

The Symbiosis of Globalization and Terrorism: Revealing the Relations of Globalization and Terrorism in the Contemporary Era

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Abstract

Globalization and terrorism have a symbiotic relation. If globalization is understood as a system that integrates all social, economic, cultural, and political orders in the overall homogeneity, then its relation to terrorism is symbiotic parasitism. In this sense, globalization is at disadvantages while terrorism is at advantages. Globalization is at disadvantages because of the impact it brings in increasing terrorist activities which make people lose their confidence in the positive effects of this system, so that, the globalization makes the global security threatened. The terrorism is at advantages because it has an excuse to launch an action as a victim of the globalization's injustices. They can campaign to the international community that their action is meant to express the oppressed community as a result of globalization. If globalization is understood as a means of mass media to extend the effect of its news coverages to the world, its relation to terrorism is symbiotic mutualism. The global mass media is benefited due to the occurrence of terrorism. The society also must have listened to every news related to terrorism, since it is important for them to increase their vigilance against the possible threats around them. This kind of relation makes the mass media which broadcasts the terrorism will be pursued by the consumers and the media's circulation will increase rapidly.

Key words: globalization, terrorism, security, cyberterrorism.

Introduction

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC), New York, and the Pentagon, Washington, on 11 September 2001 have been successfully disseminating threat, not only to the United States but also to the world. By this tragedy, which then known as 9/11, the Americans were directly threatened by the attack that took place at the trade and defense center. This attack is surely impacting the entire country. The international community also felt threatened by the news of the crashed of the two commercial airlines into the twin towers which was quickly broadcasted through various media, whether in electronics, printings, and online. Moreover, every time people turn on the television, listen to the radio, read the newspapers, and browse the internet all they saw was an eerie atmosphere of the attack. Direct broadcasting by Central News Network (CNN) which displayed the minutes of the hijacked planes crashed into the WTC up to the collapse of the building, added the dramatic effect of the attack. The non-stop media publications had made the world community aware of this shocking news. The process of globalization helped the immediate spread of information in a matter of minutes and seconds.

Jean Baudrillard appraised the 9/11 tragedy as "a symbolic act of defiance ... in response to globalization, which is itself immoral" (Baudrillard 2002: 15). The tragedy that killed more than 3,000 people is the beginning of the globalized terrorism acts. Previously, the terrorist attacks only affect the

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stability of the region and do not have global effect. The bombing of several churches in various cities in Indonesia on Christmas Eve 1999, only caused a psychological impact on Indonesians, but not to the world. The bombing in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office in Oklahoma on 19 April 1995 also only frightening U.S. citizens, the fear also did not spread to other countries. However, the 9/11 tragedy has a significant impact on international security and stability. Evidently, after this tragedy happened, the issue of terrorism has become one of the prominent issues in international political forums and many countries start to increase its national security for the fear of the potential threat of terrorism.

After the ending of Cold War and also post-9/11 tragedy, the international community has been increasingly concerned with transnational organized crimes. This increased concern is due to the possibility that, at one point, the transnational criminal groups together with terrorist groups will be likely to meet a common goal. The perspective of transnational organized crime is likely to change. If the previous transnational organized crimes are considered as ordinary criminal matters and only relates to public order, however, the current crimes are not only related to the public order, but also to the security (Vermonte 2003).

These perspectives changes are interrelated with the widespread of globalization. Globalization does not only encouraged the expansion of transnational legal businesses, but – at the same time – also provides the opportunities to the widespread of illegal businesses; where the rapid advances in technology, especially communications and transportation technologies, provide the convenience atmosphere for the necessary conducts. Consumerism and Western commercialism which are portrayed through lifestyle and prosperity and, then, transferred via television and internet has encouraged people to get them in an easy way through illegal businesses. As a result, the number of illegal business groups has increased rapidly in various regions in the world (Vermonte 2003).

