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Message from the President

It is now common to hear people referring to a 'black swan' when a surprising or unforeseen event occurs; this metaphor was made popular by Nassib Talib through his book, *The Black Swan*, in 2007. We need metaphors to make our field and science interesting and relevant for people, and the 'black swan' metaphor does exactly that. I have noticed increased interest in and enthusiasm for discussing risk issues when using the metaphor. The effect is in fact remarkable. It quickly leads us into reflections of what risk actually is, how we can assess and describe risk and what the limitations are when measuring risk using historical data and traditional methods based on available knowledge. It also makes us rapidly see the importance of reading signals and being resilient in case something surprising should occur. A black swan is not an excuse for not intervening and reducing risk; rather, it is a means to get the right focus – to extend the risk management beyond narrow risk assessments and their follow-up and use new and

creative approaches for assessing and handling the risk. Think about the September 11 event. In this case, some people had knowledge about the attack, but the analysts did not (we can talk about an unknown known), and when it occurred it came as a surprise to most people. Alternatively, we can think about the event as known – we knew that such a type of attack could occur (similar types of events had occurred before), but it was not believed that it would occur because the likelihood was judged to be low. But, as these are judgements, they could be supported by more or less strong knowledge and even be wrong. For example, the judgements could be based on an erroneous assumption that potential attackers did not have the capacity to conduct such an attack.

The black swan metaphor motivates further discussions and analysis of the knowledge supporting the judgements, the beliefs and assumptions. In my view, current risk analysis practice pays too little attention to these aspects of risk. The knowledge aspect of risk is not sufficiently incorporated in the methods and techniques used. There is a common belief that probability is sufficient for expressing uncertainties, but this idea fails to acknowledge that any probability used to express uncertainties is conditional on some knowledge. The strength and correctness of this knowledge need to be given attention, not only the probabilities.

Some risk analysts would like to restrict the black swan metaphor to unknown unknowns – events that nobody has experienced before they occur. However, such an understanding of the metaphor would make it more or less uninteresting, as such events are so rare. The attractiveness of the black swan concept is that it relates to something that we face daily: that surprising events occur relative to our knowledge. It is a main aspect of risk, and we need to improve current risk analysis methods to better meet this type of risk. It is an important research challenge for the risk analysis science.

Best regards,



Terje Aven



REGISTER TODAY

SRA 2018

RISK ANALYSIS · The Many Faces of Risk

December 2 - 6 · New Orleans, LA

It's time to make plans to join SRA in New Orleans, LA, December 2-6, for the 2018 Annual Meeting. Registration for the meeting is now open and we encourage you to [register](#) early to take advantage of early-bird pricing!

Interested in attending a full or half-day [workshop](#) on Sunday or Thursday? We have many workshops being offered for the first time this year, as well as favorites returning from years past. Register before October 17 and **use promo code news18 to save 10%** on workshop costs.

It's not too late to submit an abstract for a poster presentation! Late-breaking abstract [submission](#) is still open until November 1.

What's New in 2018?

Join SRA's new mentorship program! The **SRA Mentorship Program** facilitates communication throughout the conference by linking those new to the field/profession with mid- and senior-level colleagues. Mentors advise emerging professionals (mentees) on getting the most value from the SRA Annual Meeting, introduce mentees to colleagues and discuss career goals. Mentees are encouraged to talk with mentors about challenges and opportunities in today's risk analysis landscape.

Use the following links to enroll in the program:

[Students/New Professionals](#) | [Mentors](#)

Childcare is being offered free of charge to all attendees at this year's meeting. The service will be provided through Preferred Sitters, a licensed and insured childcare providing service. Childcare will be in a room at the Marriott. Toys, a small refrigerator and a “camp theme” will be provided. In an effort to keep the numbers low, childcare is provided at first come-first served. Please use [this form](#) to reserve a spot for your child(ren).

Enjoy the sites and sounds of New Orleans by booking a city tour or a Sunday brunch steamboat cruise. SRA has partnered with Gray Line Tours to offer all meeting attendees 10% off all excursions on Sunday, December 2. Use [this link](#) to book your adventure.

Your immersion into New Orleans doesn't end there! This year, we're bringing the sounds of the Big Easy to you with a performance from Grammy award-winning Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band! And Tuesday evening, we're taking the [Specialty Group Mixers](#) off-site to several venues downtown.



