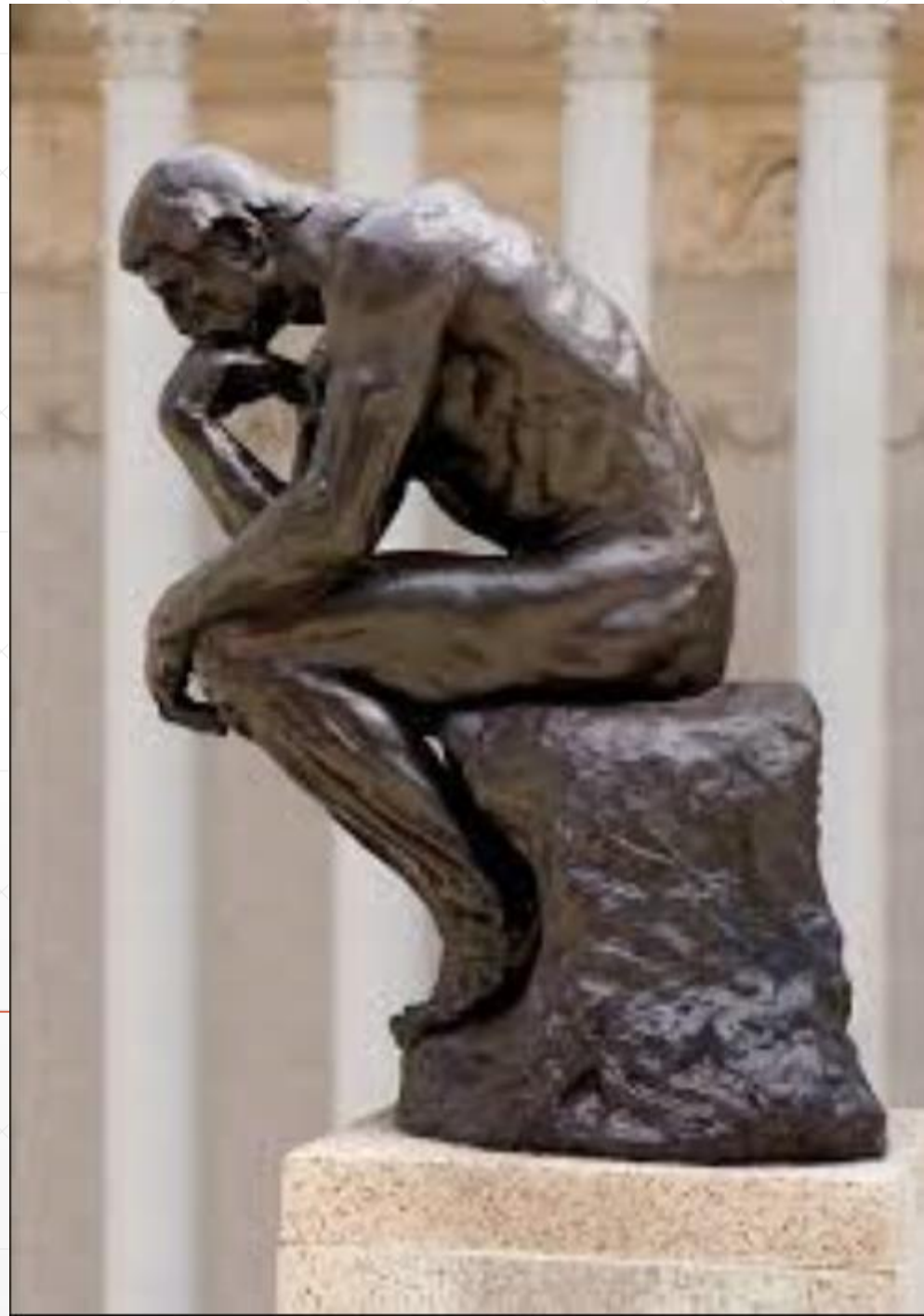


Strategic Thinking

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Senior Security Studies Course
18 November 2019



Agenda

- **What is strategic thinking?**
 - **The elements of strategic thinking**
 - **Strategic thinking and crisis management**
-

