

Blackwell Public Philosophy Series

Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Ethics and Liberal Democracy

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Discussion Questions

- Is the definition of terrorism in terms of violent attacks on non-combatants the same as that in terms of violent attacks on the innocent? If not, what is the difference? What are the main objections to these definitions?
- Are non-combatants, such as bureaucrats, ever morally responsible for human rights violations? If so, are such non-combatants morally legitimate targets of groups attempting to bring about the cessation of these rights violations?
- Should terrorism be regarded as an ordinary crime or as acts of war? What are the ethical implications for counter-terrorist strategies of choosing the terrorism as war framework as opposed to the terrorism as crime framework?
- What are the in-principle limits, if any, that a liberal democracy ought to place on police powers to combat terrorism? Is preventative detention of terrorists morally justifiable; if so, under what circumstances?
- Are targeted killings of terrorists morally justifiable? If so, under what circumstances?
- Is it morally permissible to ambush and kill terrorists, in the manner that a military force might ambush and kill enemy soldiers? If so, under what circumstances?
- Is it ever morally permissible to torture a terrorist? Could it ever be morally permissible to legalise torture?
- Does the threat of bio-terrorism justify censorship of some scientific work in the biological sciences?