

Project White Horse 084640

Chapter 1

Part 2 of 2

The Constant Gardener

Indian Country

Simple to the verge of being trivial, to determine how to get somewhere, you must first know where you are – simple - yes, trivial- maybe, but no less true. At its most basic, *triangulation* is a process for determining, within the accuracy of the observations in determining the three lines, the boundary lines of your position on the face of the earth.

Part One “triangulated” war with the Clausewitzian trinity of military, government, and the people. In addition, without so stating, it also established the three linked elements of relationship of people, a possible long period of war or world conflict, and the actors or responders required to insure the safety of those people – military, civil agencies and a civil-military response team.

From a different angle, if you pick any two related subjects, note the dynamic as you add a third element: man-woman, add children; peace-war, add nuclear weapons; aviation-aircraft carrier operations, add night. Change the third element and the whole line of thought on the initial two relationships changes. In my own experience, changing night to day was a transition from “only your laundry man knows for sure” to “more fun than you can possibly have- with your clothes still on!”

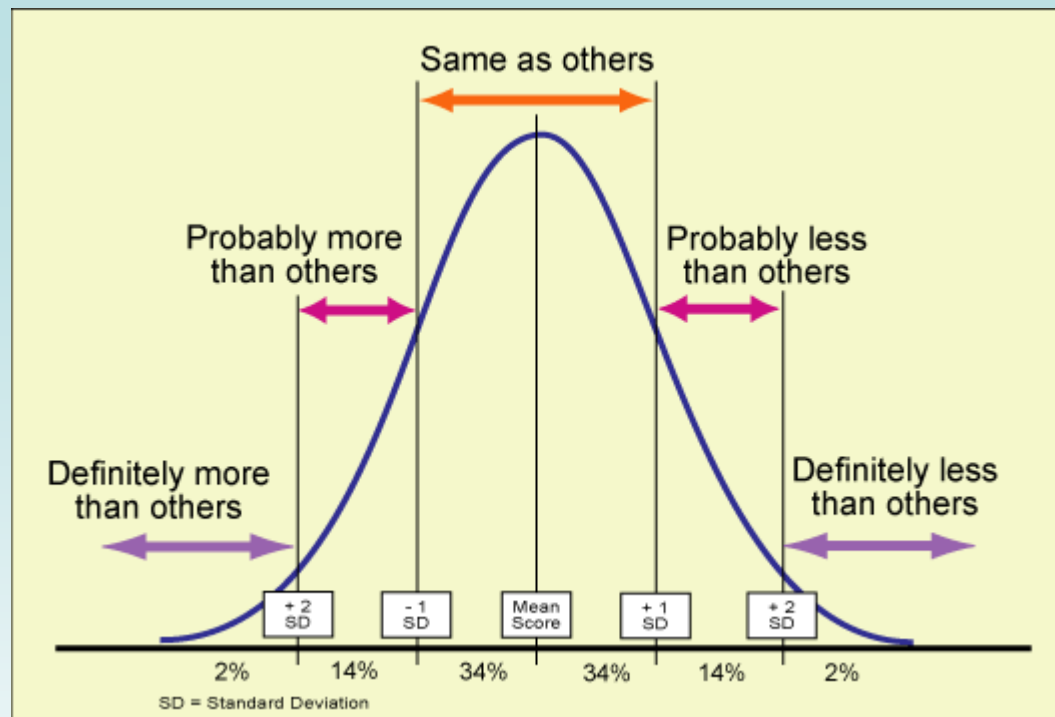
A quote long used with no idea the originator – “How you think about the future, determines what you do in the future” – is a constant underlying thought embedded within Project White Horse 084640 and one that drives the selection of the project boundary triangle elements of *situation, actors and time dimension*. Discussed below, White Horse research and writing is triangulated by 1) events characterized as *Worst Cases*; 2) the decision maker idea of *Commander Leader Teams (CLTs)*; and 3) the added element, the notion of time, taken from special operations analysis, encompassed within the concept of *Relative Superiority*.

