

## **Reorientalising Islam: Terrorism and Discourse on Evil**

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### ***Abstraksi***

*Pertanyaan sentral artikel ini membahas tentang gerakan fundamentalisme liberal yang beroperasi dan membentuk keasyikan kita saat ini dengan terorisme dan intrik koneksinya untuk menerima Islam. Banyak argumen yang diusulkan mengacu pada pemikiran politik pasca-fondasionalis yang memfokuskan inti perhatiannya pada cara di mana Islam secara luas dianggap sebagai ancaman kekuatan untuk tatanan liberal dan keamanan global. Dibanding berfokus pada pelaku teroris atau aktivis muslim radikal, artikel ini secara radikal mengambil rute yang berbeda dalam membuat pikiran praktis hegemonik dari konstruksi terorisme kontemporer. Tesis tulisan ini menyebutkan bahwa Islam adalah target utama wacana mengenai terorisme saat ini. Fundamentalisme liberal telah berupaya untuk mereorientalisasi Islam melalui perang dan proyek global dari de-radikalisasi. Yang dipertaruhkan dalam wacana ini adalah hubungan antara Islam, politik dan kekerasan.*

### **Keywords:**

*Terrorism; Islam; liberal fundamentalism; orientalism.*

*The eye that sees evil is part of evil (Hegel)*

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## **Pengantar**

*"If you harbor terrorist, you are terrorist; if you aid and abet terrorist, you are terrorist—and you'll be treated like one!"* These words represent the rhetoric of today's liberal power that masks its banality through the language of victimhood and moral-ideological supremacy altogether. Bush has proclaimed that the war on terror is justified war of retaliation not only against Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaida but also against the supposed threatening forces to 'humanity'. Osama and those labelled as terrorist are posited with evil power that needs to be made intelligible through war and torture. One decade of invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq has shaped discourse on global terrorism to the extent that American unilateralism is perceived as worth global support. It is precisely after having attained its status as moral discourse that it authorises killing of thousand civilians in the two wars, in Iraq 2003 and Afghanistan 2001-present. Such atrocity is justified within Just War doctrine as 'collateral damage'—morally tolerable death as unintended effect of war misconduct.

As well-informed public, we know too well that rhetoric of power seeks to win support instead of telling the truth of its own crime. However beautiful and morally engaging the rhetoric may appear, it cannot stand the test of time and human conscience. How could people around the world be fooled after they have seen and read atrocities caused by the war on terrorism in Middle East?

This article takes seriously the maneuver of liberal fundamentalism as it operates in the current discourse on terrorism. We need to push our discussion into the core problematics of the war and all its accompanying ideological interventions such as global project of deradicalization and disengagement. Our fundamental question is what is actually the enemy evil the war on terror implies? How best to make sense of the connection between Islam and terrorism as implicated in the discourse? This is not an easy task.



To deal with ideological question means ~~First all~~ to study how ideological masking of facts and ideological construction of knowledge of objects (i.e terrorism, radical community, Islamist) set unquestioned grounds and causes for killing Muslims and intervening into internal affairs of their religious conduct. This article argues that it is within current discourse on terrorism that Islam, instead of terrorism, is the targeted enemy of

liberal fundamentalism. War on terrorism serves particular interests of the Western power, be it economic or political, which all articulate through this discourse. Equipped with the difference between terrorist act and terrorism, we become more enlightened to speak of 'terrorism' as part of orientalist agenda that remains alive since colonial period.

*First* section, *From Political to Religious Terroris*, discusses the shifting understanding of contemporary terrorism from political to religious characterizing. The shift, as found abundantly in terrorism studies in post 9/11, hints not only at the failure to grasp the more complex characteristics of current use of unpredictable yet terror inflicted violence but also the dramatic intrusion of orientalist prescriptions into academic world particularly research centers to which grants for researchs are mostly provided by liberal regimes and transnational corporations whose interests with Islam and Middle East are at stake. *Second* section, *Inspecting the Oriental Specters*, presents international debates on terrorism since 1970s. It is through this process that the connection between Islam and terrorist's violence through the globalising rhetoric of Islamist radicalism has steadily developed. Lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism for the Draft Convention on International Terrorism paves the ways for the trend. Third, *Reorientalising Islam*, elucidates main arguments of this essay by drawing upon post-foundationalist thoughts on contemporary terrorism. Central hypothes is twofold. *First*, Islam is reorientalised through discourse on terrorism as it feeds the liberal search for order and security. *Second*, Islam is perceived as the invisibility of threateing evil, with which liberal identitarian logic of politics is rendered workable.

### **From Political to Religious Terrorism**

It might be of some truth that the greater success of terrorist's act is when the sense of ultimate terror predominates over those targeted livings. Political scholars on terrorism are completely aware of how the terrorist instrumentalizes the victims in order to achieve far greater objective, be it encouraging the sense of distrust among the public againts their goverments for its failure of maintaining security—strategic manipulation (Bell, 1978:50; Laquer, 2001:26), or the modest one, that is, inciting pressure againts the targeted community-state to be in compliance with their demand—coercive manipulation (Wilkinson, 2001:46). Most

of the scholars focusing on political violence seems to share one central thesis that terrorism is specific strategy in conflict context to pursue one's interest and to justify one's cause as well.

Taking into account political nature of the conflict, terrorism as tactic or method is no longer the privilege of the weak, particularly non-state actors, but extends to include tactics employed by the states to terrorize their sovereign enemies in inter-state conflict or insurgent groups either through direct military attack or by proxy (Schmid, 1988: 201). In Palestine-Israel conflict, for quick instance, suicide bombing committed by Palestinians might be labelled as terrorist act and such labelling could be equally attributable to Israel's military attacks on Gaza Strip or West Bank as they sought to contain and destroy Hamas and its bases. What scholars on political violence suggest is that terrorism is an act of compellence, as summarized in the Sun Tzu's slogan—kill one and frighten ten thousand.

