

Terrorism and the media term paper

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



“Terrorism” has no precise definition and this has created many controversies in the face of humanity. The United Nations General Assembly for example offered one definition of terrorism that has apparently been deemed workable for most purposes. Criminal acts aimed or calculated to irritate a situation of terror in the common public, a crowd or particular persons for political purposes. Whatever they are, the contemplations of a political, theoretical, ideological, ethnic, spiritual or other nature that may be invoked to substantiate their actions (Nacos 12).

Another definition used by the U. S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has been stipulated as follows: Terrorism is the illegal use of force or aggression against persons or property to threaten or pressurize a government, the civilian populace, or any section in advancing their political or social purposes. The above definitions hold for the various federations but both of them have come under criticism from various corners. For example, the use of the words ‘criminal’ and ‘unlawful’ makes them seem ambiguous to various applicants of the definitions.

It is still unclear which definition is to be used world over as various bodies have their own definitions that in a way seem to suit their own needs. This is further cemented by the fact that terrorism can take various forms: state terrorism that which is used against a state’s own people, state-sponsored terrorism that which is directed against the people of another state, and the insurgent terrorism, which is carried out by non-state entities.

With or without a universally accepted definition, terrorism is a monster that has been enormously fuelled by the freedom of press (Thistle 74). The mass media is the mother of all the terrorism that the world has been experiencing

since time immemorial. A big section of the world media is acting in a manner that enhances terrorism activities and mass killings more likely to happen rather than take the lead in curbing the vice that is threatening to wipe out every creature from the face of the earth. They knowingly but secretly enable and encourage the terrorists in their activities of murdering innocent people by actually providing and backing false stories in favor of the terrorists and their illegal activities.

Without any gain, the terrorists would not relent in their quest and hence end up shedding innocent blood for their quest to be heard and granted. This is true because the media gives undue attention to the activities of the terrorists. This can be further fuelled by the fact that the media can choose to concentrate on the plight of the terrorists and portray them as the ones whose cause is justified (Dettmer 47). This has detrimental effects, as they will carry on with their criminal and unlawful activities, which no matter their effects will look justifiable especially in the eyes of the public. This is so because it leads the government or the public to act in a certain way without necessarily taking the right cause of action. Therefore, the terrorists can utilize such a vital loophole to manipulate the media to their advantage and hence move on with their activities, which will obviously have adverse effects on the public.

On the other hand, the public derives its' understanding of the wider reality of what is happening around them beyond direct personal experience through the media. When the media say anything in a certain dimension the public generally assumes it is being honestly informed. In the case of terrorism, if the media gave any information, whether true or not, most of

the people will not question, as they will view the information in such a way that they are getting informed. This can lead to an exceptionally serious case of terrorism escalating, as the public can generally not question the authenticity of news from the media. The Internet and talk shows in radio often challenge the leading media.

However, not everyone has the time and willingness to be well informed and go beyond what the media presents to them on the many issues in search of truth and thus sort things out, especially when some section of the media also present conflicting views of reality. This kind of ignorance from the public has unusually serious effects because even when they are being preyed on they will not question a bit just because the media is always right and is giving them the information that they require. This has been witnessed in Lebanon where Hezbollah attack their own civilians and afterwards seek for sympathy from the press, which they generously get. They and the media as a result blame the Israel for deliberately attacking the civilians and as a result leads to endless wars between the two countries just because of a mere fact that the truth has been concealed from the eyes of the public. This has however made terrorism more efficient as the truth is not there and no one is willing to take responsibility to give the information, as it should be.

The media, especially the television, can manipulate the images they have so as to let the local citizen see only those images that are going to cause emotional disturbances to them and hence as a result bring about a public outcry in favor of the terrorists. This is so because the media can color and spin stories that favor their agenda. The printing press is also terribly much

vulnerable in this area as they can give an image of an individual and then just write a line under it that can trigger many tensions and hence lead to fueling of terrorist attacks. The statement could be a sentence or just a few words but their effects can be felt the world over.

The media can deliberately conceal some details in some episodes so that not to inform the public fully but to give bits of information so as the truth cannot be revealed and hence as a result manipulate the public or government into springing a certain cause of action that which is generally centered on their (terrorists') interests. This can in return escalate the massive killings of innocent people because the media acted in partiality. All this conflicts with honesty which is a core value in the mass media industry and thus as a results helps in propagation of terrorism attacks. This thus shows vividly how the media can fuel and bring about a large bloodshed by just an ordinary action of concealing some little truth or by just giving some inadequate information regarding a certain event or episode.

