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What Can You Do with a Physics Education...in Addition to Becoming a Professor

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Physics professors have often said that an education in physics will prepare you for just about anything. Certainly, the numerical and computer skills of physics students are widely known. The broad mathematical skills of physicists regularly lead to positions throughout the financial or engineering world, and the computer skills are a basis for employment in essentially all areas. However, these are features of all technical educations. What a physics curriculum provides as well, through the understanding of classical and quantum physics, is the basis for a quick understanding of the essential features of the world around us, and the devices we use to negotiate that world. This talk will discuss examples of how physics arguments have influenced a number of major government programs by providing decision makers with a simple and clear yet technically sound understanding of the underlying issues. In addition, examples of current problems in Defense that are subject to active research and debate will be discussed. The talk will conclude with a description of qualities and qualifications needed for a physicist to successfully transition to becoming an analyst.

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