



A friend first introduced me to STRATFOR early last fall when I was in the beginning stages of my final semester undergraduate thesis. I undertook the project of exploring the development of European Security and Defense Policy and how dependence on Russian natural gas was undermining Europe's attempt at political cooperation. I chose to do three case studies of Germany, Italy, and Poland, examining their energy dependence and relations with Russia and their consequent contributions to ESDP.

My friend, in an effort to help me with my thesis, e-mailed me one of your articles in which you discussed the possibility of Russia offering the Germans a security deal. I remember being very impressed with the succinct explanation of Germany's historical relations with Russia and NATO and I appreciated the concise analysis of potential outcomes and scenarios if such a deal were to go through. Besides offering me a new and overarching perspective in which to begin my section on Germany, I was delighted to learn that there was such an organization right here in my hometown of Austin, Texas.

In the fall of 2007, I decided to delay my May 2008 graduation by adding European Studies as a major to my almost completed Government degree. I originally planned to receive my undergraduate degree and complete my teacher certification, but my recent summer travels in Europe had convinced me that I wanted to pursue a career in international relations. The European Studies major required me to study abroad and write the semester thesis I described above.

I left for Freiburg, Germany in May 2008 to begin a European Union study abroad program. Throughout the summer, I took two classes focusing exclusively on the European Union's efforts to prepare the Balkan countries and Turkey for membership, including international relations and security issues.



journalists, government officials, parliament members, think tanks, and international organizations such as the OSCE to discuss membership goals and concerns. Needless to say it was the experience of a lifetime and my increased understanding of the European nations complex relationships only instilled in me a further desire to learn more.

My newfound love affair with geopolitical issues, especially in Europe, has only begun relatively recently and I can't help but look for every opportunity to educate myself further. I took my new interest and enthusiasm with me to an interview with STRATFOR in March, where I soon discovered my research experience was limited when compared to the other applicants (all of whom had completed their master's degree or were in the process). But I still felt very confident with my broad geopolitical knowledge and instincts.

I have since broadened my knowledge of the appropriate and applicable resources for the research you conduct at STRATFOR, in addition to reading George Friedman's book, *The Next 100 Years*, and though I have much to learn, I am incredibly eager to hone those research skills through an internship. Not only would I benefit personally from the skills I would acquire at STRATFOR, but they would also be an enormous benefit as I work to pursue a degree in international law.

Since the time of my interview with STRATFOR earlier this year, financial necessity and a desire to stay in Austin has led me down a very different path in beginning my young career. I am currently working, through the Travis County CAPITAL AmeriCorps Program, as an afterschool science instructor for at-risk youth at an AISD elementary school as well as participating in a variety of mentoring and community programs throughout the Austin area.

On top of this, I am taking a rigorous prep class for the December LSAT to help me achieve a score that would allow me to compete for a spot in a top fifteen law school, of



face every day are very different from the ones I would experience with a STRATFOR internship. But I have easily and eagerly adapted to the commitment to service I have made, and I can assure you I would bring the same level of commitment every day to the STRATFOR office. And even though my original career path has taken a slight detour, I remain fixed on my goal of a career in international relations.

My interest in geopolitical affairs may be in its infant stages but I think my young, open and eager mind will fit very well for this internship. I am more than ready to dedicate myself to learning and absorbing as much as I can from the team at STRATFOR. I cannot think of a better place to begin my career in global affairs and intelligence analysis and I look forward to having the opportunity to work as hard as I can for your team.