The manifestation of such businesses are very diversified, among them is the dilating access to arms purchase by the non-state actors, both individuals and groups. Since the mid-1990s, the arms market has been increasingly fragmented which characterized by the emergence of many new arms manufacturers outside the U.S. and the Soviet Union who were dominating the market during the Cold War. Consequently, the control over arms productions and transfers become more difficult. This then alters the structure of the arms industry and makes it more accessible to parties other than states, including the terrorist groups (Vermonte 2003).

Therefore, the terrorist activities have been increasing in the last two decades. Based on the Gus Martin's record, since 1945 (post-World War II) until 1990 (the end of the Cold War), there were 49 terrorist attacks. Meanwhile, since 1990 (post-Cold War) until 2001 (the 9/11 tragedy), there were a total of 25 terrorist activities. After the 9/11 tragedy, the terrorist attacks even occur every year in various countries, such as in Bali (October 12, 2002), Moscow (23 to 26 October 2003), Madrid (March 11, 2004), and London (July 7, 2005). All these four examples is part of the total 43 acts of terrorism post-9/11 recorded by Martin up to 2005 (Martin 2006a:B13-B17).

Furthermore, both globalization and terrorism seem to be interrelatedly developing. The rapid process of globalization is then followed by the increasing number of terrorism activities all around the world. According to Jamal R. Nassar (2010:vii), both globalization and terrorism are not considered new anymore, but its growth rate is relatively new. World financial crisis in 2008 had terrorized many people around the world. In the same year, there were terrorist attack in Mumbai (India) and piracy in Somalia. This indicates globalization and terrorism are the two interrelated phenomena.

Therefore, it is interesting to observe the relation between globalization and terrorism, especially after the two phenomena has grown into a global issue in the beginning of the 21st century. In this paper, the relation between them is reviewed through two questions: first, how is the impact of globalization on terrorists' activities around the world? second, how are the terrorist groups take the advantage of globalization?

Globalization, Nature of Terrorism, and International Security

Thomas Friedman (2005) said that globalization is a flat world. According to Friedman, globalization has been growing rapidly as the world increasingly flattened since 2000. The increasingly flattened world from medium size, to small size, and even smaller size is marked by the convergence of personal computer that allows each individual to become an author in a short time who writes his/her materials digitally. The access to the materials is then easier as they become digitally interconnected from anyplaces in the world. Later, they become independent individuals regardless the state authority.

As a result, as stated by Mark Duffield, there is an overlapping authority between countries, which then even more overlapping with the existence of non-state actors that are emerging in the globalization era. Duffield appraised that the globalization had deconstructed and decentralized the authority of the nation-states (Duffield 2001:164-165). In such conditions, the state cannot provide an adequate security for its citizens, so that there are many groups' appearances (especially in African countries and Eastern Europe) that are arming themselves in order to protect their interests. Utilizing the ever-weakening state authority, they create their own authorities and privatized the security. Furthermore, the impact that then emerges is the growing non-state authority which is called as multiple security by Duffield (Duffield 2001:170-172).

In line with the emergence of multiple authorities, Mary Kaldor (2006:73-75) states that globalization causes a community fragmentation into different socio-political identities. According to Kaldor, globalization is a complex process that involves the globalization and localization, integration and fragmentation, homogenization and heterogenization. In one hand, this process gave birth to an inclusive transnational community network. They are characterized by the use of English and the culture of consumerism that is symbolized by Coca Cola and McDonald's. In the contrary, this process has been able to eliminate a lot of people who disagree with universalization, homogenization, and integration brought by the rapid progress of communication and information technology. They simply do not feel to be part of global community.

In such conditions, Kaldor (2006:80-82) says, the politics of identity becomes more tensed. Identities such as ethnicity, religion, and race are used as a tool of resistance. Conflict also becomes widespread and leads to the emergence of a new war, involving the new identities that arise because of globalization. In contrast to an organized traditional warfare waged by the state, new war is unorganized, using identity symbols, and having a desire to break the integration. The globalization is known to greatly contribute to this new kind of war.

