THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FOCUSING ON STATE TERRORISM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

State terrorism is as prevalent as terrorism committed by non-state actors. However, excessive attention has been given to the study of non-state terrorism whereas state terrorism which is far serious an issue remains largely overlooked and under researched. The silence that is maintained on terrorism committed by states is alarming indeed. There is a genuine need to break this silence. It is a serious mistake to equate terrorism with non-state actors only. It is equally wrong to consider terrorism in terms that it is only committed by non-Western states against the Western states. This study has attempted to highlight the significance of focusing on state terrorism and recognizing it as abhorrent an activity as terrorism by non-state actors is considered. Various debates on the subject in terrorism and Critical Terrorism Studies have been discussed at length to seek clarity regarding the nature of the issue.

Keywords: State terrorism, Political discourse, Implications, Global security, Human rights.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is considered to be a great menace in today's world. Much fanfare has been attached to the havoc created by non-state terrorism. However, state terrorism which is a far greater menace is largely ignored. There is a general tendency to equate the word terrorism with the terrorism committed by non-state groups. This is undoubtedly a mistaken view. States are capable of causing destruction and misery on much larger a scale when they commit terrorism. As Wilkinson (1981) also observes that the reign of Hitler in Germany and that of Stalin in Russia are enough evidence to acknowledge "that state terror has caused far more death and suffering than has ever been inflicted by rebel groups" (p. 468). The reason is that the coercive machinery at the disposal of states is much more powerful and pervasive than the relative destructive strength of non-state terrorist groups.

Sadly, in terrorism studies field also, state terrorism has not received the attention it deserves. It has been over shadowed by the excessive focus on terrorism committed by non-state actors. Majority of the terrorism scholars have a tendency to equate terrorism with non-state terrorism only. State terrorism has failed to get the attention it deserves. The whole issue becomes even more problematic due to the fact that a state has the legitimate monopoly of using physical force, or what Max Weber terms as the "means of violence" (Weber as cited in Torpey, 1998, p. 239), in its territory. The definitional problem of terrorism has further complicated the matter. There is much disparity and variation in the definitions proposed for the word *terrorism.* Unfortunately, these definitions are mainly actor-specific. They set out to describe terrorism as only a non-state activity. States have been excluded as possible perpetrators of terrorism. The result of this exclusion of states from those definitions is that states have been granted complete impunity from being held responsible for their acts of terrorism, by ruling out the possibility that states too can commit terrorism.

Emerging in the first decade of the 21st century, Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) has launched a serious criticism on the major discourse of terrorism field for not acknowledging the acts of terrorism on the part of states as state terrorism. This study also draws from the tradition of Critical Terrorism Studies and has attempted to highlight the significance of focusing on state terrorism.

Literature Review

There is an alarming silence on state terrorism in the terrorism studies field. This silence needs to be broken. Jenkins (1980) holds that the word terrorism is often used to label one's opponents in the sense of passing "moral judgment" (Jenkins, 1980, p. 1). Hence, terrorism ends up meaning what the user of the term wants it to mean. Jenkins (1980) points to the practice of distinguishing between state terrorism and non-state terrorism. One is referred to as terror while the other as terrorism. States commit terrorism in different forms and at different levels. Stohl (1984) notes that at the international level, states use three different forms of terrorism. Sproat (1991) highlights the fact that a wide spread assumption prevails "that the state cannot be terrorist by definition" (p. 19). He dwells on the reasons for this state of affairs and notes that since traditionally state is understood in terms of force and violence, it becomes difficult to distinguish between state's legitimate right to use force in its territory and its illegitimate violence against its own or another state's citizens (Sproat, 1991).

Addressing the definitional issue of terrorism, David Claridge (1996) has proposed a definitional model of state terrorism which is helpful in judging as to which acts of state violence can be termed as state terrorism. Claridge (1996) explains that despite using extreme forms of violence, states emphatically refuse to admit that they have committed terrorism. Jeffrey A. Sluka (2000) notes that the neglect shown towards state terrorism is mainly due to "political and ideological" (p. 1) reasons. There have been countless occasions when states unleashed violence on their own citizens but still the destruction caused by non-state terrorists is over exaggerated. Making a distinction between state's use of terrorism against its own citizens and against other states, Primoratz (2002) asserts that the former type of state terrorism is far worse as the state intimidates and attacks the very population it is responsible to protect. Therefore, on the moral grounds, state terrorism is far worse than non-state terrorism.

Stressing the need to shift focus from non-state terrorism to state terrorism, Nielson (2003) holds that state terrorism is the basis "for creating and sustaining the other forms of terrorism" (p. 427). The suppressive, unjust and exploitative policies of a state, that commits state terrorism, give rise to other forms of terrorism. Alex P. Schmid (2004) maintains that there has been a consistent effort of excluding states from any definition of terrorism. Duyvesteyn (2004) and Spencer (2006) have criticized the use of the term 'new' for terrorism and have questioned its validity. Spencer (2006) argues that the distinction between old and new terrorism is unreal and even dangerous as it can be used by states to justify their unnecessary and reckless counter-terror measures. Though Merari (1999) has not referred to the term 'new terrorism', yet he denounces the assumption that terrorism has changed.