Consider one last modifying thought. Problem solving, for very good reasons, usually is based on dealing with issues most likely to occur - the expected normal - yet in almost all situations and particularly those of the human condition, immensely more is learned about character, capability, recovery in an hour observing “systems response under stress” than in days observing normal problem solving in response to predictable events. Major breakthroughs in thought in economics and physics by John Maynard Keynes and Albert Einstein respectively, occurred as a result of pursuing phenomena outside the “bell curve.” By investigating “outliers” and extrapolating back, they changed the normal world.

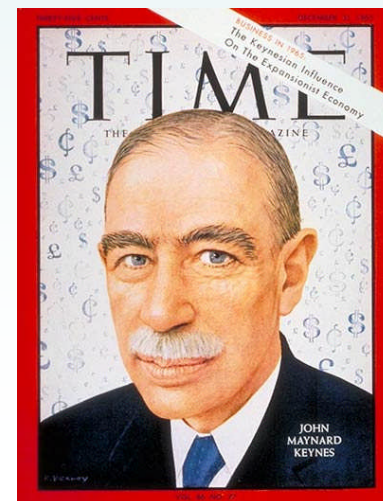
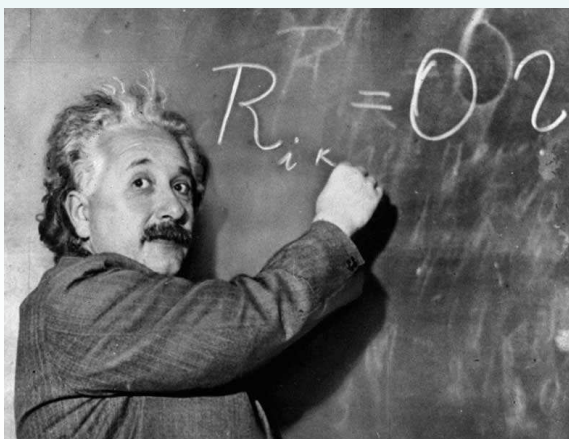
White Horse’s author is a far cry from genius, but it seems reasonable to attempt to learn by following such examples. The target set - level of events and the response portion with time critical issues - may be highly

Problem solving

• *Normal*: rule out extraordinary, look at normal, most likely



• *Einstein, Keynes:*
Consider extremes
to understand the
world's properties



unlikely, but consider the following:

- What does it say about preparedness if all contingency planning is based on assessment of probable events?
- And then there is uncertainty and random events, so called Black Swans, with the properties of large impact, incomputable probabilities, and surprise effect. Their ability to occur is actually a function, not of being outside the Bell Curve, but of “not being imagined” at all.
- If 90% of the opportunity to make a difference in response is gone when a worst case occurs, what is the likelihood of positive outcome in that remaining 10% if the response is based on something never thought about.

Worst case thinking should be *Possibilistic* NOT *Probabilistic*. A possibilistic approach implies looking at outliers and the unthinkable and therefore the White Horse triangle is intended to reflect an “outlier model” approach.

Defining situation: The idea of Worst Cases

Disasters aren't special –worst cases happen frequently. Attributes of worst cases are:

- Inconceivability
- Uncontrollability
- Social identification

Most noteworthy, *Worst Cases are never reasonable.*

How we think about “worst cases” will be a major topic of discussion with a dedicated chapter but the idea of “worst Cases” requires some preliminary comment. All organizations do some type of worst case planning and the later chapter will discuss the impact of planning approach as a factor in creating a learning environment for critical decision makers.

As a boundary condition for White Horse, worst cases are the necessary limiting situational frame of reference. It is not to say that time critical decision making is not necessary in lesser events, but for this effort, sticking to worst cases is intended to define an operational environment in which multiple leaders with diverse requirements have likely equal interest and same level concerns in problem solving mitigated by time criticality.