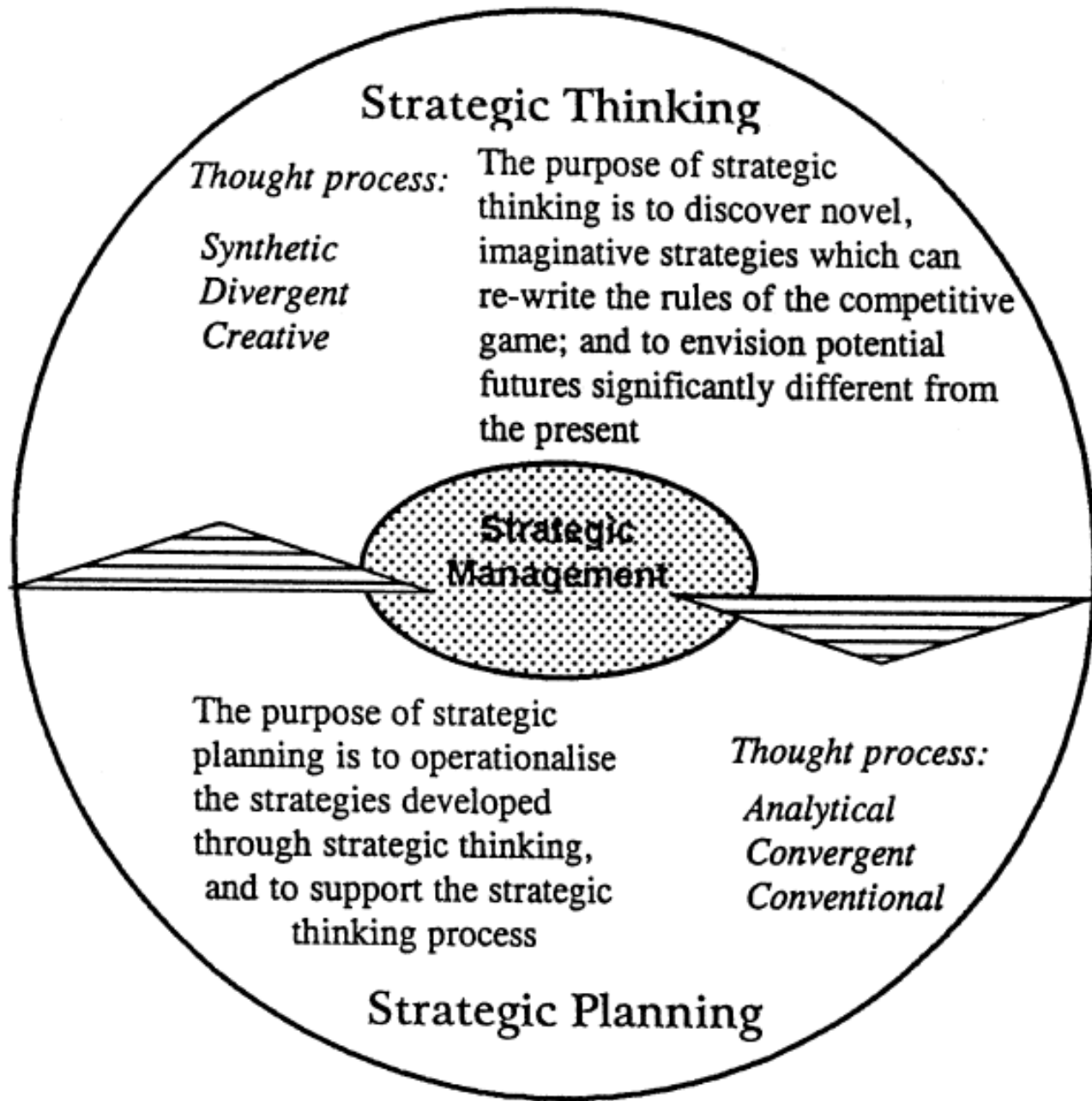
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What Is Strategic Thinking?

- **Usually associated with and contrasted to strategic planning:**
 - “Strategic planning ... is an analytical process....
Its outcome is a plan.
 - “Strategic thinking is... a synthesizing process utilizing intuition and creativity whose **outcome is ‘an integrated perspective of the enterprise.’**”

Source: Jeanne M. Liedtka. 1998. “Strategic Thinking: Can it Be Taught?, *Long Range Planning* 31(1), pp. 120-129, p. 122.



Strategic Thinking and Strategic Planning

Source: Loizos Heracleous. 1998. "Strategic Thinking or Strategic Planning," in *Long Range Planning* 31(3), 481-487, p. 485.

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- What is strategic thinking?
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Strategic Thinking Comprises Five Elements

