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### **Key words**

state terrorism, neoliberalism, human rights law, counterinsurgency, torture

### **Abstract**

States use terror to achieve political ends, by employing violence to ensure compliance and to coerce populations away from dissent. Moreover, despite popular understandings of terrorism as a 'strategy of the weak' used against liberal democracies, an examination of the history of Western foreign policy shows that democracies have often returned to the use of state terror in order to cement their regional or global dominance. This chapter explores the use of state terror by the West, and seeks to provide an understanding of its underlying purposes. We argue that Western state terror is one of a number of coercive tools used to secure and maintain access to resources and markets, whether in colonial times, during periods of imperial decline, or as an adjunct to the more recent roll-out of neoliberal forms of globalisation.

### **Introduction**

Throughout history, a significant proportion of state violence has been used to coerce populations into complying with the agendas of political and economic elites, by using such violence to instil fear in an audience beyond the direct victim. State violence of this kind is intended to achieve certain political objectives, particularly curtailing political dissent. This is state terrorism. As we have argued elsewhere (Blakeley 2009a; Raphael 2009b), the academic literature on terrorism pays relatively little attention to terrorism perpetrated by states. This is the case even though state terrorism results in far more deaths than non-state terrorism does: an estimated 170-200 million deaths were caused by state-instigated mass murder, forcible starvations and genocide in the twentieth century (Rummel 2011), while in the last two decades of the twentieth century alone 300,000 people were 'disappeared' by state agents worldwide (Sluka 2000).

Where state terrorism is discussed, the focus tends to be on totalitarian regimes, with far less attention paid to the use of state terrorism by now liberal democratic states. Certainly the regimes of Stalin, Hitler and Pol Pot were responsible for state violence on an industrial scale, perpetrating genocide but also terrorising populations into submission to the regime. Yet European colonial powers also used terrorism widely to establish and maintain their empires, and to try to thwart independence movements in their colonies. The allies during World War II bombed civilians in German cities to try and incite the public to turn against Hitler. The Latin American national security states during the Cold War, with significant support from the US, also deployed violence, including disappearances and torture, to try and curtail support for political movements that would threaten US and local elite interests. Liberal democratic states have continued to use and sponsor terrorism during the last two decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century as part of a process of guaranteeing access to resources and markets across the globe. As we show in Chapter 19 of this volume, US and allied-sponsored state terrorism has been used in particular against many suspects in the 'War on Terror'.

A handful of scholars have undertaken excellent work which examines state terrorism by powerful liberal democratic states. The emphasis has been predominantly US or Western state-sponsored terrorism during the Cold War (Chomsky and Herman 1979a, 1979b; Gareau 2004; George 1991b; Herman 1985). Chomsky and Herman paved the way in developing an argument that US support for and use of state terrorism during the Cold War was part of a process of organising under US sponsorship 'a neo-colonial system of client states ruled mainly by terror and serving the interests of a small local and foreign business and military elite' (Chomsky and Herman 1979b: ix). Their work provided a fine framework for this type of analysis. Curtis (Curtis 2003) and Cobain (Cobain 2013) have followed up with contributions that have similarly documented the use of terror as a central component of UK foreign policy during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, while Stokes (Stokes 2005) has examined how state terrorism has been hardwired into US counterinsurgency doctrine for decades.

Our own work has further developed such analyses along these lines. Blakeley (2009b) has provided a comprehensive update of Chomsky and Herman's earlier work, by tracing the historical use of state terrorism as part of the European, and then American imperial projects. In particular, she argues that state terrorism has been central to processes of neoliberalisation, documenting how efforts to roll out neoliberalism across the globe have often been accompanied by considerable violence and terrorism by states and state-sponsored paramilitaries. At the core of this neo-imperial project by leading capitalist states is an objective to secure unfettered access to key markets, as well as strategic resources such as oil. In this light, Stokes and Raphael (2010) have documented the use of US-sponsored state terror within oil-rich regions specifically to 'armour' processes of neoliberal globalisation, to insulate local elites from popular discontent, and to stabilise the production of oil that underpins American hegemony. In a further update to critical work published during the Cold War (George 1991a; Herman and O'Sullivan 1989), Raphael (2009b) has also explored the role that terrorism experts, including in the academy, have played in diverting attention from US and allied use and sponsorship of state terrorism.