A step further – what types of worst cases are of concern: acts of terrorism or all hazards? Not limiting the discussion was recommended by several readers including the Sheriff of Ventura County California, I agree, not only because that’s where I live (hey), but also because there is a significant issue of how we too easily extrapolate from lower to higher levels of emergencies that impacts time critical decision process and requires investigation and discussion. While acts of terrorism imply *worst case*, to frame the extrapolation issue, we need the night and day ramifications of say Category One and Category Five Hurricanes as

vehicles to consider the differences in command control and decision making processes. Time criticality may be a function of minutes or hours for terrorism, but the critical decisions during Katrina, I submit, were no less time sensitive.

Within the specific framework of terrorism response, as related to worst cases, the question of difference in an armed bank robbery and armed terrorists must be on the table for discussion. This is the issue of the “human factor” and the transnational nature of terrorism and the manifestation of “total war” anywhere, anytime, anyplace.

Finally, from “total war” under the umbrella of “worst cases” comes consideration for the type responder, i.e., military, civil, or civil-military. This effort uses reference material focused on guerilla warfare and special operations, but is focused on response education and training needs related to Homeland Security and Homeland Defense. The issues that would stem from a worst case requiring both law enforcement AND military tactical response (in addition to support) are of particular interest.

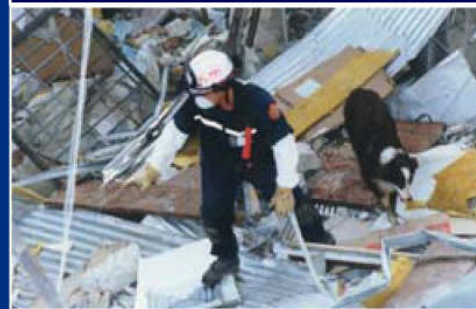
Whether civil, military or combined, first response to all hazards is dictated by the National Response Plan (Figure 2) to utilize the National Incident Management System or NIMS. Given “worst cases,” the response effort can be assumed multi-jurisdictional and at Federal, State, and Local levels. The decision making and directional process encompassing

NRP: The Full Spectrum of Incident Management

Pre-Incident



Incident



Post-Incident



Prevention

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

Mitigation



Homeland
Security

Figure 2 Incident Time Line

multi-agency senior representatives within the incident command system or NIMS is defined as “Unified Command.” As the second Project White Horse 084640 boundary condition of “actor”, first responder tactical leadership and their relation with Unified Command and other potential crisis decision makers will be addressed as Commander Leader Teams (CLT). The discussion of this term and concept borrows extensively from the long term effort of General Federic Brown (USA, Ret) in regard to recognition of the value of teams composed of leaders in complex battlespace decision making.

First Response Decision Makers: Commander Leader Teams

The Incident Command System has been in existence for some time and is practiced by many states. In the state of California, ICS is used almost daily on both small incidents and when large events occur. Pre-White Horse exercise examination led to focus on command control issues and education/training needs in regard to response to terrorist attack. From the exercise conducted in the co-civil military harbor at Port Hueneme,

Asymmetric Warfare Initiative Exercise 2003 (AWI-03) Final Report:

It was noted repeatedly in the post exercise interviews and after action reports that the exercise presented a unified command problem significantly different and more complex than most players had previously seen. This included organizational issues, communications problems, and situational awareness capability. While the experience in unified command varied, it is offered for consideration that the unified command response to terrorism is different from other crisis and therefore greater emphasis should be given to complex terrorism based exercises and education. Every effort should be made to increase the opportunities for exploration, learning and exposure related to the unified command processes through dynamic, complex terrorism based events.

... There is a need to recognize that terrorism will require a “ we must come together immediately!” type of response.

Reflected in the exercises and certainly in a real catastrophe, particularly a terrorism attack, but also noted in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, there is the distinct possibility that for **some period of time** the nature of the situation will more closely resemble (and indeed for terrorism, must be considered until proven different) a battlefield than a crime, accident, or disaster scene. Therefore, the decision-action process required may be more military-type “command control” than pure civil incident

management. Further, the “art of command” rather than the “science of control” or the “process of management” will be the specific immediate critical skill necessary.

