Intelligence Analysis
What is Analysis?

- Analysis is an examination of a complex, its elements, and their relations — *Merriam Webster Dictionary*
  - Analysis is *not* a recitation of facts
  - Facts support analysis, but the two are far from identical

- Value-add from intelligence analysis
  - Customers can obtain the facts on their own, but typically do not have the time or background to work out all the implications and nuances
  - Analysts simplify complex issues, highlight key implications, and rank the likelihood of possible outcomes
  - Analysts help customers deal with uncertainty
Main Customers for US Intelligence Analysis: Overview

- Executive Branch
  - President
  - Executive Departments
  - National Security Council
  - Intelligence Community, including DNI

- Legislative Branch
  - House of Representatives
  - Senate
Main Customers for US Intelligence Analysis: Details

- Executive Branch — Intelligence is a largely executive function, so the major customers for intelligence analysis are in the executive branch
  - President
  - Executive Departments, especially:
    - Department of State
    - Department of Defense
      - Civilian side — Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)
      - Military side
        - Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), highest US military advisory group — Chairman of the JCS, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps
        - Joint Staff — supports the JCS with personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, plans and policy, and communications
Main Customers for US National Intelligence Analysis: Details (cont’d)

- Executive Branch (cont’d)
  - The Departments (cont’d)
    - Department of Homeland Security
    - Department of Justice (particularly FBI)
    - Others from time to time
  - National Security Council
  - Office of the Director of National Intelligence
    - Intelligence Community

- Legislative Branch
  - Some foreign policy input, depending on political circumstances
  - Oversight committees
    - House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI)
    - Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI)
Strategic vs Tactical Analysis

- **Strategic** analysis is big-picture, elucidating trends and issues that affect large regions, important countries, and broad national interests
  - Popular support for al-Qa’ida in south Asia
  - Changing Japanese military policy
- **Tactical** analysis is narrow and focused, supporting specific tasks or (often military) operations
  - What is the command structure of al-Qa’ida in Iraq?
  - Does Hizballah have any Chinese C-802 cruise missiles left?
Structure of an Analytic Product

Bottom Line

What’s new?

So what?

Argument & Facts

Conclusion up front. If readers go no further, they still get the main point. Main value-add of analysis.

The analytical “hook.” What happened? What is changing? What is different?

Why should the readers care? What does it matter?

Source what is asserted, defend the thinking, show the logic. Give readers reason to be confident in the assessment.
General Analytic Products

- **Current Analysis** looks at day-to-day events
  - E.g., President’s Daily Brief (PDB), Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB), National Intelligence Daily (NID)

- **Estimative Analysis** explores what might be, or what might happen — e.g., National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs)

- **Warning Analysis** (aka Indications and Warning, I&W) advises policy makers that something may happen requiring urgent attention, usually of a military nature

- **Research Analysis** is an in-depth study of an issue
All-Source Intelligence Analysis

- All-Source analysis is analysis that draws on all categories of collected intelligence — e.g., HUMINT, SIGINT, IMINT, OSINT
- The US intelligence community (IC) has three agencies which do all-source analysis
  - Directorate of Intelligence, CIA
  - Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), Department of State
  - Defense Intelligence Agency
- The other members of the IC that do intelligence analysis tend to specialize in certain types, e.g., National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency works on IMINT
Competitive Intelligence Analysis

- Built-in redundancy among analytical agencies
  - Serve different customers, e.g., DIA is caters to military requirements, CIA serves the President and NSC
  - Having different agencies — with different analysts, interests, and traditions — theoretically makes for better analytical products
Difficulties in Intelligence Analysis
Mirror-Imaging

- Defn: The assumption (often subconscious) that other people in other cultures and political systems think like you do, would make the same decisions, value the same goals.

- For example, the assumption that other countries and cultures have the same time-horizon we do.
Mirror-Imaging (cont’d)

- Mirror-imaging can affect intelligence analysts from any culture or background — for American-born analysts, cultural factors that may contribute to mirror-imaging include:
  - Uncritical emphasis on the “scientific method,” e.g.
    - Tendency to assume phenomena do not vary from place to place
    - Naïve acceptance of Western social science dogmas, e.g., that religious belief wanes as modernity proceeds, or that religious motivation is “explained” by social or economic factors
  - Lack of emphasis on foreign language programs in US education
    - Relative geographic isolation contributes
  - Belief (with some justification) that others aspire to the “American way of life,” hence share same fundamental motivations
  - Assumption of classic liberal individualism, i.e., culture is relatively superficial and underneath we are all the same
    - The “melting pot” idea tends to encourage this