



How to brief your Minister when disaster strikes?

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Objectives

At the end of this masterclass, you will be able to:

- Discuss the role of elected officials and senior leaders in disaster response and recovery, including the overall incident management structure, overarching priorities, essential responsibilities, what to expect and emergency public information principles.
- Outline the main steps of strategic incident planning and decision-making processes used in emergency management, and describe the essential elements of information required by senior leaders and elected officials.
- Identify challenges and best practices in briefing elected officials and senior leaders in emergencies.
- In a simulated disaster scenario, identify the essential elements of information required by a senior leader or elected official, and prepare and conduct a briefing of a cabinet-level official.

Who Is Who?



Who Is Who?

| | Senior Leader/ Elected Official | Senior Executive |
|----------|---|---|
| European | Commission President Council President Commissioner MEP*/EP Delegations* | Director-General Chief of Staff/Cabinet Director* |
| National | President Prime Minister Minister MP/Legislature delegations Ambassador | Secretary-General Director-General Agency Director/Head Flag Officer |
| Regional | Prefect or Commissioner Regional Council Chair | Director-General Agency Director* |
| Local | Mayor City Council Chairperson | Director-General* Agency Director* |

Who Is Who?



Response Overarching Priorities

Life Safety

Unity of Effort

Incident Stabilization

Protect Property and the Environment

Recovery

Incident Management and Coordination

- **Incident Management System** – manages tactical activities that aim to stabilize an incident, save lives, and protect property and the environment
 - Led by one or more Incident Manager(s)
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** – provides incident support activities, including strategic coordination, resource acquisition, and information gathering
 - Led by EOC Director
- **Multiagency Coordination Group or Policy Group** – provides policy guidance to incident personnel, supports resource prioritization and enables decision-making
 - Led by a Senior Leader or Elected Official
- **Public Information System** – ensures coherent, consistent, and accurate messaging and communication with the media and public
 - Led by one or more Public Information Officer(s)

Incident Management and Coordination



What are Senior Leaders/Elected Officials expected to do when disaster strikes?