Our work seeks not only to provide an empirical account of the use of state terror by Western states; it also aims to situate this longstanding practice within an explanatory framework which emphasises the economic interests of the ruling capitalist class. Such an understanding is the subject of considerable debate, and has led a number of critical scholars to further explore the interrelation between state power, capitalist elite interest and the use of disciplinary terrorist violence 'from above'. Some of these scholars have made significant theoretical contributions to the debate (e.g. Herring and Stokes 2011; Jarvis and Lister 2014; Joseph 2011; McKeown 2011), whilst others have offered detailed empirical analyses of particular cases of state terrorism in the name of neoliberalism (Maher and Thomson 2011; Raphael 2009a). Together, these works are beginning to address the substantial gap in the literature by bringing the inconvenient truth of the use of terrorism by powerful democratic states to the fore.

Our aim in this chapter is outline our understanding of the nature and purposes of Western state terrorism. With reference to specific examples, we show that state terrorism involves the illegal use of force against persons that the state has a duty to protect. The purpose of this violence is not simply to cause harm, but to send a message to a wider target audience. We then offer an account of the historical uses and underlying purpose of Western state terrorism. State terrorism in the contemporary era is not simply an instrument used to curtail political dissent by repressive regimes. It is also one of a number of coercive tools that have been used by powerful states as part of a process of securing and maintaining access to resources and markets.

## The Nature of State Terrorism

State terrorism is no different from non-state terrorism in terms of its constituent features. Common to most definitions of terrorism are three key elements. First, it involves threatened or perpetrated violence directed at some 'protected victim'. Second, the violent actor intends the violence to induce terror in some witness who is generally distinct from the victim. Third, the violent actor intends or expects that the terrorised witness to the violence will alter their behaviour in some way (Walter 1969). The only difference between terrorism by state and non-state actors is the agent perpetrating the act. Therefore, for an act to constitute state terrorism, a fourth element is present: the act is perpetrated by agents on behalf of or in conjunction with the state, including paramilitary and private security agents, against individuals that the state has a duty to protect.

It is worth noting that the use of paramilitaries and private security forces is a strategy which has often been employed by states wishing to hide their hand in the violence. The use of paramilitaries can also increase the degree of terror experienced by target audiences, beyond that resulting from military violence. As Michael Stohl (Stohl 2006: 10) points out, fear is maximised through the use of 'notoriously vicious vigilante groups who are widely recognised in society to act as agents of the state but who are not "legally" constrained in ways that official organs might be felt to be'. Specifically:

Such extensive use of groups who appear to be virtually 'uncontrolled' and who are notoriously unrestrained in their use of vicious methods is not a strategy designed primarily to effectuate the physical elimination of the adversary; that can be accomplished easily by efficient, technologically- sophisticated police organs. Rather, it is a strategy designed primarily to induce extreme fear in a target population. It is a strategy of terrorism and is understood as such by the populations of targeted societies.

Whether state terrorism is conducted by official state agents or affiliated paramilitary groups, the target audience is central. While states often go to great lengths to conceal their complicity in terrorism against their own or an external population, there is nevertheless always an audience for these acts. For example, while occasionally an individual may be tortured in complete secret, this is only rarely the case. Rather, torture is intended to send a message to a much wider population about the risks individuals face if they are not compliant with the wishes of the regime. Populations governed by torturing regimes often know where the torture chambers are, who the torturers are, and what types of activities (such as political organising) must be avoided in order to stay safe. Torture was used to send a message to a wider audience in this way by the Guatemalan state during the counterinsurgency war of the 1970s and 1980s, during which time newspapers were permitted to publish photographs of dead torture victims:

Guatemalan counterinsurgency operations in the early 1980s ... included the terrorisation of targeted rural populations in an effort to ensure that they did not provide support for guerrillas. Tortured, dying villagers were displayed to relatives and neighbours who were prevented from helping them. Newspapers in urban areas during this period were allowed to publish photographs of mutilated bodies, ostensibly as an aid to families seeking their missing relatives, but also as a warning to all citizens not to oppose the government (AI 1976).

