

## TERRORISM, ISLAM AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

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### **Abstract**

*Post 11 September 2001, terrorism emerged as tremendous issue in International politics. Most of the countries and International organization under the "control" of USA joined the war against terrorists. Unfortunately, Islam as a religion of peace has an image as the ideology behind the actions of terrorist groups since the were some undemocratics countries were majority muslim. Whereas the facts showed that Islam and some muslim countries are the victims of American foreign policy to gain her own interests by the name of democratization process for creating new peaceful world. There are a lof unjust policies to fight the "real terrorist".*

**Keywords: terrorism, Islam, America**

### **Abstraksi**

*Pasca 11 September 2001, terorisme muncul sebagai isu sangat penting dalam politik internasional. Sebagian besar negara-negara dan organisasi internasional dibawah "kontrol" Amerika Serikat bergabung dalam perang melawan terorisme. Sayangnya, Islam sebagai agama perdamaian mendapatkan image sebagai ideologi dibalik berbagai serangan kelompok teroris dikarenakan beberapa negara yang tidak demokratis merupakan negara yang mayoritas berpenduduk muslim. Padahal fakta menunjukkan bahwa Islam dan beberapa negara muslim merupakan korban dan kebijakan luar negeri Amerika untuk mencapai kepentingannya atas nama proses demokratisasi demi terwujudnya dunia yang damai. Banyak terdapat kebijakan yang tidak adil untuk memerangi "teroris yang sesungguhnya".*

**Kat-Kata Kunci: Terorisme, Islam, Amerika**

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## Introduction

Terrorism actually is not a new issue. There were a lot of victims of terrorist attacks since many years ago. But, after 11 September 2001, terrorism has been becoming very influencing issue in International politics. Since this time, the attacks of terrorist groups has increased significantly in various places. From 2000 to 2003 there were more than 300 attacks which caused more than 5.300 people died in 17 countries. About 70 % of the attacks were indicated as religious terrorist motive.<sup>2</sup>

These conditions invite us to think more about the statement of Fukuyama in his book, *The End of History*, which explains that liberalism is the most compatible ideology in this era. If it is true, the world must be safe and no more complain and protest from other ideologies. Huntington has already predicted in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, that there will be other ideologies wars. There are some ideologies which will against the existence of liberalism. One of them is Islam which has very contrast understanding in term of freedom, equality, democracy, and other issues to liberalism ideology.

Westerners argue that Islam is a traditional ideology which is not compatible with the world development in this modern era. Islam is the seven century religions. Furthermore, they stated that Islam discriminates people to be muslim and non muslim, puts the position of women as the subordinate of man, divides the world to be *darul Islam* and *darul harb*<sup>3</sup>, and other examples which show that Islam is not universal religion. Even, Islam teaches its follower to be terrorist by the concept of jihad. And these opinion are accepted broadly among westerners, not only the common people but also the elites in those countries.

For instance, George Bush, stated that world has to fall Taliban and Al-Qaeda as the Islamic terrorist movement who have to be responsible for the 11 September 2001 attack. This evidence legalized America and her alliances to attack Afghanistan in 7 October 2001. Then they also invaded Iraq to spread the values of democracy. They believe that terrorist groups will only be existed in undemocratic countries such as Iraq which was led by Saddam Hussein, an authoritarian leader.

Unfortunately, the war against terrorist has been generalizing to the war against religions, Islam in this case. People want to demolish the concept of jihad and other understanding in Islam which are principles faith for muslims, for example muslims should not claim Islam as the only right religion because all of the religions are right.

Those conditions influence a lot of things within Islam and International political maps. After America stated the war against terrorism, Islamic world becomes "victims" of this war such as Afghanistan and Iraq, where there are a lot of innocent civil people have been killed. The world also is divided to be terrorist and democratic countries.

So that, in this essay, I will explore the influences of terrorism issue to the changes of International political maps. First of all, I will explain the concept of terrorism.

## The Concept of Terrorism

To understand the influences of terrorism issue to the International politics, it is important to understand the meaning, causes and other concept of terrorism.

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<sup>2</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism*, released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. April 30, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Darul Islam means the state which implement islamic law and darul harb to explain the state which doesn't use islamic law in its constitution.

### ***The Meaning***

Terrorism is difficult concept to be defined. There is no agreed definition about this term. M.C Pande defined terrorism as the use of threat or use of violence for political purpose when such action is intended the influence the attitude and behavior of a target group other than its immediate victims. Moreover, FBI defines terrorism as The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, World bank CD-rom defined terrorism is the use of threat of violence to create fear and panic. And simply US army stated that terrorism is threat or violence to attain political or religious ideological goals through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear.

