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Encouraging security cooperation at the forum? The EU's efforts at ARF vis-à-vis Myanmar via ASEAN: 2004-2008

Working paper

Encouraging Security Cooperation at the Forum?
The EU's Efforts at ARF *vis-à-vis* Myanmar *via* ASEAN: 2004-2008
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Abstract

This is an empirical investigation. At the beginning of 2014, for the first time, the European Union co-chaired meetings with Myanmar, which it hosted in Brussels within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) of which Myanmar has been part since 2004. ARF is the 'only multilateral political and security dialogue forum in the Asia-Pacific where the EU has its own seat' (EEAS). For this reason and because the European Union is not a major actor in the region in terms of security affairs (Stumbaun 2014, 111), the EU holds a specific interest in ARF. At the meetings in Brussels, it was planned to discuss 'various aspects of security cooperation in Asia', including 'humanitarian assistance and disaster relief' (EIAS 2014). These, and other events, suggested that a Myanmar-EU security connection exists and motivated the interest in tracing the EU's efforts, in the ARF arena, to encouraging Myanmar to tie in with the security link. This paper, therefore, focuses on two research questions: *how has the European Union interacted with Myanmar via ASEAN, at the Forum, trying (directly or indirectly) to induce Myanmar's junta towards connecting with cooperation in the area of security, as opposed to its preferred 'non-interference policy'?* Since the dialogue and many of the training activities in the ARF framework concerned crisis management and disaster relief capacity building, Cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar in 2008, is taken as a test case to explore whether Myanmar and ASEAN's reactions to the devastation caused certain processes to emerge which can be linked to the EU. The second question is: *as the EU sought to convince Myanmar to compromise and accept cooperation, has Myanmar hit by Cyclone Nargis caused some consequences on the EU and its security policy, and, if so, how?* Interpretations borrowed from March and Olsen (1995, 1998, 2004) and Checkel (1999, 2005) will contribute towards answering the two key questions. The EU's quest to encourage security cooperation is investigated in light of the ARF meetings that it co-chaired with ASEAN during 2004-2008. The first date is justified by Myanmar being admitted to ARF and the second by Cyclone Nargis afflicting Myanmar. Lacking access to the informal minutes of these meetings, interviews on motivation will serve to compensate for the limited sources which are the ARF co-chairs' summary reports. Official declarations by the Commission, the Council and the EU together with ASEAN will indicate the EU's 'intentional policies' at the Forum level. The investigation includes no specific focus on the Forum itself in terms of assessing its operation, on the domestic level of analysis, on the decision-making processes, nor on the participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum who were different from the ASEAN group, Myanmar

and the EU. It offers no hint at other frameworks of security consultation in Asia in which the EU might be involved, and pays no attention either to whether Myanmar was somehow connected with cooperation in the area of security, or to the EU's efforts to encourage Myanmar to compromise, both up to the current position.

I Introduction

At the beginning of 2014, for the first time, the European Union co-chaired meetings with Myanmar, which it hosted in Brussels within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) of which Myanmar has been part since 2004, and the EU since 1994, when ARF has been established. The ASEAN Regional Forum is the platform which brings together nations across the Asia-Pacific region: the ten ASEAN countries and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States, plus the EU. The meetings in Brussels concerned Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD) and Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD). Various aspects related to security cooperation in Asia were planned to be discussed. These included 'counter-terrorism', 'organized crime', 'cyber security and non-proliferation', and, in particular, "humanitarian assistance and disaster relief" (EIAS 2014). The whole proved that Myanmar was cooperating with the EU in the field of security. Relatively recently (5 March 2013), Myanmar has stipulated an agreement with the EU, the 'EU-Myanmar Partnership'. In this document the EU pledged to work with Myanmar on specific issues concerning 'preparedness, response and resilience to emergencies', and intended to pursue this goal through 'building up a professional and effective response system' (p. 2). Also this agreement indicates that a Myanmar-EU security connection exists. In mid-2014, Myanmar's government accepted, by the EU, the funding of the Myanmar National Crisis Management Centre, which has been established in Nay Pyi Taw, the new capital. This EU's action is indicative of its support for capacity development concerning crisis-related responses (Reiterer 2014). These commitments and agreements between Myanmar's government and the European Union, specifically its external branch, the European External Action Service (EEAS), testify to a shift in Yangon/Nay Pyi Taw's government towards (cautiously) detaching itself from the rigid non-interference dogma that has characterised its policy for decades. Myanmar's junta has opposed any multilateral option in general, and, even more so, with regard to approaching aspects of security (EIAS 2014). These events, suggesting that a Myanmar-EU security link subsists, motivate the interest in tracing the EU's efforts, in the ARF arena, to encourage Myanmar's politico-military establishment to tie in with the security connection. As a convinced proponent of a multilateral approach to security and defence problem solving and supporter of a collective security through dialogue and cooperation with international partners and organisations (ESS, 2003; COM 1994, 5), the European Union antagonised Myanmar's junta's chosen isolation, and specifically in the area of security and defence. The EU's experience as 'a collective and in Asia not yet well known political and security actor' (Reiterer 2014, 20) inspired the EU's policy proposed at the ARF meetings. This investigation develops around two research questions: *how has*

the European Union interacted with Myanmar via ASEAN, at the Forum, trying (directly or indirectly) to induce Myanmar's junta towards connecting with cooperation in the area of security, as opposed to its preferred 'non-interference policy'? Since the dialogue and many of the training activities in the ARF framework concerned crisis management and disaster relief capacity building, Cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar in 2008, is taken as a test case to explore whether Myanmar and ASEAN's reactions to the devastation caused certain processes to emerge which can be linked to the EU. The second question is: *as the EU sought to convince Myanmar to compromise and accept cooperation, has Myanmar hit by Cyclone Nargis caused some consequences on the EU and its security policy, and, if so, how?* Interpretations borrowed from March and Olsen (1995, 1998, 2004) and Checkel (1999, 2005) will contribute towards answering the two key questions. The EU's quest to encourage security cooperation is investigated via the ARF meetings that it co-chaired with ASEAN during 2004-2008, and specifically through the co-chair's summary reports. Not being an ASEAN member, with ASEAN, the EU was allowed to co-chair the meetings. It made use of this opportunity in 2004-5 and 2006/7 and co-chaired the ARF Inter-sessional Group on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD) (Weber 2013, 351; Thayer 2009, 78). Lacking access to the informal minutes of the meetings, interviews on motivation will serve to fill this gap of our limited sources. Official declarations by the Commission, the Council and the EU together with ASEAN will indicate the EU's 'intentional policies' at the Forum level. The investigation includes no specific focus on the Forum itself in terms of assessing its operation, on the domestic level of analysis, on the decision-making processes, or on the participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum different from the ASEAN group, Myanmar and the EU. It offers no hint at other frameworks of security consultation in Asia with which the EU might be involved, and pays no attention to whether Myanmar was somehow connected with cooperation in the area of security, nor to the EU's efforts to encourage Myanmar to compromise, both up to the current position.

