

“On Air Terror”: Experiencing Violence From The Distance

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ABSTRACT

The debate over violence, particularly political violence, in media coverage gets more public attention when the violent actions involve tens or even hundreds of people as the victims. With the global scope of mass media owing to new technology, the audiences are globalized as well as the events. In the case of media portraying the immense destruction during the globalized events resulting in mass casualties public discussions of the media's ethical roles and responsibilities such as the appropriateness for capturing the event and sufferers as public consumption have heightened. Such questions reflect the societal concerns on the need to review the nature of media with regards to links to politics. This paper, however, will not review the debate but only refer the relationship of the media and violence as the main issue.

Keywords: *political violence, mass media, terrorism, globalization*

The public and scholarly debate regarding the portrayal of violence in the mass media is an ever-lasting discussion. The polarization between the pros and the cons usually focuses on the advantages and the disadvantages of violence reportage. The coverage includes visual images on the occurrence of violence that happened as acts and the results caused by these incidents. The disadvantages strongly focus on the ethics and the psychological impact, and question the roles, responsibilities and functions of mass media to the public on the one hand. On the other hand, the groups supporting the reportage of

violence argue on the tremendous benefits socially, economically, psychologically and politically that can be gained through the coverage. Theoretically and empirically, both sides have strong arguments supported by real experimental observations.

The discourse of the relationship between the mass media and political violence has increased to draw the attention of the public and scholars since the late 1990s and has intensified in the early 21st century. It has corresponded to two subjects. Firstly, it has been in accordance with the increasing global discourse of 'terrorism within the entity of political violence'. Secondly, the intensification has also paralleled to a mushrooming phenomenon of the destructional public property that has killed many civilians and taken place in some metropolitan cities around the world. Mass casualty violence that has occurred in one place, thus, appears as a global performance seen by diverse national audiences. This notion leads to a question on the extent of the relationship between mass casualty violence and global media. Since the conduct of mass murder is political in nature, it leads to the second question on the accuracy of the action in casting such forms of violence as political acts designed to tap into the communicative potential to global media.

This paper tries to explore the role of global media in politics. It particularly examines the extent of a relationship between mass casualty-oriented political violence focusing on terrorism and global media. The role of global media in exposing such forms of violence used by political actors as a method of communication among them will also be investigated.

“Media”, “Political Violence” and “Terrorism”

With the aim of understanding the correlation between global media and terrorism, it is necessary to elaborate the key terms. The first key term is “media” as the root of extended concepts such as “mass media” and “global media”. Wilkinson (1997, 51) defines “media” is “a generic term meaning all the methods or channels of information and entertainment”. The term of “mass media” encompassing all kinds of electronic, audio visual and printed media for communication such as books, newspapers, cultural arts, films, radios and television and “global media” refers to the scope and capability of media to reach the communicants. The second key term, “political violence” particularly “terrorism” is terminology that is more challenging to elaborate. The definition of “terrorism”, as recognized by Nacos (2002a, 15) and Jenkins (2003, 16), is more complicated and debatable since there is no precisely and widely or universally accepted definition. However, the effort of limitation

can be started from the more general term, “political violence”. The term “political violence” can principally refer to the conduct of violence aiming to achieve political objectives. The core of violent actions is politically based with purposes as well as objectives. This key feature differentiates it from other types of violence, such as criminal violence. Some studies on violence have underlined the political motives embedded in the actions.