The point of terrorism is to cause terror, sometimes to further a political goal and sometimes out of sheer hatred. The people terrorists kill are not the targets; they are collateral damage. And blowing up planes, trains, markets or buses is not the goal; those are just tactics. The real targets of terrorism are the rest of people: the billions of people who are not killed but are terrorized because of the killing. The real point of terrorism is not the act itself, but the reaction to the act<sup>5</sup>.

So, we can understand that terrorism is the violence which conducted to attack non-military or unactive military object or in non war and peace condition or civil people and public facilities to intimidate and create shock within society and do pressure to government or organizations to do something or not to do it. So it is clear that terrorism doesn't want to kill the people as the goal but only as a tool.

Terrorism term has emerged as International issues since 1970 and 1980s. In that time, terrorists used mass destruction weapon. They did such kind of things to attract the people attention so people will be fear and unsafe in their life. But then, after 1990s terrorism issues tend to be the issues which are related to religions, such as Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, Hizbullah in Libanon and Alqaedah in Pakistan.

By the advances of technology and communication, terrorists recruit their members from various fields of knowledge such as communication, computer programmer, techniques, finance, chemistry, health, etc. And they also has begun to use several modern technology to do their actions. That is why now there is cyber terrorism which against important state data and secret through internet.

### ***The Causes***

Based on the logic, something happened because of reasons. In term of terrorism issues, there are some reasons which often cause terrorism attacks<sup>6</sup>:

*Psychological problems (paranoid)*

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<sup>4</sup> [http://terrorism.about.com/od/whatisterroris1/ss/DefineTerrorism\\_6.htm](http://terrorism.about.com/od/whatisterroris1/ss/DefineTerrorism_6.htm). accessed on September 1st 2012

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2006/08/what\\_the\\_terror.html](http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2006/08/what_the_terror.html), accessed on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

<sup>6</sup> Alex P.Schmid1. *Root Causes of Terrorism: Some Conceptual Notes, a Set of Indicators and a Model*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. *Democracy and Security*, 1:127–136, 2005

It is common that someone who has psychological problems will do his action emotionally. For instance, when someone felt anger or frustration in facing his problems, it is often that he will do the coercion, suicide and throw everything close from him. This condition occurred in terrorism context.

Usually terrorists are the minority or discriminated or exploited groups who lose their rights cause of other powerful actors. Sayyid Qutb for example legalized his followers in Ikhwanul Muslimin to against and kill governments who do not implement Islamic law and against dakwah (Islamic preaching) because of his experiences when he saw the policies of Egypt government, which killed Hassan Albanna and prisoned him self.

#### *Economic, politics, religion and social problems*

These conditions also produce terrorism actions because based on the nature the human being want them selves to be free and have their own properties. If there is discrimination among the people within the state, extreme poverty, and the state is so weak to solve that particular problems, then the people tend to do terrorism action.

This will be worse if there are some other problems such as ethnic conflicts, religions clashes, pressure of globalization, different ideology in politics, violence culture, the existence of revolution groups, elites conflicts, etc, have already existed.

Terrorist groups believe that through violence, they can gain their political goals to change the conditions, even by capturing and coupting the state, or doing global revolution. At least they can achieve their short time aims to provoke and mobilize masses and do intimidations.

#### ***The Methods of Attack***

To gain their goals, there are some methods which are common to be used by terrorist groups to do their actions<sup>7</sup>; *Firstly*, by killing the important person to publish their existence in International world. For instance, they killed Anwar Saddat on 6 October 1981, one day after his visiting to Israel. In 40 AC, Jews people did the same thing to go out from the influences of Roman Kingdom power. In Pakistan, a lot of their leaders were killed by terrorist groups such as Zia Ul-Haqq, Ali Butho, Benazir Butho, etc.

*Secondly*, through suicide action, means that the terrorist kill or bomb the target by killing and bombing himself around the crowded of people or strategic places. For instances, the bombing of American Embassy in Beirut, April 18, 1983 which caused 63 people died. Terrorist also attacked America and French camp in Libanon which caused 241 French military and 58 American military died. Robert Pape said that from 1980 to 2001, there were 188 suicide attacks and majority of them based on political motives, not religion based.<sup>8</sup>

*Lastly*, by joining some combats to against American and western countries in some Islamic countries such as in Iraq and Bosnia. This strategy often made the situation in those places became worse. For instance, in Iraq, as the research I did for my bachelor degree graduation, the conflict actually could be solved domestically if there were no foreign intervention. Unfortunately American

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<sup>7</sup> Is improved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactics\\_of\\_terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactics_of_terrorism), accessed on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97 (August 2003), pp. 434-361, 2003.

soldiers wanted to leave Iraq if the condition had become stable, but terrorism groups that come from outside the countries, such as Al-Qaeda Afghanistan, wanted America to go out first and they would not attack public facilities anymore. Because there is no trust between them, then civilian people in Iraq become victims.

