

Terrorism is never justified

The debate on terrorism and the underlying causes as well as the justification of it have been going on in the media and other public forums ever since the Boston Tea Party. Terrorism can be simply defined as an intentional act of violence against non-combatants or civilians for political motives. With this definition, it can be said without qualification or exception that terrorism can never be justified. This can be proven with legal arguments and with conceptual agreements on what is war as well as the method for waging war.

Martin & Martin (2003) report that it was St. Augustine who first gave the two principles of entering into a war i.e. the war should be *jus in bello* (just in action) and *jus ad bellum* (just in cause). This definition was accepted in the English law and is considered the basis of commonly accepted laws for waging or entering into a war with other nations. Terrorism and any apologist for terrorism will only be able to provide a lukewarm cause for the act (*jus ad bellum*) but the second requirement of just actions can not be accepted as they often occur.

For instance, targeting innocent civilians is not permissible in any way while the first targets of any act of terror are often civilians. It must be noted that there can be no distinction made between terrorism and retaliation for terrorism which can be termed as terrorism itself (Sterba, 2003). For instance, if the US launches a strike against terrorists and kills innocent civilians in the process they can not be termed "collateral damage". A spade has to be called a spade and killing innocent civilians defies the dictum of *jus in bello*

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