These observations (confirmed and modified by interviews with senior law enforcement and emergency management participants) led to the conclusion that addition of *military-type command-control process* in public safety education and training would be of benefit. The issue was how to create a learning environment for the civil and further co-civil-military responders given that training and education for the military and civilians is very different.

Military and civilians train, educate, learn with significantly different parameters and constraints, not the least of which are time (civil first responders work 24/7, training comes out of hide and there is no return from deployment for them), budget, and lack of common chain of command. My military background led to the following questions:

1. Can the bloodless battlespace “train to the ace level” concept behind Top Gun, Red Flag, National Training Ctr at Ft Irwin, i.e. the combat training center or “CTC” concept be applied to asymmetric crisis command control learning?

2. Would “first mission” exposure for first responder and emergency manager decision makers provide value added? Consider that given funding constraints, daily normal real world law enforcement, fire response, emergency management, and job rotation, there may be only one opportunity in a three year cycle to expose the candidates. Can one exposure make a difference? Impact of classroom, dynamic simulation?
3. What needs to be included in pre-exercise classroom and simulated command problems to make the learning and training effective? In particular, by who and how are cognitive elements and related decision making in crisis taught?
4. What kind of research would need to be done in this area?

During the examination of the IDA report and its emphasis on adaptability learning requirements, I was immediately struck by the use of the concept of commander leader teams as their target audience. Simply defined, a CLT is team composed of the leaders of other specialized teams

Consider the following:

- Commander/Leader Teams (Army concept as presented by General Brown)
 - Chain of Command – vertical (hierarchical)
 - Traditional chain of command across multiple echelons
 - Unity of effort and unity of command
 - Chain of coordination –Horizontal (peer)
 - Independent organizations working to a command goal
 - Unity of effort but not command
 - Chain of functional support – vertical and horizontal
 - Functional support teams based on shared responsibilities
 - Supported and supporting CLTs working together
- Unified Command (National Incident Management System)

“In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multi-agency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multi-agency involvement, unified command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.”

I submit that “CLTs” and the group that comes together in the civil “unified command” structure of incident management are horses of the same breed and color. As the idea of White Horse became clearer, it appeared useful to bound the effort and to address the learning process for decision makers by overlaying CLT learning upon Unified Command learning. Reference to lessons learned for both “911” and Katrina suggest that this juxtaposition (which in essence forces consideration of unity of effort as a function of structures encompassing both *unity* of command and *unified* command) is worthy of exploration for time critical decisions at levels ranging from SWAT to Federal agency level - not just at the more obvious tactical level.

Worst case CLT Time of Response

The outcome desired from this endeavor is a concept for learning that could assist in producing better decisions in all hazards crisis. There is first concern with the impact of not looking at extreme *but possible* outlier disasters, and second, offered for consideration is the notion that by examining time critical worst cases, there is much to be learned about *how to think* about response in crisis. The thought running through evolving

chapters will be that by having exposure to key subjects, the potential members of commander leader teams might adjust how they think in crucial situations. Time criticality as a defining parameter for White Horse is intended as a forcing function by disallowing certain types of thought or action as being time friendly. That is not to say that time of interest is measured in seconds or minutes. While *time critical response* is often (and correctly) a function of fleeting opportunity to catch a bad guy, attack a mobile target, or defend oneself, for this effort, the time frame is a function of the type problem itself. Decisions in a hostage situation or in the pre hours of Katrina have a different scale of relevance but are none-the-less both time-critical.