Situational awareness



Decision-making



Communication



Crisis termination

Senior Leader/Elected Official

Essential Responsibilities

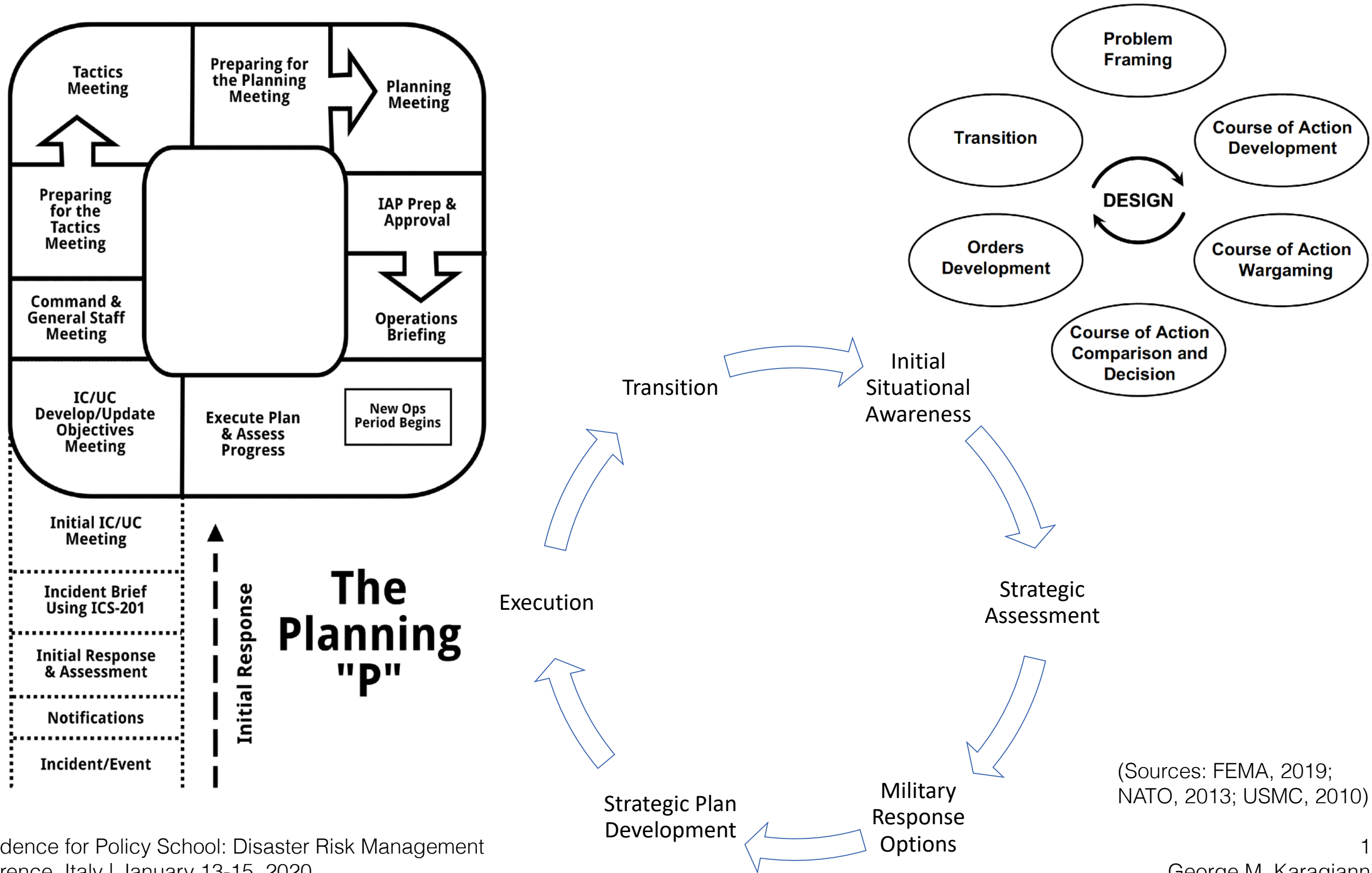
- Ensure the continuity of government.
- Activate specific legal authorities (disaster declarations, evacuations, states of emergency, or other protective actions).
- Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to keep the media and public informed.
- Request assistance from state agencies through mutual aid agreements.
- Resolve any resource allocation conflicts.
- Coordinate with other senior officials and community partners.
- Participate in a Multiagency Coordination Group, if required.

Senior Leader/Elected Official **Decisions**

When disaster strikes, senior leaders/elected officials are typically expected to make decisions, such as:

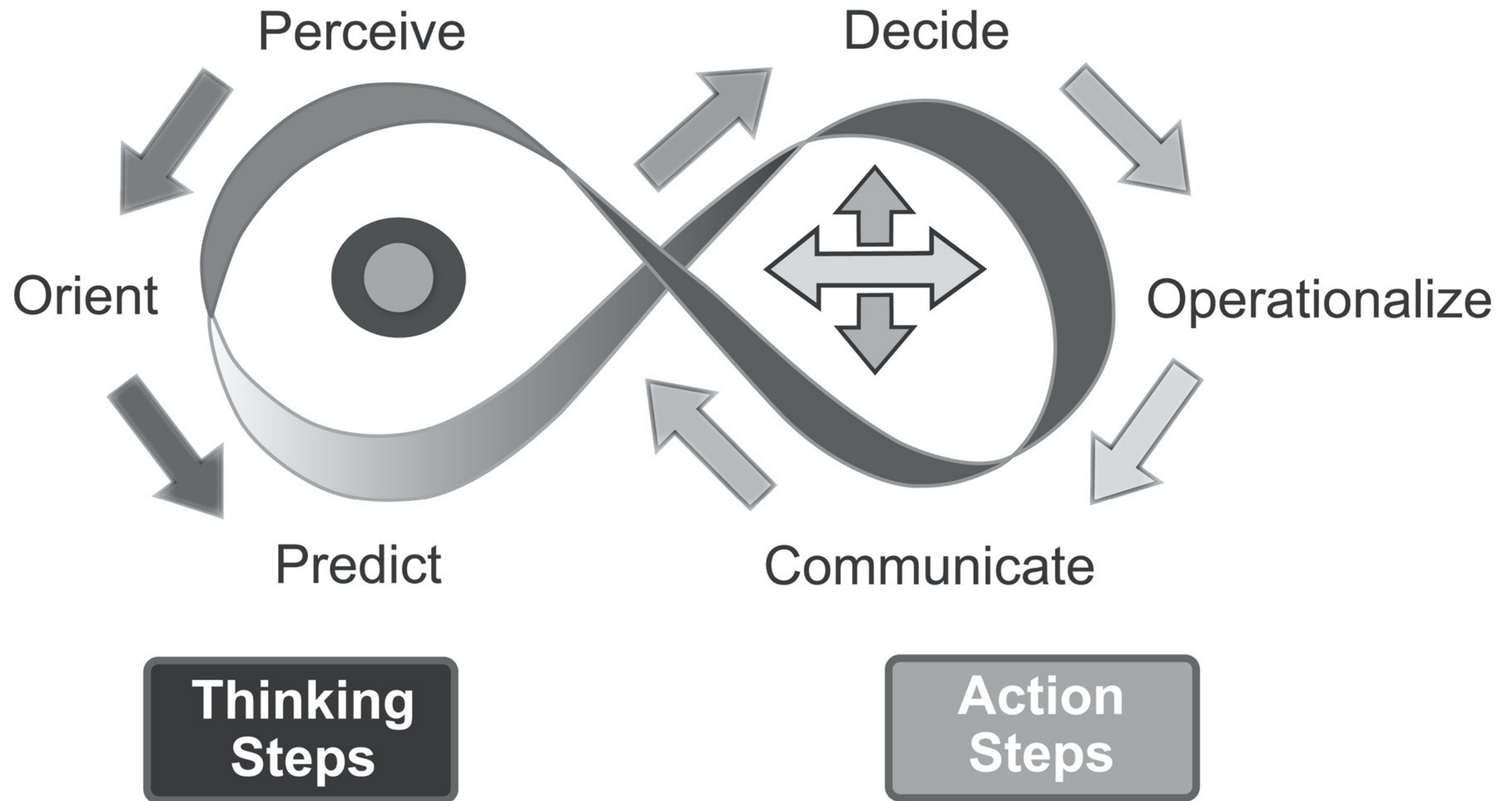
- When/whether to evacuate the jurisdiction.
- When/whether to declare a disaster.
- Set priorities in coordination with other senior officials.
- Take steps to ensure the organization follows national and international restrictions and requirements.