The investigation is divided into five sections following this introduction, and culminates in a conclusion. Section two deals with the framework of analysis, and section three centres on the recent mainsteam literature concerned with the EU's networking with ARF, ASEAN and Myanmar – with a focus on the EU's encouragement of security cooperation, and conveys the way in which the present work relates to others' publications. Section four deals with the EU at the Forum and is divided into three subsections. It first reviews the EU's interest in ARF and how the latter is organised. It then looks at the engagements that the EU stated to be willing to undertake at the Forum through an insight into the official documents of the Commission. It also offers the view of the EU as co-chair of the ARF meetings (in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008), i.e. some of its positions which may generate processes to be linked to Myanmar or ASEAN. Section five deals with the reactions of ASEAN, ARF, Myanmar and the EU to Cyclone Nargis' ravaging of Myanmar. Section six, 'what the framework of analysis reveals about the EU encouraging, at ARF, cooperation on security', is mostly analytical. It is divided into four subsections and discusses: the processes which evolved in the context of the EU co-chaired meetings; the dynamics of socialisation shedding some explicatory light on ASEAN's behaviour in response to the cyclone; the logic of consequences trying to give reasons concerning Nay Pyi Taw's behaviour, and also the social mechanisms and

argument of the 'agent-carriers of new ideas'; and, lastly, the logic of appropriateness' explanation of the EU's behaviour. This section's analysis avails itself of interviews with ASEAN leaders and leaders close to the ARF organisation, Southeast Asian security policy analysts, Burmese historians, together with personnel from Crisis Response and Operational Coordination, the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, and more in general from the EU's external branch, the EEAS.

II The framework of analysis

How the EU's encouragement, at the Forum, concerning security cooperation interacted with Myanmar *via* ASEAN and, how the EU itself was exposed to side effects which had their origins in Myanmar will be considered through interpretations offered by March and Olsen (1995, 1998, 2004) and Checkel (1999, 2005). Concerning March and Olsen, I start by recalling, that since external security tensions principally arise in a multilateral context, one of the main tasks of the states participating in the ARF meetings is agreeing together how to face security strains (ARF's Concept Paper 1995, (ARF-CP (1995)). There has been a specific emphasis on the scope of the Forum of 'reconcil[ing] the differing views between ARF participants' under the conviction that unifying visions would 'reduce the risk to security' (*ibid*.). There has been a reported tendency of ARF to move beyond dialogue towards practical security cooperation (Haacke 2009), which would suggest that common agreement may tend to bridge mere diplomatic declarations with more proactive policies. National considerations, however, trump conceptions of any common, stable ARF interest (Acharya 2014; Simon, S. 1995). ASEAN members have been determined to retain their national prerogatives (Ruland 2010), even while strengthening their commitment to homogenising their policy in view of the increasing regionalism through Bali Concord II (2003), Vientiane Action Programme (2004) and the ASEAN Charter (2007) (deFlers 2010). ASEAN members have declared their interest in common action, largely on the basis that influence and effectiveness in foreign policy is, to a considerable extent, based on speaking and working together (ARF's Concept Paper 1995). March and Olsen (1998) foresee 'agreeing together' via a *logic of expected consequences*. They posit that the strategic calculation of rational bargaining suggests a logic of expected consequences when a government's protection and defence of what it perceives as its national interest confronts but frequently becomes reconciled with the position of other states on the same policy issue. A logic of expected consequences 'explains' policy positions by offering an interpretation of the outcomes expected from such positions (p. 950). It sees political order as deriving from negotiations among rational actors following personal interests, in situations where there may be advantages attached to coordinated action (p. 949). It perceives politics as aggregating individual preferences into collective action through various processes of bargaining, coalition building and exchange (see: Niskanen 1971). On the other hand, when governments tend to recognise the ethical dimensions and collective norms of the group, March and Olsen identify a *logic of appropriateness* that motivates the behaviour (p. 951). Embedded in a collectivity (such as ASEAN), states-actors do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation (March and Olsen 2004, 3). To act appropriately is to proceed according to practices based on a collective, mutual and tacit understanding (p. 4). The logic of appropriateness embraces principled dimensions and aspirations (see

March and Olsen 1995, 1998, 2004), and 'explains' foreign policy as the application of rules, associated with specific identities, to specific circumstances (March and Olsen 1998, 951). A common interpretation of rules is that they exist because they work well and provide better solutions than their alternatives (see: Hechter, Opp and Wippler 1990) (March and Olsen 2004, 12). However, it is also true that the logic of appropriateness does not guarantee moral acceptability (p. 4). Yet, the division between the two logics is faint. States and their political actors are characterised both by their interests and by the rules ingrained in their identities, as well as in the political institutions that they decided to build, loose and unfastening as they might be. 'Appropriateness need not attend to consequences' (March and Olsen 1998, 951), in the sense that it does not include a focus on consequences. As March and Olsen specify, 'the descriptive question is whether (or when) one logic is more likely than the other to be observed as the basis for actual behaviour' (p. 949).

