



Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Ethics and Liberal Democracy

By Seumas Miller

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Undoubtedly, the events of September 11, 2001 served as a wake-up call to the scourge of global terrorism facing twenty-first century societies. But was the attack on the World Trade Center a crime or an act of war? Is seemingly indiscriminate violence inflicted on civilians ever morally justified? And should society's response always be in kind--with blind, destructive violence? For that matter, are all civilians truly "innocent"? The answers are not always so simple.

Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Ethics and Liberal Democracy provides sobering analyses of the nature of terrorism and the moral justification--or lack thereof--of terrorist actions and counter-terrorism measures in today's world. Utilizing a variety of thought-provoking philosophical arguments, the historic roots of terrorism and its contemporary incarnations are explored in depth. Detailed analyses of organizations such as the IRA, ANC, Hamas, and al-Qaeda will reveal the many faces of terrorism and its disparate motives and tactics. Early chapters on the Definition of Terrorism, and Is Terrorism ever Morally Justified? are balanced with discussions on Counter-terrorism Strategies and Methods and Moral Limits on Counter-terrorism to provide insights into the complexities and ethical dilemmas posed by terrorism in today's world.

Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism will greatly broaden our understanding of the nature and morality of terrorism and counter-terrorist pursuits--a crucial precondition for establishing any form of enduring peace between nations in the twenty-first century world.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Miller's approach is thematic, addressing questions of how to define terrorism, whether it can ever be justified, and, finally, whether terrorism should be fought through the police or the military, and whether to contemplate the use of interrogative torture. ...[H]is tone is...cautiously analytical throughout, eschewing any obvious sense of partisanship...[offering] a distinctive and important contribution to a range of debates on the ethics of terrorism and counterterrorism." (Christopher J. Finlay, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 24, no. 1, 2010).

"[Miller's] book is seminal in its suggestion of re-establishing the political role of philosophical reason for dealing with the problems of our age." (Mehmet Ruhi Demiray, *Political Studies Review*, 2011, vol. 9)

"Seumas Miller's book is entitled *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism* but it is much more than its title suggests. It is best described as an astute examination of the different types of 'unconventional political violence' that occur in our world. It provides useful discussions of political assassinations, targeted killings, torture, attacks on military personnel who do not perceive themselves to be at war, and more. Miller is especially concerned about the appropriate response to terrorism-whether it is fighting crime or engaging in war. He is also concerned with how liberal democracies can most effectively respond to terrorism without violating their most basic moral commitments. . . there is much in the book that can advance discussion of some of the most important issues facing Western liberal democracies." (*Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 12 May 2011)

"Seumas Miller has written a first-rate book. It is the only philosophical treatment of the ethics of terrorism that takes counter-terrorism seriously. Building on his extensive work in police ethics, Miller refocuses the debate about terrorism in light of the kind of procedures that police and the military employ to stop it. It greatly contributes to enlarging the growing debates about the appropriate moral response to terrorism.'—
Larry May, Washington University in St Louis

"Miller's book is a serious invitation to think again through complex issues, about whether terrorism is ever justifiable, about the "police" versus "war" paradigms of counter-terrorism, and about torture... In general, Miller's mode of argument is pleasingly generous, pointing out difficulties and counter-arguments along the way." *The Guardian*

From the Back Cover

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the IRA, the ANC, Hamas and Al-Qaeda will reveal the many faces of terrorism and its disparate motives and tactics. Discussion of the nature and scope of terrorism and whether it can ever be morally justified is balanced with analysis of counter-terrorism strategies and the methods and moral limits of counter-terrorism.

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About the Author

Seumas Miller is Professor of Philosophy at Charles Sturt University and the Australian National University (joint position) and Director, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (an Australian Research Council funded Special Research Centre). He has published *Police Ethics* (2006), *Corruption and Anti-Corruption* with P. Roberts and E. Spence (2005) and *Social Action* (2001).

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