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Review of *Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence, Second Edition.* By Katherine Hibbs Pherson and Randolph H. Pherson. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press (an imprint of Sage Publications, Inc.), 2017. ISBN 978-1-5063-1688-8. Graphs. Charts. Photographs. Maps. Notes. List of Names. Recommended Readings. Glossary. Sources cited. Index. Pp. v, 376.

Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence should be a primer—if not mandatory reading—for all new U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) analysts. The authors approach critical thinking methodologies in very practical terms that easily translate to the day-to-day functions of an IC analyst (or analyst in any field), which is to research, write, package and present timely, accurate and relevant intelligence information or other key data to decision makers. The format of the book includes a step-by-step breakdown, by chapter, of the analytical process, from establishing your end user or client, to researching information, to presenting a finished product. It also provides guidance to help prevent many of the missteps IC analysts often make when faced with large workloads and tight deadlines. The book also includes several helpful graphics, IC Directives for Analysis, key takeaways, and case studies which, when taken as a whole, serve as a great reference guide that should be on the desk of every IC analyst. Even more experienced analysts would benefit from having this as part of their reference library.

The key element that makes *Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence* stand out from similar works is that it is written specifically *for* analysts *by* analysts, taking into consideration the typical day-to-day tasks of an IC analyst. The authors understand what is expected of analysts and convey, in practical and useable ways, critical thinking methods to help analysts research, write, and produce better products. They know all too well from their own experience that analysts have a small window of opportunity to relay key data to their superiors or decision makers, and establish their credibility as analysts. To do that, the products must be accurate, timely, and impactful to establish credibility and get the attention of the decision makers. Without that credibility, an analyst's work is often for naught. Another element that sets this book apart from others is that the authors use feedback from other analysts and students in their courses to make this book as relevant as possible for analysts dealing with the realities of the day-to-day demands of the IC.

Part One of the book provides the basic steps for establishing a foundation that, when adopted and used as part of the analytical process, should enable

the analyst to generate analysis that is consistent and insightful despite time limitations and abundant task lists. The authors provide an excellent graphic, the Analyst's Roadmap, on the back cover of the book that can be referenced quickly and easily to help analysts organize their thoughts and stay on track throughout the production process. In getting started, the authors state the importance of assessing clients and their needs. The analyst must understand who they are writing the product for, what their client needs to know, and the broader context for the analysis. The analyst should also consider at that time what collaboration, if any, is necessary or helpful to ensure the best possible outcome.

In Part Two, the authors provide strategies to help analysts organize their data searches as well as tips on finding information that is relevant and credible. They emphasize how the analyst can apply different critical thinking strategies to their research methods to ensure they are not just collecting everything they can find on a subject and drawing conclusions based on a surface-level understanding of the information they find. The authors also delve extensively into the importance of evaluating the credibility of sources, and include helpful graphics on the intelligence grading criteria and matrices used by the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Overall, Part Two is extremely important for analysts to not only read, but repeatedly reference, as the credibility and reputation of the analyst hinges on the reliability of the information they provide. The authors provide different strategies the analyst can employ to avoid certain pitfalls that can bring their product, and their credibility, into question.

Part Three takes the analyst through the process of proofing and editing the product to ensure the information is clear, accurate, and effective. Has the situation changed since the product was started? Is there new information available that would change key assumptions? Is this a politically charged topic that is subject to politicization, or cherry picking of information by senior leaders? These are some of the questions the authors suggest for analysts as they formulate their final arguments and conclusions to present to their clients. It is imperative, especially for long-term, strategic products, that the analyst (and any fellow collaborators) take a close look at the end product to ensure the information properly conveys these arguments and supports them with the most solid evidence available. In Chapter 11, the authors provide the eight-step Key Assumptions Check as a first step in ensuring the analyst can support their argument with the information provided. In Chapter 12, they take the process further by illustrating techniques an analyst can use to scope out his or her argument, such as topic sentence outlines and

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argument maps. Also, of equal importance, they warn analysts of some of the logical fallacies to avoid, such as circular arguments, inadequate sampling, hasty generalizations, and false analogies–to name a few–that can impact the credibility of the final product. The authors also encourage analysts to consider alternate hypotheses as a means to test their key assumptions, arguments, and conclusions; how to deal with the possible politicization of intelligence; and how to avoid being spectacularly wrong in the final product.

Finally, in Part Four the authors address how analysts can most effectively convey their message and give their clients the information they need. Is the argument persuasive? Have IC confidence levels been used? Does the product need graphics or other visuals to illustrate data? For analysts who do not typically do so, Chapter 18 provides an excellent outline on how to effectively use graphics to enhance the usefulness of the product. Overall, Part Four is invaluable to analysts as they prepare their product for final distribution to the IC or to the requesting client. It serves as a final checklist to evaluate whether the analyst has achieved their objectives in the final product.

The Case Studies referenced at the end of the chapters and provided at the end of the book are interesting to read, but they also provide very useful exercises in critical thinking for intelligence analysts. One critique is to not only include the questions about each case study in "Consider the Case Study" at the end of the chapter, but also include those questions again at the end of each case study, so the reader does not have to flip back and forth to each chapter for the questions.

Overall, *Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence* is an excellent reference book that all IC analysts should read and keep at their desks. Since an analyst does not likely have time to re-read each chapter for every assignment, highlighting the Key Takeaways at the end of the chapter and ear-marking the graphics in each chapter can provide analysts with quick references to useful information when they are in the midst of creating new products. Having been an analyst in the IC for ten years, I attended several courses that taught critical thinking strategies; however, in this book the authors provide a more practical, realistic, and attainable approach for applying these strategies to the everyday duties of an analyst.

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