Contextualizing terrorism as instrumental violence has been the main feature of discourse on terrorism during Cold War period, particularly in 1970an-late 1990s (Neuman, 2008:77). The goals pursued through terrorist act are perceived as politically attainable and technologies of violence deployed are relatively moderate in terms of inducing human atrocities. Drawn upon a number of cases since the end of nineteenth century, two scholars on terrorism, Weinberg and Eubank in their widely quoted book, *What is Terrorism* (2006), classify modern terrorism into four waves.<sup>1</sup> *First Wave* characterises terrorist acts since the end of nineteenth century until *First World War*. *Second Wave* is the feature of terrorist acts in the context of anti-colonialism and the birth of post-colonial nationalism after *Second World War* toward the late 1960s. Third Wave began in the late 1960s until 1980s in which terrorist acts were situated in anti-capitalism movement and anti-war movement together with heated US-Soviet contestation. Fourth Wave, situated simlutenously with Iran Revolution 1978-1979 and

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1 Not different from Weinberg's context-based typology of terrorism, Paul Smith (2007:17-40) emphasises ideological dimension of modern terrorism and classifies it into 3 waves: *First*, Anarchist/Revolutionary Terror; *Second*, Anti-colonialist/Nationalist Terror; and Third, Religious Terrorism.

growing wave of jihadism in Afganistan against communist Soviet 1979-1989, characterises terrorist acts with religious motives and goals.<sup>2</sup>

The *First* three waves accentuate political nature of the conflict in which terrorism deployed as strategy and termed as Political Terrorism, while the fourth wave, with Islam perceived as its main proponent, is called Religious Terrorism. In this last wave, terrorism, its violent terror, no longer serves political goals. Violence is perceived as the ultimate goal of the homicide. Phenomenon of suicide bombing is taken for granted to inform the validity of such thesis. Violence for the sake of violent redemption becomes the defining nature of religious terrorism. In contrast to the common slogan of political terrorism noted above, religious terrorism imbues homicidal acts with ‘thousand dead, thousand witnesses’; killing as many people as possible is its ultimate goal (Perrin and Negrin, 2008:4-5). Among other declaratory sentences quoted by proponents of fourth wave is the statement issued by Ayatollah Baqer Al-Sadr: “We are not fighting so the enemy recognizes us and offers us something. We are fighting to wipe out the enemy”. Mesmerized with these seemingly apocalyptic words, another notorious scholar, Bruce Hoffman (2006:90), advances his argument that terrorist’s act, like suicide bombing, presents transcendental act of redeeming one’s sinful life and simultaneously demolishing evil that inhabits the body and soul of the enemies.

Though remaining discriminate in targetting the victims, some scholars argue that the potential victims are less clear or poorly identifiable largely because this type of terrorism derives its strength and causes from human encounter with God or worse, his personal or collective

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2 For further reading on the fourth wave terrorism, see studies undertaken by academic proponents of ‘Religious Terrorism’ as follows: David Cook. *Understanding Jihad*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005; Barry Cooper. *New Political Religions, or An Analysis of Modern Terrorism*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004; Beverley Milton-Edwards. *Islamic Fundamentalism Since 1945*. New York: Routledge, 2005; Thomas Mockaitis. *Osama bin Laden: A Biography*. California: Greenwood, 2010; Eli Berman. *Radical, Religious and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009

coping with the changing world.<sup>3</sup> Though easily invalidated if we take up Osama's political project, which is completely mundane and reflecting nexus of power-relations in Middle East context,<sup>4</sup> most of the fourth wave proponents goes far beyond Huntington's thesis on clash of civilizations. Suicide bombers that hijacked two civilian airplanes, exploded WTC and killing 3000, are perceived as the blind servant of 'radical islamist ideology' whose genealogy must be sought in clandestine movement such as Al-Qaida and the likes. It follows that in responding to Bush-style rhetorics 'why do they hate us?' the answers must reside in the terrorist's religious ideology, homeland and community that all, arguably, breed

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3 Understanding causes of terrorism as rooted in human subject's encounter with the world and outer world characterises behavioralist and culturalist perspectives. Some scholars, particularly proponents of *root cause thesis*, argue that the terrorist are "cultural outcast, living at the margin of society in either their countries of origin or their host countries" (Roy, 2006:159-170). Concerning 9/11 terrorists, they are seen more likely as product of "westernized Islam than traditional Middle East politics. Beside as effect of de-culturation, terrorist, or terrorism, is seen as effect of secularization, as ways to cope with rootlessness and disembeddedness (Lara, 2003:186-193). Economic disparity, authoritarian regime, deficit-surplus democracy are also seen as root cause of terrorism—structuralist perspectives.

