

CHAPTER III

SINGAPORE DILEMMA IN COMBATING TERRORISM

Having various strategies to defeat terrorism that are available to be implemented, it now inflicts a serious dilemmatic question faced by several countries including Singapore like how one approach could fit in the existence of internal and external security, also how it could adjust between international and domestic jurisdiction and consider the actors, whether both state and nonstate actors (Crelinsten, 2009). Thus, it now makes Singapore face some dilemma in here, a new complexity of security environment.

Some scholars define terrorism as a war or a crime, a conflict or a violence, a propaganda or a direct action, and also could be a state violence or insurgent violence, Terrorism is the activities between these concerns (Crelinsten, 2009). Therefore, building a perfect framework to address terrorism as a whole is an effort that still becomes a challenge in today's security concern.

However, there has been 2 main approaches which also raise a lot of pros and cons. They are repressive and persuasive approaches. These approaches, however, are questionable, whether repressive approach is acceptable and or persuasive approach is sufficient to address the problem of terrorism which is a very difficult to be done.

A. Repressive Countermeasures

Repressive countermeasures or coercive counterterrorism is the use of violence in its process, for example, the execution of hard power. This

countermeasures include two major models, they are criminal justice model and the war model (Crelinsten, 2009).

Criminal Justice Model is an approach targeting the terrorism as a crime; all kind of terrorism which violates the criminal law on the state, for instances armed attacks, assassination, bombing, or kidnapping. By using this approach, state is expected that it could eliminate the terrorism development by using such as retribution, deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation, also in term of education (Crelinsten, n.d).

While for the War Model, terrorism has been regarded as a major threat as it shares the same threats between a state. Thus, it considers terrorism as an act insurgency or a war. This model expects to be ideal for a new kind of security environment implemented by decentralized and terrorist networks that based on ideology that is not determined by the traditional criminal justice. Additionally, it is considered quick and effective because this measure uses the cutting edge science and technology (Crelinsten, n.d).

However, repressive approach is considered costly because in implementing the strategies, the state needs a variety of sophisticated weaponry that could work faster and effective like stated previously. These sophisticated tools could be such as satellite imagery, spy drones, smart bombs, facial recognition, other biometrics, missile technology and remote sensing. Such tools require a little more funding but they are capable to make the state to track any person, watch, listen and record every single move of the suspect quickly and appropriately. Thus, action taken will be well guided (Crelinsten, n.d).

Nevertheless, this approach has some weaknesses too. Experts in terrorism issue stating that this approach is ineffective. They say that it provokes a greater action for the terrorist groups. Even, the terrorist groups deliberately provoke the state to perform an act of repression to them in order to gain more support and invite more people to join their organization. Other than that, government which uses this approach could allegedly abuse the original purpose of this approach. The power that they have could be turned out to againsts those who are not terrorist, such as state opposition, individuals, groups and others who considered posing a threats (Martin, n.d) especially when it is about those terrorists in democratic countries. Democratic countries will face a lot of criticism if they choose this approach as their counterterrorism because rights and liberties are well accepted in democracies. So, if the government responds those terrorist groups by detaining without charge, or assisanted the suspect, violate the human rights, it will likely contradict the values of democracy. As happens in Italy, Germany, Israel and Northern Ireland, repressive measures increases the support to the terrorist groups, leads to radical people, and it is counterproductive. Consequently, legitimacy needs to be considered because repressive action affects the duration and mobilization of the groups (Daxecker and Hess, n.d).

Also, repressive action done by state agents such as the police and the military could violate the domestic law and international law. Moreover, it could cause unintended consequences to widen the excersise of violence. Not only that, in the purpose to counter terrorism, the legal system and security forces are suspected to do this approach for the interest of particular rulling group, which could lead to

people's reluctance to participate. Furthermore, it is harmful for the legitimacy that belongs to the government that owns it, and push that government to become a state which has anti-democratic governance.

B. Persuasive countermeasures

Persuasive countermeasures believe that terrorists are communicatives. They are good to provoke their ideology and spreading hates among each other. Thus, this approach assures that terrorist activity could be eliminated by means of communication by communicating to the variety of audiences using a message that they could understand, in purpose to break the aim of terrorist in blinding the citizen and recruits them. Therefore, all layers of society, from citizens to media and policy elites could agree that terrorist is an alert and can not be ignored and certainly not a best pathways and be an option.

This measure reminds important because the existence of well-known terrorism could impact to a massive destruction and kill a large victim and still faces a small support and not considered as not an urgent problem (Crelinsten, n.d) because non-state actors such as common people are indifferent to this problem, and somehow do not understand how to help the government to fight againts this issue.