Update on the SRA Fifth World Congress on Risk
Cape Town Convention Centre, South Africa, May 6–8, 2019

The Program Committee, chaired by Dr. Igor Linkov, has reviewed more than 200 abstracts to date, with a few additional late-breaking abstracts expected by the end of October. Several continuing-education workshops with exciting relevance to the region will be offered, with details soon. We look forward to welcoming many returning and new SRA and SETAC members for a historic event in the worldwide community of risk science and policy. If your organization can consider sponsoring a meal, social, exhibit booth, or travel/registration of African and lower-income participants, please contact [Jennifer Rosenberg](#) of the SRA Secretariat or the event Finance Chair, [Dr. Shital Thekdi](#). Dr. Sasa Jovanovic is coordinating additional sponsors in Europe and Africa. Charlie Menzie is the liaison to the SETAC and Dr. Jo Anne Shatkin is the liaison to SRA's new Africa Regional Organization. Stay tuned at the [event website](#) for the online registration and the preliminary program to be released in early December. See you in stunning Cape Town!
~ James H. Lambert (USA), Chair, and Mary Gulumian (South Africa), Co-Chair

We want your thoughts on the future of SRA.

SRA is currently in the process of developing its strategic plan and we are looking for your feedback on the current draft. We are especially interested in your thoughts regarding the vision statement and slogan for our Society and we want to know which goals you consider to be of utmost importance for developing and progressing the

Please review the documents provided on this [webpage](#) and provide feedback using the form provided. All feedback must be submitted by September 30, 2018.

SRA podcast series

"LET'S TALK RISK" IS AVAILABLE TO LISTEN ONLINE & DOWNLOAD

Let's Talk Risk with the Society for Risk Analysis, the world's leading authority on risk science and its applications, helps bring clarity to the world of risk, uncertainty, and ambiguity. Visit www.sra.org for more information on the topics discussed in these episodes and for more studies found in Risk Analysis: An International Journal.

Episodes available for download:

Ep. 1: [The Uncertainty Component](#)

Ep. 2: [We've Been Underestimating Climate Change](#)

Ep. 3: [The Preservation of a Culture](#)

Ep. 4: [Clearing House at the EPA: An Attack on Science](#)

Ep. 5: [Infrastructure Management: Communities Can Profit From Disaster](#)

Ep. 6: [Boundaries in Risk Analysis: What's In and What's Out?](#)

Ep. 7: [Power Systems Resilience: Can We Rely on Renewables?](#)

Ep. 8: [Emotions Control Your Appetite for Risk](#)

Ep. 9: [A Paradigm Shift in Injury Risk Reduction](#)

Ep. 10: [Risk Science & the Regulatory Environment](#)

Ep. 11: [Building Urban Resilience](#)

Ep. 12: [How Do We Determine If Our Food Is Safe?](#)

Ep. 13 (NEW!): [Facing Extreme Weather: How do YOU Prepare?](#)

Call for Abstracts: SRA Nordic Conference
University of Stavanger, Norway, November 8-9, 2018

The theme of the conference is the intersection of risk, safety, security and resilience as well as the relationship between these areas of research. We do, however, welcome contributions on all topics related to the understanding, assessment, communication, management and governance of risk.

We welcome abstracts and presentations in English in one of the following formats:

- Oral Presentation
- Symposium
- Roundtable
- Poster Presentation

Length: Maximum 400 words

[Click here](#) for more information and to submit. Submission deadline: September 15, 2018

SRA Member Spotlight: Christine Hassauer, M. Sc., research associate and doctoral candidate at the Technical University of Munich, recipient of the 2018 SRA-Europe Conference Scholarship Award.

Christine's work focuses on the process of generation, use and embedding of evidence in the debate on food safety using different qualitative research methods. Her work examines evidence practices of consumers and scientists and their interaction, dynamics and role in the negotiation of food safety. The contesting dynamics of globalization in trade and moralization in consumption are of special interest. Recently, Christine has



worked on the development of a conceptual framework to describe food safety and has been analyzing the regulatory practice of risk analysis, specifically the considered factors, the applied criteria and the reactions to scientific uncertainty.

Each month the SRA newsletter will feature one of its members and their work in the spotlight section. If you would like to nominate a member, please email [Melanie Preve](#).

Save the Date! **Upcoming Webinars**

*An additional email will be sent to all members
with a registration link*

Core Subjects of Risk Analysis Series

October 3: *Risk, Causation and Decision
with Tony Cox*

November 7: *Inclusive Governance of
Risk: The Incorporation of Stakeholders
in Risk Management with Ortwin Renn*

Other Webinars

September 26: *Toward Safer Consumer
Products: Exploring the Use of Multi-
Criteria (MCDA) and Structured Decision
Making (SDM) Approaches for Chemical
Alternatives Analysis*

October 24: *Writing Guidelines for Risk
Management: Lessons and Questions
from 3 Examples*

If you or your specialty group has an idea for a webinar or is interested in hosting, please contact [Scott Dotson](#). All of our past webinars are available [here](#) for members.