4 The following are publicly declared goals of Jihadism as listed from Osama's speeches: (1) fighting the great satan and its collaborators—US and repressive regimes in Middle East; (2) Expelling US from Iraq; (3) establishing an Iraqi Islamic Emirate as a prelude to joining wider caliphate; (4) extending the jihad to secular states surrounding Iraq; (5) clashing with Israel; (6) combating secularism. These official goals, however, reflect political dimensions of Middle East-Western Powers conflict that US in particular does not recognise in its foreign policies and in Western media. If we attend more closely into Al-Qaida's historical development, violent jihadism has been situated in Cold War period when US administration facilitated, precisely say, promoted officially the moslems resistance againt Soviet invasion in Afganistan since 1979 onward. For US, this resistance was taken as proxy in its covert war againts communist superpower. Discussion about American involvement in producing Islamist Jihadism since Reagan up to Obama adminstraation, see Michel Chossudovsky, America's 'War on Terrorism (2005); see also Chossudovsky, 9/11 Analysis: From Ronald Reagan and the Soviet-Afghan War to George W Bush and September 11, 2001 (Global Research, 9 September 2010).

homicidal perverts. Sources of terrorism, this violet yet unjust act, are out there, in hiding places including in their minds and hearts.<sup>5</sup>

### **Inspecting the Oriental Specters**

Another way to come to terms with the shifting notion of terrorism, from political into religious-cultural, is by drawing our attention more closely to the lack of conceptual clarity in the definition of international terrorism. Such lack not only characterizes various conceptualization of terrorism among political scholars on political violence and other scholars whose arguments seek to conflate violence, radicalism and terrorism altogether, but most unfortunately, has for almost four decades since 1970s marked in insidious ways how US, Western states, authoritarian regimes in Middle East, and to lesser extent, Southeast Asian countries have employed this term for pursuing their respective interests or mobilized it as conceptual apparatus readily available to contain either communist insurgent or, more recently, political Islamists in post-Cold War period.

Far beneath the discursive surface of liberal security-welfare nexus, Islam occupies the place of communism, a discursive space of ideology within which terrorism, this empty signifier, begins to function as image of chaos, disorder and inhumanity altogether. Noam Chomsky (2003:211), the most insistent critic of US foreign policy in the Middle East, argues after fairly long study on America's quest for global dominance that this self-declaring democracy has been thoroughly consistent in shaping and reshaping international enemy. After 1989, Islam—as religion and community—has been made the best candidate of all as post Cold War 'international enemy'. At this point, terrorism is the only concept that political vocabulary of liberal power has kept intact from any definite

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5 Military attacks and the working of detention centers in post 9/11 are two articulations of such assumption within global counter-terrorism framework, that evil intention resides in community, perceived as breeding ground, and keeps locked in human minds. Guantanamo's detention center, including Abu Gharaib in Iraq, is the place where supposed terrorist and those linked to Al-Qaida have been arrested without fair trials and tortured as to getting 'confidential' infos on Al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden. Heated debate on the presence of the center is discussed among scholars drawing on human rights and international laws perspectives. One of the criticism of the torture practice is that "while terrorism is being practiced by the weak, torture has our attention that it is being practiced by the strong" (Lee, 2007).

substance or force. It continues its adventure with Islam in the baggage, to requote Chomsky in *International Terrorism: Image and Reality*, "as concept to be exploited in the service of power" (1991: 69).

To firmly asserting the discursive formation of this specters, or non-sovereign threats, discourse on terrorism has passed through two international debates in United Nations in 1970s and early 2000s. In his fact-investigating article *Defining International Public Enemy* (2006: 69-91), Jorg Friedrich summarizes how the debates revolved around the precise definition of terrorism as to fully inform the Draft Convention on International Terrorism. In the *First* debate (1972-1979) particularly after Munich Incident in September 1972, most of the post-colonial African and Asian countries strongly objected the proposal of US, British and Israel. Post-colonial countries seemed to realize how terrorism as defined by the three states was the last scenario of the almost dying colonializing powers. Their proposed definition targetted insurgents or self-determination movement as terrorist groups. Until 1979, the consensus remained out of sight though Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism has been established through Security Council Resolution in 1973.

On the contrary, *Second* debate in early 2000s, particularly after 9/11, almost all countries were in agreement that 'terrorism' is their common enemy. But consensus remained fairly unattainable given that the states share different interests in preoccupying with, or making use of this term. One of their point of difference concerned the status of Hamas in Palestine-Israel conflict. Though investing their interest in terrorism as means to containing insurgencies at home, most of the African and Middle East states were well aware of superpowers' interests and proposed more abounded definition of terrorism capable of restricting US and Western states' conduct that might violate their sovereignty.

It is in the *Second* debate that US and Western powers attempted to avoid the more precise definition of terrorism. Why? Matters concerning the profiling might to be too risky for the superpowers since if the draft convention offers rather clear-cut definition of who or which organization and which acts fall into terrorism, it might restrict the possible extending use of the term to capture other threatening forces to Western interests in Asia, Africa and South America regions. The lack of consensus over definition of terrorism benefits not only US and Western countries whose



imperialist foreign policy is in desperate search for bypassing other's state sovereignty but also those post-colonial regimes in the three regions, particularly Middle East, whose internal repression at home againsts political Islamist becomes increasingly legitimate through the constant deployment of terrorist labelling.

The lack of consensus in fact masks imperialists interests to the extent that such lack facilitates, if not prompting, the emergence of two non-democratic trends in international arena. First, USA and its supporters defines terrorism in line with *functional extrapolation* model (Lee, 2007:137-153). With this model at its disposal, the state, especially USA and its 'War on Terrorism', has been made possible to extrapolate set of criteria or articles from sixteen international covenants in order to justify its arbitrary definition or labelling of other 'threatening forces' abroad as terrorists.<sup>6</sup> It then follows that by influencing members of Security Council, series of resulted SC resolutions have justified the unilateral and also multilateral intervention in the universalizing name of 'international community'.<sup>7</sup> The factual determination of which organization or community is terrorist with

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6 There are 16 international conventions from which US and Western states define terrorism on case-by-case basis. Many other countries also use these conventions in their legislation as to enforce laws againsts domestic-transnational terrorism. The conventions are as follow: Aircraft Convention 1969; Unlawful Seizure Convention 1971; Civil Aviation Convention 1973; Diplomatic Agents Convention 1977; Hostage Taking Convention 1983; Nuclear Material Convention 1987; Amendments to the Nuclear Material Convention 2005; Airport Protocol 1989; Maritime Convention 1992; Protocol to the Maritime Convention 2005; Fixed Platform Protocol 1992; Protocol to the Protocol on Fixed Platform; Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection 1998; Terrorist Bombing Convention 2001; Terrorist Financing Convention 2002; Nuclear Terrorism Convention 2007.

