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Lecture Notes, November 3

### I. Is there any justification for terrorism?

Terrorism seems impossible to justify, but it might not always be illegitimate.  
The history books are written by the victors, and yesterday's terrorists may be today's diplomats.  
This is especially so because anyone may allege that their opponent is a terrorist.  
Thus, the apartheid South African government had labeled Mandela a terrorist.  
Consider the Middle East, and you can see how the definition of terrorism depends on your viewpoint.  
It's been interesting, over the past couple of years, to see the comparisons of CNN, e.g., and Al Jazeera  
It would be nice if we could arrive at an objective definition.

### II. Attempts to define 'terrorism'

Frey and Morris characterize terrorism as follows:

1. Creating terror and fear within a population
2. Random or arbitrary use of violence
3. Targeting of innocents, or "non-combatants"

The main problem with this characterization is that each of these characteristics may describe war more generally, as well.

This is especially so if Wasserstrom is wrong about moral nihilism in respect to war.

That is, if there is no morality in war.

Notice that the armed forces consistently deny that they do these things when discussing their conduct.  
As a practical matter, to a bystander in a warring country, say a civilian Iraqi, all three of these characteristics would seem to apply.

An average Afghani, over the last three years almost certainly suffered from all three.

So, is there any defense for terrorism, and for war, more generally?

If we can find a defense for war, we might extend this to terrorism.

If we find a defense of terrorism, that will certainly cover war more broadly.