For instance, Held (1997, 187) states, “Violence is political when it has political aims, such as to change government's policies or undermine its credibility.” Considering its broad meaning, political violence can be in the forms of political assassinations, riots, guerilla warfare, civil war, revolution or terrorism. Next, what are the conspicuous features that distinguish terrorism from other kinds of political violence? Although there is no agreeable universal definition of “terrorism”, one common simple characteristic to consider is that “terrorism” usually has the purpose of creating fear or to terrify a population (Held 1997, 188; Kegley 2003, 1; Jenkins 2003, 15; Raymond 2003, 72; Laqueur 2003, 151; Juergensmeyer 2003, 5). Wilkinson (1997) denotes the further narrower limitation that “terrorism” is a particular type of violence that differs from politically motivated violence. Further, Wilkinson (1997, 51) isolates a specific distinction of “terrorism” in the following expression:

It has five distinguishing characteristics: 1) it is premeditated and designed to create a climate of extreme fear, 2) it is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims, 3) it inherently involves attacks on random or symbolic targets including civilians, 4) ... it violates the norms regulating disputes, protests and dissent, and 5) it is used primarily ... to influence the political behavior of governments, communities or specific social groups.

While Wilkinson makes particular distinctions in the definition, he ignores the need to identify *the element of the way of conduct*. The conduct itself is an essential element since terrorism focuses on deeds more than words due to the relative diffuseness of its ideology (Alexander, 2004:89).

Another aspect of “terrorism”, that seems more significant and makes it more exclusive, is the innocent people. The degree of physical and psychological destructive effects of terrorism is thereby deepened and underlines the rough treatment component in causing casualties. In searching for a pattern of terrorist actions, Juergensmeyer (2000, 121) identifies that the nature of acts is “... not only of destruction but *also bloodshed executed in a deliberately intense and vivid way*. It is as if these acts were designed to maximize the savage nature of their violence and meant to purposely to elicit anger.”

Further, Juergensmeyer strongly emphasizes the vivid and horrific methods of

conduct even when the actions have involved less direct methods of killing such as car bombs and suicide attacks. Karim (2003), in searching the religious factors that underlie the causes of terrorism, argues that it appears human society has placed the conduct and the avoidance of violence as a fundamental part of their societal activities. In particular, Karim (2003, 39) refers to Rene Girard's study on "the institution of sacrifice". Various societies need "the institution of sacrifice" in dealing with the irrepressible force that is inherent within them though conducting violence such as killing or war in order to purify member of the in-group. "The bloodshed" is the feature that has frequently been associated with the victims of terrorism in general. Other types of political violence have merely no requirement for suffering of victims in obtaining the objectives. More essentially, the terrorist have targets civilian and "innocent" people. It is also the production of bloody frightful noncombatant victims that symbolizing the purpose of terrorist missions.

Moreover, as quoted in the introduction of this paper, Crenshaw (1981, 379) points out that the victims of terrorist attack "represent a larger human audience whose reaction the terrorists seek". Since the terrorists do have political purposes and objectives, Crenshaw's argument implies the notion of scale and scope of terror's horrific effect for affecting "a larger human audiences" is important. The degree of terror effect possibly determines the way of conduct in conveying the messages. Although not all terrorists intend to generate mass murder the horrendous manner of spreading terror in resulting fatalities with the highest possible number of victim or to create grainatic hostage of the enemy representatives is assertive factor to pursue the objectives. In order to affect "a larger audiences", a combination of mass casualty violence and horrific images are important elements in contributing impact of the violence. Alexander's expression (2004, 90) affirms these notion. The seemingly demonic ferocity of terrorists, their ruthless willingness to sacrifice the lives of the others and their own, indeed does draw blood and does create social and political chaos and stability. Its spirit of brutality signifies "terrorism" *a political vampire*. Therefore, "terrorism" can also be recognized as brutally mass casualty-oriented violence.

A Dependency on Communication Technology

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in the modem world of politics. It has evolved from occasional event to a regular occurrence. The historical identification of terrorism as a threat to the *status quo* can be traced back to the French Revolution in 1789, the existence of the Narodnaya Volya and the Combat Organization of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Russia from 1878 to 1913

(Crenshaw 1981, 380).