Ruth Blakeley (2007) asserts that "terrorism is a tactic and not an ideology" (p. 234). Terrorism is neither something which only non-state actors commit nor it is only what non-Western states indulge in. Richard Jackson (2008) observes that in the terrorism studies field, "state terrorism is noticeable mainly for its absence" (p. 1). This is an alarming situation since states commit terrorism much more often and in far destructive ways against their own citizens while countering insurgencies within their territory. State sponsorship of terrorism is still another form in which states commit terrorism indirectly. Daniel Byman (2010) has discussed state-sponsored terrorism as a principal-agent issue. He refers to the state sponsoring terrorism as principal and the terrorist agents or groups which are being sponsored as agents. The actor-specific way of defining terrorism has been criticized by Jackson et al. (2011). They observe that such a practice is both misleading and unjustified as it gives a clean chit to states to indulge in terrorism as a matter of policy. Bart Schuurman (2019) observes that "The relative lack of interest for state terrorism ..." (p. 473) reiterates the concerns expressed by the critical terrorism scholars. The overly emphasized topics of jihadism, counterterrorism strategies of the governments and what Schuurman (2019) terms as "the event-driven" (p. 475) focus of terrorism research in turn undermines the significance of studying "right-wing extremist terrorism and state terrorism" (p. 476). State sponsorship of terrorism is still another form in which states commit terrorism indirectly.

Contradictory Perspectives on State Terrorism

There are contradictory perspectives regarding state terrorism. One argument is that states cannot commit terrorism and it is wrong to use the term terrorism for state violence. This impression is created and further strengthened by definitions of terrorism such as considering terrorism as a kind of violence which

only the non-state actors have the necessity to commit (Jarvis & Lister, 2014). The dangerous implication of this perspective is that it emboldens states to use terrorist violence "against their opponents and citizens without fear of condemnation" (Jackson, 2008, p. 15).

Another tendency is to recognize that state terrorism may exist but to distinguish between state's acts of terrorism and the committing of such acts by non-state actors. This perspective holds that there is a qualitative difference in non-state "terrorism" and the state's use of "terror" as the state has the "legitimate right to use violence" (Jackson, 2008 p. 8; Jackson, 2010). Still another perspective concedes and emphatically describes that state terrorism can and in fact, does exist (Jarvis & Lister, 2014).

The Definitional Issue of Terrorism

Given the complicated nature of the whole issue, a lot more confusion has been created by the surprising multiplicity of definitions offered for the word terrorism. It has been observed that currently scholars, governments and international organizations are using over 200 different definitions of terrorism (Jackson, 2010). These definitions largely reflect the interests of those who have proposed these definitions. As Alex Schmid (2004) notes that "definitions generally tend to reflect the interests of those who do the defining" (p. 384). States tend to define terrorism according to what suits them at a given time (Zeidan, 2004). That is the reason why no agreement exists on a universally accepted definition of terrorism. A definition that is applicable to all those acts falling into the category of terrorism regardless of who commits those acts.

Most of the definitions of terrorism are "actor-based" (Jackson, 2008, p. 1). They have been devised to make sure that states are excluded as perpetrators of terrorism. They can be its victims but never the perpetrators. Jackson (2010) observes that this has its roots in the existence of a knowledge-power nexus. There is a close relationship between knowledge, power and politics in a society. Explaining this relationship, Jackson (2010) further argues that "knowledge and its production" (p. 2) is not a neutral phenomenon. Knowledge is not created in a vacuum. In its essence, knowledge is a social and at times a "highly political" (Jackson, 2010, p. 4) phenomenon. The interests of the powerful and the elite in a society are the primary determinants of the kind of knowledge to be produced. Same goes for the

avoidance that is demonstrated in the production of certain kinds of knowledge considered to be detrimental to the interests of the powerful.

The point here is that since it is not in the interests of the states that their acts of violence falling into the domain of terrorism, be termed as terrorism, they prefer the label of terrorism to be used exclusively for the non-state actors. Therefore, the serious issue of state terrorism remains neglected in the major discourse of terrorism studies field as the said discourse largely reflects the interests of the powerful Western states.

Despite being almost absent from the terrorism studies, the "ghostly outline" (Jackson, 2008, p. 4) of state terrorism can somehow be discerned. For instance, it has been a practice by the terrorism scholars to acknowledge that the word *terror* from which the term *terrorism* has been derived, was first used to describe the violent activities termed as the 'reign of terror' which the Jacobin regime imposed after the French Revolution (Jackson, 2008; Goodin, 2006; Primoratz, 2002; Rodin, 2004). Thus, the "*regime de la terreur*" (Hoffman, 2006, p. 3) of 1793-94 added the English word terrorism to the vocabulary of political analysts. Ironically notwithstanding this acknowledgement, they still hold that the word terrorism should not be used for the violent acts of states.