Overall, state terrorism takes on two forms. The first involves small-scale operations aimed at specific targets, which we refer to as limited state terrorism. This includes one-off events and small-scale terror directed at one group or sector or a series of small operations. For example, assassination attempts may be made on leading political figures, particularly opposition leaders or, in the case of international state terrorism, against the leaders of other states. In such cases, the target audience are the allies of those political leaders who are being warned of the risks of their continued political opposition and activities. Examples of this include the initial use of

disappearances, illegal and arbitrary detentions and torture by the Latin American national security states during the Cold War. In states such as Chile under Pinochet, and Argentina under the military junta, initially specific political opponents, critical journalists, and trade union leaders were disappeared, with their bodies never returned. The specific aim was to instil fear among groups that were critical of the regime. But these acts were not simply carried out within the state. In some cases, those states were able to target citizens who were in exile overseas. This occurred through programmes such as Operation Condor, in which the intelligence agencies of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile all collaborated in the interdiction, detention, torture and sometimes assassination of individuals from one of the other partner states living abroad in one of the other partner states (Dinges 2004; McSherry 2002). Likewise, the many assassination attempts made by the CIA against the Cuban leader Fidel Castro can be considered 'limited state terrorism' (McClintock 1992, Chapter 5).

The second form of state terrorism is that which is intended to instil fear among large sections of the population. This might be termed generalised, governance or wholesale state terrorism, referring to its use as a tool for controlling entire populations, or during war. Examples include aerial bombardments, and mass detention, interrogation and torture. Specific programmes have been implemented for these purposes by states in the past. Military planners argue that aerial bombardment is aimed at attacking strategically significant targets. This can include the targeting of the civilian population with the intention of terrorising the population to provoke a political response. In 1942, Directive 22, issued to the British Bomber Command, called for the deliberate targeting of residential neighbourhoods in Dresden. The designated targets were 'the morale of the enemy and civilian population, in particular industrial workers' and the points to be aimed at were 'built-up areas, not for instances, the dockyards or aircraft factories' (Grosscup 2006: 64). 'Bomber' Harris was clear in his memoirs of his conviction that 'air power alone could win the war if the RAF were allowed to bomb the working class into open revolt against the Nazis' (Grosscup 2006: 65).

It is worth noting that campaigns of limited state terrorism often broaden to more generalised efforts to terrorise entire populations. Indeed, as Amnesty International (2006) noted, of all the decades they have researched torture, they have found that it always expands from a few targeted individuals aimed at intimidating the immediate circle of that group, to a much more widespread and indiscriminate policy involving disappearances and extrajudicial executions not simply of supposed political opponents, but anyone assumed to have even loose associations with them. In the case of Chile, over 2000 people were killed or disappeared in the years following the 1973 coup, according to the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (CNCTR 1991). In the case of Argentina, some 10,000 disappearances were documented by the US Embassy in the first three years of the dictatorship alone (Embassy 1979).

Whether state terrorism involves acts limited to a small number of victims and a limited audience, or whether it is targeted at a much wider section of the population, the methods used always involve the deliberate targeting of persons protected by international law. Such methods include kidnap, disappearances, arbitrary or secret detentions, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, assassinations, and mass murder. All of these acts are prohibited under international law, both in peacetime under International Human Rights Law (IHRL), for example the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), or during war under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), specifically the Geneva Conventions. Even combatants are protected: while it is legitimate to target armed enemy combatants directly participating in hostilities, assassination, torture, rape and other inhumane treatment is always prohibited.

We will now provide a brief account of the history of, and purposes of, Western state terrorism. Our focus is specifically on the functionality of state terror for the imperial projects of powerful

states, undertaken in collaboration with co-opted local elites in regions considered by Western planners to be strategically important.

### Understanding Western State Terrorism

As outlined in our introduction, state terrorism has been widely used by repressive regimes as a tool to curtail political opposition. Rarely acknowledged and far less well understood is the use of terrorism by states now considered to be world leaders in terms of their democratic and human rights credentials, both in the past and currently. Our main argument here is that the use of terrorism by these states is best understood in relation to their broader foreign policy objectives. Following a historical materialist tradition (for an excellent overview, see Herring 2010), we argue that there is an important continuity in the foreign policies of now powerful liberal democratic states that can be traced back to the European colonial era. Specifically, there has been a consistent drive by these states to ensure access to and dominance of resources in states in the South. Where necessary, coercion, including state terrorism, has underpinned efforts to achieve these goals, especially where more consensual means of achieving them are deemed likely to fail. To elaborate on our argument, we trace this continuity in the foreign policy objectives of the European colonial era up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We offer several illustrative examples of how these policies played out in practice, but these are indicative rather than exhaustive (for a much more comprehensive account, see Blakeley 2009b).