Incident Planning Processes



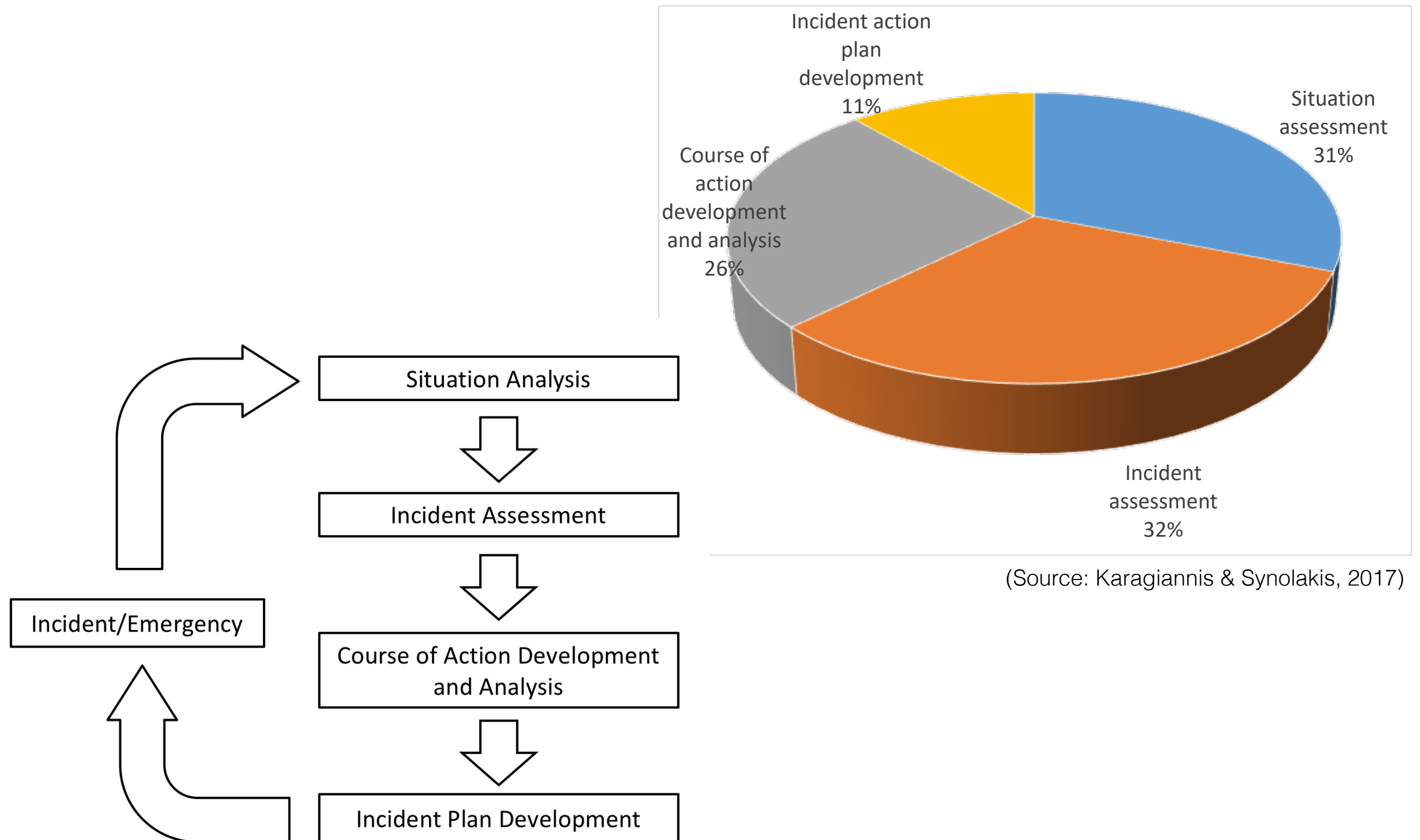
(Sources: FEMA, 2019; NATO, 2013; USMC, 2010)