7 The following is the definition of terrorism as explicated in SC's resolution 2004 (S/RES/1566/2004). Compared to other resolutions, this definition is more clear-cutting: terrorism is "criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostage, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature, and calls upon all states to prevent such acts and, if not prevented, to ensure that such acts are punished by penalties consistent with their grave nature".

all its supposed networks and supporting community works through *on case-by-case basis* formula. It is when members of SC are in full agreement on the causes of War on Terrorism (Jus ad Bellum) and practical principle of waging the War (Jus in Bello) we soon witness, as few times happened, harsh military attacks on Middle East and Moslem communities have been carried out in the name of either preventive intervention or humanitarian intervention.

*Second*, warfare becomes the rule of international law. This has its recent origin in what we already delineated above. Not only American exceptionism as students in IR know very well but the fact that amid the lack of consensus and specific characteristics of post Cold War order, the War on Terrorism reveals more blatantly how moral imperialism of liberalism has taken the bloody face of war. Andrepuolos (2011:98-86), for instance, argues that instead of war as last resort, it is through hegemonic discourse on terrorism that the war begins to be best channeling of moral fantasy and ideological supremacy of (neo) liberalism. War is thought as the price of peace that never lasts. War and moral is thought as not be in conflict to each other as their connection has arguably been, and will be in sustained refinement through Just War Doctrine.

This doctrine occupies crucial position in current discourse on terrorism since it provides moral grounding of military intervention war on terrorism in terms of causes and procedures of waging the war. It is our contention that it promotes war with its underlying assumptions that stretching between realism and pacifism in making senses of the world order. Cloaked in liberal humanism rhetoric, the doctrine centres its practical validity upon the notion of legitimacy and sovereignty. The most leading proponent, Michel Walzer (2006:3-12) evokes a bold statement: "all terrorists are murderers but not all murderers are terrorists". Though he defends that state can commit terrorism insofar as it does not follow suit the principles of Just War, his arguments do not fully engage with the reality of international politics in which the states, particularly superpowers positing UN's Security Council, have been privileged to profiling certain acts and groups as terrorist. In order not to fall into terrorism, the state must conform with principles of Just War where the terrorists do not comply. It is also argued that in waging the war, terrorist knows no collateral damage while the state targets definite enemy. This

doctrine implies that current terrorist acts, which are perceived as religious and non-political, kill civilians or non-combatants.

Maneuver of Just War doctrine draws growing criticism that sees it as completely a liberal license to kill. Againtz Walzer, Virginia Held, in *Terrorism and War* (2004: 59-75), argues that “war can be morally wrong than terrorism’. The strongest point of her arguments is that, drawing upon historical evidence of modern terrorist acts, terrorism has been the language of change, be it societal *revolution* or political reformation. Political nature of modern terrorism, including Al-Qaida, in contrast, seeks to reshape more just and equal world order. Counter-terrorism is seen as attempt at preventing such change for which the labelled terrorists desperately struggle. Consequently, using terrorist violence to bring about change is not inherently worse from moral point of view than using violence to prevent such change (counter-terrorist acts). It implies that terrorist violence is completely evil in religious-liberal terms but necessary evil in political terms. It is also the case that victims of the acts are not innocent civilians but selectively targetted whose political consent, be it by commision or by ommission, have made possible for the government to issue unjust public policy at home or imperialist foreign policy abroad.

It then becomes undoubtedly clear how contemporary tranformation of the rule of war into rule of law in international politics setting places war as legal activity while terrorism is not. Violence is the essence of the terrorism while violence of the counter-terrorism is matter of war misconduct. Terrorist violence is perceived as having nothing to do with politics but completely with religious zeal of ‘radical’ Moslem that knows no dialogue or negotiation. This renders possible the mainstreaming of liberal understanding of violence in which violence exclude from political arena and being confined into domain of war (Asad, 2007:17). The task of liberal states is, by implication, to abolish terrorists and make their voice voiceless. Criticising U.S intervention in Sudan in 1994, Mamdani exposes us into hidden truth of liberal state’s maneuver, that is, humanitarian intervention is cloaked war, “humanitarian intervention is not antidote to international power but its latest product... when the law is applied selectively, the result is not the rule of law but the subordination of law to the dictates o power” (2009, 282-284).

Non-democratic trends in international politics bring us closer to what is actually going on within the discourse on terrorism. Beside the fact that violence of terrorist's act, as defined by SC Resolution, remains at the heart of the international debate, moral-ideological overdetermination is evidently present even in scale and in such a depth unprecedented. Though scholars on political violence have sought to redefine violence as the core component of terrorism (Mockaitis, 2007:3-8), such effort cannot distract our attention to how particular moral-ideological doctrine regulates international politics and conducts of war againsts what has been labelled as terrorists, or public international enemy. As we already discussed, the enemy in question is not the enemy without discursive intervention in the sense that it exists within discursive understanding in international politics and academics world as well. Acts of profiling certain groups or networks that commit violence, particularly homicide, is not the privilege of international politics but also the habits of scholars on terrorism whose basic assumption of violence and humanity needs to be brought into our constant vigilance. This is to be well informed with what Chomsky suggests that concerning 'terrorism' we have to be able to distinguish literal terrorism, that is, the acts of terror from propagandist terrorism of post 9/11 campaign which exploits issues of justice and security in favor of liberal humanism and nationalism cum fascism.