The ownership and control of media has significantly changed in the recent past. People with their own interests are venturing into the media fraternity in order to forge ahead with their plans, which are not necessarily virtuous ones. The people with the highest positions of power in the media industry are not the ones that are rightly qualified for the jobs but the ones that have exceedingly high degrees of command in the social or political circles and thus this makes the media particularly prone to manipulation even with people who have terrorism interests. This therefore makes the management to be highly partial in determining what is aired and what is not as their interests remain their biggest obligation in the media and not the general

role of informing the public. Adverse effects should always be expected in the cases of mass killings as people relay the information without fear through the media as it has a wide range of reception and influence on the people who are receiving the information. This actually makes terrorists more efficient in their work (Slone and Shoshani 440).

Therefore, it has been comfortably shown that the media plays a particularly significant role in terrorism and related eventualities. This is undoubtedly true because even if the government tries to intervene on the activities of the media by introducing things like press controls, the terrorists will be benefiting from the protection. Additionally, they can benefit from the services of the media and can plan a counter attack and thus lead to even worse effects of the terrorism because they will act in vengeance and anger (Barnet and Reynolds 123). This therefore predisposes all the media outlets to the mercies of the terrorists because they can be easily manipulated. The activities of most of these terrorists groups are known to be terribly heartless and extremely harsh hence the media houses have no option other than comply to their demands for fear of worse repercussions in case they did not cooperate.

Some of these terror groups even promise the media some kind of protection or even monetary gains when they cooperate. This acts kind of motivates the media in aiding the terrorists in their activities and thus leaves the public to bear the full weight of the attacks as they cannot do anything other than take what is brought outwards them as their influence is too little, if any. The public remains always at the mercies of both the terror gangs and the media for the latter have a lot of influence to the activities of each other.

The source of information for the media has a lot more than meets the eye into it. According to Centre of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism, Most of the leading media have an abnormal access to information regarding to some of those devilish mighty terror groups. These media have an irrevocable capability of getting this news, which they cannot accept to give to any other media house or any other form of government. This is because if it were to be known and their source exposed, they would lose a lot in terms of the following and also the terrorists might even decide to stage a counter attack that can be extremely dangerous to the media and the general public as well. This therefore calls for the media to be highly secretive in their dealings with the terrorists so as not to lose a vital source of information that which could see them miss various deals. The terrorists in return exploit this opportunity to their advantage and thus make the media their puppets and can thus manipulate them anyhow to their advantage. A relationship certainly does exist between the terrorists and the media where the two of them seem to benefit significantly. This however comes at a cost as the public suffers most from the attacks that the terrorists launch and from the misinformation by the media. It is evident that the media is not ready to accept the fact that they are helping the terrorists in their escapades and that the terrorists are not ready to accept that they cannot be effective as they have been without the support of the media (Alexander 101). The media generally has a way of ensuring that they strongly conceal what happens between them and these terror gangs. This has also been aggravated by the increased campaigns by the media for what they are calling democracy and media freedom. They are remarkably versatile in their

quest as anyone who brings anything like an idea to bring any form of control in the media is zealously brought down so as they can continue enjoying their freedom. They do not want to be asked questions like on where they get certain information. They just what to continue in their undertakings as private entities free from any form of control so that they can comfortably carry out their duties.

It is therefore correct to say that the media and the terrorists are in a form of symbiotic relationship and that they would not mind if it continued a little longer. The two obviously are in a dire need of each other and once they ensure that they have established strong links, nothing will make them part ways because they will be sure that their interests are well protected by each party. For the terrorists to more effective in what they do they need the complete support of the media and vice versa. It is however highly beneficial to come up with a strategic plan to counter these under cover dealings between the terrorists and the media so that the world can be a more peaceful place to live in with guaranteed security and the right to the correct and full information.

This therefore calls for a great campaign for the media to uphold the integrity and honesty in their dealings. After this is done, the terrorists will be left without any guaranteed support from the media and hence this will save the public from the continued butchering in the hands of the merciless terrorists (Hermant 31). This will in turn leave the target audience for the terrorists well informed and will thus not fall prey to their evil schemes and thus we will end up having a more secure world to live in.

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