POP-DOC loop

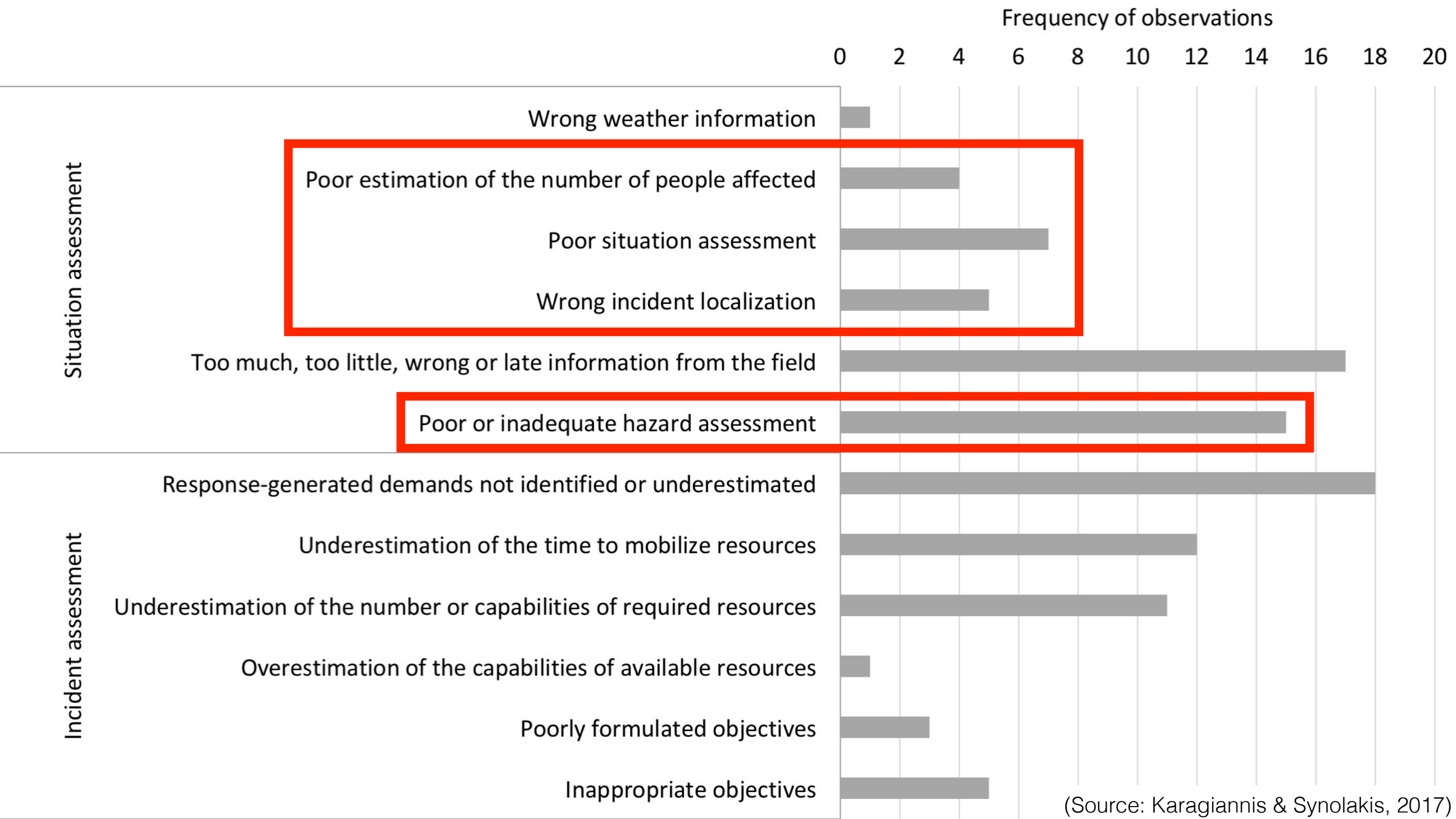


(Source: Marcus, McNulty, Henderson & Barry, 2019)