Concerning Checkel's contribution (1999), the dynamics of socialisation and social learning will help to capture aspects of the interaction between the EU, ASEAN and Myanmar. Socialisation is a process which most likely develops when the contact among actors become frequent due to their working together, having common tasks to perform, or decisions to take in a group, all kind of practices which need several exchanges in order to accomplish. Social learning implies a cessation of strict practices of methodological individualism. It involves a process whereby actors, through contact with other contexts (discursive structures and/or norms), develop new interests and preferences. In an abstract sense, it can readily be appreciated that social learning takes place at certain times and that there are times when agents acquire new preferences (pp. 548-9). As for Checkel, 'social learning is more likely…where a group meets repeatedly and there is a high density of interaction among participants…where the group feels itself in a crisis or is faced with clear and incontrovertible evidence of policy failure'. A setting where agents should be conducive to persuasion, Checkel argues, is most likely 'when the persuader is an authoritative member of the in-group to which the persuadee belongs or wants to belong'. Persuasion is a mechanism through which social learning may occur and may lead to interest redefinition and identity change (pp. 549-550). There were many channels within the ARF framework where ASEAN, Myanmar and the EU through their own representatives networked together within contexts, which were potentially conducive to socialisation. Between 2004 and 2008, several meetings took place in the ARF structure. Strictly concerning aspects of security or closely related to it, they were: No. 10 meetings of the Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBMs); No. 4 seminars related to Peacekeeping; No. 8 of the type of Search, Rescue and Disaster Relief; No. 32 related to Defence. These were ARF Defence Officials' Meetings, and ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meetings, ARF Security Policy Conference, Workshops on Civil Military Relations and the Rule of Law, and Workshops on Changes in the Security Perception and Military Doctrine of ARF members. There were no. 10 Counter-Terrorism Related meetings; no. 4 concerning Non Traditional Security Issues; no. 9 aimed at Maritime Security; no. 2 regarding Preventive Diplomacy; no. 5 dedicated to Non-Proliferation; no. 3 targeted at the management of Small Arms and Light Weapons; no. 2 related to Energy Security; and no. 2 linked to Experts/Eminent Persons

(EEPs) Meetings (ARF Activities). These ARF activities have taken place also in Yangon, such as the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue and the ISG on CBMs. When events were situated outside Myanmar, officials from Yangon's administration represented their government at the meetings. There were several occasions for the officials to integrate their views. Checkel's interpretation about the optimum scope conditions under which socialisation was likely to occur was when individuals were in settings where the contact was long, and sustained, as well as intense (Howorth 2010, 15).

III Recent publications

With regard to investigations on the EU's efforts to encourage security cooperation while at the Forum, trying to connect with Myanmar and ASEAN – no similar works have been found among the publications. Political scientists and observers have growingly paid attention to Myanmar, also with regard to security cooperation in Southeast Asia. The most complete publication on the European Union and ARF is Weber's work (2013), which proposed some reflections on the EU's role in promoting security in the Asia-Pacific region via the ASEAN Regional Forum; yet she makes only a cursory mention of Myanmar. Haacke (2013) published an overview of Southeast Asian international relations and security perspectives, with insights into Myanmar's reactions to security incidents; however his study almost completely ignored the EU. Emmers and Tan (2011) argued that ARF has evolved into a highly inflexible forum, and this fact has severely inhibited the adoption of a 'preventive diplomacy' agenda under the ARF framework. Neither the EU nor Myanmar was included in their discussion. Haacke and Morada (2010) made available a view of the ARF in terms of cooperative security, including traits of policy originating in Myanmar. Yet, their contribution paid no attention to the European Union. By contrast, Reiterer (2014) has very recently published an informed and updated evaluation of the European Union's comprehensive approach to security in Asia. Nonetheless, his study has offered a very modest outlook of Myanmar. Casarini (2011) has drawn an outline of the security developments in East Asia and consequences for the EU, but he made no mention of Myanmar. Interestingly, Haacke (2009) has offered an interpretation of the way in which the ARF has moved beyond dialogue towards practical security cooperation, though, this time, he left Myanmar out of focus, and, similarly, the EU. Katsumata (2006) emphasised the efforts of ASEAN, in ARF, to achieve the security of the whole region, through multilateral security cooperation, along the view that regional security is indivisible, though this contribution emphasises neither Myanmar nor the EU. Heller (2005) has argued that the ARF is a forum that reflects the convergence of the strategic interests of both the regional and external actors. However, he pays no attention to the European Union and virtually ignores Myanmar. Berkofsky (2003) has discussed some ideas regarding the function that the EU should cover, and develop, within ARF to enhance security in Asia. Yet, his policy brief gives a very brief hint about Burma. Hence, an investigation tying in the EU, Myanmar, and ASEAN, at the ARF level, from the perspective of the EU's trying to inspire security cooperation appears to be unavailable; thus, the present study aims to fill this gap.

IV The EU and the Forum

How was the EU represented at the Forum? The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission embodied the European Union at the ASEAN Regional Forum, and participated on behalf of the member states. As the EU likes to assert (EU&Asia), 'the European Union [has] participated actively in the ASEAN Regional Forum', since its establishment. It participated in ARF on account of 'its commitment [to it] as part of the European Union's overall engagement with a security order in Asia' (EEAS-ARF). It has participated to ensure political and strategic exchanges with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. It aimed to foster conflict prevention, under the conviction that 'any major security incident in Asia would have serious implications for Europe'. Together with stressing its reasons for participation, the European Union has never concealed its aspiration (or objective, as it put it) to establish itself as a 'political and security player' in the Asia-Pacific region. The scope of the consultation on 'regional political and security issues' was the choice of 'reconcil[ing] the differing views between the ARF participants'. This meant that lessening the diversity of views would have 'reduce[d] the risk to security', precisely as the European Union understood these relations. As part of ARF's working method, several groups and sub-groups, either for consultations or training purposes and practices, were arranged (ARF Concept Paper, 1995). The fixed convening of the groups was at the inter-governmental level, and the meetings reflected the three stages of development of the ARF's activities: confidence-building, preventive diplomacy and approach elaboration to conflicts (ARF 1995). The Concept Paper defined the goals and expectations of the Forum, its organisation, and the kind of participation. It suggested how ARF could serve to implement 'ideals and proposals', and specified that 'decisions were made on the basis of consensus and compliance. The meetings were, among others, the Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building and Preventive Diplomacy (in particular a dialogue on security perceptions and defence policy papers) and the Inter-sessional Meetings on Cooperative Activities, including, inter alia, disaster relief and Peacekeeping (ARF-CP 1995).[1] *Confidence building measures* were actions meant to address, prevent and resolve uncertainties among actors and states, and could involve (direct or indirect) negotiations (CBMs). *Disaster relief measures* were intended to ensure a coordinated response in order to increase the local resilience of the people offended by natural, or man-made, disasters (DRMs). Since ARF's inception, it was convened that ASEAN was the 'primary driving force' and chaired the annual meeting (Weber 2013, 351). Acknowledging the importance of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the European External Action Service, in its attribute of the external arm of the EU, and the EU member states have taken part in several ARF work strands (Reiterer 2014, 17), and cooperated with ASEAN in drawing and adopting ARF statements.