Historical evidence of how Islam has been transformed into serious matters of international affairs since Iran Revolution in 1979 needs no further discussion here. What concerns us is the fact that by rereading the relation between Islam and Terrorism within the underlying logics of 'War on Terrorism', we are able to capture how threat is actually required as to efface sense of security and moral-liberal supremacy in post Cold War period. Full-scale atrocity of WTC explosion together with the huge number of dead has paved the way toward 'policing the human' rather than 'policing the states'. Againsts common sense, the inclusion of Islam into international specters has taken place far back in times rather than moulded in the event. War on Terrorism, officially declared next day after the event, reaccentuates, if not to reassure in strongest imperialist tone, that 'our enemy' is out there and Americans must take action for justice. If we take Bush's declaration including other Western's leaders' statements

after the event into critical scrutiny, Islam, this supposed enemy, has now been wearing terrorist cloths rather than terrorist wearing Islamic cloths.

The imperialist urge for hegemonizing its political principles and moral conduct of human co-existence throw liberal states into the constant state of emergency. It is with the War on Terrorism, liberal politics of banalization againts different sets of ideas and practices of conducting human affairs operates in the name of humanitarianism and global security (Negri, 2000:12-13). The forced presence of Islam as metaphor of actual and latent threat to liberal imagining in fact renders the War to acquire global rather than international dimension. Rhetorics of the war sounds too loudly that nowadays it is not the state but the human security at stake. Sense of indiscriminate killings is provoked in books, journals and mass media while in fact the perpetrators, as listed by the states' agencies, committed violence in purpose—instrumental violence (Jenkins, 2003:1-16).<sup>8</sup> This crafted sense of terror has been rapidly reproduced through New York Times, Foreign Policy, Washington Post, CNN, to take the best representative of others, and hundreds of provoking but doctrinal scholarly books on terrorism in post 9/11 period.

As widely accepted, the terms, Religious Terrorism, almost entirely imprints its hegemonic assumption about Islam with far reaching excesses including the most notorious project of deradicalization and disengagement. Contrary to official propaganda that War on Terrorism-Deradicalization is to rehabilitate 'radical Moslems' from violent propensity, this discourse have sought to ensure that Islam, particularly political Islam, has been at perpetual conflict with liberal political-moral doctrine. Labelling such as radical Moslem Islam, political Islam and Islamist to wahabism and salafism for intance, to name the widely used terms, is not value-free. As we will discuss in next section, this labelling, the act of naming, reveals convincingly moral evaluation of political reality in

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8 Worth adding here is the fact one of the possible ways to get the sense of terror globalized is by exaggerating potential threat of WMD or the use of it in the unforeseable future. In post 9/11, books and media reports discuss at length the possibility of 'Islamist Terrorists' using nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Attacks on Al-Qaida bases in Afganistan in 2001 up to 2011 have been based, beside looking for Osama bin Laden, on this crafted fear of potential use of WMD. In terms of international laws, the attacks fall into *preventive* intervention. It is also the case for the military invasion in Iraq in 2003.

which struggles for justice and freedom from imperialist intervention are de-islamized and politics must get rid of religion. Both 'islamization of politics' and 'politicization of islam' are two sides of a liberal coin, forging an understanding of the connection between religion and politics. To sum up, in our treatment, the labelling deserves critical inspection since in fact it does not truly tell us the reality it claims to represent but worse, such labelling erases political dimension of terrorism and the worst, promotes the making of radical subject it seeks to negate at all cost through exhausting war- legal enforcement and ideological intervention—deradicalization.<sup>9</sup>

### **Re-orientalising Islam**

Preceded with the contextualising of discourse on terrorism as religious evil in academic debate and international politics, we now pursue our stricter explanation into ideological effacement of orientalism. Though, we know well both academic and international politics reorientalise Islam by employing the language-games, be it legal or moral, that incite broad public consensus and capable at almost all levels to mobilise war's support and hysteria. Rereading contemporary Islam through our restored critique of orientalism serves to make sense of how at the heart of the discourse lies ideological installations of power-relations. We can no longer deny that 'moslem', this religious attribute of human identification, enlives the paradoxes of the discourse to the extent that it has multiple use for different regimes of political crafting. It is today, precisely following 9/11 event, liberal fundamentalism has reinvented our notion of identity as we cultivate identity-difference, in matters of social and political affairs, that accords within liberal frame.

At quick glance, status of Islam in post 9/11 discourse on terrorism seems fairly ambivalent. On the one side, it is taken for granted that as religion it promotes peace instead of violence. while on the other side,

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<sup>9</sup> There are ample discussions on characteristics and types of intervention/measure againts national-international terrorism. Terente (2002:5) summarizes them into *law of war framework* and *legal enforcement framework*. In common use, there are hard approach and soft approach. Another Scholar, Wilkinson (2001:49-102), notes three models of intervension/measures againts national-international terrorism since after World War II onward. First, diplomacy approach or political negotiation within peace process framework. Second, legislation approach and legal enforcement. Third, military approach or war on terrorism.