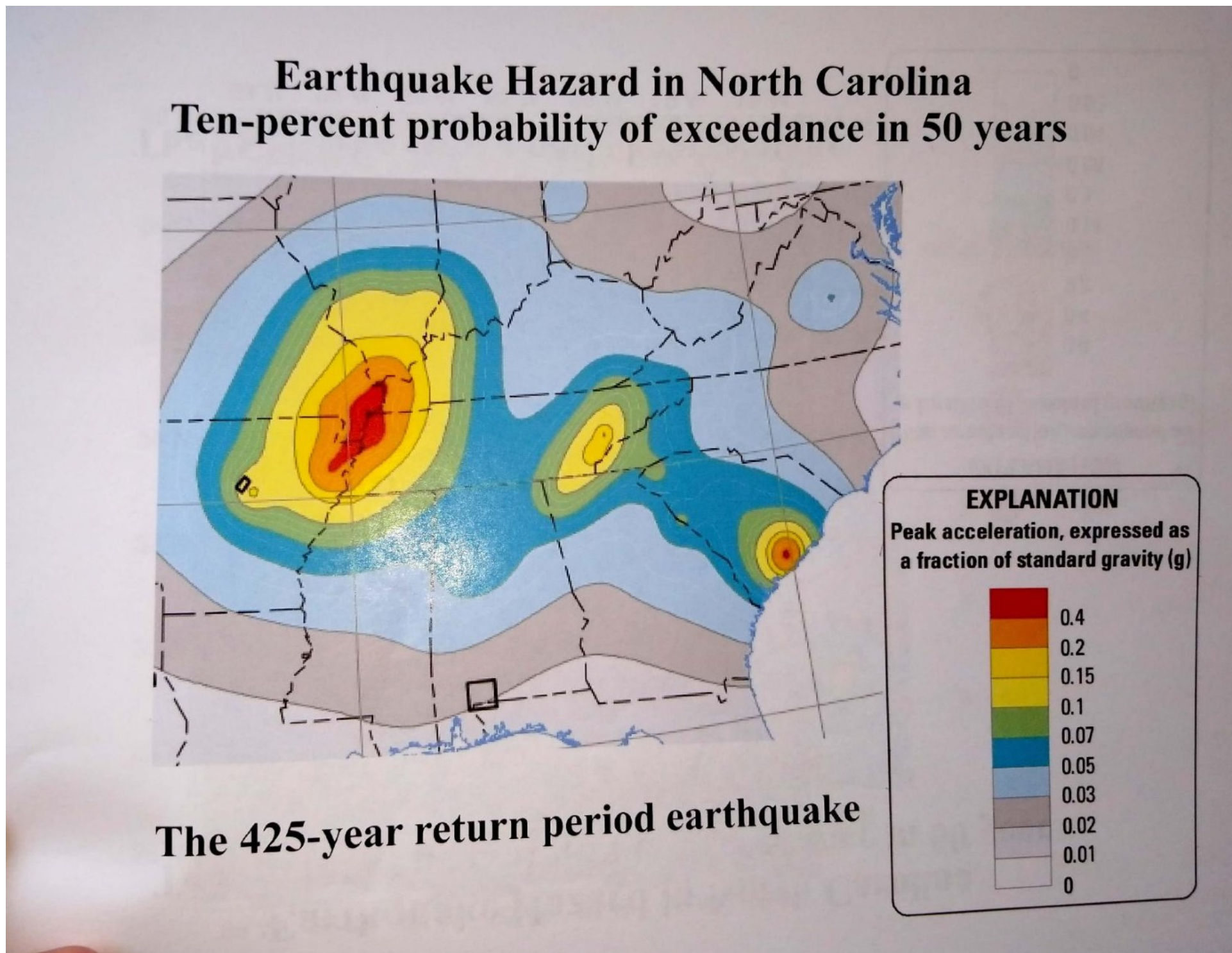
Common Pitfalls in Incident Planning



Twenty Challenges in Incident Planning



Disaster Science “Illiteracy”