Actor-focused Definitions of Terrorism

Nevertheless, this 'ghostly outline' of state terrorism that Jackson speaks of, never becomes obvious and remains in shadows due to the actor-focused definitions dominating the major discourse in the terrorism studies field (Jackson, 2008). These definitions view terrorism as a non-state mode of violence which only non-state actors resort to. The definition of terrorism given by the U.S. State Department which is widely used by the majority of terrorism experts, can be cited here as one such example. The said definition declares that terrorism is "pre-meditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants, targeted by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (Goodin, 2006, p. 53). In the same vein, Walter Laqueur holds that terrorism is "the substate application of force" (Laqueur, as cited in Rodin, 2004, p. 754). Any possibility of states' involvement in terrorism has been completely ruled out in these definitions,

thereby rendering the use of terrorism as the strategy of non-state actors exclusively.

The Interplay of a Dual Standard of Morality in Defining Terrorism

 It is important to note here that states have been resisting and rejecting with surprising consistency, all attempts to legally define terrorism in a way that might include all those actions of states that fall into the category of state terrorism. In November, 2001, discussions were underway in the United Nations to have an agreed definition of terrorism. However, one of the issues that could not be resolved in this regard was that majority of the states "preferred to limit the application of the term to individuals and groups" (Schmid, 2004, p. 388). This is how the dual standards of morality come into play while defining terrorism. One standard of morality has been reserved for non-state actors and another for states. Challenging this double standard of morality, David Claridge argues that there is no difference in anti-state terrorism and state terrorism as such. Both are equal in their psychological impact and basic method of operation. Granted that the tactics employed in the two forms of terrorism may be different, their psychological impact and their basic method of operation is largely the same (Claridge, 1996). Claridge further asserts that there is hardly any difference in "kidnapping" used by a non-state group and enforced "disappearance" by a state (p. 50). The same is true of the "market-place bombings by non-state terrorist groups and large-scale massacres by armed troops" (Claridge, 1996, p. 50).

The widely held practice of differentiating between the same acts of terrorism committed by insurgents and the state operatives is both unhelpful and unjustified. Acts of violence against a symbolic target for the purpose of intimidating a wider audience to influence its political behavior should be termed as terrorism whether carried out by non-state insurgents or the state. Taking a leaf from Woddis, "Dropping a bomb" should be considered as bad as "Throwing a bomb" (Woddis as cited in Primoratz, 2002, p. 2). Thus, the hypocrisy and the dual standards of morality in defining terrorism, make all such actor-based definitions strictly subjective. One cannot find any semblance of objectivity whatsoever, in them.

The tradition of referring to state violence as *terror* and the anti-state violence as *terrorism* is related to the same practice of hypocrisy (See e.g., Jenkins, 1980; Wilkinson, 1981). This is aimed at downplaying the seriousness of state violence and over-exaggerating the destruction of anti-state violence. This depiction of state and anti-state or non-state terrorism serves to present a distorted view of the whole issue. It is not hard to understand that "even the most advanced anti-state terrorists" cannot match the destructive power of even small and relatively less powerful states (Sluka, 2000, p. 2).

Furthermore, the apprehension that the non-state terrorists may take possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and may use them has not proved to be true so far. No non-state actor has ever used nuclear weapons. Contrary to that, states not only possess nuclear weapons but also have exhibited their capacity to use them without any compunction or fear of impunity (for instance the bombing of Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States in the WWII). Not a single terrorist act committed by any non-state actor has caused human suffering on such a massive scale as that. Therefore, it is a grave mistake to downplay the seriousness of state terrorism in any way.

Is Terrorism an Ideology, Tactic or Strategy?

For the sake of clarity, it is pertinent to look into certain features of terrorism which have a direct bearing on the concept of state terrorism. In this regard, the question of treating terrorism as an ideology or a strategy has been discussed at length by scholars. The *'ism'* of terrorism appears to suggest that it might be an ideology with a set of principles to somehow grasp the meaning of life around us in the manner ideologies like Anarchism, Communism, Feminism, etc. do. Ruth Blakely in an attempt to clarify the confusion surrounding the whole issue has proposed to treat terrorism as "a tactic and not an ideology" (2007, p. 234). For her, terrorism is a tactic which can be employed by any actor no matter a state or a non-state one. Robert E. Goodin considers it to be a "technique" or what may be called "propaganda of the deed" (Goodin, 2006, p. 35) as the cliché goes. Moving further, he asserts that terrorism is a "tactic, adopted for socio-political ends" (2006, p. 36). Walter Laqueur (1986) asserts that terrorism is a "strategy" (p. 90) to be used by adherents of different political beliefs and "not an ideology" (p. 90). Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur also agree with Blakely that terrorism is an activity rather than an ideology (Weinberg & Pedahzur, as cited in Schmid, 2004).

Richard Jackson (2010) also argues against treating terrorism as an ideology. For him, it is "a particular act or strategy of political violence" (Jackson, 2010, p. 6) which can be adopted by any actor. There is nothing in the terrorist actions of the state agents which can differentiate them from those of non-state actors. Blowing up "civilian airlines (the Lockerbie bombing) or a protest ship (the Rainbow Warrior bombing)" or bombing public places "(the Lavon affair)" (Jackson, 2010, p. 7) does not become the legitimate use of violence just because states did it. It is terrorism pure and categoric.

