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## ปริทัศน์หนังสือ (Book Review)

State Terror, State Violence:  
Global Perspective

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# State Terror, State Violence: Global Perspective

Yanuar Sumarlan

Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies,  
Mahidol University

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## Introduction

This book is written and done in 2016 or five year after the 9/11 attack and all the consequences that appear afterwards. Bettina Koch from the Political Science Department, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA believes that this is the time to stop all forms of the abstinenence known among political scientists from the concept of state in discussions on terrorism and violence.

Max Weber's old definition that "state as the only human community ... the monopoly on the use of legitimate physical force" has never been challenged seriously. Typically, the Geneva Convention and the UN's position to the legitimacy [of using force] is to look at the legitimacy as a problem of [International] Laws.

Political theorists, however, expand the question of [use of force] legitimacy as the questions of norms, social, and ethical. For instance, Hennis (*Politics and practical science*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2009) views that legitimacy rests with the people and not with the international community of states. This position leads to Waldron's view (*Torture, terror, and trade-offs: Philosophy for the White House*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) that "states can't be terrorist, but states can be terrorizers".

Although "state terrorism" is not acknowledged by International Law, but state terrorism may qualify as a social fact. In fact, some theorists have differentiated between terrorism (creation a sense of fear, usually by the use of symbolic acts of physical violence, to influence the political behavior of a given target group) and violence (illegitimate use of force against the rights of "Others").

Using the cases in this book, the author Koch reveals the similar strategies of state's legitimizing violence and/or the use of terrorist tactics. These strategies, however, have been proven to evade any solution to internal conflicts; it is not too far to suggest that "terrorist tactics triggers more violence instead of less" (Koch p. 9).

## Book Organization

The book is organized through the principle Basic/International Laws and the use of armed forces by states as an international legal framework followed by the examples of abuses of this legitimacy, i.e., terrorism rhetorics is used by state actors to establish control over citizens and space to operate. These examples are taken from the three different cases of State Violence in India, in Thailand, and

Egypt under Mubarak's Regime. The further examples for State's abuse of armed forces use are taken from the more historical Maoist China in the past and the post-Mao China. The interesting part of this Chapter on China is on explanation of the nature of the terror system that is defined by the unquestioned primacy of the communist party.

The interesting part of this Chapter on China is its author's analysis on the evolving Nature of the Chinese "terroristic" element in the system from a "revolutionary" (brutal) to a "governing" regime (less brutal) to adapt into a growingly complex society and growing economy. The last part of the book is filled by a two examples of under-researched issues: outsourcing violence and exporting violence. For the first example, Bilberman tells how the Russian government released an embezzler in 1999 to wrestle Chechnya's Grozny from the separatists' control. Earlier in 1991, separatists under Dudayev's leadership demanded Chechnya's independence from Russia and was responded with supply of armed forces by President Yeltsin. After 1999, Putin's iron-fist policy got a large support from Russian citizens after Russian cities were bombed by allegedly by the Chechen separatists. The example for "exporting" violence is given through the drones strikes by the US armed forces in the Middle East and South Asian countries.

## Evaluation

This book is a good reminder that the real damages inflicted to the social and political settings all over the places where the state terror and violence takes place are no longer sufficient to be taken care of through social and political analyses. While human rights advocates and others have been clamoring for a more serious discussion on the

fate of the victims of state (either foreign or local) terror and violence by the name of “state security” or any other labels, the legal counterparts among the advocates, experts and academics have been lagging behind.

The book offers a different way to look at what most states have been trying to do in the name of, just to name a few, “state security”, “security and order”, “legal enforcement”, etc that have been launched most of the time through rush and undemocratic decisions.

The follow-up for the political way out to reduce the malevolent effects of state terror and violence, however, are most of the time highly dependent on the rather universal political decision making procedures through elections, representation, majority rules, state authority, etc. These procedures are very unlikely to be falling within the reach of the politically and, thus, economically poorest of the poor. For this limitation, this book has rarely revealed any bright and hopeful ways out.