Observers argue that the ASEAN Regional Forum has proved incapable of addressing hard security issues, and cite the case of the denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula and non-proliferation. Similarly, they judge that neither did the preventive diplomacy reach the desired standard, and mention the conflict in Kashmir and the Taiwan Straits. More positive evaluations cover ARF's dealing with soft security matters, where the Forum has been more effective. Analysts uphold that ARF may have a 'lease of life' following the 2004 Tsunami (which hit the Indian Ocean area, particularly Indonesia) and Cyclone

Nargis that struck Myanmar in 2008 (Thayer 2009, 79). Others, judging that ARF has advanced from dialogue towards factual security cooperation, contend that ARF is developing capacity building and operational security responses, also, outside the Forum, and argue that this outcome is the result of initiatives supported by a small group of ASEAN and some non-ASEAN states (Haacke 2009). Because ARF was formed, also, to step up its practical involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, ARF Disaster Relief Exercises have taken place, including recently, in Thailand (May 2013) (DRE). The joint participation of the European External Action Service, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and several EU member states (Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg) in the exercise in Thailand showed that the EU 'attached particular importance to improving the early warning and disaster management capabilities in the region' (Reiterer 2014, 17-18).

The EU's intentions at ARF: the official documents

The EU's position, in the ARF framework, that could be linked to convincing Myanmar's junta to connect with security cooperation was expressed within the joint declarations with ASEAN. ASEAN was a moderator of any possible EU overtone reproaching Myanmar and demanding transformations. EU's policy on Myanmar developed through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) sanctioning the military junta since 1991, and through the EU-ASEAN dialogue (see: Marchi 2014). What can be deduced from the ARF meetings' declarations co-chaired by the EU has little direct relation to Myanmar. Nonetheless, connections can be made concerning ASEAN and Myanmar in terms of EU support of multilateral security options. An outline of the engagement that the EU stated to be willing to undertake is enclosed in the European Commission's official documents.

From the 1994 Commission's communication, 'Towards a New Asia Strategy' (COM 1994), and from the viewpoint of the European Union acting with a focus on security and stability in Southeast Asia, the EU's relations with ARF became imbued with the idea that enhanced security cooperation was likely to benefit both regions. The EU was led by a declared dual objective in its interactions with ARF. It sought to support 'the efforts of Asian countries to cooperate' in that forum, as the Commission stated in 1994 (p. 4). At the same time, it aspired to 'strengthen the position and profile of the EU in Asia', as the 2001 Commission's communication made it clear (COM 2001, 26). The latter document also specified that, within ARF, the EU maintained 'distinguished relations' with ASEAN; and this is why the two groups' interactions will be a constant feature of this work. Furthermore, the 2001 communication explained that the EU interpreted the dialogue with ASEAN as one which was going to 'help to identify areas where ASEAN and the EU could work together' on security challenges. It, then, made it more understandable that, giving 'full support to conflict prevention efforts within the region' was on the agenda of the cooperation which the EU sought to offer (p. 21). *Conflict prevention* included that range of actions intended to anticipate and deter the outburst of conflict (EPLO). That same Commission's document, of 2001, also specified that the promotion of good governance, transparency and the rule of law highlighted what the EU defined as its 'increasingly active role in the ASEAN Regional Forum' (p. 21).

A further communication from the Commission, in 2003, has indicated that the ambition of the EU to develop 'a more active role in the ARF' was entrenched in its determination to be influential when it co-chaired meetings. This specification was highlighted in 'A New Partnership with South East Asia' (COM 2003, 13). The European Union also included its ambition to revitalise 'its presence at the military tables of the ARF' (p. 13). The Council has specified, in 2007, that the EU saw the employment of the multilateral framework as the basis for 'building a better world', and indicated this in the 'Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership'. The EU's vision was underpinned by the EU-ASEAN's 'common understanding of security as a comprehensive concept with a political, human, social and economic dimension' (Nuremberg 2007, 3). Furthermore, in a following document, in 2007, the EU has declared that 'crisis management' and 'capacity building' were expected to enrich the EU's security dialogue with ASEAN in the form of 'knowledge transfer' and 'exchange of best practices' (Plan of Action 2007, 2). *Capacity building* involved actions focused on the development of skills and attitudes in groups and individuals with regard to the formation, management and maintenance of processes which were locally meaningful (Howorth 2007). *Crisis management*, in its civilian aspects, extended its operation to the wider area of the rule of law (strengthening the police sector), and included monitoring borders and peace agreements (C-CM). The whole of these EU's propositions were acknowledged in the 'Plan of Action to Implement the Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership' of 2007. There within, in addition, the EU extended its political action to the Association to the point of encouraging the 'participation of ASEAN countries in European Security and Defence Policy operations', in full respect of the mandate of both regional organisations.[2] Hence, the EU claimed that disaster management and coordination on disasters, risk reduction, emergency response and information sharing were within the focus of the cooperation with ASEAN envisioned by the EU (Plan of Action 2007, 3). These EU's plans, purposes and commitments were meant to contribute to the debate at the Forum where Myanmar participated as a full actor in its capacity of a full member of ASEAN since 1997 and a recognised participant in ARF seven years later.

