

THE DEBATE OVER MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF STATE TERRORISM

PERDEBATAN JUSTIFIKASI MORAL DARI TERORISME NEGARA

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Abstract - This essay examines the debate over moral justifications of state terrorism. Consequentialist and deontologist perspectives provide a framework to justify acts of terrorism. However, this framework can not absolutely be defended. By drawing on Tony Coady and Igor Primoratz point of views, it is argued that acts of terrorism perpetrated by the state can never be justified and it is morally wrong and worse than non-state terrorism.

Keywords : state terrorism, moral justification, consequentialist, deontologist

Abstrak - Tulisan ini mengkaji perdebatan mengenai justifikasi moral dari terorisme negara. Perspektif Consequentialist dan Deontologist menyediakan kerangka teori untuk membenarkan tindakan terorisme. Namun demikian, kerangka teori ini tidak bisa dipertahankan secara absolut. Dengan menggunakan perspektif dari Tony Coady dan Igor Primoratz, tulisan ini menegaskan bahwa aksi terorisme yang dilakukan oleh negara tidak dapat dibenarkan dan secara moral salah bahkan lebih buruk dari aksi terorisme yang dilakukan oleh aktor non-negara.

Kata kunci : terorisme negara, justifikasi moral, consequentialist, deontologist

Introduction

In today's world, the term "terrorism" is prominently applied to actions by non-state actors or by private individuals or groups. The word "terror" was first used in relation with the Jacobin "Reign of Terror" following the French Revolution, instituted in 1793, in the case of government violence against a wide numbers of national element where the victims are about 17,000 civilians. Based on this political history, some scholars limit the definition to the government action only, in term of "state terrorism."

Previously, there was a clear distinction between terrorist and guerillas, and between non-state terrorism and state terrorism. Today, these distinctions become

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blurred and more confused than ever before. Although, we could find so many sources for research about state terrorism, but some criticisms stated that a study of state terrorism is biased or not in the mainstream study of terrorism where ultimately focus on non-state actors. This paper will examine the debate surrounding the study of state terrorism and the question of moral justifications of such actions by the state. It is argued that acts of terrorism perpetrated by the state can not be justified and it is morally wrong and worse than non-state terrorism.

Defining State Terrorism

Before discussing the concept of state terrorism, it would be valuable for us to evaluate the term “terrorism” previously. According to Coady, “[terrorism] is the organized use of violence to attack non-combatants (innocent in special sense) or their property for political purposes.”² Moreover, Primoratz defined terrorism ‘as the deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating some other people into a course of action they otherwise would not take.’³ Stohl defined terrorism as ‘the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behavior in a victim and/or audience of the act or threat.’⁴ From these definitions, the term ‘state terrorism’ could be included because it is open to the act or use of violence perpetrated by state and non-state actor.

The study of state terrorism is still marginalized in social sciences. There is only limited attention to focus on state terrorism by historians, sociologists and political scientist, and philosophers, whereas they focus too much on non-state terrorism. As Paul Wilkinson says :

A particularly thorny problem in all the major contributions to the literature on terrorism has been the relationship between terrorism by factions and the state acts of terror... There is a rich and growing literature on what most authors now term state terror, but the term

² C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, “Defining Terrorism,” in Igor Primoratz (ed.), *Terrorism The Philosophical Issues*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ Michael Stohl, “International Dimensions of State Terrorism,” in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *The State as Terrorist : the Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 43.

*terrorism now widely used to denote the systematic use of terror by non-governmental actors. Nevertheless we should not lose sight of the fundamental truth that one cannot adequately understand terrorist movements without paying some attention to the effects of the use of force and violence by states. Indeed some of the best historical case-studies of the use of factional terrorism as a weapon vividly demonstrate how state violence often help to provoke and fuel the violence of terrorist movements.*⁵

While study about war, crime, and non-state terrorism have been intensively studied and theorized, state terrorism remains understudied and virtually untheorized. In addition, state terrorism have rarely been systematically studied within a single framework or comparatively.