Rapoport (2003, 3745) identifies four waves of terror in the history of contemporary politics, with Narodnaya Volya categorized as the first wave. The study describes the evolution of terrorism including the patterns of development, organizations, purposes, weapons, international context and strategies. Importantly, Rapoport (2003, 38) reveals that the timing and spread of the “first wave” in the late nineteenth century was linked to the developing infrastructure. It was mainly the transformation in communication and transportation patterns, such as the telegraph, daily mass-distributed newspapers and the flourishing railroads. This relationship has continued to subsequent waves throughout the twentieth century. Rapoport’s study, thus, implies that the fundamental linkage between terrorist actions and communication technology has been established since terrorism emerged in the modern world of politics. More significantly, it also reflects communication technology revolution has enabled terrorism to evolve.

Terrorism has experienced gradual change which has generated “new terrorism”. This differs from the old one in terms of organizational structures, strategies, weapons and motivations (Laqueur 2003, 151). In particular, Laqueur argues that societies are more aware of a new terrorism taking advantage of electronically based information transmission. Kaldor (2001, 8) investigates that the use of modern communications such as mobile phones, or computer networks are imperative and are constituted as signifiers. Finally, Kegley (2003, 4) claims that another of the characteristics of new terrorism is its “reliance on the most of advanced technology of modern civilization to destroy through those sophisticated technological means that modern civilization seen as posing a threat to the terrorist’s sacred traditions”. Kegley’s observation implies that terrorists much less recognized the application of technology or even underutilized it in the past.

However, the use of technology can arguably not be the distinguishing factor between old and new terrorism. The application of technology has been used since the “first wave” of terror, as argued by Rapoport discussed in the previous paragraph. The Narodnaya Volya (Rapoport 2003, 39) took advantage of pamphlets and books, the most progressive media at that time, as a medium of articulating their grievances. As technology developed, its progress also influenced the terrorists’ strategies and created different perspectives for conduct planning. The strategies can be labeled as “different” since the applied technology is different as well. The dependency on the use of technology as part of their strategies such as for weaponry or communications is inseparable within terrorism dynamics whether it is old or new.

Essentially, the dependency of communications technology is one of the fundamental needs of terrorism design for achieving their goals. Crenshaw (1981, 386) points out that the most basic reason for terrorism is to gain recognition or attention in the short-term. Jenkins (2003, 20-22) indicates that terrorists attempt by their acts to create fear and manipulate it for a variety of purposes; publicity is their foremost aim. In this regard, the axiom of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is an accurate expression that “publicity is the oxygen of terrorism” (Wilkinson 1997, 53; Nacos 2002a, 27). In line with Crenshaw’s argument, Nacos (2002a:27, 2002b:14) agrees that the role of mass-communications media are central to furthering the terrorist’s publicity goal. Terrorists have a need for publicizing all their deeds. “Publicity” may be just a *side-effect* of the actions other types of political violence while it is principal of terrorism. The notion of publicity also underlines terror perpetrators’ mission of conveying their political message. As a form of political behavior which pursuing recognition through challenging the *status quo*, terrorism and terrorists create a political conflict. Communication and propaganda become inherent elements within the terrorists’ strategy. The terrorists’ reliance of advanced communication devices, thus, has linked the need of publicity on one hand and inevitably communication and propaganda on the other hand.

A “Quasi-Symbiotic Relationship” Facilitates “Performance Violence”

Mass media has two functions to society. Firstly, they are agents of information having a duty to inform us about news, knowledge and facts. A theory of news (Masterton 1998, 85) dictates that information, a moment, event or act is worthy of reporting if it contains news value. The second function of mass media is an entertaining agent. Another communication theory suggests that a dramaturgical approach is imperative in journalism (Breen 1998, 163-191). Kimberling (1982, 15) explains “Dramatism derives its name from the drama , where the crucial focus is upon *acts* performed by various players. Just as in a play, the act is central insofar as it reveals human motives.” [underlines added].