The EU as co-chair of ARF meetings

Potsdam: 2005
In Potsdam, in 2005, at the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures, co-chaired by the EU (21-23 February), representatives of Myanmar's junta sought to convince the ARF participants, including the European Union representatives, that the course of Burmese reform was on track, namely the implementation of the Seven Step Roadmap to Democracy (CSR 2005). The Roadmap was expected to address also security matters, and was seen to offer an opportunity to implement 'ceasefire strategies' in Myanmar (Jones 2014, 16). The observance of the Seven Steps programme was a matter of interest and preoccupation for ASEAN, firstly, because of their true support for a transition in Myanmar and, secondly, because it was expected to soothe the international agitation originated by the military junta, which also affected the Association itself (Caballero-Antony 2010, 26-7). ASEAN's relations with

the EU had already suffered when Myanmar was annexed to ASEAN and, later, when it was accepted in ARF (Marchi 2014, 63, 67-8). ASEAN's 'completion of the vision of the ASEAN founders' and project of successful regionalism had called for these inclusions (Acharya 2002). Hence, in Potsdam, possibly, to break down the wall that separated the processes under way in ASEAN as a whole (the integration efforts of ASEAN's regionalism) and Myanmar (the vocal intention to comply with the Seven Steps reforms), the EU delegates put the accent on what they conceivably thought to be the success of the multilateral participation (that the EU privileged and supported) in approaching security situations. The EU officials focused on threats to non-traditional security, particularly crisis prevention, dispute avoidance, management and settlement. They indicated that a combined process of multilateral inputs and arrangements, rather than a single country's efforts, more easily antagonised complex situations. Governments acting unilaterally were putting themselves at a disadvantage. To that scope, the officials explained the concept of the (at that time) European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which was described as that process which aimed at strengthening the EU's 'external ability to act through the development of civilian and military capabilities in conflict prevention and crisis management'. They claimed that the coordination of civilian and military capabilities was central to successful operations. The EU's action in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EU-ALTHEA), as well as its contribution towards supporting the local authorities to build and safeguard a secure environment served to exemplify the specific value wanted by the EU, which was the centrality of the role of the local authorities in the progress of the security goal. Hence, at the Potsdam meeting, the idea of the role played by the EU in terms of preventing and easing crises emerged as an illustration of the action that ASEAN and its members, Myanmar included, and ARF participants could provide to the region when such support seemed necessary to the group (CSR 2005).

Helsinki: 2007, and before, Phnom Penh: 2004, and Berlin: 2008
In Helsinki, in 2007, at the other ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy co-chaired by the European Union (28-30 March), the EU sought to promote confidence building practices through discussing the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) 'potential for strengthening ties with the ARF' (CSR 2007). Already at a previous meeting that it co-chaired (Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures), in 2004 (26-28 October) in Phnom Penh, the EU had succeeded in promoting the inclusion of the 'need to maintain informal contacts' with OSCE in ARF's conclusive official position (CSR 2004). Its message, at that time, had focused on showing that the two groups' constructive and productive interaction was confirmed by the extent to which many of the issues with which the EU increasingly became involved were common to those motivating OSCE's missions.[3] The EU's experience shared good governance, democratic transition, human rights and minority rights with OSCE. Hence, in Helsinki, the EU's multilateral influence featured, more intensely, through explaining (to the ASEAN nations, Myanmar and the other ARF partners) OSCE's expansion, progress, structure and activities (CSR 2007). It pursued this endeavour also at the successive co-chaired event in Berlin (2008), the ARF Workshop on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy in Asia and Europe (12-14 March). There, 'transparency' and 'information' were examined, classified as substantial key factors in OSCE/EU activity,

and used as examples of the practices that could develop and characterise security behaviour among the countries of Southeast Asia and the other ARF participants (CSR 2008). Representatives of the EU stressed that the obligation to share military information, data on major weapons and equipment systems, defence planning and expenditure were fundamental to a policy associated with an 'open' dialogue on security (CHS). They defended the adoption of a common security concept together with the development of politically binding standards and the gradual institutionalisation of cooperation as processes offering a solid and durable basis for security collaboration (CSR 2008). Were all of these discourses, supported by the EU at the Forum, going to create some consequences among the regional actors, ASEAN and Myanmar?

V Cyclone Nargis

Around that same time, in May 2008, Cyclone Nargis ravaged Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta causing huge destruction and loss of life. It produced reactions among the local actors. Initially, with regard to Myanmar, the government was overwhelmed by the magnitude and complexity of the disaster relief problems. The junta's attitude, particularly at the beginning of the crisis, in refusing external help did little to diminish the difficulties. The EU, and other external agents, was barred from being an actor by the SPDC's inflexible non-interference policy (see: Selth 2008; Haacke 2008). Concerning ARF, the latter has not entered into action. It was reported that 'it may have been that ARF Senior Officials were among the first to meet soon afterwards Nargis had struck' (Haacke and Morada 2010, 228), but it was ASEAN that was the predominant actor in the contingent cyclone's circumstance.[4] Myanmar, distressed by the cyclone, induced some processes which concerned the EU too and its security policy.

ASEAN
The Association's activity was vital to the extent that it networked the government in Myanmar and other international actors, which were ready to assist. It made possible the constitution of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, led by the ASEAN Secretary General, that operated through the Tripartite Core Group (TCG: the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the UN), coordinated the relief work and delivered assistance. The Task Force was the first ASEAN-led mechanism that involved ASEAN member states individually and collectively (in addition to the international community and the UN), and, as such, its value was embedded in having built a regional response to a local problem (ARF 2008). ASEAN bridged Myanmar's government to the donor nations and their funding. It allowed, for example, through the TCG, the financing and development of the Commission's Post-Cyclone Nargis recovery and preparedness Plan over three years, from 2009 (EC 2009).

ARF
At their meeting, shortly after the cyclone struck, the 15th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF 2008, 24 July), ARF ministers discussed several failures of the Humanitarian Task Force which obscured its reassuring results. The ministers took several decisions. They decided that the Forum should 'intensify cooperation' specifically in some areas which included 'emergency preparedness, disaster relief and management, rehabilitation and recovery'.

They opted for additional preparation concerning 'technical assistance and coordination among ARF participants in advance of disasters'. ARF officials realised that, for calamities of this scale, a 'civil and military intervention' was more beneficial to the scope of reinforcing aid to specific areas. They concluded that the coordination of the civil and military capabilities was key to a multinational response. The whole of these endorsements were detailed in the Chair's statement of that ARF meeting, that was notably not co-chaired by the EU, in Singapore (ARF 2008).