However, there are some efforts by some scholars who try to define the concept of state terrorism. In this regard, according to Laqueur, state terrorism refers to ‘acts of terror carried out by governments against their own population, including systematic intimidation, arrests, killings and other means of coercion. This is usually directed against political opponents, but it can also effect sections of the population considered ‘objectively’ harmful, and it has been, on occasion, altogether indiscriminate.’⁶

Primoratz points out that there are two tendencies in the discussion of state terrorism. First tendency is based on the assumption that ‘what the state does has a certain kind of legitimacy, while those challenging it tend to be perceived as the forces of the disorder and destruction, engaged in clearly unjustifiable pursuits. The second tendency, is the double standard of the form ‘Us vs. Them.’ For instance, in dealing with insurgency, the general public and the media tend to support the state. In this way, when insurgents abroad are sponsored by our state, we do not call them terrorist, but rather guerrillas, freedom fighters, and the like.⁷

In accordance with Primoratz, Selden and So point out that in state terrorism, a state systematically directs violence against the civilian population of its own or another

⁵ Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *The State as Terrorist : the Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), p.7.

⁶ Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1987), p. 145.

⁷ Igor Primoratz, “State Terrorism and Counter-terrorism,” in *Terrorism The Philosophical Issue*, Igor Primoratz (eds), (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2004), p. 113.

state. Drawing on this point, they define state terrorism as ‘systematic state violence against civilians in violation of international agreements, state edicts, and precedents established by international courts designed to protect the rights of civilians.’⁸ In this regard, while certain acts of violence perpetrated by individuals and groups against the state or its citizens are often labeled as terrorism, violent acts committed by the state against a civilian population have rarely been conceived in these terms, despite the clarity of international law in defining such as terrorist.⁹ Moreover, Martin points out that terrorism by states is characterized by official government support for policies of violence, repression and intimidation. This violence and coercion, according to Martin, is directed against perceived enemies that the state has determined as threatened its interest or security.¹⁰

In a slightly different way, Gilbert notes that state terrorism has many of the features of war, of a war fought by an army of occupation, say, against partisans, or of a war fought by the state against rebels. The aim of its operations is to remove obstacles to state control of a territory by shooting, taking prisoners, destroying strongholds, cutting off supplies, breaking up command structures, and preventing aid being given by the civilian population.¹¹

Gilbert argues that the distinctive of state terrorism is its use of political assassination, of torture and other cruelties against opponents. Such acts are indisputably contrary to the rules of war, as preserve in the Geneva and Hague Conventions. They involve deliberate attacks on identifiable protected persons or mistreatment of enemy forces. Their routine and unremarked occurrence in state terrorist campaigns betokens the secrecy of the war or warlike activities in which the state is engaged. State terrorism involves warlike intentions which are impeded by constraints from issuing in open war. Thus, the intention to achieve the aims of war is

⁸ Mark Selden and Alvin Y. So, *War and State Terrorism : The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific*, (Lanham, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, Inc. 2004), p. 6.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gus Martin, *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives and Issues, Second Edition*, (California: Sage Publications, Inc.), 2006, p. 111.

¹¹ Paul Gilbert, *Terrorism, Security and Nationality : An Introductory Study in Applied Political Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 128.

usually denied by the state, even when its national elites often used the rethoric of winning a 'war against terrorism'.¹²

Forms of State Terrorism

The use of terror in international and domestic affairs is common and the state has been and remain a more conductor of terrorism than insurgents with greater effect. There are variety of state involvement with terrorism. As Primoratz points out that many states have used terrorism in international affairs particularly as a mean to achieve foreign policy objectives, in the course of waging war, or as a method of maintaining their occupation of another people's land.¹³

Stohl argues that the state is as much as a user of terror in its international affairs as in its domestic activities. He describes three broad forms of state terrorism in international affairs. Sirst is coercive diplomacy. The aim of this form of state terrorism is to make nonconformity with a particular political demand. He points out that although threat is communicated by actions of the state openly, threat may be implicit and often nonverbal. In other words, coercive diplomacy is overt behavior. The parties to the conflict are fully aware of the nature of threat.¹⁴ Following this rational, we could examine Israel's behavior in relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982, in order to halt the PLO ability to attack the Israeli settlement near the Lebanese border. Israeli retaliation and bombing raids are designed to instill fear as they are to produce damage. The Israel required PLO to surrender and leave Lebanon or would face a full scale assault. The target of the raids and the intimidation and threat was the population of Beirut as well as the PLO itself. In this way, the widening target was designed to increase the pressure on the PLO to surrender by convincing the people of Beirut, through the threat of destruction, that expelling the PLO, was their best interest.¹⁵

¹² Ibid., p. 129.