### ***Types or Form of terrorism***

In this part, I want to explain that we often defined terrorist in smaller understanding. Terrorism only used to call Islamic movements or some other coercion actions which done by actors outside the state. Theoretically, state also possible to be terrorist. This statement can be understood through explanation of terrorism classification such as nationalist separatism, religion fundamentalism, new religions, and social revolution<sup>9</sup>.

Nationalist separatism means that the movement of people in one region which want to separate from the state to be independent country through violence actions can be called as terrorism. Though they could be hero for their groups, but state or government will call them as terrorist group. For instance, people movement in Aceh, Indonesia. Moreover, religion fundamentalism which basically was not came from Islam, tends to describe Islam in this current issues, because conceptually, if there is movement to build religion based on its basic principle, which is Islam want to do, that it will be called as terrorism, though fundamentalism term did not come from Islamic history.

On the other hand, if there is movement which manipulate and create new religion and make people feel uncomfortable, it is also called terrorism. For instance, Lia Eden in Indonesia which called her self as prophet but she still claimed her self as muslim. This action will influence the psychology of people, especially muslim in the country. As also the the social revolutioner can be a terrorist since in government point of view, the movement of idealist groups which against authoritarianism also will be call as terrorism.

The perspective of terrorism types above did not judge state as terrorist, but, other kind of terrorism classification has different perspective because the kinds of terrorism can be classified as domestic terrorism, state terrorism, terrorism sponsored by state, and international terrorism<sup>10</sup>. Domestic terrorism is the violence conducted by non state actor to press the domestic political enemy, for instance cause of ideology reason (Islam, Marxism) or ethnic (cases in Spain and Aljazeera).

Furthermore, the state terrorism indicates the violences which is done by state through intimidation to it's people. For example, dirty war in Argentina. This kind of terrorism is done directly through the policy of the government and it's structures. But, if the state does not do the direct terrorism action, but by paying other actors to do the actions, it will be called as terrorism sponsored by state. If all these kind of violences are done by one state to other state or people in other state, such as American invasion to Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, etc, it is said as international terrorism.

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<sup>9</sup> US Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General, a Review of The FBI's Investigations of Certain Domestic Advocacy Groups. September 2010. Page 24. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/37834620/19/VI-FBI-Terrorism-Classifications>

<sup>10</sup> As Prof Nishar Ul Haqq was explained in the class when I was studying in Political Science, Jamia Millia islamia.

From this perspective, we can understand that state can do terrorism action directly or indirectly. Even if we mention, there are a lot of cases of terrorism actions conducted by state.

### **Terrorism and International Politics**

In this part, I will explain the mission of Amerika on the war against terrorisme, and it's relations to the muslim countries which became the victims of this policy. At the end, this part also will picture the changes of the international politics because of terrorism issues.

### ***War Against Terrorism***

As explained above, terrorism is very dangerous for the existence of human life. All the forms of terrorism attacks should be condemned. Terrorist actions often kill innocent people. By the name of humanity, all the countries have duty to against the kinds of terrorism.

For that ideal goals, in post 11 September 2011 attacks, Bush declared the war against terrorists around the world. This declaration got sympathy and support from many countries. Then, to support her policy, America did some missions, such as, *First*, America announced the war against terrorists specially Al-Qaedah, Hamas, Hizbullah, Jama'ah Islamiah, Laskar Jihad, and others local terrorist movements. From these data we realize that almost all of the targets are the Islamic movements. Moreover, Amerika stated that South East Asian countries are the dangerous areas cause of their fuction as the traffic area of terrorists movement. For security purpose, Indonesia has got support and award for her responsibility, though in reality there were some debateable issues which used terrorism as the tools to increase the government legitimacy.<sup>11</sup>

*Second*, America tried to influence the reshuffle of governments in moslem countries to be changed by loyal leader to America by the name of democratization process. This condition could be seen in some countries, including the issues of Arab Spring which had successful in changing the "authoritarian" regime such as Khadaffi, Husni Mubarak, etc. Even America legalized the invasion to another countries for this purposes, like the case of American invasion to Afghanistan and Iraq which she called as undemocratic and terrorist supporter countries.

