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Inter-state vs Intra-state Disaster Diplomacy

<http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org>

In asking how and why disaster-related activities do and do not induce international cooperation amongst enemy countries, past disaster diplomacy work—covering pre-disaster activities such as mitigation and prevention and post-disaster activities such as response and reconstruction—includes three main areas of investigation at the inter-state level. First, case study analyses, such as Greece-Turkey rapprochement before and after the 1999 earthquakes and foreign assistance offered to the USA following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Second, spin-offs, for instance disaster para-diplomacy which refers to non-sovereign governments dealing with international relations regarding disaster-related activities. Third, characterization and categories of disaster diplomacy across case studies. Factors to compare include information flow amongst, physical proximity of, and aid relationship of disaster diplomacy political entities.

The pattern seen from the evidence examined so far is that:

- (a) Disaster-related activities can sometimes have a short-term catalyzing impact on diplomacy but do not create new cooperation amongst conflicting parties.
- (b) Over the long-term, non-disaster factors have a more significant impact on diplomacy than disaster-related activities.

Non-disaster factors could be a leadership change, distrust, belief that an historical conflict or complaint should take precedence over current humanitarian needs, or priorities for action other than conflict resolution and diplomatic dividends. Disaster-related activities can sometimes exacerbate conflict too.

Recent case studies have provided further evidence at the intra-state level. This poster highlights those new intra-state insights, including from Indonesia, the Maldives, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Sudan. The characteristics and characterizations of disaster diplomacy are compared and contrasted for inter-state vs intra-state examples. Minimal difference is found between the two groups, suggesting that with regards to disaster-related activities, based on the evidence available, non-state actors can be as important in local, national, and international affairs and conflict resolution as state actors, particularly for disaster-related activities.