Coercion dominated the colonial practices of the European powers, both during the process of colonisation and as part of efforts to maintain control over conquered territories, as well as early American imperialism (for detailed accounts, see Arendt 1966; Beckett 2001; Elkins 2005; Fanon [1961] 1967). Empire as practised by the European post-feudal state was aimed at dominating trade, extracting resources, through exploitation of indigenous labour, and in some cases, through shipping slave labour from one conquered territory to another region of the empire. The colonisers often terrorised the indigenous populations to achieve their goals. For example, the colonisation of Brazil by Portugal involved the genocide of 2 million indigenous people (80% of the population), while in territories occupied by the Spanish an initial wave of extreme violence was meted out against the indigenous people that refused to hand over foodstuffs. This violence had a deliberate terrorising effect, with surrounding populations witnessing the violence and being terrorised into supplying resources lest they meet the same fate (Bethell 1984: 8-10). The British, Belgians, Germans and French were involved in very similar practices in their own colonies in the 1800s, relying on terror to achieve their objectives. (Killingray 1973, 1986; Porter 1968; Suret-Canale 1971 [1964]). In numerous African colonies, for example, houses and even whole villages would be razed to the ground if labour and taxes were insufficiently forthcoming, or if resistance emerged (Bush and Maltby 2004). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, British powers proved willing to have the same effect using aerial bombing campaigns. In response to a rebellion in Iraq in 1920, 4,008 missions were flown to drop 97 tonnes of bombs on the supposed rebels, referred to as night 'terror' raids, with one official writing that it should be 'relentless and unremitting and carried on continuously by day and night, on houses, inhabitant, crops and cattle' (Glancey 2003).

In the postwar era, several European powers used widespread state terrorism in an attempt to resist movements for national independence in their surviving colonies. Indiscriminate detention and torture was used on a massive scale in British-ruled Kenya in the 1950s, and in French Algeria during the war of the 1960s (Blakeley 2009b: 84-85). To illustrate with the case of Kenya, in 1952 the British declared a state of emergency in Kenya in response to the rebellion of the Mau Mau movement. The Mau Mau largely comprised Kikuyu people, the poorest and most exploited group under British rule. Independence was not secured until 1963, and for a ten year period, mainly Kikuyu were subjected to extreme violence, mass incarceration and torture. Official figures of the numbers detained are around 78,000. However, research

involving detailed analysis of the now declassified documents suggest the figure to be at least two, and more likely four times higher (Beckett 2001: 125; Elkins 2005: xi). As Elkins shows, many of those detained had not only had their livestock seized and been forced into slave labour, but they were also subject to torture, including simulated drowning, food and water deprivations, and beatings as well as threats of further violence. She also found many that women were living under siege and were subjected to violence and rape (Elkins 2005: 214, 33-74, 327-8).

As European powers were declining through the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the US was on the rise. It had already shown its hand in the 1901-02 war aimed at bringing the Philippines under US control; a war that saw US forces engage in the use of torture, rape, shootings, hangings and the systematic burning of homes and villages, all aimed at quelling support for the insurgency (Welch 1974). This was just a glimpse of methods that would be used to further US interests and entrench the US as a global hegemon by the latter half of the twentieth century. Throughout the Cold War, US intervention around the world was publically justified as necessary to contain communism. Yet our analysis shows that there was frequently an underlying material imperative, with coercive interventions aimed at shoring up an emerging US-led global order: one based on universal free trade underpinned by American strategic primacy (see, for example, Layne 2006; Williams 1988). Officials explicitly pointed to the economic threats posed to the US when leftwing governments were elected, and frequently stated that interventions to support repressive regimes would serve US capitalist interests.

