

DIPLOMACY FOR A SAFER WORLD

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จากการที่มนุษย์เราต้องรับมือกับภัยธรรมชาติและภัยที่เกิดจากน้ำมือของมนุษย์เองทำให้เกิดการท้าทายที่ระทึกใจใหม่ๆ ในวงการทูต บทความนี้จะมุ่งเป้าไปยังภัยสึนามิที่เกิดในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้และการตอบสนองจากนานาชาติและองค์กรระดับโลก อีกทั้งยังแสดงให้เห็นถึงบทบาทสำคัญของการทูตในการรับมือกับภัยธรรมชาติโดยทั่วไป

Abstract

New dramatic challenges to diplomacy emerge from coping with man-made and natural disasters. This paper will focus primarily upon the Tsunami in South East Asia and the response of various states and world organizations. It will demonstrate the central role of diplomacy in dealing with natural disasters in general.

Within the calendar of the irreversible process of globalization, the end of 2004 and the years 2005 - 2006 have revealed critical challenges that impose a greater commitment to humanity in terms of solidarity and political will. The period 2004-2006 has witnessed in Southeast Asia a historical show of solidarity in response to the apocalyptic tsunami of December 26, 2004. That colossal catastrophe was the result of the greatest earthquake in 40 years, measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale, with its epicenter at 150 kilometers off the west coast of Northern Sumatra in Indonesia and more than 500 kilometers from the West coast of Thailand.

Despite the distance, the giant waves struck with an unimaginable power and left behind destruction of biblical proportions. The tsunami was one of the most devastating natural disasters in modern times. Millions of people have been affected in 12 countries. On May 27, 2006 a new devastating earthquake on the Indonesian island of Java killed over 5,700 persons, hurt over 20,000 and left about 200,000 people homeless.

In a more general context, it should be recalled that from 1980 to 2005, over 7,000 natural disasters worldwide have taken the lives of nearly 2 million people and produced economic losses of over \$1 trillion.¹

Animated by generosity, many states and ordinary citizens from all continents offered a helping hand to ease the suffering caused by these unprecedented calamities. Bilateral and multilateral diplomacy have had a high visibility in this ongoing humanitarian process. There are encouraging signs that this trend will continue; that countries and peoples will not limit themselves in expressing compassion for victims, but will continue to demonstrate an authentic, proactive solidarity.

The international development agencies most involved in the recovery effort stated that the toughest difficulties still lie ahead, including the complex issues of where to re-establish housing, how to quickly restore livelihoods, and what to prioritize after the immediate relief phase is over.²

While recovery efforts continue to meet the needs of victims, in particular on the Indonesian island of Java, there are many reasons to ponder and reflect on the mission of diplomacy directly or indirectly involved in a tremendous collective endeavor of contributing to the establishment of a safer world during the present era of global vulnerability. Is this not to ask the impossible?

1. Fundamental Functions

It is hard to imagine real success in world affairs, including fighting the consequences of natural disasters, without a responsive diplomacy, as it is the first line of defense for all nations.³ Diplomacy is defined by Sir Harold Nicolson, in a classical work, as "the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the