Adding another degree of complexity to time pressed decision making, studies in cognitive science indicate that in the face of uncertainty, humans have ingrained biases that can easily lead to bad decisions. Sometimes experience sends the wrong answer. The short cuts the brain uses, heuristics, have side effects –biases:

- Importance and probability as a function of ease with which it comes to mind
- Probability of event category as a function of how representative it appears to be, rather than how likely it actually is

- Determination of general rules based on last few observations as descriptive of general distribution
- Hindsight – after the fact overestimation of what should have been known at the time of the event
- Excessive optimism in planning/projecting – elimination of “off-model” risks
 - ascribing failures to randomness, success to skill
- Over estimation of actual knowledge

Two elements are offered as crucial to this view of time and the impact it may have on how we think. First is “orientation” as reflected in OODA loop context and second “relative superiority” as a key aspect of Special Operations.

Orientation is the crucial element of late Air Force Colonel John Boyd’s OODA Loop (observe-orient-decide-act). While much has been made in the last several years about the need to move through this cycle more rapidly than an opponent, the real key is how quickly and effectively can the internal elements of orientation (Figure 3) be analyzed and then synthesized. As stated by Dr. Chet Richards, in any form of competition (particularly rapidly changing military situations), the side that can do the following better than its adversary will create opportunities to achieve decisive results:

1. Keep its world view, or “orientation,” most closely matched to the situation in the real world.

2. Harmonize this orientation in real time throughout the organization.
3. Possess a range of actions or responses that it can intuitively and nearly instantaneously apply to nearly any situation. This means actions at all levels and people taking initiative, not waiting for commands.