Islam is kept in sustained surveillance as various ideological interventions are deployed as procedures and technics for liberating, or better say, 'civilizing' moslems from temptation to take up violent conducts in dealing with social and political problems. This ambivalence is too apparent if we take a closer inspection at how global project of de-radicalization stems its assumption and prescription from both Huntingtonian doctrines of post Cold-War politics and the seemingly unquestioned set of analyses provided by proponents of religious terrorism-fourth wave among small but too powerful circle of American and European scholars. It is in books and politics that once again we witness Islam, this faith and community, becomes object of speech, control and specific treatment. Since 2007 onward, integrated efforts to relate Islam and violence has been in place with full scale and intensity.<sup>10</sup> But this time moslems themselves, particularly scholars, intellectuals and de-radicalization practitioners, take the leading role in promoting this scenario of liberal power.

Centuries of colonialism are not too distant for human memory to recollect historical pieces of human subjugation in the name of modernity and modernization. Taking the most recent instance, Palestinian experience of loss, which triggering violent urge for independence, has been blocked from getting globalized not only in terms of publications and reports but also being emptied from the conceptual apparatuses liberal scholars employed to make sense of their cases (Said, 1978:3-11). The terms terrorism is used by Israel governments and Western Media to describe any acts of resistance committed by intifadists and Hamas. The notion of conceptual apparatus includes sets of institutions, rules, media and political supports that all, by design or by implication, aim at representing objects of its encounter and intervention. Not different from Bush who states that moslem terrorists are incarnation of evil, Benyamin Netanyahu (1986:29-

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10 Orchestrated efforts at 'deradicalizing' Moslem subjects and its 'violent culture' have begun in 2007 onward as such efforts reintegrates into US foreign policy in North Africa, Middle East and Southern Asia regions. As global project issue of deradicalization emerged within American public around the year when the public felt that the invasions into Afghanistan and Iraq made Americans far more insecure at home. It also affected scholarly works and research orientation toward finding out 'root causes' of terrorism in terms of surplus-deficit democracy, authoritarianism, failed state, effects of globalization and culture of violence.

30) used terrorism to describe palestinian moslems in his words, terrorism is "a new breed of man which takes humanity back to the prehistoric times, to the time when morality was not yet born'.

In *Orientalism Reconsidered* (1985), Said reiterates the urgency of criticising the power-knowledge nexus in producing facts and common sense about religion, race, and ethnic. In his article *Palestine in Mind of the West*, he writes the following:

"...As a designation made in Europe, the "Orient" for many centuries represented a special mentality, as in the phrase "the Oriental mind," and also a set of special cultural, political, and even racial characteristics (in such notions as the Oriental despot, Oriental sensuality, splendor, inscrutability). But mainly the Orient represented for Europe a kind of indiscriminate generality associated not only with difference and otherness, but with the vast spaces, the undifferentiated masses of mostly colored people, and the romance, exotic locales, mystery of "the marvels of the East." Anyone familiar with the political history of the late Victorian period, however, will know that the vexing, mostly political "Eastern Question" as it was called tended then to replace "the Orient" as a subject of concern.." (1978: 3)

The point that Said stresses is that Islam is one of the name that fits orientalist's mental maps since centuries of colonialism.<sup>11</sup> Historically tracing, American power, which has taken over Britain orientalism since 1945, reeffaces the imperialist legacy in full blown military scale and dogmatic intensity. Even before, Roosevelt in 1907 had been the ultimate racist and cultural imperialist in his words, "it is impossible to expect moral, intellectual and material well-being where Mohammedanism is supreme" (Little, 2002:15). Liberal white ranks at the top of the race while Arabians, including African and Asian, placed nearer to the lowest bottom. Not only enlightenment bias that purports 'reason' to win over oriental 'sentiment', American power steadily recultivates deep-seated promoteanism that liberal whites have to rescue the moslems from tempting recourse to

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11 For complete reading on how Islam is constructed as 'orient', see Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and Its Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York : Pantheon, 1981; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993.



tribalism and warfare in politics including mysticism in their religious affairs. In post-colonial context, moslems, vast majority of Arabians and Africans, are strangely perceived as white men's burden.

Imperialist power since colonial time has intimately engaged with making and remaking of identity, or in other words, dwelled in the course of how to construct other so as to facilitate and cover up economic exploitation and political control over territory and resources. It is, then, instructive for us to see how if in the 1990s Africa are labelled or housed with 'tribalism' that is arguably responsible for inter-ethnic violence, Arabian Middle East in 2000s are labelled with terrorism that is equally in full responsibility for globalized jihadism. These two terms are employed by liberal fundamentalism to define the connection between identity and violence where the violence is treated as excess of the identity. 'Tribalization' of post-colonial African politics and 'religiozation' of post 9/11 Arabian resistance, in contrast, are ideological narrative through academic works and liberal state's policy with twofold objective. *First*, to restrict the broader and deeper issue of violence into discussion of perpetrators and victims. *Second*, to disentangle former colonial states from recognizing their centuries of tribalizing Africans and decades of radicalizing Arabians.

Drawing upon extending historical study of European colonialism in Africa, Mahmood Mamdani (1996), for instance, makes clearer that there was no tribal politics among African before the colonialist stepped into the continent, but instead colonialism practices have produced African co-existence according to tribal lines that distinguished in rank between the citizen, the native and the indigenious—colonialist model of indirect rule. Equally applicable is the fact that American involvement in Middle East since 1945 has shaped political contours of the regions. Its rampant search for oil wells, necessary combined for Marshall Plan to restore Europe from total ruin and its domestic industry, has until today promoted autocratic regimes at the expense of throwing the regions into endless military coup and the masses facing repressions and exclusions. This two phenomena of imperialist exercise offer us clues to capture how Western power, by neglecting their own historical record, rehistorise contemporary Arabians in 'pre-and-after' colonialism while with the same move, dehistorise their

imperialist presence that capable of bestowing their today's intervention as *benevolent* and democratic tutelage.