¹³ Primoratz, op.cit., p. 116.

¹⁴ Michael Stohl, 'International Dimensions of State Terrorism,' in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, op.cit., p. 44.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.45

The Israel also did the same form of state terrorism when they invaded Lebanon, once again, in July 2006. The Israel launched full scale attack on Beirut to end the Hezbollah. In this way, Israel demanded to weakened and destroyed Hezbollah, just as the PLO had to be evicted from Lebanon in 1982. However, the target of the raids and threat was not only to convince the people of Lebanon and Hezbollah per se, but also to enhance the credibility of threats against Iran by eliminating a Lebanese-based deterrent to possible attack.

The second form of state terrorism is covert behavior. The clandestine services of the national state are responsible for these actions. The actions were conducted by government agents which operate across the country and the targets are national elites or foreign society. In this type of state terrorism, the state attempt to intimidate government officials directly through campaigns of bombing, attacks, assassinations, and sponsoring and participation in attempt coups d'etat. Alternatively, national states participate in destabilization of other societies with the purpose of creating chaos and conditions for the collapse of governments, the weakening of national state, and changes in leadership.¹⁶

This forms of state terrorism is not directly aimed at producing conformity but rather fear and chaos. It is hoped that as a result of increased fear and chaos, governments at some point will be in a weaker bargaining position or have a different composition induced by terror. For instance, the clandestine services of the United States have had much experience in the past decades in this type of behavior. The organization most often responsible for such behavior is the Central Intelligence Agency. A listing of well-known CIA special operations indicates the range of such activities. For instance in Guatemala, 1954; Iran, 1953; Indonesia, 1958; the Bay of Pigs, Cuba, 1961, the US trained, equipped, and provided tactical assistance to groups attempting to overthrow established governments.¹⁷

The third categories of state terrorism is surrogate terrorism. This form involve assistance to another state or insurgent organization that makes it possible or improves the capability of that actor to practice terrorism. Since the obvious effect and intent of

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 51.

the assistance provided is the improvement of assisted actor's ability to either carry out terrorist actions to maintain regimes rule or to create chaos and/or the eventual overthrow of an identified enemy state regime.¹⁸ In this regard, when governments train the personnel that conduct terror operations, consult with and advise – for state reasons – the security services of a 'friendly' state in its use of terrorism, this tool is a forms of surrogate terrorism.¹⁹ For instance, the professionalization of Latin American police forces was the object of the International Police Academy and the Intenational Police Services, Inc. The latter is a CIA-sponsored organization that also had students from Asia and Africa.²⁰

Moving on from international affairs, state terrorism may conduct in domestic activities. In this regard, state terrorism is directed internally against domestic enemies. As Primoratz points out, this form of state terrorism is defined by the sustained use of terrorism against their own population. In this case, totalitarian states, such as Nazy Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, or Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia are the best example of state terrorism as domestic policy.²¹

However, Primoratz argues that not only totalitarian states use terrorism as domestic policy, but many non-totalitarian states, including many democratic and liberal states have used terrorism on a limited scale and for more specific purposes. The states may done directly or indirectly by sponsoring non-state actors to conduct terrorism. Primoratz points out that several totalitarian states have used terrorism against their own population directly by having state agencies such as the armed forces or security services. In this case, he points out many military dictatorships in South America and elsewhere as examples of this form of state terrorism. For instance, Chile under Augusto Pinochet and Argentina under the generals. While, other states have used terrorism indirectly by sponsoring death squads.²² For example, Brazilian government established a special force which conduct terrorist operations, widely known *Esquadrao da Morte* ("Death Squad"). However, knowledge of the establishment of the Death Squad in Brazil did not reduce

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Primoratz, op.cit., p. 115.

²² Ibid.

American assistance to Brazilian security efforts. Death squads have appeared in some Latin American states whose military and police were supported and trained by the United States.