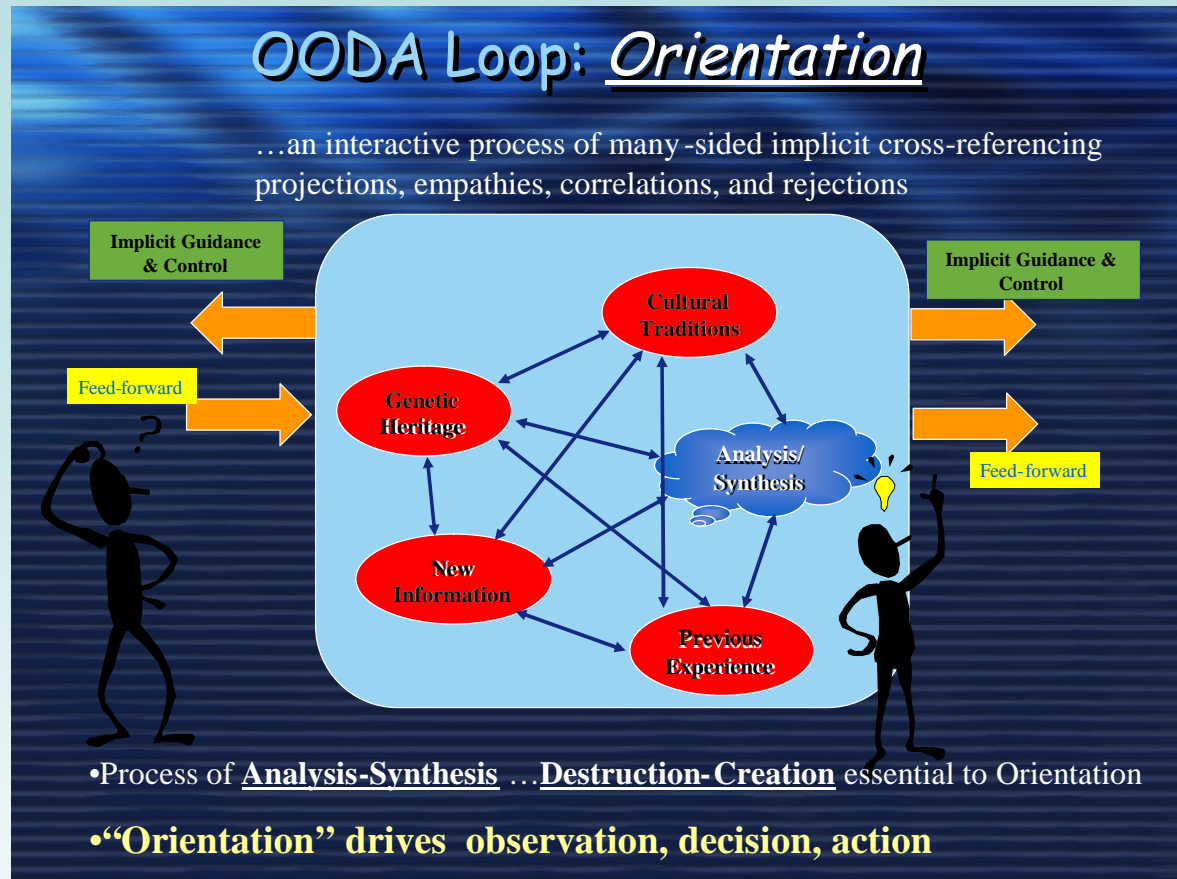


Figure 3 Boyd's Orientation

For *worst case events*, the situation in the real world, (whether terrorist attack or category five hurricane, whether by human initiative and surprise or uncontrollability), places decision makers in a condition of disadvantage, chaos, and uncertainty for some period of unknown time. Borrowed from *SPEC OPS - Case Study in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* by CDR (now Admiral) William McRaven, in this situation the “adversary” has gained at a