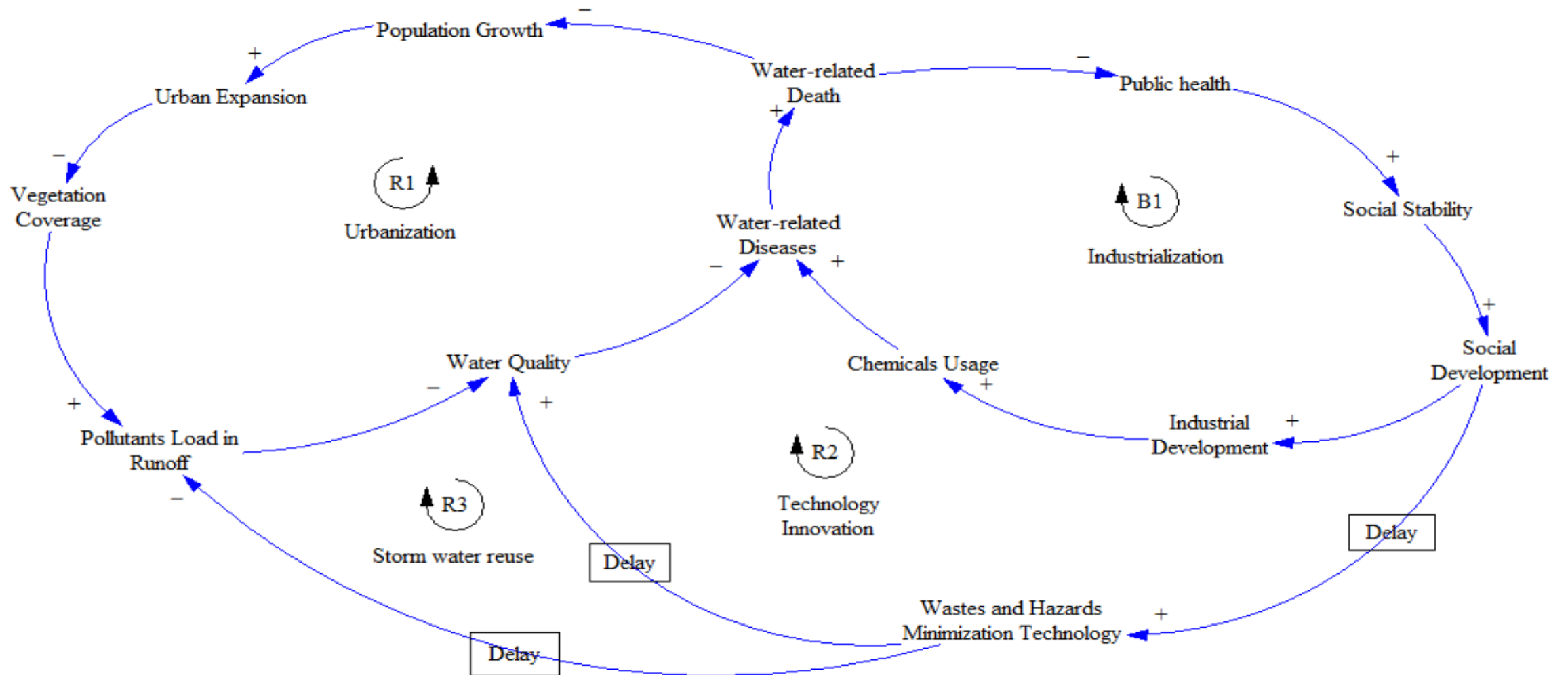
- 1. A systems perspective**
- 2. A focus on intent**
- 3. Thinking in time**
- 4. Hypothesis testing**
- 5. Intelligent opportunism**

Source: Jeanne M. Liedkta.
1998. "Strategic Thinking: Can
it Be Taught?", *Long Range
Planning* 31(1), pp. 120-129.

1. Strategic Thinking Requires a Systems Perspective

- **Need to know what variables interact and can be acted upon.**
 - **Need to understand the level of complexity involved and the potential for unintended consequences.**
 - **Need to recognize stakeholders.**
 - **Need to intelligently identify opportunities.**
 - **Note that the system to be mapped is shaped by your intent.**
 - **Allows you to test hypotheses by asking, “How will X affect the system.?”**
-

Example, Systems Perspective: Water Quality Causal Loop



Source: [Majid Baseer. 2017. "Analysis of Water Security Using Causal Loop Diagram"](#)



Example, Systems Perspective: Idealized Risk Assessment Actor Network

Source:

[Tim Prior and Florian Roth. 2013. Preparing for Disasters in Global Cities. Zurich: Center for Security Studies](#)

Example, Systems Perspective: Domain Mapping Afghanistan Stability



Source:
Dr. Deon
Canyon,
APCSS

2. Strategic Thinking Requires a Focus on Intent

“To resolve a crisis, you need to identify what a good outcome will be. In other words, ask the question: what does good look like? We call this the Strategic Intent.”

--Crisis-solutions.com

- **How do I want to change the system?**
 - **What do I want to happen?**
 - **How should I frame the problem?**
 - **How should I communicate it?**
-

3. Strategic Thinking Requires Thinking in Time

- **The future system must evolve from the present.**
 - **The present system derives from the past**
 - **The past and the present constrain strategic intent.**
 - **Your vision of potential futures depends on your understanding of the past and present.**
-

Example, Thinking in Time: Kiribati Sea Level Rise

Past



-- [E. Weber. 2016. "Only a pawn in their games? environmental \(?\) migration in Kiribati – past, present and future," Die Erde 147:2, pp. 153-164, p. 154.](#)

Present



Source: [P. Plastrik. 2018. "Kiribati: 'We Might Be the First Nation to Disappear, But Not the Last,' in Life After Carbon \(April 27\).](#)

Example, Thinking in Time: Kiribati Future (?)



Source: [J. Ryall](#). 2013. [“Saving Kiribati: a blueprint to rescue sinking state,”](#) in [The Telegraph](#) (Sep 14).