Terrorists can be called as a community with a new identity that refuses universalization, homogenization, and integration as desired by the globalization. Therefore, the terrorist groups are always targeting the symbols of the developed countries which become the proponent of the globalization. In many occasions, the terrorist groups stated that their mission is to confront U.S. forces which seen as the main engine of the globalization process. U.S. hegemony that seeks to homogenize and integrates all systems under her control is seen as a threat towards terrorist groups' identity. Therefore, in some developing countries, the fight against U.S. interests is quite popular as most people in developing countries feel that they gained neither benefit nor prosperity like what had been promised by the globalization (Vermonte 2003).

The resistances are not only performed with physical violence, but also mentally; which exercised through psychological threat and widely spread through media provided by the instrument of globalization. That is, terrorists are not only at the disadvantages by globalization, but also benefited from the globalization through the acts of terror that received extensive media coverage so as to increase public fear. In this case, the nature of the terrorists which is to spread the frightening threats to people should be understood.

The terrorist targets are not merely the bombed victims, but also the wider community gripped by fear. One of the purposes of the terrorists to spread over fears throughout the world has been accomplished

with the help of mass media. The achievement was possible because the globalization had allowed people all over the world to be interconnected by particular network, so that, the event happened in certain region can be quickly known by the other communities in other regions.

In the era of globalization, terrorism has turned the media into a means of extending the acts of terror. Brian Jenkins stated that "terrorism is a product of freedom, particularly freedom of the press" (Jenkins 2002:160). Birgitte Nacos argues that "getting the attention of the mass media, the public, and decision makers is the *raison d'être* behind modern terrorism's increasingly shocking violence" (Nacos 2004:8). In addition, Walter Laquer (2004:104) says that "the media are the terrorist's best friends, ... The terrorist's act by itself is nothing, publicity is all. Moreover, Baudrillard argues that: "Any violence can be forgiven, as long as it is not transmitted by the media ("Terrorism would be nothing without the media"). But, this is all just illusion. There is no such thing as a good use of the media. The media are part of the events; they are part of the terror, in one way or another, they play along"(Baudrillard 2002:18).

All these views indicate that the globalization on the media communications and information creates a space and an opportunity to the terrorist groups to increase the potential to widespreadly carry out their actions. In various places, terrorist groups have been carefully utilizing the conveniences offered by the rapid development of technological and communication advances to achieve its objectives. Other than the use of the classical methods, the acts of terrorism today have the potential to create damages and casualties far greater than the similar actions in the past (Vermonte 2003).

The damages are not always physical, but also mentally which is suffered by people who feel threatened after watching the news about terrorism. The victims are not merely the dead ones, but also those who feel that the world is no longer safe, right after they get the information about the acts of terrorism. Therefore, it can be said that the globalization has increased the terrorism activities in all over the world; and the global development of communication technology is being used by the terrorists to expand its negative effects caused by their actions.

The Globalization Increases the Terrorism Activities

Nassar (2010:14) says that globalization increases the violence which manifested in the form of terror. Rapid changes brought by globalization process have polarized the society. Citing the theory of relative deprivation, Ted Robert Gurr stated, Nassar appraised that inside a polarized society, emerged a gap between expectations and desired achievements. Nassar pointed out the poor – as an example – who watches television that broadcast a glitzy life offered by globalization and dreams that his life will surely become one of them one day.

The problem lies on the fact that they (the poor) do not have the power to change their lives, while the people they are seeing in television do not help them and, yet, they getting a much better living standards. As a result, the gap between the two groups is widened and raises hatred of the poor to the rich community. The different attitudes between the two groups in facing globalization contribute to the rise of the conflicts among those groups who counter-globalization against the pro-globalization. The form resistance is then cultivated in the acts of terrorism (Nassar 2010:15).

Along with Nassar, Paul Collier (in Martin 2006b) also see the root problems of civil war actually lay on the economic deprivation and struggle to control the resources. In developing countries, many people who live under authoritarian regimes are not able to access the resources to improve their economy. This resulted in domestic destabilization that leads to internal conflicts. When these conflicts reduce the government's ability to control the territory, the terrorists appear to take the opportunity to take over the control (Croecker 2003 in Martin 2006a). Sustainable intensification of the globalization contributes greatly to the creation of this conflict, since the globalization caused alienation to numerous people due to imbalances that arise. In short, globalization has expanded the process of economic, social,

political, and psychological marginalization for people in developing countries, so that, it encourages people to act aggressively (Susilo 2005).