This was the case in Guatemala in 1954, where the CIA was involved in the coup which ousted the Arbenz government after its economic reform agenda included the expropriation of lands previously occupied by the US-based United Fruit Company. Similarly, declassified memos relating to the military coup in Chile show that the CIA was complicit in its organisation, and that the US state continued to support the ensuing campaign of state terror. This campaign took place alongside a period of intense neoliberal economic restructuring which directly served US interests. Indeed, the threat to US investments posed by Allende's relatively mild economic reforms was a key driver for overthrowing his government, as outlined in a memo from Henry Kissinger to President Nixon:

The consolidation of Allende in power in Chile would pose some very serious threats to our interests and position in the hemisphere, and would affect developments and our relations to them elsewhere in the world: US investments (totalling some one billion dollars) may be lost.... Chile would probably become a leader of the opposition to us in the inter-American system, a source of disruption in the hemisphere and a focal point of support for subversion in the rest of Latin America' (Kissinger 1970).

Counterinsurgency (CI) campaigns undertaken by local military and paramilitary groups with generous support from Washington have been a hallmark of US sponsorship of state terrorism throughout the postwar era. US security assistance to its allies in unstable regions has aimed to reorientate security forces away from external defence and towards internal security, policing their own populations in order to combat signs of political unrest or subversion. CI forms a bedrock of US assistance, with tens of thousands of officers from foreign security forces receiving training throughout the Cold War and beyond (Blakeley 2006; Priest 1998; Shafer 1989). US training in counterinsurgency focuses not only on defeating armed groups, but also on controlling the populations within which they move, and policing those populations for signs of 'subversive' activity. As one Cold War training manual published by the US Army made clear, so-called 'Insurgent Activity Indicators' include the operation of political organisations that push for 'immediate social, political or economic reform'. In particular CI forces need to be on the lookout for:

Refusal of peasants to pay rent, taxes, or loan payments or unusual difficulty in their collection. Increase in the number of entertainers with a political message. Discrediting the judicial system and police organizations. Characterization of the armed forces as the enemy of the people. Appearance of questionable doctrine in the educational system. Appearance of many new members in established organizations such as labour organizations. Increased unrest among labourers. Increased student activity against the government and its police, or against minority groups, foreigners and the like. An increased number of articles or advertisements in newspapers criticizing the government. Strikes or work stoppages called to protest government actions. Increase of petitions demanding government redress of grievances. Proliferation of slogans pinpointing specific grievances. Initiation of letter-writing campaigns to newspapers and government officials deploring undesirable conditions and blaming individuals in power. (DoD 1970)

A politicised civil society was characterised as a threat to stability, and therefore as a legitimate target of CI campaigns (Stokes and Raphael 2010: 64-72). In US terms, 'psychological operations' ('psyops') are seen to be a central plank of this effort, targeting the 'local civilian population', including the deployment of programmes 'designed to instil doubt and fear.' However, if psyops fail, 'it may become necessary to take more aggressive action in the form of harsh treatment or even abductions. The abduction and harsh treatment of key enemy civilians can weaken the collaborators' belief in the strength and power of their military forces.' (DoD 1962).

An important example of counterinsurgency campaigns as state terrorism is Operation Phoenix, a CIA-led programme established in Vietnam aimed at improving intelligence with a view to wiping out the Vietcong infrastructure and leadership. In reality, it involved the widespread use of torture and killings intended to instil fear in citizens suspected of supporting the insurgency. Under Phoenix, the torture was brutal, as Douglas Valentine has documented, with the use of rape, electric shock torture, and other forms of torture and violence (Valentine 2000: 85). Numbers of those killed as part of the Phoenix programme according to the CIA are some 20,000. The South Vietnam government placed the number at over 40,000 (Blum 2003: 131; Chomsky and Herman 1979b: 324).

The Phoenix programme was an important precursor to the methods used by numerous US-backed Latin American national security states during the Cold War, as reformist regimes were overthrown and forces friendly to US material interests were bolstered through massive levels of CI training. Declassified documents show that the US military was complicit in the campaign of state terrorism unleashed in Guatemala after the coup, in the form of extensive military training and material support, despite the US state knowing of widespread human rights abuses committed against sectors of the population (Vaky 1968, 1978). Indeed, 20,000 people were disappeared or murdered by the US-backed regime between 1966 and 1976 alone, with US military assistance having a significant bearing on the human rights violations that occurred (Tomuschat et al. 1999). Similar campaigns of state terror characterised the strategies of numerous US-backed regimes during the 1970s and 1980s, alongside the entrenchment of economic reform that would allow greater penetration by US and other Western capital.