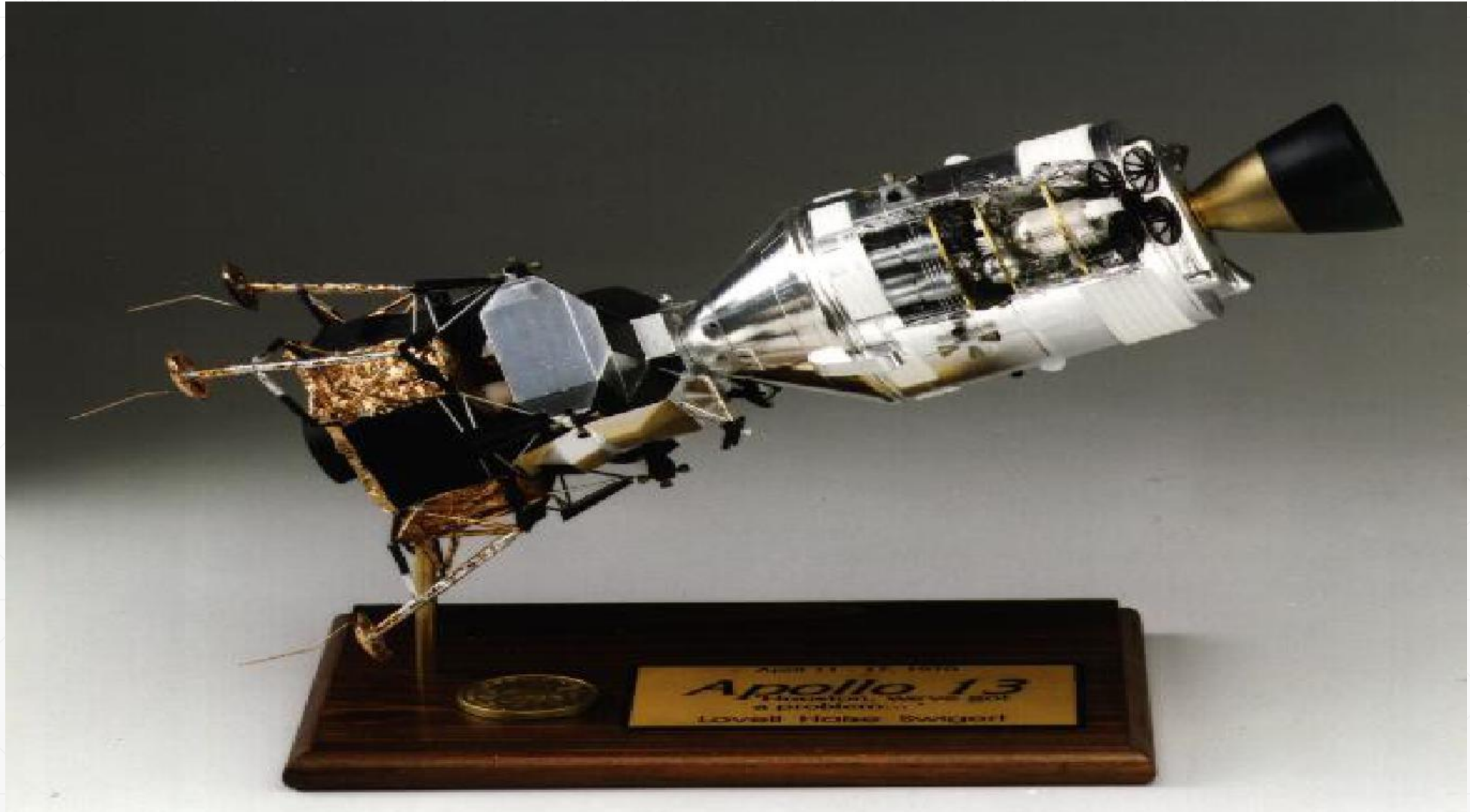
4. Strategic Thinking Is Hypothesis Driven

- **Form of an hypothesis: If X, then Y.**
 - **Ask “What if X ?”**
 - **Cast a scenario to explore the consequences of the change.**
 - **Use the system diagram to explore second and third order consequences.**
-

5. Strategic Thinking Employs Intelligent Opportunism

- **Think not of prior intent, but continuously develop agendas of issues, aspirations, challenges and individual intentions.** —
Ralph Stacey in Liedtka, p. 123.
 - **Consistent with understanding and managing a complex, dynamic and multi-minded system.**
 - **Another reason to encourage management team diversity.**
-