Myanmar
What resulted from the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force's intervention in Myanmar, with regard to the military government's approach to policy-making, was a softened non-interference stance by the junta (see Cook 2013, 184). Myanmar's change was tangible. It was also confirmed by Brussels, where Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner acknowledged the opening up of an 'unprecedented dialogue' with Myanmar's government (which the Commissioner defined as having been paved by the coordinating efforts of ASEAN and the UN) (EC 2009).

The EU
Myanmar's devastation caused by Nargis provided the European Union with some new thinking (EUC 2008). The European Council, around that same time, in November 2008, discussed the state of affairs of the European Security and Defence Policy, and argued that, after five years of civilian missions, a 'large body of information and experience [was] available which needed to be captured in a systematic lessons learned' exercise (Council 2008, 16). The exercise led to the recognition that the 'function that [the EU] should play' in Nargis-like situations required the use of a 'broader understanding of the term responsibility to protect [R2P]' (EUC 2008, 28).[5] Human security was more far-reaching an interpretation. More concretely, the new EU security policy (agreed in December 2008, i.e. the 'Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World') fixed the notion of a 'shared responsibility to protect populations' as the new goal included by law (IESS 2008, 12). The side effect of cyclone-affected Myanmar contributed towards building this.

VI What the framework of analysis reveals about the EU encouraging, at ARF, cooperation on security

(i) The official documents of the Commission

(a) ASEAN
As co-chair of the ARF meetings, the EU publicised the multilateral aspects of its policy in the field of security on the basis of its experience and aspiration to encourage others to follow. As an actor which wanted to mobilise the different strengths, values, and capacities of its partners (EP-C 2013) while operating in the ASEAN Regional Forum, the European Union sought to provide suggestions concerning security cooperation, confidence building and disaster relief. Yet, the EU and OSCE's argument that the gradual institutionalisation of cooperation has underpinned their common action contrasted ARF's distinctive loose character of collective security arena for dialogue

(Heller 2005; ARF-CP 2006). It antagonised the low institutionalised cooperation approach of the ASEAN group, though ASEAN was engaged in building a security community among its members, including Myanmar (Acharya 2001), and confronting the EU-OSCE's interactions offered inputs to their security community project. Furthermore, the suggested commitment to an open security dialogue, made distinctive by 'transparency and sharing information', was, as an official from the EEAS interviewed in Brussels confirmed, out of tune with the secrecy with which security and defence choices were made in the ASEAN group (Interview (A), 2014).

(b) Myanmar

Myanmar's leadership, with the obligation that it has established in the 2008 constitution to preserve the nation's sovereignty, and, more specifically, the sovereignty of its decision-making in the field of security, was conceivably indifferent to the messages addressed by the EU at the Forum. Myanmar's leadership had to embrace a multiple process, with several preparations and arrangements, in order to cope with the declared commitment to implementing the Seven Steps Roadmap to Democracy. Incentives to change, promoted by the EU, in favour of Myanmar's transformation were ready to be taken up at the Forum by the military junta. A full progression of actions was necessary to Myanmar's promise to fulfil the Seven Steps programme: convening a National Convention to draft the constitution; taking steps to establish democracy after the National Convention was concluded; drafting a constitution based on the principles laid down by the National Convention; organising a national referendum to approve the redrafted constitution; holding free and fair elections for a Parliament; and building a modern and democratic nation through the support of the leaders elected by Parliament (Caballero-Antony 2010, 27). A boost to the junta's expected connection with democracy was, for example, the idea of the incorporation of the fundamental freedoms, minority rights and democratic transition into 'the indivisibility of the security concept' (as it has been embraced by both the EU and OSCE). That progress was, however, irreconcilable with the thinking of Myanmar's administration (Roberts 2010; Farrelly 2013). Similarly, there was no chance that Myanmar's authorities would provide assistance to their ASEAN partners in the unfortunate case of a crisis occurring in the region and the need for help, or, as an interviewed official from the EEAS implied, accept ASEAN's assistance, incoherently with the propositions from the EU (Interview (B), 2014).

(ii) The dynamics of socialisation and ASEAN

However, the reactions, among the local actors, to the devastation produced by Cyclone Nargis revealed fresh developments. ASEAN sorted out crisis support for Myanmar. How could this be the case? The dynamics of socialisation, as explained by Checkel (1999), and social learning might have been central to that development. Social learning takes place at certain times and there are times when agents acquire new preferences. As upheld in the framework of analysis' section, social learning involves the development of processes whereby actors acquire new interests and preferences through contacts with other contexts, either discursive structures or norms. Three points try to explain how social learning (and the ability to persuade, and the crisis and policy failure argument) might have encouraged ASEAN's engagement in crisis support for Myanmar.

First, there was no lack of transformative discourses at the ARF meetings through which to promote group learning and dispense norms, as agents of new interests (Checkel 1999, 548). The Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures, the Peacekeeping groups, and those related to Search, Rescue and Disaster Relief, received growing support from the personnel from the EU External Service. These officials were from the Crisis Response and Operational Coordination section (Interview (B), 2014). Officials from the European Commission's department providing emergency assistance and relief to the victims of natural disasters and armed conflict outside the European Union were also in contact with the ARF groups. Frequent exchanges with the Commission's ECHO personnel for humanitarian assistance and long-term follow-up were confirmed (Interview (C), 2014). Relations among these personnel and the groups' participants indicate that communication most likely spread, and competence and knowledge were disseminated. We reported the number of times in which the working clusters, training and security exercises, and other groups met during the 2004-2008 period. As the interviewed EEAS officials acknowledged, not only was it inevitable that interactions were going to develop new interests. It was the purpose of the frequency and thickness of the networking to promise new learning (Interview (B), 2014). This result was anticipated by Checkel proposing that 'where a group met repeatedly, and where there was a high density of interactions among participants' social learning was most likely to occur (p. 549).

