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Dr. David Lai is a Research Professor of Asian Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) of the U.S. Army War College (USAWC). Before joining SSI, Dr. Lai was on the faculty of the U.S. Air War College. Born and grown up in China, Lai witnessed China’s “Cultural Revolution,” its economic reform, and changes in China’s foreign relations, the most important of all, U.S.-China relations.

Dr. Lai was one of those who made it into colleges when China launched its economic reform and restored the institutions of higher education in 1978. He later pursued his post-graduate studies at the University of Colorado and earned his Master’s and Ph.D. degrees in political science specializing in international relations.

Dr. Lai’s research and teaching cover U.S.-China and U.S.-Asian security relations. He has also made special contributions to the study of Chinese strategic thinking and operational art.


Dr. Lai has been to most of the Asia nations. In recent years, he has also visited many major European states. These visits and academic engagements keep Dr. Lai in close touch with the regional as well as global perspectives on U.S.-China, U.S.-China-Asia, and U.S.-China-Europe relations.