The need for dichotomy of protagonists and antagonists is quintessentially dramatic. It includes reality representation of the political stage. The theatre of politics continuously presents the struggle over power. According to Karim (2003, 19-21), the maintaining of power, to a significant extent, tends to involve the use of or has a potential for violence, both physically and psychologically. Media has a significant role for categorizing any kind of violence act into “bad and good” based on the prism of the legitimate authority. Therefore, the terrorism’ label as generally applied to the illegitimate

use of force conducted by non-state agents in pursuing the destabilization of the *status quo*. From the general antagonistic perspective, terrorism or terrorists, like the other uncommon “bad” characters, is not an uncommon role. At a glance, the ferocious actions perpetrated by terrorists appear similar with other political and criminal violent acts, such as murders, building destructions, or ransom ultimatums. The violent feature of terrorism has applied the dramaturgical formula of journalism. Nacos (2002a, 29) is convinced that terrorists and the media have “a quasi-symbiotic relationship”. The media organizations seem increasingly inclined to exploit terrorism as “infotainment” for their own imperatives, such as ratings and circulation. Jackson (1990, 526) argues in more detail that the relationship of terrorism and the media is “a strictly one-way symbiosis”, a term explained to a situation when two separate entities need each other to survive but the power of controlling the relationship is unbalanced. Laqueur (cited by Hachten and Scotton, 2002, 66) states, “The media are a terrorist's best friend... Terrorists are the super-entertainers of our time”. Terrorism episodes, thus, reflect a series of new package fulfilling both information and entertainment obligations.

On the other hand, terrorism and terrorists play a specific kind of antagonistic role in the theatre of politics. As discussed in the previous section, the way of terrorists’ conduct and its brutality are deeply embedded in the perpetrations, mainly mass casualty oriented acts. Moreover, beside dramatic aspects of the deeds and the results coming from their occurrence, terrorists send political signals through their activities and their victims. Alexander (2004, 90-91) considers that terrorism is a particular kind of political performative that has a manifest and latent symbolic significance.

A similar argument is suggested by Juergensmeyer (2000, 126-127), that terrorist acts can be regarded as “performance events” and “performative acts” due to their symbolic, dramatic and theatrical characteristics. The symbolic significance of terror perpetration is reflected by the horrific actions performed and the injured people victimized. More essentially, the important meaning of places demolished and times of action scheduled are major factors representing the symbolization of terrorists’ political communication. The horrendous deeds, the mass casualties, the selection of location and time are the *terrorist” language*. This language, Juergensmeyer argues, has particular political power which is relating to two reasons. Firstly, terrorists’ deeds represent a nonverbal communication which has “multifaceted” meanings; different interpretations rooted from different viewpoints. Secondly, the event has a transformative impact; a capability to influence society and to change reality through alteration of public's behavior in reacting to the event. The terrorist violence contains the power of political communications in transforming their political objectives.

Terrorists use their conduct and mass casualties as symbol of their efforts for seizing attention from wider spectators. Nacos (1994, 8) labels it as “calculus of violence”, a planning calculation of addressing their actions to target groups consisting of media, public and decision makers in target audience and in international audience. The implicit political motives of terror acts are far more important for the mass media to present to society. The perpetrators are assured of substantial press coverage since they believe that their horrific acts, their *performances*, are *news value-oriented*. It seems terrorists have a consciousness of being reported. Nacos (2002a, 17) defines such action committed with the intention to publicize, to gain publicity with the public and government, as “mass-mediated terrorism”. The European and American hostages kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf in 2001 is one of some cases of terrorism's considerable successes in exploiting the mass media for publicity purposes (Nacos, 2002a:83). In short, the sequence of performance violence consists of a series of rational calculations for conduct planning, that is recognition as the elemental aim - a need for publicity and propaganda - take action and commit the violence - mass media coverage - political and social changes.