5. Intelligent Opportunism, Example: Apollo 13 Rescue



5. Intelligent Opportunism, Example: Apollo 13 Rescue

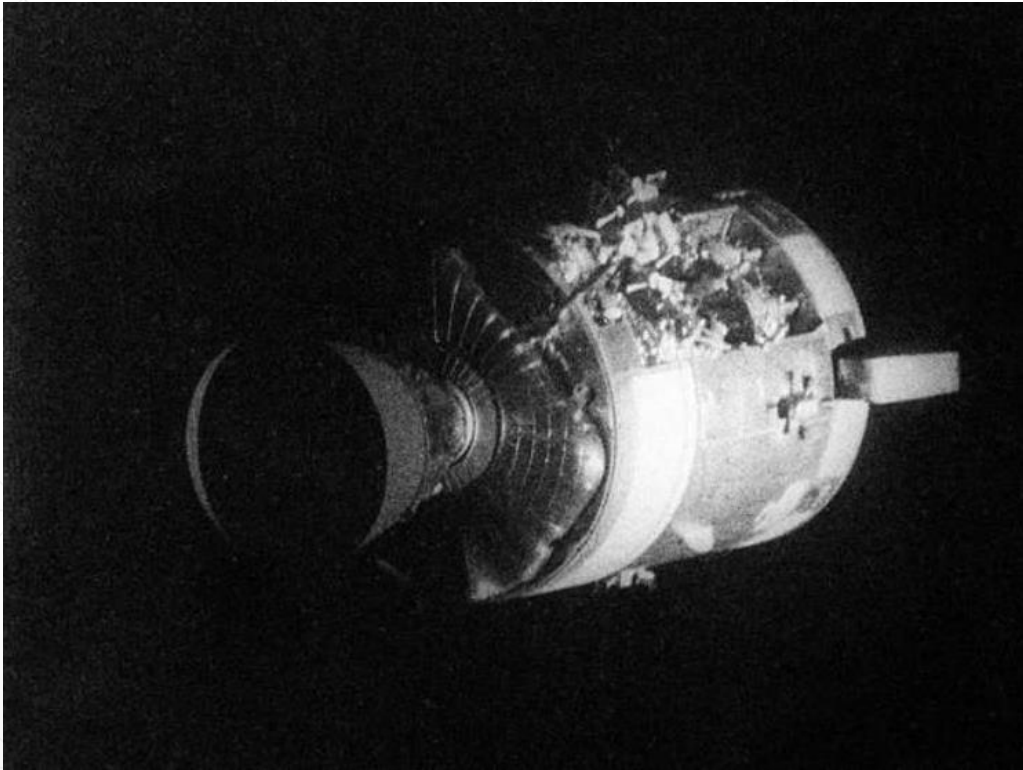


Image: NASA



Image: NASA in [Newsweek 13 April 2018](#)

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Crisis Management Demands Strategic Thinking

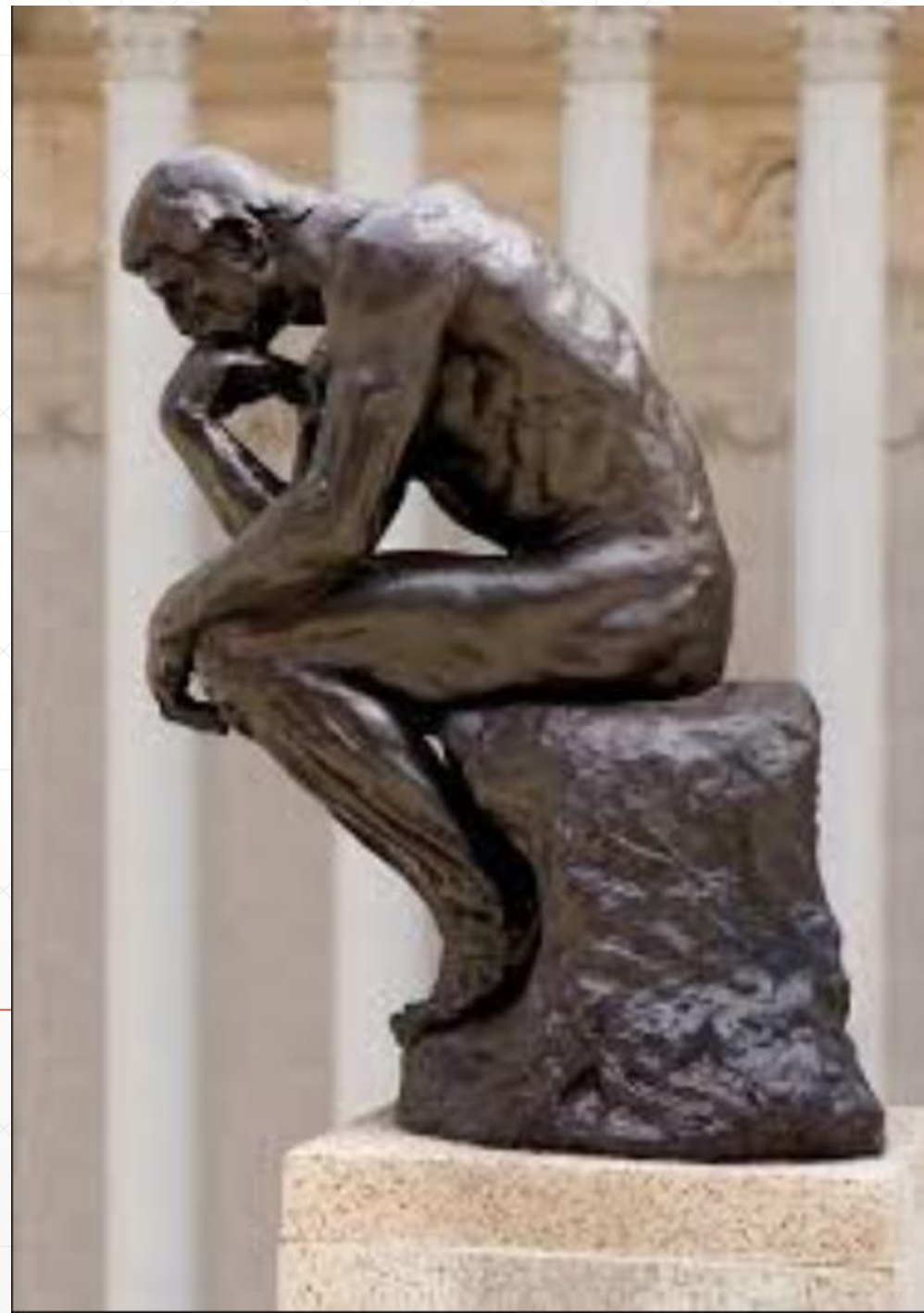
- In a crisis the status quo of a socio-environmental system has been disrupted.
 - An effective crisis manager must:
 - Comprehend the system.
 - Understand connections between the present, the *status quo ante* (the past) and possible futures.
 - Formulate an intent – e.g., to restore, to mitigate, to adapt, to improve.
 - Be hypothesis driven – use scenarios to test “what if ... ?”
 - Take advantage of contextual factors or events that may arise.
 - Be able to clearly communicate your plans and actions.
-

