CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY & DEFENSE

Description of the Field
The international security field has organizations in every sector, be it government, private, or nonprofit. The goal of many intelligence service providers is to produce reports consisting of evaluated information and forecasts that political, military, and government leaders can then use in decision making. The government is the largest employer of international security professionals, but opportunities also exist with think tanks, defense contractors, and NGOs.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries
Entry-level employees generally are assigned to gather information. With previous experience and training, they can instead qualify for analyst positions. Advancement may include postings requiring more responsibility and assignments to foreign countries. International security specialists in the public sector are promoted and given assignments according to the needs of the government. Further advancement leads to management positions.

In the government, case officers stationed overseas gather information and then relay it to analysts who analyze the information and produce intelligence reports. There are specialized officers, known as technical analysts, as well as cryptographic technicians, who are experts in coding, decoding, and sending secret messages. There are three categories of intelligence operations: strategic intelligence, tactical intelligence, and counter-intelligence. Strategic intelligence agents keep track of world events, watch foreign leaders carefully, and study a foreign country’s politics, economy, military status, and scientific advances. Tactical intelligence consists of determining which groups hold power and looking at foreign policy, public opinion, and voting statistics. Economic factors include trade agreements, the gross national product, and possible famines, all of which can influence domestic and foreign policies. Counter-intelligence consists of keeping valuable information away from adversaries and preventing subversion and sabotage.

The Department of Defense International Security Affairs Division develops defense positions in political, military, and foreign economic affairs, including arms control and disarmament. Its functions include the negotiating and monitoring of agreements with foreign governments concerning military facilities, and the status of the armed forces. Those with advanced degrees are hired at the GS-9 grade with the step depending on experience. The GS-9 salary ranges from the low $40,000s at Step 1 to the mid $50,000s at Step 10. Updated GS Pay Scale information, including additional pay adjustments, can be found at: http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2013/general-schedule/.

Demand
Intelligence operations are closely linked to the world political situation. People with specialized skills or backgrounds in the languages and customs of countries in which the US faces security challenges will continue to be in high demand.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) merged several intelligence-related federal agencies into one agency that has the capability to anticipate, preempt, and deter threats to the nation whenever possible, as well as the ability to respond quickly when such threats do materialize. DHS is responsible for assessing the vulnerabilities of the country’s critical infrastructure and cyber security threats and will take the lead in evaluating these vulnerabilities and coordinating with other federal, state, local, and private entities to ensure the most effective response.

Updated 06/15
Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field
An advanced degree is recommended for those entering the international security and defense field. Other important qualifications include the ability to speak and read a foreign language, computer literacy, and excellent analytical, oral, and written communication skills. Studies in military technology, international economics, US foreign policy, Russian studies, Chinese studies, and East Central European studies are valued. Experience gained through an internship will make one more competitive, while for those wanting to work in the Department of Defense, the Presidential Management Fellowship is often the only way to enter as a civilian.

Sample Group of Employers

Private Sector
- BAE Systems – www.baesystems.com
- Boeing – www.boeing.com
- General Dynamics – www.generaldynamics.com
- Lockheed-Martin – www.lockheedmartin.com
- Northrup-Grumman – www.northropgrumman.com
- Raytheon – www.raytheon.com
- Textron – www.textron.com
- TRW - www.trw.com
- United Technologies - www.utc.com

Government Agencies
- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) - www.dia.mil
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) - www.cia.gov
- Department of State - www.state.gov
- Army - www.army.mil
- Air Force - www.airforce.com
- Navy - www.navy.mil
- Marines - www.usmc.mil
- Department of Energy - www.doe.gov
- National Security Agency - www.nsa.gov
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) - www.fbi.gov
- Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - www.ice.gov
- Department of Treasury - www.ustreas.gov
- Coast Guard - www.uscg.mil
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency - www.nga.mil

Non-Government Organizations
- Center for Defense Information (CDI) – www.cdi.org
- The Brookings Institute – www.brookings.edu
- Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation – www.armscontrolcenter.org
- Center for Strategic and International – www.csis.org
- SAIC – www.saic.com

Updated 06/15
Resources for Additional Information

Associations

Association of Former Intelligence Officers
6723 Whittier Ave., Suite 200
McLean, VA 22101-4533
Tel: 703-790-0320
[website]
afio@afio.com

Women In International Security
Center for Peace and Security Studies
Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University
3600 N Street, NW, Lower Level
Washington, DC 20007
Tel: 202-687-3366
Fax: 202-687-3233
[website]

Internet Resources

- ASIS International - [website] - Resource for security professionals. Formerly known as the American Society for Industrial Security, ASIS International is an international organization. Visitors to this site can read the latest issue of Security Management.
- Intelligence Careers - [website] - A good starting point for information intelligence professionals to find career opportunities. This is not an IT-recruiting website. This website is about the pursuit of “information intelligence” - careers that balance the need for world knowledge with the ability to use technology to achieve action.
- Law Enforcement Jobs - [website] - Resource for those interested in the law enforcement area of the security field. The jobs are open for all to review and one can register to receive announcements of new jobs as they are posted. They also have training resources, books, and a calendar of training sessions being offered by various organizations and agencies.
- Security Management Online - [website] - Check out education and training opportunities, learn about professional certification, or get information on scholarship and grant programs from the association. Members can also access the association’s extensive career center.
- Security Jobs Network – [website] - Resource for security and law enforcement professionals. Job listings require a paid subscription, but much of the resource information is free including great research links to additional online security and law enforcement resources.

Future Challenges of the Profession
The international security field faces a range of challenges, from the increasing dependence on the internet and its vulnerability to outside attack, to the effects of global poverty on terrorist activity. These issues not only will require further integration and cooperation between international security institutions, but also a concerted effort to recruit, train, and retain talented individuals so as to be best equipped to maintain security and stability.