Therefore, the purpose of this approach is to make any individuals to understand the term of terrorism itself and also to involve them in the countering process in order to make them learn and also to secure themselves. Hence, ideology, social, political, religious and cultural aspects are important to be included in countering terrorism, because in this behalf, these aspects play a

crucial part of a nation. Furthermore, this counterterrorism approach works within the social and political term.

Furthermore, this approach introduces the communication model involving a complex measures containing different kind of messages to a diverse community, a communicative pathways acceptable in public. Not only that, by using this model, government also intends to approach the members of the terrorist groups, the supporters and sympathizers. Helping them to think that their activity is counterproductive and cause more losses than gaining their goals. Moreover, the government could join them and ensure that state can make a good cooperation to help them in obtaining their goals in a more humane way.

Compared to repressive approach, persuasive measures more likely less require substantial funds, because this approach uses the existing and available tools without having to add any other tools that are not in accordance with the state ideology. They are by economy and political term stated previously which are not seperated from other imporant aspects, such as religions and cultural aspects based on what the state has.

However, as does repressive countermeasures, this approach also has some weaknesses especially for countries that still need to improve their economic and political affairs which at the same time is required to maintain their security. They are deemed not ready but should be ready with the situation as it is now, for instance is the economic problem. Terrorist group usually utilizes human resources to be part of them or sympathizers or recruits them to be used as suicide bombers. By the weakness of a country's economy and unemployment, other

issues such as corruption can trigger this activity in a wider chances. They could instigate and persuade the poor and weak individuals with money and hatred to certain apparatus to urge them to struggle together to achieve their goals for example creating a state which in accordance with their understanding.

In addition, not only require human resources, terrorist groups certainly need substantial funds because they need to buy weapons, explosive materials for the bombs, other destruction tools, also to maintain their lives. The funding they need is usually obtained by prostitution, money laundering, smuggling, corruption, and etc. Therefore, government and the responsible actors are charged to be capable on discovering the causes of their success to fund themselves, by detecting those actions that are difficult to be traced (Amirulhaq, 2011).

In consequence, government also has to provide a sophisticated technology because seeing that terrorist nowadays are more intelligence, reliable, and one step ahead the government regarding their cutting edge technology. Additionally, they are able to recruit intelligence people, biological and even experts in constitutional. For this reason, government is expected not to lose out in the aspect of technology. So, if a country is still unable to advance these aspects, then any measure that they attempt will not run optimally.

Another concern comes from political affairs. A state has to maintain their duties firmly. The government feares of not being able to stabilize the situation inside the country when there is a political problem both within and outside the country. By the weakness of the political system, it could become a good driveways to help the terrorists carrying out their mission (Amirulhaq, 2011).

Despite all of the side affects, all the actors are expected to cooperate in the fight against this threat. These are incorporated with the state actors such as government ministries, bureaucracies and agencies, including their allies, also, non-state actors such as citizens, the media and the public both domestic and international. It Includes the industries and private companies which covers employers and employees (Amirulhaq, 2011). By coordinating with these various agencies, fighting againts terrorist is not only expected to deminish them until its roots but also, in this approach, the government could learn and understand how their society that consists of various audience communicate within their community. Thus, fighting againts terrorism can make other aspects more advanced. These two approaches can be summarized through the table below.

Table 3.1 Hard Approach

| Repressive Countermeasures | Time | Space |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Criminal Justice Model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive policing • Criminal intelligence • Anti-terrorism legislation • Peacekeeping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrest and detention • Prosecution and trial punishment • Extradition • Internal law and policing |
| War Model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military exercises • Military occupation • Counterinsurgency training • Peacemaking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaliatory strikes • Military invasion • Gunboat diplomacy • Economic blockades |

(Crelinsten, 2009)

Above are elements divided by Ronald Crelinsten describing both hard approach and soft approach. In the Table 3.1, the table elaborates the criminal justice model and war model as hard approach, in which each of the model is described by Crelinsten based on the spaces and the impact in certain range of time. Meanwhile Table 3.2 below elaborates the soft approach with economic and political means, which Crelinsten also classifies each mean by the space to do it and the result by using this approach in certain range of time.