Second, the ability to persuade was not a minor factor contributing to enhanced social learning. The EEAS and ECHO personnel, those from OSCE and the EU co-chairs, were recognised as having sway over the attendants, during training, and their involvement in tuition and assistance in the practical exercises. Whether this result was due to their personal ability or to other reasons is hard to say. The interviewed ASEAN leaders close to the ARF organisation (Interview (D), 2013) and Southeast Asian security policy analysts (Interview (E), 2014) have, however, acknowledged that the persons involved in the Forum's activities, in most cases, had an enhanced persuasive capability, which they accredited to the authority of their position. The persuasive ability provided guidance. Concerning the connection between persuasion and social learning, Checkel explained a dynamic: when the persuader was an authoritative member of the in-group to which the persuadee (e.g. representatives of ASEAN and its member states) belonged or wanted to belong, persuasion was most likely to materialise (p. 550).

Third, also, there is the 'crisis' and 'policy failure' argument that gives weight to social learning. Since the Bangkok Declaration was agreed, in 1997, to give shape to the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN set the norm that its group was to remain in a higher ranked position compared to the other participants', due to its role as founder of the Forum. An interviewed ASEAN leader (Interview (F), 2013) suggested that, when the cyclone hit and damaged the Irrawaddy delta, the ASEAN group was discouraged and sensed the emergency on its shoulders, felt an added responsibility, and the role of dealing with the crisis emerged as an obligation. The entire region was in a humanitarian and environmental depression, and all ASEAN nations were bound to suffer the consequences of this (Interview (F), 2013). No doubt, Myanmar's junta's foreign policy

was evidence of policy failure. Refusing the help of the external donors, whose ships have been left for weeks anchored in the Adaman Sea (Selth 2008), the lack of capability to provide assistance to its people was unquestionable. 'Crisis' and 'policy failure' were evident in the context within which the ASEAN's relief operation took place.[6] These reasons reconnect with Checkel's account that social learning was more likely 'where the group felt itself in a crisis or was faced with clear and incontrovertible evidence of policy failure' (p. 549).

In the end, processes of social learning might have helped to take advantage of the notions assimilated at the groups' meetings in the ARF framework. For instance, explaining the usefulness of intervening to reduce risks and crises, and suggesting that such support to the region, when required, was a highly valuable contribution to security and wellbeing, as advanced in Potsdam, in 2005, was a powerful message, by the EU, to inspire ASEAN.

(iii) The logic of consequences and Myanmar

The other new development that emerged in connection with Nargis' devastation was Myanmar's junta's softened non-interference stance. To interpret that change, March and Olsen (1998) explained that the logic of expected consequences suggests that the strategic calculation of rational bargaining of a government's protection and defence of what it perceives as its national interest confronts but frequently becomes reconciled with the position of other states on the same policy issue (p. 950). In the post-Nargis situation, the strategic calculation of rational bargaining by Myanmar's junta challenged the position of the other actors, specifically ASEAN, and the ASEAN Secretariat which was willing to network with Myanmar's government. The rational bargaining's challenge was, firstly, manifested by the junta's denial of external help, and protection of the political order that it held dear, and the defence of what it perceived to be the national interest (Selth 2008; Haacke 2008; Cook 2013).

Only subsequently, a different logic (that March and Olsen explain as the logic of appropriateness (1998, 951-2; 2004)) emerged. It was manifested by late forces for change (Haacke 2008). An interviewed Myanmar historian (Interview (G), 2014) believed that the ethical dimension of the responsibility to protect its own people was a true response which became more definite only successively. Also, the collective norms of the ASEAN group to reduce the risk to security (as established in the ARF's Concept Paper of 1995) was another encouragement to change that was confirmed by an officer of the ASEAN Secretariat (Interview (H), 2013). A further motive was proposed by a Singaporean security analyst (Interview (I), 2014) as the collective norm of avoiding impinging negatively on the strengthened regionalism in Southeast Asia that the ASEAN group was engaged in pursuing through its efforts. Another interpretation, by the same expert, hypothesised the pressure felt by the junta to comply with the Seven Steps programme (combined with the need to be more accommodating (Interview (I), 2014) *vis-à-vis* ASEAN's offer of networking) as incentives to support the new logic, that March and Olsen indicate as a logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1998, 2004).

Social mechanisms and Myanmar?
Yet, Checkel's study (1999) suggests that social mechanisms may have been active among Myanmar's representatives at the Forum and bore a relation to the resulting softened stance. Think of the case in which, while at the meetings and working groups, Myanmar's officials stayed apart, discreetly seeking to maintain their government's distinctiveness. Though, being present, they could hardly escape from the social mechanisms produced by the surroundings. As social learning involved a process whereby the actors (through interaction with broader institutional contexts, rules and discourses) acquired new interests and preferences (Checkel 1999, 548), Myanmar's representatives, by sharing the on-going practices with the other participants, were part of the development processes. For them too, 'where new tasks were communicated' was at the workshops and joint sessions, which generated circumstances where 'agents' of new interests were easier to breed than on other occasions. The method of discoursing together and understanding the difficulties others needed to overcome carried weight on shaping the attitudes to one's own country's problems. Some discourses by others could have raised Burma's representatives' attention. Myanmar's representatives might have 'internalised' the normative messages of the discourses as a 'reflex' (Checkel 2005, 811). The messages might have had the potential of creating new confidence in Myanmar's representatives (and then in the junta). A possible 'confidence factor' was, for example, the 'persuasion' that an operation of the type of the action undertaken by ASEAN (the UN and other actors) was to remain under the junta's strict control, as well as to contribute towards reducing problems.[7] This view and interpretation has not been dismissed by a Southeast Asian security policy analyst (Interview (E), 2014) when discussed together. The post-Nargis cooperation might have appeared as a foreign policy alternative that was not completely unacceptable to the non-interference option. Checkel suggests that 'social learning involves a break with strict forms of methodological individualism' (Checkel 1999, 548).