*Third*, America built some military bases in many places around the world (absolutely the strategic places) for it's national interests. But America always claim that what she did are for the world peace and goals, which the educated people realized that it is not true. The real condition of the international politics is coloured by the individual interests of the particular state.

It will be acceptable on the logic that when America intensified the functions of secret and spy group to control the existence and movement of terrorist groups, it is basically for it's own interest. When America cooperated with many countries to control and cut the financial supporting to terrorist movements, it is also part of American strategy to help it's country. Clearly, this goal can be understood on American policy in increasing the number of military personels and it's budget, and advanced the military cooperation to many other countries. This policy will be much more

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<sup>11</sup> In case of dulmatin for example, some issues among military and political experts told that he had already caught a few months before the execution. The incident of "war" between polices and Dulmation was created to get people sympathy when government had a lot of problems and critics from the people in that time.

cheaper for America than she attacks the terrorist countries based directly like cases in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Moreover, America do the principle of pre-emptive actions in her foreign policy, which means that America legally allowed to attack other countries or object which has indication to attack her self.

### ***Islam as The Victim***

As mentioned above, after declared the war against terrorism, America attacked Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 which both are the countries with majority moslems. Even within moslem countries, they support American action to against terrorists, such as in Indonesia, the police officers are actively catch and kill terrorists.

But there are two conditions which are interesting to be analyzed. *First*, that terrorist image which is come from the people who have "Islamic" performance, for example they have beard, are actively in masjid, their wife use hijab, etc. People then easily generalize that all of the people who have such kind of performances are terrorists, though Islam never teaches its follower to be terrorist, so the majority of muslim are not agree to the terrorism action.

Oliver Paderbone stated that, *Islam began by the sword, maintained by the sword, and by the sword would be ended.*<sup>12</sup> This understanding is so famous in western countries and because of that, many people misundertood about Islam.

It is right that prophet Muhammad, peace upon him, conducted several number of wars in his life. But this have to be analyzed deeply because there are some morality principles in Islam in war condition. Islam allows to use war only as defensive tools, not as offensive war. So, muslim should have good relations with non muslim in peace condition. Jihad is not used to break social security but to keep it.

If there is war, the messages of Abu Bakar to his soldiers when they would going to war in Syiria, are interesting to be understood. Abu Bakar said, "*When you face the enemy, be the real men, never withdrawl your selves from war. But if you win the war, never kill the children, old people, and women. You may not break plants, field, tress, or some other unimportant things. Just do the substance.*" Statement which show that Islam has high morality in war, not only to the human being but also to plants, animal and earth.

So, if there is terrorism action which done by moslem, it should not be generalized as the legal principle of Islam. Moslem does not exactly implement the values of Islam.

*Second*, related to the process of terrorism war, usually polices kill directly the terrorists without asking them to explain in mass media (for example through live television channel) about their existence and the reason why they become terrorist. Or if there is judiciary process, there will be no live publishing to public. This condition make people become doubt whether they are real terrorist or only as the tools of foreign interests to intervene Islamic or muslim countries, like Indonesia.

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<sup>12</sup> Norman Daniel. *Islam and the West: The Making of An Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960) p.127

The rational logic is that if terrorists have good capabilities in making weapons, they can be used by the state (Indonesia in this case) to be the part of system in improving Indonesian military. By asking the terrorists to practice how to make weapons, police and people can realize whether they are working by them selves or there are other “people” who help them, so they are only as the executors. If the are other actors behind them, then I do believe the the root problems of terrorist actions can be solved.

This particular question come from reasons. *First*, about Islam its self which teaches people to live in peace, and *second*, because there are some data which show that terrorism actions did not appear in Islamics or western countries. But most of terrorism actions have already happened in Latin America.

Based on US Department of Justice in their document 2006<sup>13</sup>, there were more than 3.099 terrorism attacks which had already done, but American spy did not exactly know who were the actor behind those attacks (page 38). The were a lot of areas which being objects of terrorism attacks such as Latin America (**41,3%** attacks), Europe (19,11%), Asia (18,65%), Middle East and North Africa (13,46%), Sub-Africa (5,95%), and North America (**only 1,44%**) (page 41-43). The question which is coming is related to the interests of muslim people in Latin America since they don’t have relations history and why don’t America against terroris massively in Latin America though it is the most dangerous area of terrorist attacks?.