However, just for the sake of argument, even if we regard terrorism as an ideology, it is very much clear that it is not an ideology which only the non-state actors adhere to. Nor it is a tactic or a method or an activity used by the non-state actors alone. Whether treated as an ideology or a tactic, there is nothing about terrorism which should restrict us to apply the term to states when they indulge in terrorist acts.

Is Terrorism a Weapon of the Weak or Strong?

To treat terrorism as the weapon of the weak, as has been frequently argued, is another aspect of terrorism which has its impact on the concept of state terrorism. Terrorism is widely regarded as the weapon of the weak and the oppressed. When there is no other alternative left, an actor resorts to terrorism. This is true of non-state actors whose power capability is no match for the relatively immense strength of states. Another argument launched by the states is that the perpetrators of terrorist violence want to achieve through fear what they cannot achieve through legitimate means. For this reason also, terrorism is largely associated with non-state actors as states are considered to be entitled to the legitimate use of force (Goodin, 2006).

However, this raises the question if states can never be weak? Surely, there are weak and failed states also. Such states may use terrorism to accomplish what they cannot accomplish otherwise. Hence, weapon of the weak does not always relate to non-state actors alone. Furthermore, strength also has the tendency of tempting one to use force in an extreme fashion. Strong totalitarian regimes have been ruling through the use of terror and they still do so (Goodin, 2006). The tendency does not end with the totalitarian regimes. A number of strong liberal democratic states often resort to terrorism as a means to achieve their ends.

Gillani (2017) has analyzed the subject of terrorism's utility for both weak and strong actors in detail. There are mainly three academic positions regarding the utility of terrorism. One holds that terrorism is ineffective in the sense that it primarily does not offer its perpetrator a high chance of achieving any long-term goals. The other perspective maintains that the efficacy of terrorism lies in its ability to attain short-term objectives. Still another perspective denotes that terrorism is effective in as much as it ensures the pursuit of short-term goals and ineffective when the goals are of a long-term nature (Gillani, 2017).

The point here is that when an actor has some short-term objectives at hand, it is highly likely to choose terrorism as opposed to other available violent options. Hence, for the attainment of its short-term goals, a state may employ terrorism as a desired violent option thereby getting "all the short-term benefits from terrorism, while ultimately relying on other violent alternatives to realize its long-term goals" (Gillani, 2017, p. 123). On the other hand, the sole violent alternative left to a weak non-state actor is terrorism, may it achieve any of its objectives or not. Therefore, the logic dictates that a state has a greater likelihood of resorting to terrorism as opposed to non-state actors "as a state has considerably greater chances of overall success when it employs terrorism" (Gillani, 2017, pp. 123-124).

Therefore, declaring terrorism as the weapon of the weak does not exclude states from committing it. States "can be terrorists, too" (Goodin, 2006, p. 53) regardless of being weak or strong. Michael Stohl (1984) has appropriately asserted that state terrorism is a weapon of "opportunity and convenience" (p. 52). It has nothing to do with the weakness or strength of an actor. States often commit it in the name of security and national interest. However, it does not make it less of terrorism.

What Do Terrorists Want?

What is it that terrorists (state and non-state both) want? Is it publicity or communication? This is also a contestable point. Is publicity an indispensable feature of terrorism? Laqueur (1986) notes that publicity is one of the features of terrorism on which experts mostly have an agreement. Publicity is generally considered one of the indispensable features of terrorism. It means that those who commit terrorism seek to publicize their cause through this act also. Consequently, it implies that when the perpetrators want "to conceal their involvement"

(Jackson, 2010, p. 6) in terrorism, it cannot be regarded as terrorism.

If we go with this argument, the states' acts of political violence are excluded from being called as terrorist acts since states generally do not prefer publicity for such acts. Rather they tend to deny their involvement in terrorism in any way. Therefore, publicity should not be mistaken for communication. It is in fact, communicating their message to a wider indirect audience, that the actors involved in terrorism seek to do and not publicity necessarily.

The veracity of this argument can be understood from the fact that not all terrorist acts necessarily are claimed by any group as a rule. There are a number of terrorist acts by non-state actors which were not claimed by any group. In case of state terrorism also, as we have already discussed, publicity is not a concern (Jackson, 2010).

Publicity is an added advantage that the non-state terrorist groups gain in the process of struggling for their cause through their acts of terrorism. It is not their primary motive as such. The inherent nature of terrorist violence is such that it attracts publicity as any form of violence has the propensity to do. The role of media in the romanticization of violence has somehow ensured that any form of violence will attract attention. Therefore, non-state actors need not make publicity as their primary goal when they engage in terrorism. This is something they would get anyway.

When it comes to states, this added advantage of publicity attached with terrorism becomes problematic since states prefer to avoid publicity when they commit terrorism. Their preferred policy is that of a denial of their indulgence in any such acts. The reason is that states seek to maintain their somewhat benign image in the eyes of their domestic audience and avoid international condemnation also. That is the reason states generally avoid leaving a track so that their acts of terrorism may not be traced back to them.

Why States Resort to Terrorism?

