

The Analyst's Craft

Who We Are and What We Do

Our Job Is

Our job as intelligence officers is to:

- Define intelligence problems and issues clearly.
- Anticipate trends and developments.
- Provide our consumers with judgments and insights.
- Tell our consumers what is *really* happening in a situation.
- Be responsive to our consumers.
- Evaluate raw information critically to determine its relevance, reliability, and weight as evidence.
- Extract key points from raw information or otherwise identify what is important in a sea of detail.
- Make meaningful characterizations about data by “synthesizing” them into judgments that are greater than the data they’re based on.
- Deal with ambiguity, uncover and test assumptions, reconcile conflicting information, and guard against bias, subjectivity, deception, and “politicization.”
- Consider the views of others.
- Evaluate alternative scenarios.
- Assess implications for our consumers.

Our Job Is Not

It is not our job to know everything.

- We have to make judgments on the basis of information that is incomplete, conflicting, and of varying degrees of reliability.
- We need to provide the best possible answer given the time and information available.
- We do not pile up detail. Data dumps are not the way to show our expertise.
- And we are not historians.

Analytic Mission

As intelligence analysts, we “synthesize”:

- We interpret, not describe.
- We render the complex simple.
- We read, weigh, and assess fragmentary information to determine what it means, to get the “big picture.”
- That is, we draw conclusions that are greater than the data they’re based on. One plus one equals three!