



Analytical Judgments

Dos & Don'ts



Bottom Line Up Front

- Don't make your audience work to find your analysis.
- Decisionmakers have limited time and will lose interest and stop reading if your main judgment is buried.

So What?

Without a 'so what?', your analysis will always be lacking. Ask yourself:

- Why does this matter to my primary audience?
- What is the main takeaway?
- What is the Key Intelligence Question I'm answering?

KIQ

- Although this doesn't appear in your judgment, the Key Intelligence Question is your North Star.
- Without an appropriately crafted KIQ, your product and BLUF will lack focus.

Estimative Language

- A judgment isn't complete and doesn't demonstrate good analytic tradecraft without estimative language: probably/possibly, likely, very likely, unlikely, etc.
- Refer to publicly available resources from the ODNI on probability and estimative language.

Credibility Assessment

- Don't forget your credibility assessment!
- What is your assessment based on? How can the audience determine the credibility of your analysis?
- Just like math problems, show your work!
- “Based on analyst observations, intelligence gathered from threat actor chat rooms, and primary source interviews, we assess that...”

Avoid Non-Analysis

- If there's nothing to say, don't say it.
- “...based on previous reporting and past events, this will likely continue...”
- This doesn't say much, is vague, and isn't actionable or forward-leaning.