The answer lies in terrorism being the cheapest mode of violence as compared to launching a conventional war. It can be said that states use terrorism as a "cost effective" means to control (Claridge, 1996, p. 60). Furthermore, the strong element of generating fear attached with terrorism and its ability to intimidate a much wider audience apart from the immediate

victims, makes it a convenient rather attractive option for any perpetrators including states.

The reasons for states' involvement in terrorism may range from economic to political and strategic. Furthermore, states' acts of terrorism domestically and in other countries are motivated by still different objectives. The economic objectives come into play when state terrorism serves the purpose of sustaining the interests of the elite. States may engage in terrorism to gain control of resources and markets in other countries. They may also use violent means to suppress reform movements for instance, labour unions (Jarvis & Lister, 2014).

Nevertheless, unlike non-state actors since terrorism is not the only option available to states, their involvement in terrorism is morally more flawed. They have other options available to them which are not at the disposal of non-state actors who commit terrorism. This makes the acts of terror by a state even more unjustifiable. If rules should be defined for terrorism, it is no less important, rather more so, to establish rules for state terrorism (Westra, 2012).

This is not to say that non-state terrorism's contribution to human suffering is altogether negligible or justified. Though it is a contestable point that in case of national liberation movements, acts of terror committed by non- state groups can be considered justified or not. Given the fact that terrorism is also regarded as the weapon of the weak, when faced with the might of a much more powerful opponent, it is debatable if terrorism in such a situation can be considered morally justified or not. Since this debate is not relevant to the point this research intends to make here, it would not be discussed any further. However, the issue has been touched upon by some authors. (See e.g. Nielsen, 2003; Shanahan, 2010).

The Concept of New Terrorism

Let us now turn our attention to another important issue of whether terrorism has changed from what it used to be or not. Is the *newness* of terrorism a myth or reality? However, it is important to understand first what the concept of new terrorism entails before answering this question. Since the mid-1990s, the term *new terrorism* began to be used by scholars. This trend particularly accelerated after the incident of September 11, 2001. The underlying assumption was that terrorism has changed and acquired a new and more lethal dimension. The proponents of the new terrorism thesis believe that terrorism is now

religious in nature and therefore, more fanatic. The new terrorists are transnational in character and have network structures. They are indiscriminate in their targeting and are more prone to the use of WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction). It all suggests that since terrorism has changed, so should the strategies and tactics to counter terrorism be.

Duyvesteyn (2004) and Spencer (2006) have questioned the use of the term *new terrorism.* Both of them argue that patterns of continuity rather than change mark the terrorist phenomenon. Religious, ideological and political considerations motivated the old terrorists and same is the case now. Transnational links and network structures are not something new to terrorists. They existed before as well as they are now. Indiscriminate targeting does not appear to be a pronounced feature of the new terrorists. The targets they select are still largely symbolic for instance important individuals and buildings etc. The so-called new terrorists are using the same conventional weapons as their predecessors have been using. The possible use of the weapons of mass destruction by the new terrorists is only an apprehension so far and not a reality. Ariel Merari (1999) also agrees with these observations though he does not explicitly refer to the term of new terrorism (Duyvesteyn, 2004; Spencer, 2006).

What then the thesis of new terrorism seeks to do if terrorism has remained more the same than exhibiting any patterns of change or the so-called *newness*? The answer lies in the rationale that the states have provided in the name of new terrorism for their new and more destructive ways of countering terrorism and insurgencies. States are using the concept of new terrorism to justify their new and more lethal terrorist policies against foreign targets and their own population. The focus on the new terrorism debate has undermined the already minimal attention that state terrorism receives.

Actor-neutral Definitions of Terrorism

I have discussed those features of terrorism that have important bearing on the concept of state terrorism in one way or the other. A cursory glance at some of the neutral definitions of terrorism will be of considerable instructive value at this point of our discussion. Attempts have been made to propose such definitions of terrorism that are not actor-specific and can be applied to both non-state and state terrorism. These definitions clearly are an improvement upon the tendency of defining terrorism as only a non-state activity. In this regard, Michael Stohl's definition of terrorism may be applicable to state and non-state actors alike. He believes that terrorism is "The purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and / or compliant behavior in a victim and / or audience or the act of threat" (Stohl, 1984, p. 38).

Dayyab Gillani (2017) has defined terrorism as "a fear generating political activity that psychologically influences an audience by means of targeting or threatening to target non-combatants with a credible threat of harm" (p. 258). Given the control that a state commands over the means of violence such as its military, police and the paramilitary forces, there can be no doubt about the credibility of a threat of harm by a state. In this sense, it is even more dangerous than a threat of harm by any non-state actor.

David Rodin (2004) believes that terrorism "uses force against those who should not have force used against them" (p. 752). Defining terrorism in the moral terms, Rodin (2004) further maintains that "terrorism is the deliberate, negligent, or reckless use of force against noncombatants, by state or non-state actors for ideological ends and in the absence of a substantively just legal process" (p. 755). Igor Primoratz (1990) defines terrorism as "deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating them, or other people, into a course of action they otherwise would not take" (p. 129). For him, it is one of the essential features of terrorism that it targets the innocent people. Since states, regardless of being authoritarian regimes or liberal democracies, have been guilty of killing innocent people, the label of terrorism should also be used for such of their acts and campaigns.