According to Martin, state terrorism as domestic policy refers to the state's politically motivated application of force inside its own borders. The state's military, law enforcement, and other security institutions are used to suppress perceived threat. These institutions can also be supplemented with assistance from unofficial paramilitaries and death squads. The purpose of domestically focused terrorism is to demonstrate the supreme power of the government and to intimidate or eliminate the opposition. Martin notes apartheid system of racial separation in South Africa as an example. During apartheid era, the South African government began a covert campaign to eliminate antiapartheid leaders and supporters, when confronted by a combination of antiapartheid reformist agitation, mass unrest, and terrorist attack. This included government support for the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party in its violence against multiethnic and multiracial African National Congress (ANC). The South African government also assigned security officers to command death squads called Askaris, who assassinated ANC members both inside and outside South Africa.²³

The Question of Moral Justifications

In the discussion of whether state terrorism can morally be justified, there are two different point of views which claim that it is morally wrong and it is not morally wrong. From the consequentialist point of view, terrorism, whether it is perpetrated by state or non-state agents is not morally wrong or impermissible and it all depends on the consequences that are going to have in certain circumstances. In this way, terrorism is impermissible when its consequences are bad, but when its consequences are good, terrorism is permissible and have moral justification. In a consequentialist point of view, the question of moral status of terrorism is exclusively the question of its consequences.²⁴

²³ Gus Martin, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

²⁴ Igor Primoratz, 'the Morality of Terrorism,' *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, No. 14, 1997, p. 222.

According to Primoratz, some consequentialists emphasize that those who resort to terrorism tend not to take the need for moral justification seriously enough. Indeed, it is difficult to satisfy the requirements of its consequentialist justification. He argues that in all such cases, a consequentialist who consistent with her position will have to draw the conclusion that terrorism is morally justified.²⁵

Another point of view which justify acts of terrorism come from deontologist theory, offered by Virginia Held. Her main idea is that terrorism can be justified under certain circumstances in terms of basic human rights. She argues that in general, social action cannot be properly judged exclusively in lights of its consequences, but we should apply the concepts of rights and duties. In dealing with terrorism, we must focus on the fact that terrorist violate rights, then asking whether such violations can be morally justified. As Held says, 'If we say that no violations of rights are justified, even in this case, this can become a disguised recipe for maintaining the status quo. If we permit violations, we risk undermining the moral worth of the very rights for which we are striving to achieve respect.'²⁶ She further argues that the question of the moral justification of terrorism is a special case of the general question whether we may violate certain rights in order to ensure the respect of other rights. Thus, terrorism violates basic human rights of its victims.²⁷ In the words of Virginia Held :

*It seems reasonable, I think, that on grounds of justice, it is better to equalize rights violations in a transition to bring an end to rights violations than it is to subject a given group that has already suffered extensive rights violations to continued such violations, if the degree of severity of the two violations to continued violations, if the degree of severity of the two violations is similar... If we must have rights violations, a more equitable distribution of such violations is better than a less equitable distribution.*²⁸

Furthermore, Gilbert believes that state terrorism can morally be justified. He also believes that many states defend their acts of terrorism as morally better justified than

²⁵ Ibid., p. 223.

²⁶ Virginia Held, 'Terrorism, Rights, and Political Goals,' in R.G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 73; Primoratz, 'Morality of Terrorism,' op.cit., p. 229.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 229.

²⁸ Virginia Held, op.cit., p. 79-80.

the campaigns of terror by non-state agents. In this sense, the moral superiority claimed for counter-terrorist actions is supposed to be founded on the fact that they preserve due process of law, while terrorist campaigns are carried on through breaches of it.²⁹ He further argues that in non-state terrorist point of view, the state is founded on organized violence, thus the actions of the state against opponents are not morally different in principle from the actions of non-state terrorist.³⁰ As an example, Gilbert points out the IRA allegation to the British Security Forces whose shot three of their members without warning or provocation. This allegation is similar to a charge of state terrorism. However, this allegation does not reply to state condemnation. As Gilbert says :

This must be that the legally sanctioned measures which the state bring to bear against terrorists themselves depend on the use or threat of violence, which the state bring to bear against terrorist themselves depend on the use or threat of violence, which is dignified as legal only because the state openly sanctions it. Since this is so, it is argued, there is no moral distinction between the actions of terrorists in seeking to gain power and those of the agents of the state in seeking to retain it. Hence there is no moral case for regarding the former as criminal and the latter as not only permissible but justified as the prevention or punishment of crime.³¹

Regarding the earlier question of whether state terrorism is morally wrong, Gilbert claims that it is not, morally speaking. He argues that state terrorism can morally be justified for two reasons. First, generally speaking, criminality of terrorism does not show that is morally wrong. He assumes that ‘if killings in wartime may in certain circumstances be morally permissible then it is hard to see how acts of terrorism committed in similar circumstances may not be.’³² He further argues that ‘if an act of state terrorism were morally permissible as an act of war then the state should acknowledge it as a war. If it does not, it can scarcely secure the justification that acts of war can have.’³³