Upcoming Scientific Liaison Coalition (SLC) Webinars

September 26: [Switching Sails: Career Changes for Toxicology Professionals, Experiences Shared, and Lessons Learned](#)

November 27: [Systematic Review Webinar Series: Practical Application of SR in the U.S](#)

Call for Abstracts: Forum on Scenarios for Climate and Societal Futures University of Denver, March 11-13, 2019

The Scenarios Forum aims to bring together a diverse set of communities working on these issues to share their experiences, progress, and plans. By taking stock of progress and facilitating scenario-related research, this meeting will inform the use of scenarios in the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) and help ensure a research base sufficient to inform future assessments and policy initiatives. The Forum is currently open for abstracts for oral or poster presentations on a wide range of topics including climate change impacts/adaptation/vulnerability,

Are you a member of another organization that could benefit from co-sponsoring an event with SRA?

For more information, and to apply for co-sponsorship, [click here](#).

climate science and modeling, sustainability, integrated assessment modeling, biodiversity, futures studies, risk management, governance, and other areas of social science.

Submit your abstract [here](#), through September 28, 2018.

SRA Sponsors NATO workshop on Cyber Resilience
by Igor Linkov & Ben Trump, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From August 26-29, 2018, a collection of 50 scholars and practitioners of risk and resilience analysis from some 15 countries met in Pärnu, Estonia to discuss the emerging challenges associated with hybrid threats and resilience in information domain. Sponsored and funded in part by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Science for Peace and Security Programme, the overall topic of this meeting was titled "Security and Resilience of Information Systems Affected by Hybrid Threats." The workshop was supported by the Society for Risk Analysis and was organized and directed by a long-standing SRA Member (Dr. Igor Linkov) as well as Dr. Lada Roslycky of The Independent Defence Anti-Corruption Committee in Ukraine.

The meeting sought to utilize the collective experience and insight from various scholars and experts in industry, government, academia, and other organizations to explore various interpretations and understandings of cyber resilience in order to provide a richer understanding of how governments, companies, and other organizations can better protect themselves from a shifting environment of cyber-attack, misuse and fabrication of data, and large-scale manipulation of decision making algorithms and machine learning processes to engender social disharmony and distrust.

The workshop focused on ways in which military commanders and civilian decision makers alike could integrate resilience management in operations. More specifically, workshop discussion centered around both a general discussion of resilience theory and analysis along with inquiry into various applications of resilience in topics ranging from data management, to comparative policy and practice, to infrastructural improvements which limit potential exploits to vulnerable digital systems. In this vein, uncertain yet consequential shocks and stresses that challenge a system's

resilience require immediate response and thus real time decision making. As such, this workshop sought to discuss how methods and tools are able to address such concerns by reconciling conflicting information, overcome high uncertainty, and facilitate context-driven decision making within various cybersecurity resilience applications.

These topics were addressed via a collection of panel discussions and presentations as well as within smaller working groups. For the former, seven panels were organized across the three-day workshop to review various considerations and applications of resilience. Within such discussion, topics included areas such as with *Resilience & Hybrid Threats in Partner Countries*, *Information Systems and Decision Making Algorithms*, *Technological Improvements to Cybersecurity*, and others. Within each panel discussion, invited participants were asked to organize a presentation in order to stimulate discussion regarding various panel topics and applications of cybersecurity and information systems management to a variety of threats, including state-based and non-state-based actors.

For the latter, Workshop participants were organized into three working groups, which address hybrid threats and cybersecurity resilience in (1) infrastructure, (2) information systems, decision making algorithms, and data curation, and (3) social cohesion and governance. Representatives of each working group were asked to lead discussion and strive to move towards “State of the Science and Practice” reviews, where each group will produce one or more chapters pertaining to the discussion of resilience theory and applications within their relevant domain of discussion. These working group reviews along with other materials discussed during the meeting will provide a foundation for a book that will be published by Springer in mid-2019.



As a follow-up to this meeting, Dr. Linkov will serve as Chairman for another NATO Advanced

Research Workshop on the subject of cybersecurity and resilience for Arctic, which will occur in Rovaniemi, Finland in January 2019. Under Dr. Linkov's guidance and experience, the meeting will be directed by fellow SRA member Dr. Benjamin Trump, as well as Dr. Kamrul Hossain of the University of Lapland.

Are you a regular contributor to an online publication or blog?

We want to help share your content! If you contribute to a publication, please email [Melanie Preve](mailto:Melanie.Preve@sra.org) and we'll be sure to share your pieces on SRA's social media channels.



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