Definitions of State Terrorism

Now it is appropriate to examine a few of the definitions of state terrorism to have further clarity in this regard. Blakely (2007) has defined state terrorism "as threats or acts of violence carried out by representatives of the state against civilians to instill fear for political purposes" (p. 228). Sami Zeidan (2004) believes that

State terrorism is the unlawful use of violence or repression perpetrated or sponsored by a state against some or all of its citizens, based on political, social, racial, religious, or cultural discrimination, or against the citizens of a territory occupied or annexed by the said state, or those of neighboring or distant countries. (p. 495)

Sluka (2000) holds that "state terror refers to the use or threat of violence by the state or its agents or supporters, particularly against civilian individuals and populations, as a means of political intimidation and control (i.e., a means of repression" (p. 2).

The definitional model of state terrorism proposed by David Claridge is a useful attempt in this regard. It may help us to judge as to which acts of state violence can be categorized as state terrorism. Nevertheless, the quest to solve the definitional problem is not that easy. Given the state's inherent right of legitimate use of force, many a times, the line separating the state's legitimate use of violence and its illegitimate acts of terrorism, is blurred (Claridge, 1996).

Claridge's model views state terrorism as a "systematic", act of actual or potential political violence by "agents of the state, or by proxies who operate with the resources of the state" to "generate fear" in unarmed victims. The intention is to "communicate a message to a wider group than the immediate victim(s)" (1996, pp. 52-53).

The state's monopoly of using legitimate force within its territory differentiates state terrorism from other acts of terrorism. However, the question is if there are no limits to this right of a state? Of course, international law will declare a state's terrorist acts against another state illegal and unjustified. In the same way, there should be some mechanism to check the terrorism of states against their own citizens. There has to be some limit against the state's right to use force within its territory as domestic state terrorism is a source of human rights violations on a massive scale.

Likewise, a state's counter- terror and counter-insurgency measures need to have limits too. If terrorism by non-state actors is wrong, excessive use of violent means to counter terror is equally wrong as one wrong cannot justify another wrong in return. As Laura Westra (2012) has suggested that "any government that imposed unlivable conditions upon its own citizens or on citizens of other countries … should not stand in judgment on the attempts of those affected to respond forcefully to the harms imposed on them" (p. 99). Consequently, there is a dire need to avoid rushing into using violent counter-terror measures against the alleged terrorist acts by a non-state actor. States must provide actual evidence of such acts (Zeidan, 2004).

States are involved in violent suppression of individuals and groups on the pretext of countering terrorism. Given the high moral ground that states claim due to their legitimate right of using force, it is very important to make a case for state terrorism. It will help in constraining states' excessive use of violence in the name of counter-terrorism.

The Deadliness of State Terrorism

Crenshaw (1981) believes that the term terrorism has been devised "to describe the systematic inducement of fear and anxiety to control and direct a civilian population …" (p. 380). This is no less done by states. In fact, one of the deadliest ways of causing human misery has been and still is terrorism by states. States have been using extreme forms of violence against civilian population.

State terrorism has claimed much more lives than terrorism by non-state groups or individuals. Michael Stohl (1984) notes the same, "the rates of death, destruction, casualties and any other measures of the severity of terrorism have been substantially greater from the hands of state operatives than from insurgent challengers" (p. 37). Various incidents of state terrorism have been proved far destructive than non-state terrorism may it be "Stalin's great terror" or "Mao's Great Leap Forward" or "Kampuchea's return to Year Zero" (Jackson, Murphy & Poynting, 2010, p. 1).

Millions of people have been killed by death squads of governments. Jeffery A. Sluka (2000) notes that "During the 1960s and 1970s, death squads emerged in at least ten states in Latin America alone, and like torture and disappearances conducted by regular state forces, also spread steadily through the Third World in the 1980s and 1990s" (p. 4). Violence, torture, abduction and intimidation have been employed by states in Guatemala, Uganda, Sudan, Bosnia, South Africa, East Timor, Chile, Argentina, Rwanda and Kampuchea (Stohl, 2006). The Lockerbie incident and Israel's terrorist acts against the Palestinians also fall into this category (Zeidan, 2004). States have been involved in massive killings, torture, forced disappearances and intimidating millions of people in "Colombia, Haiti, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Kashmir, Palestine, Chechnya, Tibet, North Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sudan and elsewhere" (Jackson, 2008, p. 11). This is what Chomsky and Herman term as "wholesale" terror. To them, this wholesale terror is much more devastating in terms of causing human misery and suffering. Contrary to this is the "retail terror" or the non-state terror which has not

proved as destructive as terrorism by states (Chomsky & Herman, as cited in Stohl, 2006).

Primoratz has acknowledged the existence of state terrorism committed by democratic states also and cites the incidents of Dresden, Hamburg, Hiroshima and Nagasaki as examples (Primoratz, 1990). India which is considered to be the biggest democracy in the world (in terms of the size of its population), has been consistently using violent means to quell various insurgent movements in its territory.