Therefore, terrorism is more commonly found in developing or poor countries, such as Pakistan, Iraq, India, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Even if terrorism occurs in developed countries, the perpetrators tend to come from either developing or poor countries. The suspects who allegedly staged terrorism in the U.S., Britain, and Spain are not the native citizens, but the citizens of developing or poor countries.

Relating to the acts of terrorism in developing countries, Indonesia can serve as a unique example because since the Bali bombings in 2002, almost every year the country is beset by terrorism. One of the reasons is the globalization which has alienated the community, particularly the terrorists. In a discussion entitled "Globalization and Terrorism" at the University of Pelita Harapan (UPH) Tangerang (21/07/2006), Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said: "Straightaway, the globalization gave birth to numerous impacts. Some are negative and some are positive. As a result, the world now seems to be a small village. One of the negative impacts of globalization is terrorism. It also besets Indonesia. "(Suara Pembaruan July 22, 2006).

Terrorism in Indonesia is the effect of globalization that implies not only on economics, but also politics and culture which known as the Americanization (Arifin 2010). The terrorist groups in Indonesia has always made the interests of the U.S. and its allies as a target. When the group of Imam Samudra, Amrozi, and Muklas bombed a night club in Legian, Kuta (Bali), on October 12, 2002, they were targeting on the foreigners – mostly Australian – who often enjoyed the entertainment available in this area.

Subsequently, the interests of Western countries – which becomes the major sponsor of globalization – are oftenly targeted by the terrorist in Indonesia, including: McDonald's bomb blast in Makassar on December 5, 2002, JW Marriott Hotel bombing in Jakarta on August 5, 2003, a car bomb blasted with the magnitude of 1 ton in front of Australian Embassy on September 9, 2004, suicide bombing in Jimbaran, Kuta on October 1, 2005, and the bombing of JW Marriot Hotel and Ritz Carlton on July 17, 2009.

All in all, the terrorist groups deliberately use the Western interests as their target. This is because of globalization, which was campaigned by Western countries that aims at integrating and homogenizing the economic, social, cultural, and political systems that are essentially Americanization and Westernization, causes inequality between the Western and the developing countries. It is quite understandable if the terrorists are the citizens of the developing or poor countries who feel unfairly treated by the hegemony of the great powers.

The Terrorists are Harnessing the Globalization

Another interesting side of the relation between globalization and terrorism is, besides being put at disadvantages by globalization, the terrorists also turned out to be benefiting from globalization. Although refusing globalization, in fact, the terrorists harness the globalization to achieve its objectives. The utilization was done through information and communication technology devices, especially television and internet. The television is used to display visual images of the actions done. In other hand, the internet network is used to quickly disseminate the result of the actions to the world. Globalization has encouraged the communities to become more involved in the advancement of communications and information technology so as to facilitate the terrorists to widespread the fear through the media (Susilo 2005).

The well-integrated political and economic order has created a new field for global terrorist operations to draw attention away from the center location of the targets. This new field raises a new terrorist who wants to influence the global situation more quickly than previous generations. The

advancement of information technology plays as a prominent instrument for the terrorists to continuously attack millions of people around the world (Martin in Ritzer 2006b).

Furthermore, the terrorist groups understand the importance of spreading over their message to the global community. Therefore, they need the mass media. Carefully, they adapt strategies and tactics to manipulate information technology to gain their interests. The contemporary terrorism represents a manifestation of the sophistication of extremist groups in using information globally (Martin 2006a:269). Television and internet, whose interest is to broadcast the news to the public as quickly as possible, are used by the terrorists to influence the international community quickly and inexpensively with a small risk for them (Martin in Ritzer 2006b).

