

Devin H.

*“We have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.”* –James Woolsey

Since the end of the Cold War, the already complex field of national security has expanded to include a staggering number of concerns and issues. The wider distribution of power, wealth and influence means that it is now possible for political and religious organizations and even powerful individuals to damage American political, economic and military objectives on a level previously only attainable for states. The range of threats and hostile actors is truly staggering in its complexity. This complexity is one of the central reasons why a career in national security interests me, because it appeals to my innate curiosity and gives me a chance to be part of something larger than myself.

By nature, I am a very curious person who enjoys learning new information for the intrinsic joy of doing so. I spend a great deal of my time reading books, news articles, opinion and idea journalism from across the political spectrum and historical accounts to increase my base of background knowledge. This is a habit that has served me well in school, and also contributed strongly to my interest in national security, which became my favorite area of personal study when I was sixteen and has captivated me ever since then because of the massive number of issues and areas of concern involved. Almost every region in the world has a place in this field, along with politics, history, economics, sociology, engineering and several other fields. Although I have spent a great deal of time studying security issues and have gotten strong grades in several security-related classes, one thing that has struck me again and again is the true vastness of what I still do not know and have yet to learn. For someone like me, this is the most exciting feeling imaginable. A major appeal of the national security field for me is the certainty that it will require me to continually and constantly learn new things and study new areas.

The other main appeal of the national security field is that it gives me a chance to be part of something larger and more important than myself. I am strongly aware of the many benefits that US power brings to both America and the world. Although it is fashionable in many circles to focus almost exclusively on times when the United States has made mistakes or ventured into moral grey areas, the world is still a vastly better place than it would be if the Soviet Union had triumphed in the Cold War or if any number of other things had happened that were prevented only by effective action by the United States. Even the most controversial chapters of our history have often been the result of people with limited time and information making the best choice they can from a list of imperfect options. The aggregate conclusion of all the reading and study I've referred to is that what America's national security professionals do is worth it, and that this field is something I want to be a part of because ultimately it makes America stronger and makes the world a better place.