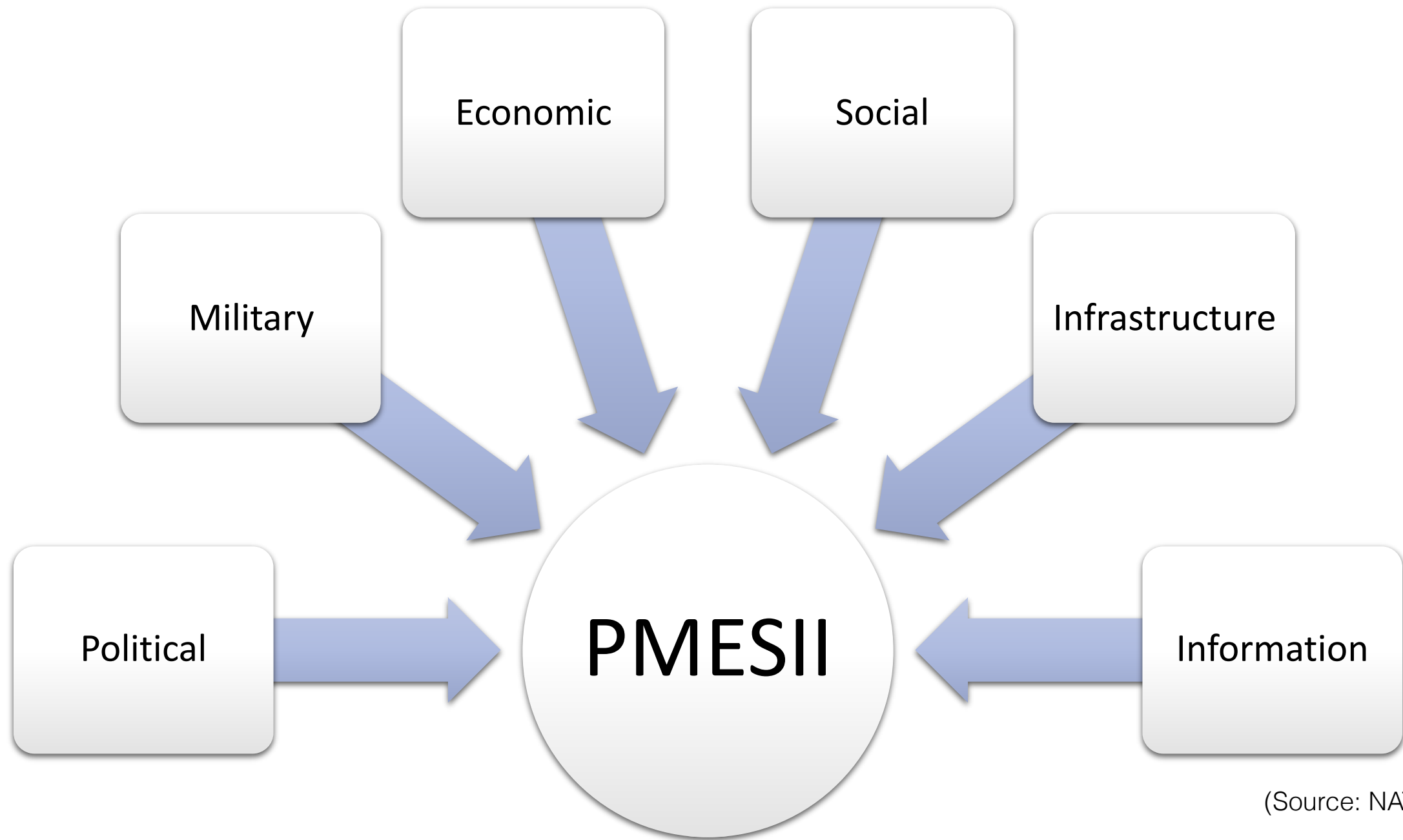
(Source: LinkedIn, 2019)

Domestic Incidents:

Essential Elements of Information

- Incident type and location
- Lifesaving needs
 - E.g. evacuation and search and rescue.
- Status of critical infrastructure
 - E.g. transportation, utilities, communication systems, and fuel and water supplies.
- Status of critical facilities
 - E.g. police and fire stations, medical providers, water and sewage treatment facilities, and media outlets.
- Potential cascading effects
 - E.g. dams and levees, facilities producing or storing hazardous materials.
- Number of displaced individuals and estimated damage to homes
- Action already taken or in progress
- Situation development: most likely and worst-case scenario

International crises: **Engagement Space**



(Source: NATO, 2013)

A Senior Leader/Elected Official briefing

- It IS NOT a scientific or professional conference, workshop, lecture or invited talk.
- Unless you are part of the emergency response system:
 - You will get minimal if no preparation time at all.
 - You will not have the time to develop a model, let alone run calculations.
 - You may only be able to provide an educated guess.
- There is usually not a prescriptive format.
- The purpose may vary:
 - Situation assessment
 - Incident Assessment
 - Course of Action Development & Analysis
 - Incident Plan Development

Best practices

- Take an emergency management class!
- Get to know your emergency management partners and stakeholders.
- Prior to the briefing
 - Determine the Essential Elements of Information of your audience.
 - Check how long you will have.
 - Prepare your presentation.
 - You most likely won't have the opportunity to show slides.
 - However, maps, charts and graphics might be useful.
- Stick to your area of expertise!
- Stay focused on the purpose of the briefing.

Common pitfalls

- Structuring and delivering the briefing as a conference presentation, university class or invited talk.
- Getting into the details of the math.
- Assuming your audience knows more than the basics of your area of expertise.
- Not addressing your audience's information requirements.
- Offering a recommended course of action with limited information.
- Not presenting an educated guess as such.