In page 46, it is more clear that from all of the incidents, only 131 of them (or 0,2%) which caused victims from American people. In some cases, these attacks were done by stressful American citizens. The most tragicomic attacks for America was terrorism attack to American embassy in Beirut which cause 239 American people died. But this number was much more smaller than the victims of American invasion to Iraq which kill people around 100 civilian Iraq citizens since March 2003 till now.<sup>14</sup> That is why I do believe that Islam become the victim of terrorism issues.

### ***The Changes of International Politics***

After Bush declared war against terrorism, it doesn’t being war against terrorist it self, but also has changed the political map of International relations. Countries which supported this war became the alliances of America and who did not support, Bush classified as part of terrorist as he said, “*Either you are with us or you are with terrorist,*<sup>15</sup>” statement which is become famous as Bush Bush doctrine.

In the era of cold war, the line used to be “*either you are with us, or you are with communists*”. By this particular statement, Bush defined his country and those which followed America are the states which commit to democracy, freedom, pluralism and tolerance. On the other

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<sup>13</sup> Department of Justice, edited by Gary La Free, Laura Dugan, Heather V Fogg, Jeffrey Scott, Building a Global Terrorism Database, May 2006, document number 214260.

<sup>14</sup> Gonda Yumitro, The Disturbance of Political Movement in Post Saddam Hussein Iraq. Thesis for Bachelor Degree in Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> This statement can be watched directly from youtube video.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpPABLW6F\\_A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpPABLW6F_A), or <http://www.australianpolitics.com/news/2001/01-09-21.shtml>, accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2012



hand, those which did not join America in the war against terrorists must be undemocratic countries, even terrorist it self.

So, there were cooperation and war in the level of International politics. Some became friends and other became victims. Not only countries but various of International organization joined American to defeat terrorists, such as NATO, European Union, the Organization of American States, The Association of Southeast Asian Nation, The Organization of the Islamic Conference, and UN General Assembly and Security council.

American efforts got sympathy from several countries. It's relations to Soveit Union has become closer after had long cold war history, China also supported American policy, and India has given a lot of supports to America since 11 September 2001, so their relations become smoother. But, on the other hand, Afghanistan and Iraq become the objects of war and victims of terrorism issues. The number of civilian people who died caused of American and her alliences invasion to both countries are much bigger than the number of victims cause of terrorism attacks.

Moreover, terrorism issue has already made the issue of democracy and freemarket become more popular over the world. Colin Powell said that, *we will continue to advance our fundamental interests in human rights accountable government, freemarket and spreading democracy*<sup>16</sup>. This statement came cause some experts argued that terrorisme can be exist only in non-democratic country.

As un-democratic country, then Iraq could not prevent American and her alliance invasion to her country. The policy of pre-emptive strike which is conducted in American foreign policy legalized the invasion to Iraq. Iraq was indicated as a country which had mass destruction weapons, so it can be dangerous to regional security even to America it self. But, till that country become the "field of war" and many civilian people have been died, America cannot find the the evidence that Iraq has the weapons.

That is why a lot of people see that what America has done is the strategy of that country to gain her own interests, especially oil. America attacked Iraq because Iraq was the second largest oil producer after Saudi Arabia.

America also attacked Afghanistan. Through this war then America easily could increased her oil investations in Central Asia countries which have tremendous number of oil and gas. American administration successfully stationed 4000 her troops in Kazakhtan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirgistan, even Georgia. It is clear that the issue of war against terrorist produces a lot of things for American interests.

Through all of those policies above, America want to keep her self as the most powerful country around the world. But, in reality, though Islamic countries have done nothing, there have been a lot of American people who criticize this country policy.

## **Conclusion**

From my explanation above, it is clear that terrorism is a very complicated issue in International Politics. In one side, terrorism should be condemned by all of the countries cause of its

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<sup>16</sup> US Foreign Policy Agenda. Terrorism, Threat Assesment, Countermeasures and Policy, volume VI, an Electronic Journal of The US Department of State, number 3, November 2001

immorally action, but on the other hand, the war against terrorism which has already led by America become questioning issues, whether it is purely to create the world life in peaceful condition or has already used by powerful countries for her own interests.

Moreover, the war against terroris should not be the war against religion because there is no evidence found that religion (especially Islam in this essay) teaches it's follower to be terrorist. Justification of terrorist by the name of religion will only make the world life become worse. Many facts showed that terrorism actions were conducted because of non-religious interests, such as economic and political reasons. \*\*

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