Different Forms and Levels of State Terrorism

States commit terrorism in a variety of ways. This accounts for the disparity that exists in the identification of different forms of state terrorism. Conn has suggested three different categories of state terrorism which are "state terror, state involvement in terror and state sponsorship of terror" (Conn, as cited in Jarvis & Lister, 2014, p. 45). For Zeidan (2004), occupation is the highest form of terrorism as it entails using violence against the innocent. According to Ruth Blakeley, there is a difference between "state perpetration and sponsorship of terrorism" (Blakeley, as cited in Jarvis & Lister, 2014, p. 45). She also makes a distinction between "limited state terrorism" which is aimed at a limited audience and "generalized" state terrorism which targets the entire populations (Blakeley, as cited in Jarvis & Lister, 2014, p. 45). David Claridge believes that there are two basic forms of terrorism which both states and non-state groups use. He refers to them as the "spectacular" and the "prolonged campaign" (Claridge, 1996, p. 60). The Amnesty International has described the major forms of state terror as "arbitrary detention, unfair trial, torture, and political murder or extrajudicial execution" (Amnesty International, as cited in Sluka, 2000, p. 3).

States commit terrorism on two scales i.e. domestically or internationally. Domestic state terrorism is against the insurgent groups within the territory of a state. States often abuse their right to use legitimate violence domestically to ensure its security and stability. It becomes convenient for states to conceal their acts of terrorism behind the façade of this right to use legitimate force. Furthermore, states usually do not have to face that much condemnation if they are involved in domestic state terrorism. It is largely considered to be their internal matter.

The use of emergency legislation by states as a tool of state terrorism also warrants attention here.

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines emergency as "an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action" ("Emergency", n.d.). States counter-terror or counter-insurgency measures are often justified in the name of dealing with unforeseen circumstances. David Claridge (1996) observes that states resort to introducing "emergency legislation" to legitimize their violent and coercive acts against their own populations (p. 48-49). This emergency legislation confers on the state unlimited powers to arrest, charge and sentence the opponents on flimsy grounds. The opponents can even be *dealt with*, bypassing all the aforementioned stages, in the most brutal fashion.

At the international level, state terrorism denotes the employment of terrorist tactics and policies in international affairs. This latter form of state terrorism in international realm is Michael Stohl's (1984) focus of analysis, with particular attention to the terrorist strategies and tactics of the United States in its conduct of international affairs. Stohl (1984) notes that states' terrorist tactics in international affairs can be divided into three categories. These include the use of "terror as coercive diplomacy", covert use of terrorism involving the employment of a state's "clandestine services" and "surrogate terrorism". (pp. 42-43).

Terror as Coercive Diplomacy

This form of state terrorism entails that the target state or group is communicated that it will have to face unbearable consequences in case of non-compliance with the demand of the aggressor state. Here the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be cited as an example. The United States made the cost of not complying with its demand of surrender, "terrible beyond endurance" for Japan (Schelling, as cited in Stohl, 1984, pp. 42-43). Another example is the "Christmas bombings of Hanoi" by the United States in 1972 (Stohl, 1984, p. 43). This was done to force the North Vietnam to come to the negotiating table. Another effect was also achieved through this display of force i.e. to ensure the South Vietnam of the United States' loyalty (Stohl, 1984).

Covert Use of Terrorism (through the use of a state's clandestine services)

Through this form of terrorism, instability or fear is generated in the population of the target state by using techniques such as "bombing, armed attacks"

and other means of destabilization (Stohl, 1984, p. 43). Furthermore, the elite of the target state may be threatened through "assassinations, coup d'etat, and the threat of sponsored exile invasions" (Stohl, 1984, p. 43). Nevertheless, this form of state terrorism is not easily discernable and often it is very difficult to trace it back to the perpetrating state. Its purpose is not to demand compliance only but through the generation of fear, weaken the target regimes also. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States has done it time and again. The United States provided all out support to groups trying to overthrow governments in "Guatemala, 1954; Indonesia, 1958; Iran, 1953; Cuba, 1961" and "Chile, 1970-73" (Stohl, 1984, p. 45). Of course, these examples do not end here.

Surrogate Terrorism

States use this form of terrorism indirectly by making other parties involved and encouraging them to use terrorist measures against the target state. When a state sells weapons or provides such conditions to an ally, coalition partner, friend, a neutral state or even a hostile state through which they can continue their repressive or terrorist policies especially, that state is employing surrogate terrorism. Also, providing training and guidance to the security services of a friendly state in their practice of terrorism, falls into the category of surrogate terrorism. Again the United States proves to be a befitting example of committing surrogate terrorism. It provided its ally, the Shah of Iran, with all the necessary riot control equipment to violently suppress the protests against the Shah's government in 1979. The United States did not cease to assist Brazilian security forces even when they were using *"Esquadrao de Morte* (Death Squad)" (Stohl, 1984, p. 48).