The media coverage of terrorist events, actually generates some implications for the public for the terrorist as a political entity and for authority of the incident site. Wardlaw (cited by Dunne, 1999, 47) argues that media coverage of terrorist events can have some effects. First, the reporting of spectacular terrorist incidents has a contagion effect which increases the probability of replication implemented by other groups or individuals. Relating to this, excessive detail of both terrorist and counter-terrorist operations provides disaffected groups or individuals with tactical and strategic information and technical knowledge which makes resolution of future terrorist actions more difficult. Thirdly, terrorist violence provides a platform for the expression of extremist views undermining the authority of the state. Fourth, coverage of ongoing incidents puts inappropriate pressure on the authorities which limits their power as decision-makers. Fifth, the competitive nature of the news industry drives disproportionate emphasis on the sensational aspect of terrorist events and presents entertainment of public violence rather than performing a public duty to inform.

Globalization I: Global Media, Global Terrorism and Global Spectacle

Today's world is a form of interconnectedness in time and space. Globalization has been facilitated by the high-technology of transportation associated with. It has also been assisted by the technologies of computer, Internet, satellites and digitalization that have converged to produce a global communication network.

John Naisbitt (cited by Hachten and Scotton, 2002, 41) states, "In telecommunications we are moving to a single worldwide information network and toward the capability to communicate anything to anyone, anywhere, by any form - voice, data, text, or image - at the speed of light". The progress of transportation and communication technologies has a consequence on the reinforcing of terrorism. According to Urry (2002, 62-63), one of globalization's effects is the expansion of economic and social disparities between nation-states which he refers to as "wild and safe zones". The sophisticated communication and transportation technologies have compressed the gaps of time and space of wild zones and safe zones. The result is the "whole world" has become closer, a compact world for the transnational players in economic, political, social, developmental and other activities. It is not only the capitalist world condensed due to global marketplace, but also the terrorist world.

Additionally, modern technology has also enabled terrorist groups to decentralize their organization into dispersed units. As already mentioned, - terrorists like other political actors have also benefited by the use of modern communication technology for conduct planning. Kaldor (2001, 8) points out that modern technology has been utilized in order to coordinate, mediate and negotiate among the disparate units. This phenomenon has implicated on the emergence of high-technologically sound term of terrorism, such as cyber-terrorism and internet-terrorism. Shortly, a globalizing world has created global terrorism.

New technologies have also resulted in the change of communication process, the variation of the communication techniques, and the delivery systems of the news to communicants. The ability of media, particularly news media, to reach larger audiences has been accelerated by the information revolution. Mass media and the public become internationalized or globalized. As global media has been "created", so as to global spectators, listeners and even the journalists have been there. In line with the publicity goal of terrorism, the information technology advancement is beneficial for them in conveying their message to reach wider target spectators in order to gain global publicity. Nacos (2002a, 93) provides a convincing example that Osama bin Laden recognized that an act alone, even if it is an act of catastrophic dimensions, does not communicate the intended message or messages sufficiently. This notion explains all kinds of methods he applied to go public and reportedly, such as his recorded statements broadcasted by Al-Jazeera and he even prepared a book manuscript. The political violence of terrorists as broadcast by the global media, thus, have transcended the boundaries of a theatrical event (Nacos 2003, 3; Kellner 2003, 43). As a result, the performative violence played out by terrorists at the theatre of politics in one place of the world have been witnessed by audiences around the world. Global media has been casting terrorists as global celebrity and produced their political violence as a

global event. Another significance of modern communication technology relating to terrorism is its potential for encouraging civilian people to become new terrorists. For instance, the Internet has distributed detailed information and knowledge accompanied by visual images of terror techniques and tactics throughout the world. An adult “commoner” or even a child can learn how to use the terrorist's weaponry and their tactics. The following expression is an example excerpted from a home page:

The purpose of terrorism is to terrify. While there's nothing new about wanting your enemies to fear you, the technique of terrorism is a purely modern phenomenon, thanks to the economies of scale that come with mass global media. In other words, it's only cost-effective to be a terrorist if your demographic reach gets you into six figures *minimum*: “Suicide Bombers”, “Kamikaze Jet Hijacking”, “Dirty Bomb”, “Suitcase Nukes”, “Truck Bombs”, “Terrorist Videos”. (<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/library/crime/terrorism/terror-tactics/suitcase-nukes/>, accessed 13 October 2005).