Agent-carriers of new ideas?
Also, Checkel's social mechanisms would lead to seeing Burma's representatives becoming agent-carriers of new ideas and identities (Checkel 1999, 549). Since the representatives were due to report to their administration's generals about the communications and messages received (and 'understood') at meetings, groups and sub-groups, they could become active in their nation's capital. As (potential) agents for change, the representatives might have wanted to convince the junta's administrators that some solutions (as they 'understood' them) were better than others. Also, they might have shown themselves to be 'less persuaded' about the goodness of the constant non-interference profession. These suggestions could be matters for further research, investigated by means of local questioning and interviewing. The above processes, however, linked to social mechanisms perform as influential incentives for modifying behaviour (p.549).[8]

(iv) The logic of appropriateness and the EU

The other observed new development connected with Nargis was the inclusion of the 'shared responsibility to protect population' as a new goal of the EU's security policy of December 2008 (IESS 2008, 12). March and Olsen's logic of appropriateness would suggest that 'rules' associated with specific 'identities' and 'circumstances' (March and Olsen 1998, 951) challenged the EU. The prime circumstance was created by Myanmar and its people, deprived by the catastrophic Nargis. The other circumstance was provided by the EU and specifically by the Council re-thinking the EU's performance, i.e. whether the EU, during the Nargis incident, has behaved in accordance with its identity and the rules to which it agreed (EUC 2008, 28). The EU had established the norm concerning the readiness 'to share in the responsibility for global security' in the European Security Strategy (ESS) that the Council ratified in 2003. In that document, the EU spelled out that the 'concept of responsibility to protect needed to evolve in response to developments' (ESS 2003, 1). Later, in 2005, the EU was at the forefront of the diplomacy that resulted in the UN General Assembly's agreement with the notion of a 'responsibility […] to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity' (UNGA 2005; Marchi 2011, 157). Notwithstanding the norm that it had fixed in the ESS almost five years before the cyclone struck and the progress achieved at the UN, the EU was yet 'normatively un-clear' on whether 'to assist in circumstances like that of Myanmar's Nargis' was a EU's compulsion (EUC 2008, 28). March and Olsen's appropriateness thinking reveals that 'action involves evoking an identity or role[,] and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation' (p. 951). Both the sense of obligation ingrained in the EU's identity, its normative actorness, valued and principled foreign policy (Manners 2002; Lucarelli and Manners 2006) and the recommendation embedded in the ESS (of evolving the notion concerning 'when' the choice to protect became a recognised responsibility) have backed the EU and Council's new claim, that cyclone-deprived Myanmar contributed towards encouraging. The claim upheld that a '*Europe de la securite humaine*' was a sufficiently broad concept for the EU to adopt in order to embrace 'natural disasters' and 'multiple sources of insecurity', which were associated with Myanmar's situation (EUC 2008, 39). The broadened concept was, now, suitable to answer the Council's question of 'whether or not the humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the cyclone, in Burma, was a reason for the responsibility to protect' entering into action (EUC 2008, 28).

VII Conclusion

This empirical investigation has focused on the EU's efforts, via ASEAN, at the ASEAN Regional Forum, concerning Myanmar, seeking to encourage security cooperation during 2004-2008. It has shown the interest the EU has attached to the Forum, the only platform for security dialogue in Southeast Asia, a region where the EU is not a major actor in security affairs. It placed emphasis on the 2014 and 2013 events that testified to the existence of a Myanmar-EU security connection that motivated the two key questions around which this work has developed. It investigated the above EU's efforts, focusing on the EU as co-chair with ASEAN of ARF meetings. It explained that, since ARF activities were mostly concerned with crisis management and disaster relief capacity building, Cyclone Nargis, ravaging Myanmar, was used as a test case to draw considerations that served to answer this work's two main questions. Concerning the first

question (*how has the EU interacted with Myanmar via ASEAN, at the Forum, trying (directly or indirectly) to induce Myanmar's junta towards connecting with cooperation in the area of security, as opposed to its preferred 'non-interference policy'*), the answer has been shown, by this investigation, by the EU publicising the multilateral aspects of its policy in the field of security on the basis of its experience and aspiration to encourage others to follow. March and Olsen, and also Checkel, have indicated the processes leading to the softened non-interference stance that Myanmar's junta has demonstrated as holding, when it accepted the relief operation made possible by ASEAN to assist during Nargis. The processes had a direct link to the EU which wanted to mobilise the different strengths, values and capacities of its partners. The investigation has endeavoured to substantiate these processes by means of interviewing – ASEAN leaders and leaders close to the ARF organisation, Southeast Asian security analysts, Burmese historians, together with officials from the European Crisis Response and Operational Coordination and the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, and, more in general, from the EEAS. Concerning the second question (*as the EU sought to convince Myanmar to compromise and accept cooperation, has Myanmar, hit by Cyclone Nargis, had some consequences for the EU and its security policy, and, if so, how?*), the investigation availed itself of March and Olsen's understanding of the logic of appropriateness, which led to a realisation of the extent to which Myanmar's Nargis incident contributed towards moving the EU Council to upgrade the European security policy by means of introducing the R2P goal.

Notes

[1] For a detailed description of ARF's activities, see the Concept Paper (ARF-CP 1995).

[2] In 2005, the EU shared the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) with ASEAN. The mission was designed to monitor the implementation of various aspects of the peace agreement signed by the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement. The EU, together with contributing countries from ASEAN, as well as Norway and Switzerland, deployed the mission. For an account of AMM's developments, see: Schulze (2007) and Tholens (2012).

[3] For OSCE's attributes, see Galbreath and Brosing (2013, 275-78).

[4] For an account of ASEAN's dealing with Cyclone Nargis, see: Haacke (2008, 370-73).

[5] For a discussion of the factors complicating the responsibility to protect's implementation in the Asia-Pacific region, see Weber (2013b, 29-31).

[6] A security policy analyst questioned in Singapore (Interview (E), 2014) believed that the intervention in Indonesia's Aceh region, in collaboration with the EU, in 2005, was of support to ASEAN's new initiative. The commentator purported that the Aceh Monitoring Mission served as a formative preparation. It facilitated the institution of the Humanitarian Task Force and the Tripartite Core Group, to organise the aid work which focused help entirely on Myanmar.

[7] A similar discourse was aired in Potsdam, when EU's officials reported about 'relief actions' remaining under the control of the nation agreeing to cooperate.

[8] Interviewed Southeast Asian security policy analyst suggested that the deflection from the non-interference strategy showed up by the junta was more 'associated to the specific circumstance' of Nargis' damage than to a 'durable and sustainable' decision to sidetrack that strategy (Interview (E), 2014).

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