



# Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence

By Katherine H. Pherson, Randolph H. Pherson

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**Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence** By Katherine H. Pherson, Randolph H. Pherson

With this second edition of *Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence*, Randolph H. Pherson and Katherine Hibbs Pherson update their highly regarded, easy-to-use handbook for developing core critical thinking skills and analytic techniques. This indispensable text is framed around 20 key questions that all analysts must ask themselves as they prepare to conduct research, generate hypotheses, evaluate sources of information, draft papers, and ultimately present analysis. New material includes a chapter on working with statistics and probabilities at an introductory level; discussions on how to work with social media; managing the “big data” phenomenon and what role analysis plays both at the front and back end of utilizing such information.

Each of the book’s chapters are consistently organized, enabling students and analysts alike to easily trace the key steps of: Setting the Stage; Looking More Deeply; Key Takeaways; Considering the Case Study, and the book’s illustrations include useful graphics that diagram and display the processes and structured analytic techniques for arriving at the best possible analytical products. The “Analyst’s Roadmap” provides an at-a-glance “map” for readers depicting the best practices involved in perfecting the analytical product. A set of carefully crafted case studies on national intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement issues illustrate how to apply these critical thinking skills tie directly to end-of-chapter questions, providing valuable self-assessment opportunities.

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**Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

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### **About the Author**

Katherine Hibbs Pherson, President of Globalytica, LLC, consults with government and private industry on building strong analytic communities, the use of structured analytic techniques, and security issues. She teaches certificate courses on structured thinking and presentation for the security association ASIS International and in the Intelligence Masters program at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid, Spain. As Vice Chair of the Intelligence and National Security Association (INSA)'s Security Policy Reform Council, she was primary drafter of its white paper titled "Next Steps for Security Reform: Industry Proposals to Enhance Efficiency and Reduce Costs in National Security Contracts," which has generated a series of productive exchanges among government and industry. Ms. Pherson is also Chief Executive Officer of Pherson Associates, LLC, and a founding Director of the Forum Foundation for Analytic Excellence, a nonprofit established in 2011 to promote the effective use of critical thinking skills and structured analytic techniques by teaching, certifying, and applying these skills in universities in the United States and Europe. She retired from the Central Intelligence Agency in 2000 after a twenty-seven-year career in intelligence and security analysis and resource management. Her leadership in the security arena led to the adoption of a risk management methodology, the strengthening of overseas security countermeasures, and improvements in dealing with unsolicited contacts. As head of the Director of Central Intelligence's Center for Security Evaluation, she managed the Intelligence Community's involvement in rebuilding the penetrated US Embassy in Moscow. She is a recipient of the CIA's Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal and the Intelligence Community's National Distinguished Service Medal. She received her AB from Vassar College, an MA in Spanish linguistics and Latin American studies from the University of Illinois, and an MA in Randolph H. Pherson, Chief Executive Officer of Globalytica, LLC, helps businesses and governments develop robust analytic capabilities within their organizations. He has authored seven books on structured analytic techniques, critical thinking and writing skills, strategic foresight analysis, and communicating

analysis in the digital age. He collaborated with Richards J. Heuer Jr. in launching the Analysis of Competing Hypotheses (ACH) method, and they are coauthors of *Structured Analytic Techniques for Intelligence Analysis*, 2nd ed., 2015. Mr. Pherson has taught courses at the London School of Economics, Liverpool Hope University, England; the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin; Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid; and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He developed and holds the patent for a suite of collaborative Web-based software tools, TH!NK Suite(R). Mr. Pherson is also President of Pherson Associates, LLC and a founding Director of the Forum Foundation for Analytic Excellence. In 2000, he completed a twenty-eight-year career in the Intelligence Community, most recently serving as National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for Latin America. Previously at the CIA, Mr. Pherson managed the production of intelligence analysis on topics ranging from global instability to Latin America, served on the Inspector General's staff, and developed and implemented a strategic planning process for the CIA. He is the recipient of the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal for his service as NIO for Latin America and the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal. Mr. Pherson received his AB from Dartmouth College and his MA in International Relations from Yale University.

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