Globalization 2: Media Coverage and Many-sided Meaning of Terror Acts

In the era of globalization, the public's demand for “fresh”, accurate, informative news received in quick manner has been increasing. Particularly to the transnational actors regardless their professions, such kinds of news is imperative in order to quickly support their strategic decisions. To some extent, radio and television are considered the most cost-effective mass media which can provide such kind of news to the world.

The increasing ability and networking capacity of mass media for contacting the global public has had two major influences on the international news system. First, it has considerably improved the innovative “breaking news” style - brief, highly updated and, in television, often accompanied by the visual image. Second, the global capability of media has possibly generated a new concept of news reporting. That is, timeless, space-less reportage and quantitatively extensive coverage recognized as “twenty-four-hour live news” or “round-the-clock news”. The 24-hour news concept initiated by CNN has certainly changed the international news system, especially during times of international crisis and conflict (Hachton and Scotton 2002, 136).

Sequentially, those reporting techniques have affected process of political communication at an international level, including the dynamics of mass-mediated global terrorism. The first implication addresses the international community in general. The political effects of newspapers, broadcasting, film and other means of international communication intending to influence foreign audiences (that is public diplomacy, propaganda activities) can achieve (Hachten and Scotton, 2002, 103) wider scope and even deeper intensity. The second implication influences international political actors including sovereign states and its agents. Since the terrorists' performative event and act contains

multifaceted meanings, different communicants can have different interpretations of the occurrence.

The 9/11 Case Study: The Power of Transformative Impact

The best example and perhaps the most prominent reference for examining this issue is the attack of the United States' Twin Towers of the World Trade Center (the WTC) on September 11, 2001. The attack was a political extravaganza. It was a spectacular performance without an unacknowledged common scenario. The show involved the sacrificing, unrehearsed, of mass figurative actors and actresses, presented by the unknown-leading actors, broadcast live by the global media, and witnessed by a global audience. That was a truly "on- air" global spectacle.

However, the 9/11 aftermath was also crucial for the goals of the terrorists', the American government, and the global public. There are many disciplines of how mass media reported 9/11, such as "comprehensive", "magnificent" and "excessive". This reflects the operating not only at the time of incident but also in the post-tragedy environment (Juergensmeyer 2000; Hachten and Scotton 2002; Nacos 2002a; Kellner 2003; Zelizer and Allen 2002; Noll 2003; Kegley 2003). According to Hachten and Scotton (2002, 66):

In this age of global television, the effects of 9/11 were deeply felt in many lands. Whether in London, Jerusalem, Shanghai, or Jakarta, the news and video were filtered through *the prisms of differing cultures, ethnicities, politics and religions*. But the most important reaction was in Washington, D.C., where the Bush administration ... vowed to strike back hard at terrorism [emphasis added].

The interpretative process of diverse terrorist acts' has been facilitated by the global media through the enormous, continuously and instantaneously news reportage. The global media, then, has offered opportunity to the global spectators for construing any meaning of the mass casualty victimizing violence.

The global violence performed by terrorists generated meanings, responses and reactions differently across different kinds of audience. Juergensmeyer (2000, 145) underlines that an act of violence, in some cases, sends two messages at the same time; a broad message aimed at the general public and a specific communications targeted at narrower audience. The following two paragraphs will discuss the implication of the 9/11 event to the public and decision makers.