There is a tendency to focus more on international terrorism than domestic dimensions of terrorism. Martha Crenshaw (1992) notes that to distinguish between domestic and international terrorism is not so easy. The line separating terrorism at these two levels tends to blur (Crenshaw, 1992). Furthermore, states may use terrorism as a tactic of repression also. This is done by the governments when they violently suppress any resistance or uprising on the part of their citizens. States may even go a step further and resort to "attacking the dissidents who flee abroad" (Crenshaw, 1992, p. 5). In this way, the domestic terrorism of a state may spill over the borders of a state. Other types of state terrorism focus on how long states engage in terrorist acts. Naom Chomsky has distinguished between limited and wholesale terrorism (Chomsky in Jarvis & Lister, 2014, p. 46).

State-sponsored Terrorism

Apart from committing terrorism themselves, states also sponsor terrorist groups. This is an indirect way of their involvement in terrorist acts. Gal-Or (1993) believes that state-sponsored terrorism is a form of diplomacy adopted by states vis a vis their adversaries. States bargain diplomatically with their enemies by supporting terrorist groups also. There are variety of ways in which states sponsor terrorism. They provide sanctuary, weapons and funds to terrorist groups (Byman, 2005).

States may sponsor terrorism both in active or passive ways. The active support includes sponsoring, controlling or directing the terrorists. It may also take the form of encouraging terrorists "by providing training, equipment, money and/or transportation" (Cohen, 2002, p. 90). The passive support entails a state's tolerance of terrorists within its territory by not arresting them. It may further involve a state's inability to control the terrorists due to its political weakness or leadership inefficiency (Cohen, 2002).

Byman (2005) observes that the decades of 1970s and 1980s witnessed a prevalence of state-sponsored terrorism to such an extent that almost all terrorist groups were supported by at least one government. The Labanese Hizballah, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Japanese Red Army (JRA) were supported by Iran, India, some Arab states, Libya and Damascus respectively. Al-Qaeda was supported by Sudan in the beginning of its inception and later on found a formidable support base in Afghanistan (Byman, 2005, pp. 1-2).

What is it that motivates states to adopt this method of diplomacy to harm their adversaries instead of launching a conventional military attack against them? The answer lies primarily in the fact that state-sponsored terrorism provides considerable room for deniability to states for their involvement in the terrorist acts of the groups they support (Gal-Or, 1993). In this way, states seek to achieve, without paying a price, what an open military confrontation with an adversary might cost them dearly.

State Terrorism Cloaked as Counter-insurgency

State terrorism in the domestic realm is no less serious an issue than a state's involvement in acts of terrorism abroad or their sponsorship of such acts. Given the fact that this terrorism is aimed at its own citizens, it has a more sinister ring to it as a state essentially is supposed to protect its citizens from any internal or external threat. Nevertheless, when the very threat comes from the state itself, the victims can have no hope of any redress. Such a situation is more likely to emerge when a state uses acts of terrorism to fight insurgencies within its territory.

The insurgents pose a challenge to the status quo whereas the state faced by such a challenge, seeks to maintain the status quo through its counter-insurgency campaign largely based on the use of force (Kilcullen, 2006). Such use of force by the state, Crenshaw (1992) observes is generally not termed as violence since the word *violence* has a connotation of illegitimacy whereas the state's right to use force is considered to be essentially legitimate. Hence, the level of impunity that a state may enjoy while committing acts of terrorism against its own citizens in the name of fighting insurgencies, cannot be underestimated.

In such circumstances, often the whole state apparatus is involved to support those who commit acts of terrorism being agents of state (the military, the police and the paramilitary forces). Legislation is introduced to save those involved in acts of terrorism. The judiciary either fails to provide any legal redress to the victims of this terrorism or chooses to ignore the complaints of the victims.

It can be observed that the counter-insurgency campaigns on the part of states may have great possibility of involving acts of terrorism as well, as in such situations, international condemnation, if there is any, cannot materialize into any form of concrete steps against the perpetrating state. Insurgent movements and a state's counter-insurgency strategy against them is generally considered to be an internal matter of a state. Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter resonates the same. It holds that "nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State" (Claridge, 1996, p. 48). This shows how difficult it is to challenge the state's right to use violence against its own population, let alone its acts of terrorism against that population.

Conclusion

Focusing on state terrorism is as important as terrorism by any non-state actors or perhaps more so as the huge power of death and destruction that a state can use against its victims is far more deadly and a lot more destructive. Therefore, the neglect of studying state terrorism needs to be rectified. The misperceptions generated through actor focused definitions of terrorism are largely responsible for underestimating the seriousness of state terrorism. Instead, actor neutral definitions of terrorism need to be employed that solely focus on the act of terrorism rather than who the actor is. The dual standard of morality while referring to acts of terrorism as terrorism when non-state actors commit them and the refusal on the part of states to use the same term of terrorism for those acts when states indulge in them needs to be both highlighted and condemned. State terrorism becomes particularly deadly when committed to counter insurgent movements within the territory of a state as international community regards it as an internal matter of a state. Therefore, more attention should be diverted to studying state terrorism as it is aimed at the very citizens a state is bound to protect. Hence, it becomes doubly unjustifiable and morally unacceptable.

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