Summary – How to Think Strategically

- **Identify the problem.**
 - Use a systems approach to **understand the problem** in its historical context
 - **Forecast possible scenarios** over time.
 - Given the problem, the system, the context and the scenarios, **assess the opportunities** to influence or manage the system to achieve your intended outcome.
 - **Reiterate.** Formulate hypotheses (If...then) and test them against the system and scenarios.
-

Crisis Communications

Mary Markovinovic
Senior Security Studies Course
18 November 2019



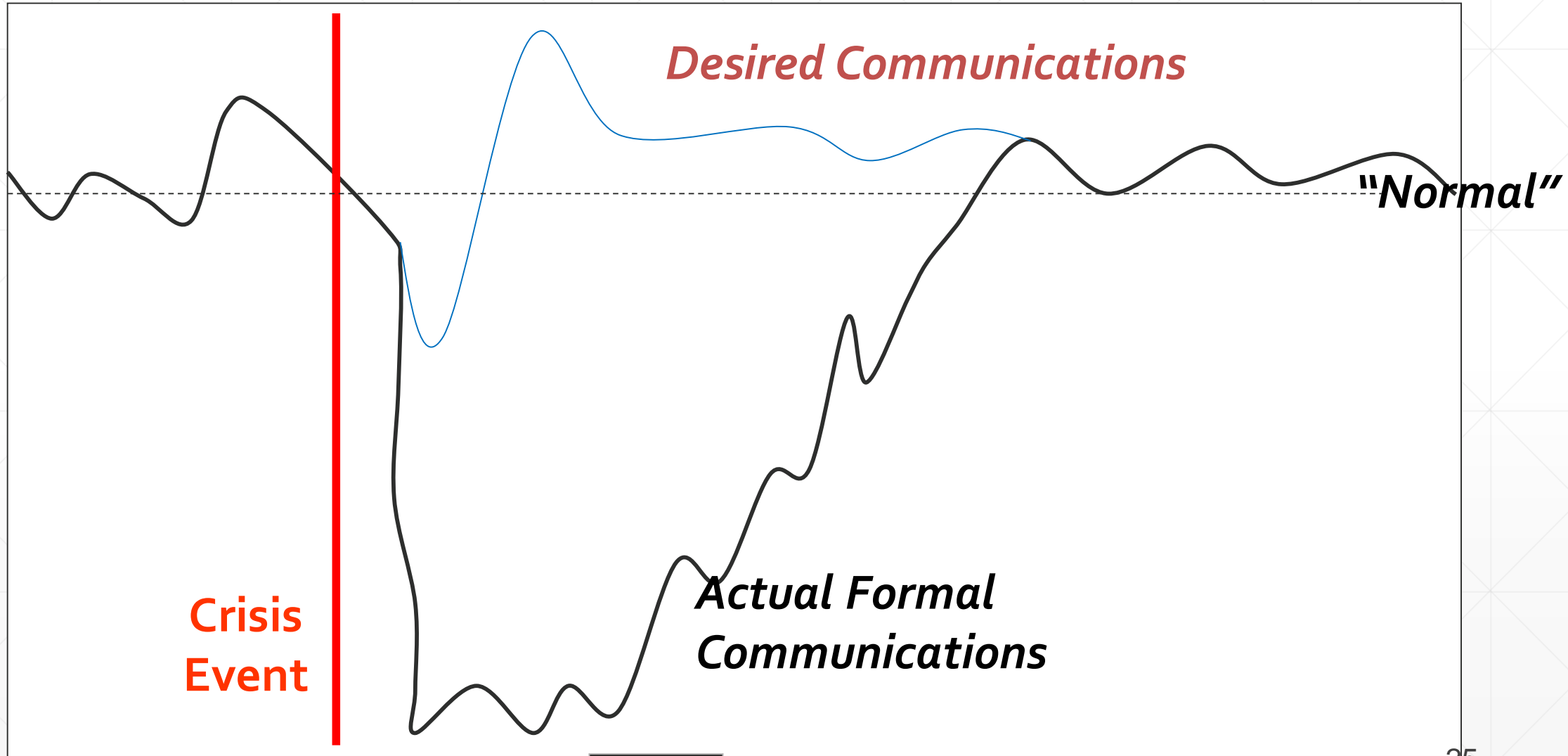
Why is it important?

