

More Than Just a Myth: Private Sector Intelligence

Claire Prestwoodⁱ

For those familiar with most famous editorials in United States journalism history, the 1897 “Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus” articleⁱⁱ, signed by the editor-in-chief of the *New York Sun*, is a fine analogy to the exploration of intelligence in the Private Sector. The author of the editorial exhorts a child to ignore the skepticism of her friends and have faith in the existence and value of Santa Claus, despite others’ lack of belief. Similarly, in order to strengthen the field, Private Sector Intelligence (PSI) professionals need to not only advertise their existence but also repeatedly show their value as a partner in the overall global intelligence enterprise. This article will highlight the key value of PSI, deconflict assumptions made about the field, and offer insight into how it may grow as a career vehicle for anyone interested in intelligence, both public and private. While there are various types of intelligence applied by businesses that are worth researching, such as information on competitors, information and forecasts for markets and pricing, financial risk intelligence, or other mechanisms that relate to profit, the following reflections pertain to security and strategic risk intelligence applied to the corporate world. Private sector security intelligence (or PSI as referred throughout the article) focuses on a duty of care for industry personnel, as well as risk mitigation for property and products of private sector companies. The field is typically a mystery not only to the majority of intelligence scholars, but also to those who are employed in the federal government.

Some professionals in the Government are fortunate enough to receive an introduction to intelligence and security in the private sector through private/public sector partnerships administered by the United States government; however, many more in the field continue to ignore the opportunities that may exist for them outside of civil service. The aforementioned partnerships are typically the first introduction for intelligence practitioners in the Intelligence Community (IC) that security and intelligence offices exist within private sector entities. These

i Senior Security Intelligence Analyst with the Private Sector, USA.
Any questions for the author will be send to the JEAIS Editors at baches.torres@gmail.com.

ii “Is There a Santa Claus?” September 21st, 1897, *The (New York) Sun*. Available at <https://www.nysun.com/editorials/yes-virginia/68502/>. Retrieved on November 15th, 2018.