

## **PLA officers engage Army War College students**

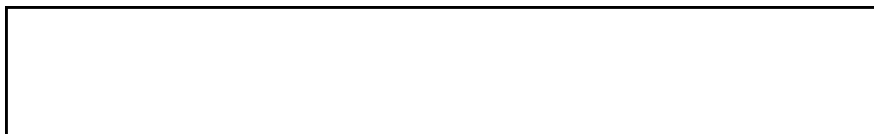
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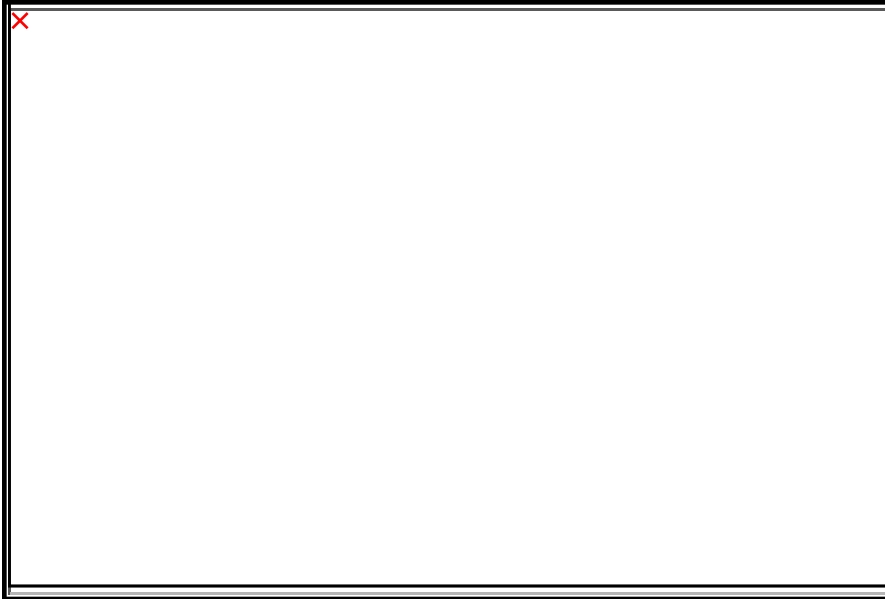
Nov. 21, 2014 – The expanding relationship between the U.S. Army and the People’s Liberation Army of China took a distinctly personal character when students at the U.S. Army War College engaged future policy and decision makers of the PLA today at Carlisle, Pa.

Sitting at a 30-person roundtable in the Command Conference Room, the group traded questions and comments



in friendly discussions both formal and informal. Topics ranged from US/China economic interests, civ-mil relations, US alliances and partners, officer professional development, cyber war, and more. The conversation unfolded after the dean of the School of Strategic Landpower introduced the Army War College’s role, since inception in 1901, to educate and develop leaders – and its current parallel mission to advance knowledge of the global application of Landpower.





“We help our student learn ‘how to think’ about complex issues regarding national security, said the dean of the USAWC School of Strategic Landpower, about the exchange between 16 Chinese officers and 17 members of Seminar 16, which itself includes three international officers. Dr. Richard Lacquement later described the two-and-half-hour experience as an extension of the educational philosophy at the Army War College. “It was extremely

valuable for our students to engage with the delegation of officers from the PLA – a group that we don’t typically interact with – to gain exposure to other countries, cultures, and approaches to strategy,” he said.

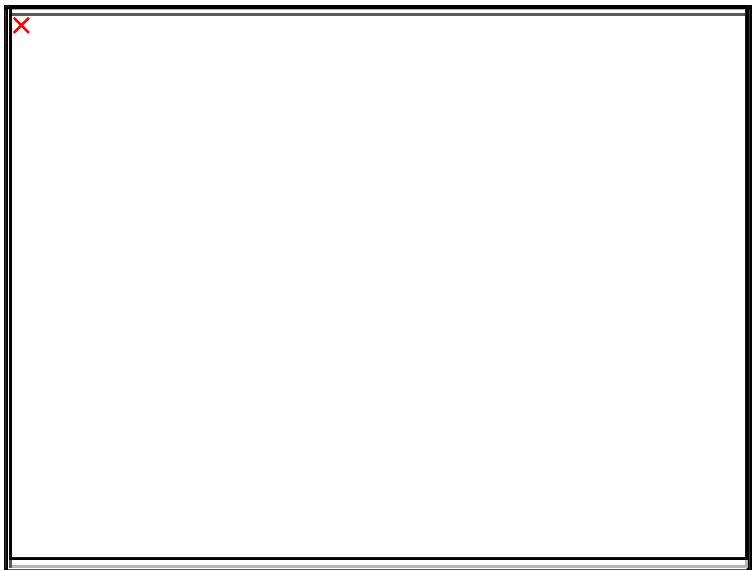
Lacquement described to the visiting PLA members why the School seeks diversity, but it was the USAWC students who voiced the importance of the joint, interagency and multinational members of each seminar. International Fellows and U.S. students explained the value of seminar dialogue to their counterparts: seeking understanding of other perspectives, rather than consensus.

The delegation’s senior colonel drew parallels between President Obama’s trip to China and the mid-level military-to-military exchanges that are very important to peace and stability in the region and the world. He opened a 90-min discussion with an invitation to the US students to comment on and assess the U.S. rebalance to the Pacific: the “return to Asia,” as he called it.

***USMC officer in the class traded ideas with his PLA counterpart. Interspersed PLA officers and USAWC students, to include International Fellows, found opportunity for one-on-one discussions.***

Finding common ground was seemingly effortless between PLA officers and USAWC students, who eased into one-on-one conversations about topics as diverse as home towns or provinces, Swiss knives and military uniforms.

“I think the students realize that as graduates of the Army War College, they’ll need to think globally and be politically astute while trying to find ways to preserve the peace, rather than



head to war,” said Professor Mike Marra, a Seminar 16 instructor. “Our students are expert in ‘M’ but they are thinking ‘DIME’,” he said about the elements of national power: diplomatic, informational, military and economic.

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