Contagion Effect

Successfully achieving their aim of publicity implies positive and negative results for the terrorist themselves. The general reactions are two-sided, pros and cons, opponents and proponents. As for the opponents, the 2001 terrorist attack on the WTC, for instance, was a symbol of tangible and intangible threats for the nation. Those were the trespassing of territorial security of a sovereign state and the undermining of stability. As for the proponents, the 2001 WTC demolition was a symbol of victory of Islamic ideology over neo-liberalism and all western values associated with. A general opinion was that the act sent a message proving the vulnerability of the mightiest military power of a superpower state (Nacos 2003, 3).

More importantly, the global media reportage of the 9/11 and specifically the unforgettable images of attack provided by television had material and psychological effects (Kellner 2003, 43; Rosen, 27-28; Hatcher and Scotton, 2002). Kellner (2003, 39) claims that there are enough significant shifts that have occurred already to see the 9/11 as a transformational event since it has created some dramatic alterations in both U.S. and global society. The signal likely gave an encouraging spirit to the perpetrators' "international supporters" to take similar action to strive for similar objectives, a destabilization of the *status quo*. On 27 March 2002, the Al-Aksa Martyr Brigade, a part of Yasser Arafat's Fatah some questions, such as "Did the Egyptian Mohammed Atta, one of the alleged perpetrators of the WTC attacks, have a relation to Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade in the past"? Davis (2003, 86-87), however, notes that the American authorities believed that Atta had a cooperative link to Osama bin Laden and his organization Al-Qaeda. Nacos (2003, 2) strongly indicates that the Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade and a secular group in Palestine did embrace the suicide strategy of the WTC building demolition for the first time in late 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, although there is no evidence of a direct connection between those two incidents. Therefore, the more important question is "How did the WTC incident motivate other individuals or groups to take similar action?"

Our previous discussion on the strong relationship between global media and terrorism has offered an argument that the enormous, continuous and news reportage of the violence of 9/11 can be interpreted differently by the general public at the same time. It can be an inspiration to some people, a holocaust and an atrocity to another, an "act of war" to someone else, an opportunity or even an act of vengeance to others. For a person who has the same politically religious ideology as the WTC perpetrators, the suicide action was likely an encouragement. This notion was the reason behind calls for a restriction on Osama bin Laden's video tapes called for by Condoleezza Rice, Bush' National Security Advisor at the time of 9/11 (Kellner 2003, 76). Bin Laden was alleged to be sending secret messages to "sleeper" agents who could unleash new terror.

Therefore, the WTC kamikaze performance has possibly a contagion effect. It demonstrated the substantial influence of transformative impact both in creating fear to American public and inspiring other actors to conduct similar mass casualty-oriented violence.

Global War on Terror

Considering the strategic political impact of the global media, it is logical that states in the world have particular policies of political communication management. Propaganda and censorship is common in order to control public opinion. As globalization and the progress of communication equipment gives benefits to terrorists, it also provides advantages to the state. Yet, the benefits of new technologies can also become costs. The positive and negative features depend on the purpose. New technologies are, “at once potentially empowering and production *and* disempowering and destructive” (Kellner 2003, 44). The U.S. general public and the government interpreted the 9/11 event as an aggression. This view was most likely different with the general opinion of Palestinians, Afghans or Iraqis. In general, the U.S. global media assisted societal interpretation of the 9/11 event and shaped two retaliatory discourses. This can be categorized into two main ideas. Firstly, Islam Jihadism and framed it as an enemy. Karim (2003, 23) argues that, “mass media workers, operating within a particular ideological system, consciously or unconsciously produce integration propaganda that serves the overall interests of elite”. This notion explains, then, why the U.S. media, television in particular, framed the 9/11 attack as a “second Pearl Harbor”.