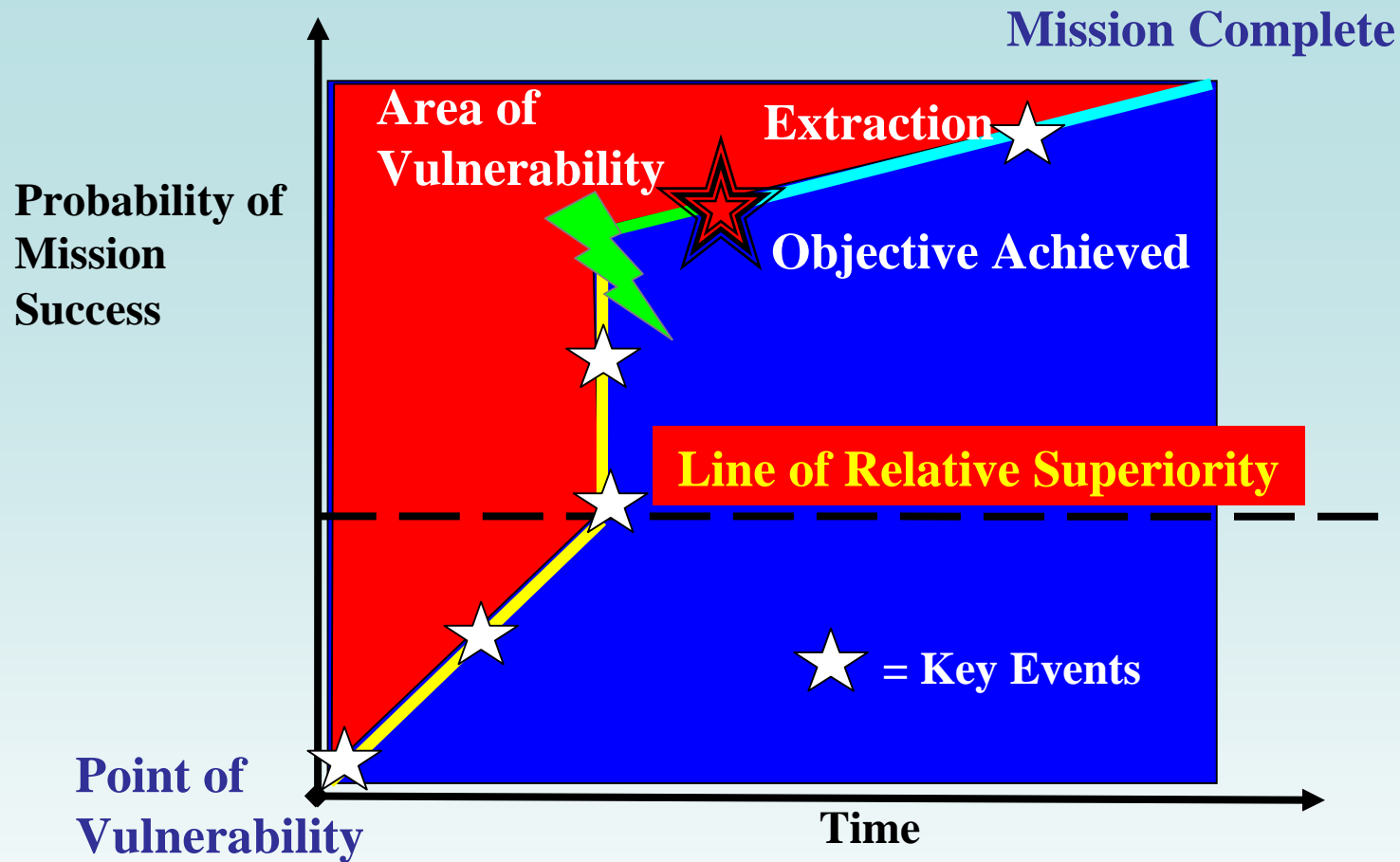


Figure 4 Relative Superiority Graph

pivotal moment, Relative Superiority. The success of the mission depends upon maintaining that superiority until the objective is completed. Therefore, independent of time scale, there now exists a period in time in which the “commander/leader team” must now struggle to correctly orient to the problem, gain situational awareness and regain control.

Admiral McRaven defined “relative superiority” as the condition that exists when an attacking force, generally smaller, gains a decisive advantage over a larger or well-defended enemy... (further) the key for special operations is to gain relative superiority early ...the longer the engagement continues, the more likely the outcome will be affected by the will of the opponent, chance and uncertainty and the larger the area of vulnerability.” Using the graph he developed to help illustrate why certain missions succeed or fail, it is not difficult to characterize a terrorist attack in this manner or even to characterize the pre and early hours of Katrina as a struggle to regain relative superiority.

Consider the following:

- When did the terrorists of American Flight 11 gain relative superiority?
- What allowed the “let’s roll” passengers of the fourth aircraft to regain relative superiority?
- How long (and what were the mitigating circumstances) did it take to wrest relative superiority from Mother Nature in New Orleans?

In closing Chapter One:

The possibility of a terrorist event within the continental United States remains highly probable. The mode of attack can be characterized by the terms “asymmetric” and “asynchronous.” Worst case all-hazards occur all over the world, all the time. The mandated (HSPD-5 and NRP) basis for disaster response for Federal (including military), State, and Local organizations is the National Incident Management System (NIMS). During the early timeframe of a catastrophic event, Incident Commanders will be faced with life-death decisions with only uncertain information. Studies in cognitive science indicate that in the face of uncertainty, humans have ingrained biases that can easily lead to bad decisions.

This “in-work” effort is based upon the examination of certain elements with the desired outcome of exposing potential crisis leadership within the NIMS structure to those developed constructs as beneficial in the asymmetric crisis decision making environment defined as one of chaos and uncertainty and time criticality.

The White Horse outlier battlespace has been defined as one of worst cases, commander leader team decision makers, and a time frame (Figure 5) requiring orientation in the face of severe uncertainty and a fight to gain relative superiority.