Table 3.2 Soft Approach

(Crelinsten, 2009)

| Persuasive Countermeasures | Time | Space |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth • Liberalization • Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Trade • Aid • employment |
| Politic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture, ethnicity, religion, identity • Diasporas, refugees, immigrants • Amnesties • Negotiations • reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psyops • Education • Countering radicalization • Community policing • Democratization |

(Crelinsten, 2009)

C. Singapore decision to choose repressive decision

Some ideas and approaches have been introduced and now it is the part where a country is able to consider and choose effective ways to help them coping this global problem. From two explanations above, there have been 2 spesific different ways of how a country could conduct its counterterrorism. Judging from the way in which both approach that are implemented also the actors, the side effect, repressive approach is prefered.

Indeed, basically the side affect of persuasive approach more likely shares a lot of weaknesses. However, repressive approach is considered capable to cause a great lose and a bigger mess because it cannot be denied that the problem of

terrorism is a sensitive issue: a matter of religion. So, when handling this problem, all the actors are forced to carry it out in a full circumspection. It is even more important especially when it is carried out by security forces like police and military; if counterterrorism is done and violates the other national interest, it could lead a mutual suspicion among the public and especially against the government.

Repressive approach is indeed capable to detect terrorist activity and make the approach quickly responds, thereby it prevents the threats before it happens. The actors are required to act professionally and proportionally. However, most of them fail to carry out this mission proportionally. There are always imbalance between the rule of law and the human rights, in which, these two factors appointed to work in one board: counterterrorism (United Nation, n.d). That is why, this approach will always have pros and cons opinion from domestic or international public.

Experts of terrorist issue argue that terrorism phenomenon cannot only involve security forces, such as police and military. Public involvement is also an important cultural approach. The need of public awareness is crucial so they will not be indifferent and understand what is the problem, how crucial it is, and how to tackle this issue and secure themselves, such as how persuasive approaches implemented. All aspects should concern on social issue like poverty, poor education, race issue and etc. Certainly, terrorism phenomenon share a false religious understanding, and can not be dealt by a means of militarism because militarism cannot touch the roots of the problem which is an understanding within

the community. Thus, the use of coercion or violence is not one of the best ways even cause many human rights violation.

Analysts of terrorism agree that an effective way to handle this threats is by advancing the public understanding without apathy, causing hates and no tolerance, without sacrificing their rights for the sake of security (Crelinsten, n.d). A counterterrorism shall be an action that fight againts false understanding, able to clear the misunderstading and attrack the public mindset not to support the terrorist ideology.

When economic inequality, injustice, poor political affairs multiply in a country, it is where a state is in a weak condition and easily made way for terrorism. So, it can be said that this problem should not be solved using weapons or violence. Government is responsible to carry out this problem by a means that more tight, that address as a common and comprehensive action within all important aspects in a country and is acceptable by the citizen, not much to cause damage, riots but still require more effort. Then, it could be more productive, and efficient (Kurnianto, 2017).

By means of communication it is expected that the approach will work to its roots. It is able to make government discuss with the terrorist group or suspects, to make government understands the reason behind their motivation and anyone involved in their networks. Once, it is done by coercion measures. Those purposes are unlikely to happen and it makes government to continue to worry who are they, where their base is and what planned mission they will do (Niam, 2011).

However, by the amount of support for persuasive measures. Singapore instead chooses the contradicting decision. By the existence of ISA, Singapore obviously supports the use of violence in terms of counter terrorism. ISA itself is known to allow the government to detain a person without trial. Thus, it could be categorized as coercive counter-terrorisim. That is why there has been a pro and cons about whether ISA is still relevant and that it has also been requested to be replaced.

Human Rights defender keep alluding that this law is unnecessary and should be replaced with a better law because it can not be denied that detention without trial is like Internal Security Act provoking a serious violation to its liberties. Thus, this cause to retivied Internal Security Act entirely with some more humane laws for example, one law that has been established by the Penal Code and The Terrorism Act (Suppression of Bombings) (Lee, 2012). Also, the reason why the contra sides mark out Singapore regarding this Internal Security Act is first, although some evidence are well collected for a person by their indication to terrorist activity, it is not enough to let him to be put on detention without the trial. Secondly, it is also harmful not only for their material but also psychological reason because the criminal proceedings could lead to the stigma among the community to the accused (Lee, 2012).

The question is, why a country such as Singapore prefers to choose coercive measures while persuasive approach is more acceptable. In fact, a country that does not need to worry about their economic and political affairs because it is well developed like Singapore decides to use repressive approach, and considers it is

necessary. While, this country that consists of diverse community and variety religions, does not worry that their decision will affect a sensitive response.

Therefore, there is no certainty whether ISA will be reified or even abolished. It will require considerable discussion because it shall be composed from a respected and fair laws to the human rights, a carefully balanced interest of national security and no exception, and the criminal code which in accordance with international standards that have been defined.