Through the media, the terrorists can do a cyberterrorism. Verton (2003) stated "The terrorist organizations are moving toward cyberterrorism, and I urge you to think differently about the future before the disaster occurs." Cyberterrorism is the use of computer networks to destroy the country's strategic infrastructures such as energy, transportation, and government operations. This method is seen as a modern way compare to the traditional way of always using bombs. The resulting effects are not much different than the traditional way since it also capable to disrupt the security, political, social, and even the psychological of the masses and attracts media attention. The intended targets are all countries whose systems are well-integrated through the computer networks (Weimann 2005:129-130).

As a new form of terrorism, cyberterrorism has five advantages over traditional terrorism (Weimann 2005:137). First, the cost of cyberterrorism is cheaper than traditional terrorism. Terrorists only need a computer and online networks, and need not guns and bombs that are costly. Second, the identity of the cyberterrorism's perpetrators is more difficult to recognize than the traditional ones. In contrast to traditional terrorism which requires the actors to be in the scene so that could be identified; in cyberterrorism, the perpetrator simply uses a nickname, a pseudonym, and need not show his face. Third, the targets of cyberterrorism are broader than the traditional terrorism. In cyberterrorism, the perpetrator could disrupt computer networks in several places at the same time. Fourth, cyberterrorism can be run remotely, at minimal risk, and requires a shorter training time so that the potential for recruiting new members is greater than the traditional terrorism. Fifth, cyberterrorism has the potential to influence many people, the media, and having a larger impact than the traditional terrorism.

So far, there has been no concrete evidence found yet of the use of cyberterrorism. However, as the fast-spread of globalization and rapid development of communications and information technology, the potential emergence of terrorism is still wide open in the future. The present generation of terrorists is tied to the use of digital equipments, so that, they are likely to take advantages of all the digital equipments to conduct actions in the future. It is possible for the terrorists to bomb subway stations and, at the same time, disrupts its transportation system online just by pressing the computer's keyboard as reported by the National Research Council (1991): "Tomorrow's terrorism may be able to do more damage with a keyboard than with a bomb."

By utilizing the global media, all terrorist purposes can be achieved. For the terrorists, the mass media is the most effective communication tool to achieve its objectives. Without the extensive media coverage, terrorism will not mean anything nor has a broad impact. The media has made the task of terrorists to terrorize easier by spreading and scattering fear. Without media coverage, the impact of violence is limited only to the victim and direct targets.

Conclusion

Globalization and terrorism have a symbiotic relation. This relation can be classified into two symbiotic. First, if globalization is understood as a system that integrates all social, economic, cultural, and political orders in the overall homogeneity, then its relation to terrorism is symbiotic parasitism. In this sense, globalization is at disadvantages while terrorism is at advantages. Globalization is at disadvantages

because of the impact it brings in increasing terrorist activities which make people lose their confidence in the positive effects of this system, so that, the globalization makes the global security threatened. In the contrary, the terrorism is at advantages because it has an excuse to launch an action as a victim of the globalization's injustices. They can campaign to the international community that their action is meant to express the oppressed community as a result of globalization. They also benefited because of the advancement of communications and information technology which can spread the message quickly, as well as spreading psychological threat to the entire world.

Second, if globalization is understood as a means of mass media to extend the effect of its news coverages to the world, its relation to terrorism is symbiotic mutualism. In the globalization era, the mass media and terrorism are equally benefited from this relation. The global mass media is benefited due to the occurrence of terrorism, so that, they have exciting news that can be disseminated throughout the world. Therefore, each media must compete to find the attention of international viewers to watch the phenomenon they witnessed. On the other hand, the society also must have listened to every news related to terrorism, since it is important for them to increase their vigilance against the possible threats around them. This kind of relation makes the mass media which broadcasts the terrorism will be pursued by the consumers and the media's circulation will increase rapidly. The terrorists understand this well, so that in every action they also consider the publication factor. With a widespread publicity, the goal of terrorists to spread over the message of injustices and gives psychological threats can be well achieved.

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