²⁹ Paul Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

The second reason for rejecting the suggestion that state terrorism is morally wrong because criminal, that state terrorism may not even count as criminal. In this way, he argues that the state's refusal to acknowledge its own activities as war does not require it to treat these activities as criminal, even if they count as such by laws enforced elsewhere. As Gilbert notes, 'the state can legalise its own terrorist acts while they remain terrorist, because they do not occur as part of an openly acknowledged war. They still count as terrorist, we might say, because they involve, simply to serve state policy, breaches of rules we expect, in those circumstances, to be expressed in law.'³⁴ Gilbert concludes that because of there is no alternative to a resort to violence in pursuit of the terrorist's aims, so there is usually no alternative to it in the state's maintenance of power – what is known as national security.³⁵

In contrast from those views, Coady believes that acts of terrorism is morally wrong. He argues that terrorism violates a central principle of the *jus in bello* – the principle which declares the immunity of non-combatants from direct attack. As Coady says, 'if one takes the principle of non-combatant immunity that forms a significant part of the *jus in bello* to invoke an absolute moral prohibition upon intentionally attacking innocent people, as just war thinkers have commonly done, then major terrorism is always wrong and always permissible.'³⁶

In accordance with Coady, Primoratz believes that terrorism 'almost absolutely wrong,' thereby endorsing a very strong moral presumption against terrorism and the targeting of civilians.³⁷ He further argues that state terrorism is morally worse than non-state terrorism. He notes four reasons : first, acts of terrorism by the state has made a remarkable destruction to civilians rather than terrorism by non-state agents. As Laqueuer says that 'acts of terror carried out by police states and tyrannical governments, in general, have been responsible for thousand times more victims and

³⁴ Ibid., p. 133.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

³⁶ C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, "Terrorism, Morality, and Supreme Emergency," in Igor Primoratz, *State Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*, op.cit., p. 81.

³⁷ Primoratz, 'Morality of Terrorism,' op.cit., p. 231.

more misery than all actions of individual terrorism taken together.’³⁸ Primoratz argues that :

*No matter how much non-state terrorists manage to enrich their equipment and improve their organization, planning, and methods of action, they stand no chance of ever significantly changing the score. No insurgent, no matter how well funded, organized, determined, and experienced in the methods of terrorism, can hope to come to close to the killing, maiming, and overall destruction on the scale the Royal Air Force and US Airforce visited on German and Japanese cities in World War II, or to the psychological devastation and subsequent physical liquidation of millions in Soviet and Nazi camps.*³⁹

In terms of victims, Primoratz argues that the number of civilians killed in acts of terrorism by the state was more excessive. He compares the number of victims of the act of terrorism by non-state agents in the United States on September 11, 2001, with victims of the Allies’ terror bombing campaign against Germany. On September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, the number of victims are approximately 7,000 and the media labeled this horrible event as ‘the most devastating terrorist attack in history.’ However, if we look at the number of people killed in bombing campaign in Germany, this would change the claim by the media. On July 27, 1943, the RAF launched a ‘Firestorm Raid’ attack on Hamburg where there were about 40,000 civilians killed.⁴⁰ From this example, we could conclude that acts of state terrorism is more severe in terms of victims than acts of terrorism by non-state agents.

Second, in terms of secrecy, he argues that state terrorism is always conducted by secrecy, deception and hypocrisy. In contrast, non-state terrorism generally not secretive, not deceive the public and not hypocrite in proclaiming their involvement under the notions of morality. In the words of Primoratz :

When involved in terrorism – whether perpetrated by its own agencies or by proxy – a state will be acting clandestinely, disclaiming any involvement, and declaring its adherence to values and principles that rule it out. Or, if it is impractical and perhaps even counterproductive to deny involvement, it will do its best to present its actions to at least

³⁸ Walter Laqueur, op.cit., p. 146

³⁹ Primoratz, *State Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*, op.cit., p. 118

⁴⁰ Ibid.