Dehistoricizing here means depoliticising of Western Power's active *involvement*, a hegemonic process through which their bloody encounter is perceived as disinterested efforts at enlightening and modernising Arabians and Africans. This ideological manuver seeks to constructing set of knowledge and common sense that violence that has for decades characterised Middle East has nothing to do with colonialist-imperialist practises with their far-reaching effects on how moslems relate to each other and also perceive the West. Violence, insofar as excluded from political-historical questions, belongs to domain of 'Islamic culture' that fails to comply with Western 'peace culture' through working of democracy and development—two leading discourses of liberal fundamentalism. Islam, understood as cultural site, is perceived as stumbling blocks for people in the region to welfare and democratic life. The worst, this religion comes to be conceived of as ideological source of dehumanization and homicide. Political repression committed by autocratic regimes and phenomena of suicide bombing in the late 1990s have set up symbolic and intrepreative conditionings that 'validate' this liberal fallacy that religion is the source of violence. in effect, it rehaspes Western public opinion and worst, compels foreign policy of Western power in dealing with Middle East politics, particularly the connection between Islam and politics.

It is after Cold War ended in early 1990s orientalist agenda has transformed ideologically from issue of westernizing the regions in terms economic development into reforming the moslem culture in terms of human rights and global security. The notion of violence reemerges togehter with the shifting emphasis from 'backardness' of Arabian societies into 'violent cultures' of mohammedism. The transformation locates Islam at the centre of global concern, particularly American foreign policy. It awaits not too long until the bombing of World Trade Center in 2001 that the questions of the relation between Islam, politics and violence begin to take liberal ways of understanding. One of central assumption is that to make sense of terrorist acts one needs to relate it to religion for which the terrorists claimed to serve rather than political context that breeds sense of humiliation and anger (Held, 2004:59-75a).

Insofar as their acts are perceived as evil, it follows that such inhumanity springs from totalitarian ideological source.

In post 9/11, discourse on terrorism transforms Islam from religious experience into political category (Mamdani, 2002: 766-775). This transformation is mediated through the employment of the term radicalism whose defining features laden with liberal assumptions of order and agency.<sup>12</sup> When Islam turns into political category to address the question of whether it is radical or not radical in nature and practical excess, it is no longer found the need to distinguish terrorist from non-terrorist, but good muslims from bad muslims. Current result is that Islam must be 'quarantined' and 'devil' in it must be 'exorcised'. This new discourse opens up civil war between good and bad moslems in forms of continued and tensor conflict of interpretation of Jihad at the service of global security and USA domestic security. This all made possible when terrorism falls into culture talk rather than political questionings of its emergence, conflict context and its adversary—the Wester Power. Within the discourse vast number of 'moderate' moslems no longer recognise US, particularly its foreign policy, as adversary of the labelled 'terrorist groups-and-radical Islamist movements'. Terrorist acts and terrorism begin to be understood integral to Islam rather than as modern construction, a historical product of Cold-War and politically crafted discourse of superpower maneuver in global politics.

Being treated as political category does not necessarily mean that Islam is understood as ethic-political articulation of moslem communities. In contrast, Islam, as conflated with terror, becomes depolitized to the extent that its ideological status serves as *First*, epistemological object of modern liberal society and *Second*, governmental object of liberal political surveillance (Asad, 2007: 7-38). It follows that in order to contain, if not

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12 Meaning of radicalism is context-based and succumbs to political interests and objectives. In current use, radicalization is to explain what is going on before the bomb explodes or paths 'radical' moslem undertakes before turning into suicide bomber. In Concept of Radicalization as Source of Confusion (2010: 479-494), Mark Sedgwick, for instance, argues that in post 9/11 the meaning and usage of the term radicalism have at least three contexts: security context, integration context and foreign policy context. US employs the terms in service of its security and foreign policy abroad particularly in Middle East while European countries exploit the terms to coping with the problems of Moslem immigrants and their encounter with European national cultures.

completely demolish this Islam-incited 'terror', Western power do not have at its disposal effective means but takes recourse to Muslims themselves who fantasise the West as tolerant and prosperous. Since 9/11, the making of 'moderate' Muslims (theologians, scholars and public intellectuals) has taken place in rather similar ways as characterising the last decades of producing developmentalist-security liberal apparatuses in Middle East and other regions outside Western hemisphere. Lurking behind this seemingly benevolent project of promoting peace in Muslim societies has been the sustained effort to produce secularist Muslims whose agency has less to do with criticising US foreign policy and interventions than to naming and blaming their fellow Muslims as terrorist, Islamist and radicals. Even in effect, these secularist Muslims, well-armed with liberal concepts of politics and identity, "promote policies and changes in Muslim societies that synchronise with US goals and strategic communication (Zuhur 2008:12-13). This agency now learns to ask question of violence in cultural-religious terms rather than disclosing its political spectrality. Terrorist act, whatever global or local the repercussions of terror, is increasingly conceived of as 'Muslim questions'.

It is here that we need to reread differently Huntingtonian thesis that 'clash of civilizations' characterises post Cold War order (Huntington, 1993:22-49). This sophisticated version of orientalism asserts that Islamic jihadism will be going to be fundamental adversary of liberal order--in our treatment, liberal fundamentalism. Following our preceding discussion, the truth of this thesis is not that it presents us facts since the outset but on the contrary, it has influenced foreign policy of the Western power to the extent that such policy contributes to the making of facts such liberal thesis has fantasised. US led counter-terrorism, through global war and global deradicalization project. By taking up Islam as its main target, discourse on terrorism creates its own reality (Zuhur, 2009:19-20). One decade of counter-terrorism fulfills truth of the thesis through ideological effacement of US invasion into Afghanistan 2001-2011 and Iraq 2003. Together with deradicalization project, this thesis cultivates its truth through the eventualization of its promises, creating the already anticipated subjects of 'radicalist Muslims' and most importantly, constructing an epistemological space within which certain ideas, knowledges, and sciences about Islam are installed while others are excluded or derealisable.

