in the region.

 Dr. Ellis has published over 240 works, including the 2009 book *China in Latin America: The Whats and Wherefores*, the 2013 book *The Strategic Dimension of Chinese Engagement with Latin America*, the 2014 book, *China on the Ground in Latin America,* and the 2018 book, *Transnational Organized Crime in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Dr. Ellis has presented his work in a broad range of business and government forums in 27 countries four continents. He has given testimony on Latin America security issues to the US Congress on various occasions, has discussed his work regarding China and other external actors in Latin America on a broad range of radio and television programs, and is cited regularly in the print media in both the US and Latin America for his work in this area. Dr. Ellis has also been awarded the ***Order of Military Merit José María Córdova*** by the Colombian government for his scholarship on security issues in the region. Dr. Ellis holds a PhD in political science with a specialization in comparative politics.

3. Dr. Gary Bjorge, Professor of the Department of History, CGSC (retired) expert in Chinese Influence and Confucius Institutes (CI) in the U.S. Dr. Gary Bjorge served on active duty in the U.S. Navy, which included serving as the Chinese Language Officer on the United Nations Command staff of the Korean War Military Armistice Commission. Following his military service he attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin—Madison where he earned Master of Arts degrees in Chinese and political science, and a PhD in Chinese. Dr. Bjorge joined the faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 1984 and taught in the Department of Military History until 2017. Dr. Bjorge’s opposition to Confucius Institutes (CI) began when one of the U.S. universities decided in 2005 to partner with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agencies to host a CI. Since then, he has repeatedly written letters and given talks to increase awareness of how CIs threaten academic integrity, freedom of expression, and national security. He is very pleased to see that now there is a growing understanding of how CIs contribute to CCP influence operations and that many universities are deciding to close their CIs.