*some audiences in a different light: as legitimate acts of war, or acts done in defense of state security. It will normally be able to do that without much difficulty...*⁴¹

The third reason, relates to the international convention signed by the state. According to Primoratz, assorted declarations of human rights or conventions and agreements are prohibit the act resort to terrorism. In this regard, in today's world, all states are signatories to most of those conventions and agreements, whereas those who engage in non-state terrorism are not signatories of any kind of conventions. Following this rationale, he argues that 'when a state is involved in terrorism, it acts in breach of this own solemn international commitments. This particular charge cannot be brought against those resorting to non-state terrorism.'⁴²

Forth reason, lies on the justification of 'no alternative' argument. Primoratz argues that it is not possible for the state to use 'no alternative' argument to conduct terrorism. In contrast, he notes that it is possible to apply 'no alternative' argument to justify acts of terrorism by non-state agents. Referring to a case where people were being oppressed, humiliated and exploited by foreign rule, it is possible for freedom fighter to claim that the only possible way and effective method to achieve liberation is by using terrorism. As Primoratz says, 'in such a situation, the "no alternative" argument would provide moral justification for terrorism, or at least somewhat mitigate our moral condemnation of its use. On the other hand, it seems virtually impossible that a state should find itself in such circumstances where it has no alternative to resorting to terrorism.'⁴³

However, Primoratz acknowledged that his arguments could be challenged, especially in regards to his fourth argument. By the notion of 'supreme emergency' it is argued that the Allies' terror bombing campaign against the civilian population of Germany could be justified. According to this point of view, it is allowed for a person to put aside moral prohibition of not to attack civilians in order to prevent moral disaster in the near future. According to Walzer, states can employ terrorism. The primacy of the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 119.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 120.

political community that Walzer sees as validating the special role of states is highly suspect.⁴⁴ As Michael Walzer says, 'for the truth is that the supreme emergency passed long before the British bombing reached its crescendo. The greater number by far of the German civilians killed by terror bombing were killed without moral (and probably without military) reason.'⁴⁵

Primoratz also highlights another notion countering his argument. Referring to the notion of 'balance of terror', it seems that acts of terrorism by the state can be justified as well as 'no alternative' argument. In this regard, the balance of terror is the product of mutual threat of nuclear attack in the Cold War era. The threat in this sense is the threat of attacking civilian population center of other state. Primoratz argues that 'if that threat was morally justified, it was a case of state terrorism justified by the 'no alternative' argument. However, he insists that those actions perpetrated by the state is morally wrong. In the words of Primoratz :

*Clearly, carrying out the threat and actually destroying major population centers of the enemy and killing hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of enemy civilians, could never morally be justified. But does that mean that a threat to do so – made with the aim of preventing the chain of events that would make such destruction a serious option – is also morally impermissible?*⁴⁶

To answer this question, he further argues that 'the threat need not involve the intention of ever carrying it out; a bluff will do. Yet one might well wonder if a threat of this sort can be both credible and bluff. Of course, if the threat is not credible, it will not be morally justified either.'⁴⁷ Furthermore, at the same tone with Primoratz, Glover argues that 'full-blooded state terrorism is normally a much worse evil than unofficial terrorism.'⁴⁸

⁴⁴ C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, "Terrorism, Morality, and Supreme Emergency," op.cit., p. 89.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Michael Walzer, *Just and Just Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, third edition, (New York: Basic Books, 2000), p. 261.

⁴⁶ Primoratz, "State Terrorism and Counter-terrorism," op.cit., p. 121.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Glover, "State Terrorism," in R.G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 274.

Conclusion

The moral justification of terrorism whether perpetrated by state or non-state agents always open to question. The discussion of state terrorism offered in this essay therefore, indicates that there are different perspectives which claim that acts of terrorism by state or non-state agents can be or can not be morally justified. From consequentialist and deontologist point of views, acts of terrorism can morally be justified and it is not morally wrong. For consequentialist, the question of moral justifications depend on the question of its consequences, whether it is good or bad will result to the conclusion that terrorism is not morally wrong or it is morally wrong. Furthermore, from deontologist point of view, acts of terrorism whether perpetrated by state or non-state agents, can morally be justified in terms of basic human rights. However, this claim can not absolutely be defended. As Primoratz argues that terrorism is 'almost absolutely wrong' and referring to Coady, terrorism is indeed violates the principle of *jus in bello* where non-combatants (civilians) have immunity from direct attack either by state or non-state agents. Following these rationales, terrorism perpetrated by state or non-state agents can not morally be justified and it is morally wrong and even worse than non-state terrorism.

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