It is only after conflating Islam with potential and actual source of terrorism that efforts at reforming this religion take global underpinings. We are today then facing with the crafted urgency of theological reformation in which the moderate moslesm, particularly religious scholars, conceived as Luther who once reformed christianity. Marvin Perrin (2008), one among other liberal proponents of Islamic reformation, argues that Moslems can learn and take benefit from from the secular, rational, and humanist outlook of the Enlightenment, which has become an integral part of modern Western civilization and is crucial to the shaping of the liberal-democratic tradition in moslem societies. This typical prescription often parallels various testimony of former jihadist whose statements and interviews are repeatedly published and cited in Western media such New York Times and Washington Post. It is through their own words liberal fundamentalism intensifies its war on Islam by using moslems as proxy. Just take a look at the words of former Jihadist that underpins liberal urge of what Islam and moslem should be in US-led international order:

“Islam needs a Reformation. It needs someone with the courage of Martin Luther. . . .Muslims are too rigid in our adherence to old, literal interpretations of the Koran. It’s time for many verses—especially those having to do with relations between Islam and other religions—to be reinterpreted in favor of a more modern Islam. It’s time to accept that God loves the faithful of all religions. It’s time for Muslims to question our leaders and their strict teachings, to reach our own understanding of the prophet’s words and to call for a bold renewal of our faith as a faith of goodwill, of peace and of light.”(Quoted from Mansour al-Nogaidan, “Losing My Jihadism,” *Washington Post*, July 22, 2007)

This statement may bear some truth for religious discussion but looking at deeper and broader context of its enunciations and addresse, it voices different messege and purpose. We no longer hear the voice of the fighters for equality and justice, but that of the ‘good’ moslem who dictates his fellows what Islam should look like in teachings and religious conducts. It is within this liberal discourse on terrorism, violence attaches to Islam, made indistinguishable, that makes us forget the actual interplay between terrorist acts and Western power politics. The dubious need for reforming Islam is, however, the discourse’s latest articulation that seeks

to separate religion from politics in times when vast majority of moslems, particularly in Middle East, has suffered from long-entrenched internal repression, byproducts of Western power's national interests that creates war abroad in service of providing peaceful welfare at home.

When terrorist's violence, its terror, confines to religious matters, we, entrapped too deeply in this discourse, are blinded to see how such terror mirrors its intimate counterpart—liberal fundamentalism's terror. When it succeeds as it is now, we come to take its prescriptions, like pills, as normal rule that regulates what we should hear and see, in other words, to consume and reiterate. To follow Judith Butler in his embracing critique of War on Terrorism (2005:1-49) , we are now living in golden era of liberal absolutism within which we are alluded to perceive some live are grievable while others are not, some deaths worth public mourning while other worth public curse and celebration. The point is that when we fail to understand the intimate relation between violent jihadism and liberal fundamentalism, we also fail to make sense of the connection between jihadist's Holy War and Western power's Just War. Such failure has been what is desirable for liberal fundamentalism that now seeks multiple ways for the persistence of its imperial power.

### **Conluding Remarks**

The overall discussion above serves to explain how current disourse on terrorism brings together terrorist' acts, violence and Islam into the generalized term terrorism. Reinsertion of Islam as explanatory power and epistemological object of the discourse tells us orientalist's vision of politics both in terms of global order or regional-domestic affairs particularly in the Middle East. It operates through scholarly works, international debates in United Nations, and most recently, channelled through the globalising project of deradicalization. What do all these imply for us? The following are three modest suggestions to help cope with global scale terrorism and current phenomena of 'religious' violence at our own home in Indonesia.

*First*, we need to distinguish terrorist act from terrorism. Drawing upon ample historical studies on political violence, acts of terror are purposive despite of the fact current terrorist acts efface religious doctrines. Violent Jihadism needs not blind us to take up essentialist

view that ideology drives action or precedes the acts. In contrast, it is through acting out, committing violence, that jihadism is actively effaced. This understanding is instructive since it rescues us from following the liberalist footsteps that idea is in full control of human behaviors. It is to run counter current discourse on terrorism that defines terrorism as ultimate violence while leaving no room for political questionings of the acts. *Second*, consequently, we need to discuss terrorist violence in broader context of its emergence and usage. Though, various definition of terrorism explicates that terrorist act is to achieve political-ideological goals, current discourse on terrorism, particularly scholars of 'religious terrorism' redefine terrorist's political goals as completely unattainable, or transcendentalist. This understanding of terrorist's goals paves ways to the arbitrary use of 'radicalism' as concept as well labelling those who employ terrorist acts as againsts liberal democracy and human rights.

*Third*, we are of course against terrorist's violence, particularly homicide, but putting the wrong questions will necessarily result in wrong answers and worse, contributes in promoting liberal fundamentalism that now makes this discourse more bleeding than ever as currently taking place in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. Equally important is that our discussion compels us to seriously rethink our current preoccupation with 'terrorism' at home so as to preclude deradicalization project from functioning as part of orientalist project to demonize Islam and also to criticise in sustained ways our current regime's maneuver to exploit the term for manipulating security issues and control the labelled 'radical' moslems in favor of ultra-nationalist-facist paradigm of nation-state building.\*\*\*\*\*

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