“Ineffective communications is the primary contributor to project failure one third of the time, and had a negative impact on project success more than half the time.”

---Project Management Institute 2013 study

“Communication Gap”

Communications Intensity



Crisis Event

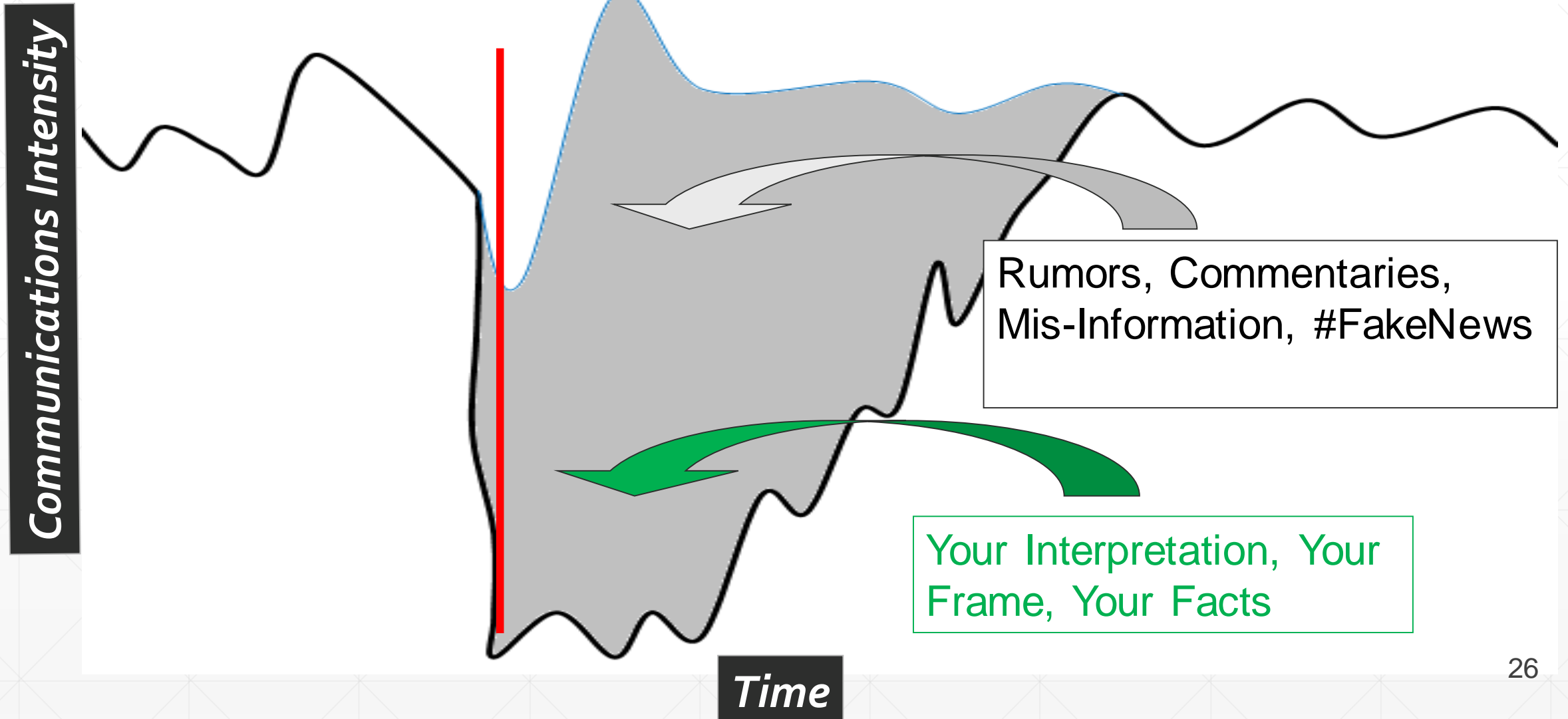
Desired Communications

"Normal"

Actual Formal Communications

Time

Filling The "Communication Gap"



Principles for Crisis Communications

- **Speak First**

- Speed is critical – minutes & hours matter
- Provide as much information to the public about government response (within reason)



Oslo, Norway bombings



“An unanswered claim will always be presumed true.”