NRP: The Full Spectrum of Incident Management

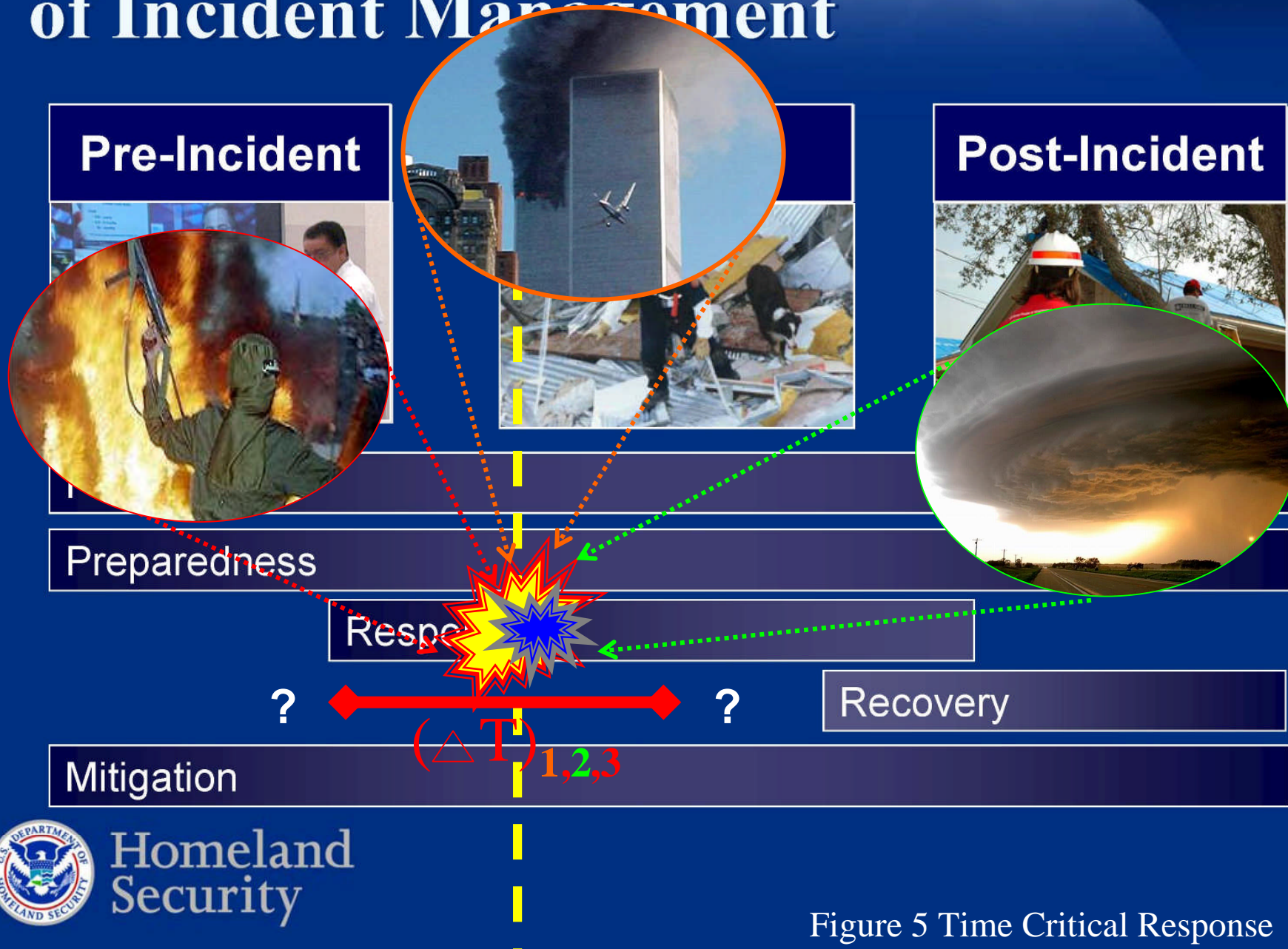


Figure 5 Time Critical Response

Given these boundary conditions and using the following definitions:

- Learning: change in behavior as a result of experience
- Preparedness: availability of all resources, both human and physical, necessary for the management of, or the consequences of, a specific disaster type
- Readiness: instantaneous ability to respond to a suddenly arising major crisis based on locally available, un-prepositioned and un-mobilized countermeasure resources

...it must be asked what value the elements listed in the Introduction, to be discussed in the following chapters, might bring to worst case time critical decision making and how to go about developing that learning process?
The key references are provided.

Project White Horse

084640

“If you’re going to lead a cavalry charge, you better believe you look good on a white horse.”

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