

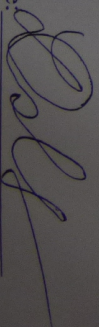
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DALINA PRASERTSRI: DISASTER DIPLOMACY: A CASE STUDY OF  
THE TRIPARTITE CORE GROUP'S POST-NARGIS HUMANITARIAN  
ASSISTANCE IN MYANMAR. THESIS ADVISOR: ASST. PROF.  
PUANGTHONG PAWAKAPAN, PH.D., 117 pp.

On 2 May 2008 the devastating Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar, causing over 140,000 deaths and affecting about 2.4 million people in the country. Despite the desperate situation, the Government of Myanmar refused the humanitarian assistance offered by international development organizations and Western governments. This act caused the international community to formulate unconventional ways in order to bring relief into Myanmar. They attempted to apply the Responsibility to Protect principle but failed, and later on used disaster diplomacy tactics by utilizing ASEAN as a mediating agent to build dialogue between Myanmar and the humanitarian community. This ASEAN-led mechanism was operated under the establishment of the coordinating body called the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) aiming to bring aid into Myanmar.

This thesis uses the disaster diplomacy framework to address the impact of Cyclone Nargis on the two-decades-long tension between the Government of Myanmar and the international community. The TCG, with the mediating support by the ASEAN, was seen by many observers as an opportunity to revitalize and improve this relationship. Apart from facilitating aid, the TCG was expected to help breaking down Myanmar's suspicion about the West's agenda and help the Government of Myanmar realize that the humanitarian community had no hidden political objective on its aid agenda. Beyond evaluating the work of the TCG in the above light, the thesis also aims to examine the achievements of the ASEAN and the UN as to whether they were able to efficiently meet the TCG's objectives regarding humanitarian aid and their ability to change the perception, behavior, approach and objectives of Myanmar. The study also identifies the gaps, challenges and the opportunities faced by the group to provide efficient and meaningful emergency response to Myanmar.

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