Indeed, this 'Chilean model' would become the blueprint for the US-led initiative to roll out neoliberalisation across the Southern hemisphere in the succeeding decades (Robinson 1996: 165-6), with receptive local elites often provided with significant political and material assistance by the US in order to insulate their reform agenda from popular forms of resistance. Coercion, often with a strategy of terror at its heart, was the dominant means by which the US established control of resources and markets overseas during the Cold War, and has continued to underpin US strategy where it seems unlikely that the roll-out of neoliberalism can occur without resistance.

This can be seen clearly in the case of Colombia, which has been the recipient of massive amounts of US military support as it wages a campaign of state terror to insulate capitalist social relations from resistance (Stokes 2005). Although justified variously as an anti-communist, counternarcotics or counterterrorism campaign, US assistance is primarily designed to secure processes of neoliberalisation, particularly in the oil sector. As Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Javier Cruz, head of an elite CI unit and responsible for protecting part of Colombia's oil operations, made clear, his units were able to use 'helicopters, troops and training provided in large part by [the US].... Security is the most important thing to me. Oil companies need to work without worrying and international investors need to feel calm' (Stokes and Raphael 2010: 193). Units receiving direct US training and funding have, for decades, embarked on a sustained campaign of state terror, targeting politicians, trade unionists, church leaders, human rights workers and community activists. Torture and disappearances have been endemic, and specifically designed to create fear amongst wider populations (for further details, see HRW 2001; Raphael 2009a).

## Conclusion

The practice of terrorism is traditionally associated with non-state actors or, in some limited cases, with the acts of so-called 'rogue states' such as Iran and Syria. However, a close examination of the historical record shows that Western states have long employed strategies of terrorism to further their foreign policy interests. Whether used to secure territories for colonial expansion, defending colonial interests from national liberation movements, or working to entrench neoliberal forms of globalisation, the use of state terror by some Western states can be seen to have long formed a central plank in efforts to secure domination over strategically-important and resource-rich regions of the world. The fact that this is a history often overlooked by those writing on the subject of terrorism cannot be accounted for by an absence of empirical data documenting Western state terror. Rather it is a reflection of the poor state of most terrorism research, which has a myopic focus on 'anti-Western' terror and a seeming inability to engage with the uncomfortable truths borne witness by the full historical record.

There has also been a strong tendency among more critical scholars to focus predominantly on analysing the discourses that enable and constrain specific policy decisions in relation to state violence and responses to terrorism. While this work is extremely valuable, providing as it does a lens through which to view the counter-terrorism strategies of powerful liberal states, such work has tended to overshadow careful empirical studies of state terrorism, as well as the materialist agendas that underpin the extensive use of terrorism by those states (see Herring 2008 for an excellent argument along these lines). Such empirically-driven, and materialist-minded endeavours add flesh to the bones of critical work that tends to focus on the ideational aspects of the counter-terrorism strategies of powerful states, by providing an account of how the policies, infused by certain discourses and ideas, play out on the ground.

Particular areas for investigation in this regard include the use and sponsorship of terror in ongoing efforts to further entrench neoliberal economic models of resource extraction and appropriation across the global south (see Lasslett 2015 for an excellent example). Much work also remains to be done in fully assessing the extent to which the US and its allies have used terrorism as part of their efforts to deal with the threats presented by al-Qaeda inspired terrorism and its successors. In our own work, explained in more detail in Chapter 19 of this volume, we have focused on mapping the global system for the rendition, detention and interrogation of terror suspects, and providing extensive evidence of the extent to which victims were subjected to a range of human rights abuses, all of which are underpinned by the intent to terrorise. There are also many other unexplored avenues. For example, a full analysis is needed



of the terrorising effects of the US-led programme of targeted killings, both by drone strikes and by elite, special forces units operating under deep cover in targeted regions of the world. Another productive avenue for research would be to examine the various ways in which terroristic practices such as arbitrary detention, kidnap and torture, as used by the US in its 'war on terror', have been adopted and integrated by the domestic and external security agencies of a whole range of states, including many liberal democratic ones. Overall, we would argue that further research into historical and contemporary forms of Western state terrorism remains crucial, not least because it provides a grounded alternative to dominant narratives of Western foreign policy as an undisputed force for good.

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