-- Cori Dauber, *Communications Professor & Author*

Principles for Crisis Communications

- **Clarify Later**
 - Follow-up with press conferences as needed.
 - Ensure all stakeholders are involved & on the same message.



Press conference with Hishammuddin Hussein following the disappearance of the Malaysia Airline MH370.

Principles for Crisis Communications

- **More things to remember:**
 - Acknowledge Uncertainty/
Don't over-reassure
 - Don't downplay an incident
 - Don't sell yourself as the only true expert on the case.



New Orleans city officials gather around Mayor Ray Nagin and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco during a hurricane press conference at New Orleans City Hall, August 27, 2005.

“The condition most conducive to panic isn’t bad news; it is conflicting messages from those in authority.” – Barbara Reynolds, CDC spokesperson, 2002.

Principles for Crisis Communications

- **Don't lie** – the truth will eventually be revealed



Risk Communication: Key Concepts

When people are stressed and concerned, they typically:

- (1)...want to know that you care...before they care what you know
- (2)...have difficulty hearing, understanding, and remembering information
- (3)...trust most those willing to acknowledge the importance of uncertainty

Who is your audience?

- Who needs to receive or understand this information?
- Who are the influencers?
- Who are their influencers?
- How do they want to received information?
- Who do they want to receive it from?



Synchronize the Plan

- Interagency coordination to synchronize efforts.
- Coordinate strategic planning for both domestic and international audiences.



Responding to the Media

- Offer current facts & plan
- Respond to public mood
- Offer realistic assessment even while offering hope
- Be willing to speak from the heart



“You will have heard me say in the media that, yes, this is an event that has happened in Christchurch, that this has happened to our Muslim community. But you are us. So we feel deeply in our hearts what has happened to you. We feel grief. We feel injustice. We feel anger. And we share that with you.”

-- Jacinda Arden, New Zealand Prime Minister, March 16, 2019

Common Questions During a Crisis

- What happened?
- How does this affect...?
- Am I safe?
- How do I protect myself and my family?
- Who caused this?
- Can you fix it?
- Who is in charge?
- Has it stopped?
- Why did this happen?

From *77 Questions you'll be asked in a Crisis* – Dr Vincent Cavello.

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/communications/cerc/journalistquestions.doc>

Exercise: Strategic Thinking and Messaging to Minimize Impact of Projected Asteroid Strike



Image source:
[Science Alert](#)

Back up Slides



“The purpose of strategic thinking is to discover novel, imaginative strategies which can re-write the rules of the competitive game; and to envision potential futures significantly different from the present.”

Loizos Heracleous. 1998. “Strategic Thinking or Strategic Planning,” in *Long Range Planning* 31(3), 481-487, p. 485.

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-

Strategic Thinking and Strategic Planning



In preparing for battle, I have always found
that plans are useless but planning is
indispensable.

(Dwight D. Eisenhower)

The Importance of Systems Thinking

“The potential for damage wrought by well-intentioned but parochial managers optimizing their part of the system at the expense of the whole is substantial.”

--- Jeane M. Liedtka. 1998. “Strategic Thinking: Can It Be Taught?”

Example, Strategic Intent: Climate Crisis

- **Ensure average global temperature does not exceed 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial measures.**
- **All actors should collaborate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Minimize the occurrence of climate-related migration.**

Note that your intent helps guide your choice of system analysis tool(s).

Your intent helps determine your frame – “What kind of a problem is this?”

Example, Strategic Intent: South China Sea

[China exhibits] a strategic intent to achieve maritime superiority within the ‘first island chain’ and increasingly project power at longer ranges.

Source: [T. Chai. 2018. “2019 forecast: China’s South China Sea Strategy,” in Foreign Brief \(Dec 28\).](#)



Crisis Communication Planning

Process

- Acceptance – this is an issue that needs to be dealt with
- Plan carefully and evaluate performance
- Have a Message – talk process
- Speak clearly and with compassion

People

- Listen to the audience
- Let the Public be part of the solution

External Factors

- Social Media Awareness & Counter Play
- Manage Media Anxiety – Not the Media

Synchronizing Images and Actions

- Photos or videos are important ways to share your message.
- Make sure the intent of your message or won't be mis-framed or misinterpreted.



Intent: then President Bush surveying damage of Hurricane Katrina.

Interpretation: The President is too far above us to care.

Manage Media Anxiety

- You cannot manage content, but you can manage the “anxiety” that surrounds the news story.
- Provide “anxiety relief” with quick response, information, briefings, and photo opportunities.

