

Career Opportunities in Counterterrorism Intelligence

In the aftermath of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks around the world, security and intelligence careers have dramatically increased in quantity and importance. The security industry is one of the fastest-growing. Counterterrorism intelligence is a specialty area within security. It involves gathering, producing, and evaluating information that political, military, and other government leaders can use in making decisions about the scope and immediacy of terrorism. As opposed to information gathered by other intelligence professionals, counterterrorism analysts examine and assess the leadership, motivations, plans and intentions of foreign terrorist groups and their sponsors.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Employment paths in counterterrorism intelligence are numerous and span across all sectors. Government agencies—such as the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States as well as intelligence agencies in other governments—demand a wide range of diverse career positions. An intelligence officer or analyst conducts investigations, performs research, analyzes information, and prepares clear and concise reports on terrorist activities. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) intelligence experts often use sophisticated equipment to track criminals and terrorists. But government agencies also employ scientists, engineers, technologists, translators/interpreters, technicians, information specialists (librarians, library technicians), and financial and information technology specialists.

Private and non-profit organizations employ a similar array of professionals in counterintelligence. Contractors and grantees from consulting firms and non-profit organizations typically have Junior and Senior-level analysts. A Junior-level analyst does work similar to that of an intelligence officer within the government. A Senior-level analyst—someone with substantial experience in intelligence—is likely to take on a leadership role by managing teams, editing information, and briefing key policymakers on specific aspects of terrorist activities.

Regarding salaries, those with advanced degrees are hired at the GS-9 level in the US Government (roughly starting at \$43,000 in Washington, D.C.). Those with advanced degrees and related experience or federal government experience may command a higher salary at the GS-11 or 12 pay rate. The Central Intelligence Agency hires Counterterrorism Analysts at a range of anywhere from \$37,900 to \$78,800, depending on the candidate's experience and qualifications.

Qualifications and the Application Process

An advanced degree is always desirable and often required. Virtually all counterterrorism intelligence jobs also require top secret security clearance. Foreign language skills, international residency experience, and military experience are advantageous to the candidate. Furthermore, employers often request a minimum of three to five years intelligence experience. An understanding of the Intelligence Cycle (collection, fusion, analysis and production, and dissemination) is also desirable. As in other fields, strong communication skills, both in speaking and writing, are a must. Proficiency in Microsoft Office and other research programs are also important. For US Government careers, US citizenship is required and experience within the US Intelligence Community is a plus.

In applying for a job, the firm or organization will usually request that a resume and/or

cover letter be sent directly to them. An extensive security clearance process will follow, which may include a thorough psychological and medical exam and a polygraph interview. Additionally, for the CIA the candidate must not have taken illegal drugs within 12 months of application for employment. Applications and resumes are available to submit on-line (See "Sample Employers" below).

Sample Employers

- Department of Homeland Security www.dhs.gov
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) www.cia.gov
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), www.fbi.gov
- Lockheed Martin, <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/>
- Booz Allen Hamilton, www.boozallen.com/
- Gerard Group International LLC, www.gerardgroup.com
- Interpol, www.interpol.int
- Arnold and Porter, LLP, www.arnoldporter.com
- Patton Boggs, LLP, www.pattonboggs.com

Demand and Future Challenges of Profession

The demand for careers in Counterterrorism intelligence is greater than ever. However, the nature of intelligence operations requires that the industry undergo constant change. Specialized skills and expertise in one language or subject area may become less relevant as policymakers focus counterterrorist activities on another region.

Another challenge in counterterrorism intelligence is the difficulty in maintaining the efficient coordination of vast amounts of resources and information. Meanwhile, various countries fighting terrorism often have different values and implement different policies among themselves, potentially creating conflict even among counterterrorist state and non-state actors. For these reasons, counterterrorism intelligence specialists may face obstacles in consistently gathering and making use of intelligence information in such a diverse and complex community.

Resources for More Information

<http://insct.syr.edu/>

The Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT), co-sponsored by the Syracuse University College of Law and the Maxwell School, provides a comprehensive website for careers in National Security and Counter Terrorism. The website provides extensive information on counterintelligence careers.

www.intelligencecareers.com/

This is a valuable website for finding specific job-openings in counterterrorism.

www.asisonline.org/careercenter/careers2005.pdf

This is an insightful brochure in PDF format that provides a sweeping overview of careers within security and counterterrorism.

www.cicentre.com/index.html

The Counterintelligence Center provides daily and weekly news and information on counterintelligence.

<http://www.ict.org.il/>

The International Institute for Counterterrorism Studies (IICTS) provides private education for professionals in counterintelligence.

Publications

International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, www.ict.org.il. Click on "Articles" and look at Counterterrorism publications by topic.

INSCT Publications, insct.syr.edu/Publications.htm

Center for the Study of Intelligence, Michael Warner and J. Kenneth McDonald "US Intelligence Community Reform Studies Since 1947,"
www.cia.gov/csi/monograph/US%20Intelligence%20Reform%20Studies/73531book.pdf.
April 2005.

Guide to Homeland Security Careers, Donald B. Hutton and Anna Mydlarz, Barron's Education Series (2003) – in career library

John Douglas's Guide to Careers in the FBI, John E. Douglas, Kaplan (1998) – in career library