The revelation of Mohammed Atta, his life and link to Al-Qaeda investigated by ABC, CBS, CNN and other news platoons led to an intensified focus on the Middle East. Yet, Karim further argues that the coverage was presented incompletely without explaining the whole contextual background. The main element of the background is historical perspective regarding the long rivalry between Orientalism and Occidentalism. Kellner (2003, 38) agrees it is the duty of mass media to provide a comprehensive picture of the problem, mainly on the radical Islamic sectors of the Arab and Islamic world who have declared Jihad against the U.S. The partial framing of 9/11 resulted in the generative stereotype that “violence” is inherent to Islam. The western imaginaries of Middle East became “Islam”, “violence” and “terrorism”. Critically, mass media framed Bush and bin Laden as “good” and “bad” characters respectively as well as widening the contrast between Liberalism and Islamism as general.

Secondly, the U.S. and the whole world was urged through the media to work

together to destroy Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda as they are the most prominent, icon of terrorism. The media argued that the U.S needed to seek revenge and this required a military retaliation. To some extent, the notion of retaliation implies a psychological condition of being in danger or anger. Public urged the authority to react as a proof of their power to combat the threat. Kellner (68-69) notices that the U.S. media during the time of crisis had led a superficial national debate which resulted in an improper response to the terrorist threat and a proliferation of war fever. The discussion was truly not a consumption of domestic society. National debates were broadcasted daily by global communication network and turned to be a consumption of international community. Therefore, the mass media not only facilitated a formulation of national public opinion of "Operation Enduring Freedom" but also assisted to construct a global agreement of global war on terror. The terrorist's goals, publicity and terror of fear, were achieved. The news media coverage and the accompanying mass-mediated debate triggered by the events of 9/11 was a direct result of terrorist action (Nacos 2003, 6).

Concluding Remarks

Does the 9/11 perpetration really have a contagion effect? The world witnessed mass-casualty oriented suicide bombings in other parts of the world in the following years after the attack of the World Trade Center in 2001. Those are: (a) the Bali Bombing I in Indonesia on October 12th 2002, (b) the JW Marriot Hotel Bombing in Jakarta on August 5th 2003, (c) the Madrid Public Train Bombing in 2004, (d) the Australian Embassy Bombing in Jakarta on September 9th 2004, (e) the London Underground Bombing on July 7th 2005, (f) the second London Bombing on July 21st 2005.

Anggraeni (2003, 196) argues that the First Bali Bombing had several characteristics differentiating it from other bombings in Indonesia in terms of following conditions: (a) political motive, (b) number of casualties, (c) horrific manner of the conduct, (d) tremendous damage of public building and infrastructure, (f) particular nationality of the fatality, (g) calculation of conduct or a planned action.

Most of the characteristics are attached to those atrocities, except the element of particular nationality. The actions, nevertheless, have one similarity that the incidents reflected a resistance of global impartiality carried out by the United States and the allies over Islamic society in several parts of the world.

A critique perhaps addresses to the possibility of contagion effect of the 9/11 to those incidents. Common opinions and some facts have addressed the substantial

role of Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, the world viewed the confession of Al-Qaeda regarding their responsibility over the conducts through global television networking. The global network of Al Qaeda has enabled its disperse cells to perpetrate independently. The organization, its institutional body is the reason of behind those subsequent perpetrations to challenge the idea of infectivity.

However, Burke (2004, 18) argues that Al-Qaeda is not a global terrorist organization but rather an ideology. Ressa (2003, 220) affirms that Al-Qaeda's ideology unites disparate Muslim groups, crossing national and ethnic lines. Ideology is the engine to imitate the terrorist performance. It is significantly more effective to influence other individuals or groups than institutional linkage. And when the scope of an ideology is more universal, such as Islamic Jihadism or Christian Fundamentalism, this driving force of perpetrating act can be stronger. The power of an ideology goes beyond the institutional membership of an organization, national boundaries and cultural identity.

The 9/11 case study has shown the significant role of global media in casting the terrorist and their political violence action as political entertainer of global event. It is accurate to cast the performative violence of terrorism as a political act since the terrorist violence has a potentiality of political communication. Finally, it is also reasonable that global media has expedited the transformation of terrorist's mass casualty violence acts, into political actions of other actors whether those are imitations or the contrary.

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