

## Framing of 'Terrorism' Issues in Indonesia: A Study of Two Malaysian Mainstream Newspapers

*Dafrizal Samsudin & Faridah Ibrahim  
School of Media and Communication Studies  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

*Indonesia is one of the ASEAN countries that is always struggling with terrorism issues. It has also been the focus of the international news media where terrorism issues are concerned. On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009, once again Indonesia is traumatised yet with another terrorism incident with the bombing of JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Jakarta. This time Malaysia also becomes a major focus in the international agenda. This is because the prosecution of Nordin Mat Top, a Malaysian citizen who is said to mastermind a series of bombings in Indonesia, is widely discussed in the mass media, both in Malaysia and Indonesia and also at the international level. In this situation how would the Malaysian mainstream media report the story on terrorism in a neighbouring country, when the terrorist himself is from Malaysia? Hence, it is interesting to look at how Malaysia writes about terrorism news in Indonesia especially with this case in point. Furthermore, with a heavy reliance on the international news agencies for international news coverage, will Malaysia adopt the same news frame as created by the international agencies when writing about terrorism issues or will the Malaysian media create their own news frames in dealing with terrorism issues in Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to identify whether Malaysian mainstream media, specifically Utusan Malaysia and The New Straits Times, with different news orientation, language preferences and editorial policies, create their own news frames or subscribe to the frames created by the international news agencies in reporting terrorism issues in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Framing, International News Agencies, Terrorism, Terrorist Threat, Jemaah Islamiah (JI).*

## **Introduction**

The debate on terrorism issues remain in dispute not only among the political elites, scholars, and the people, but also has become a global mass media issues. This is consistent with the views of scholars who are concerned over issues of terrorism. Since the events of 11 September 2001, terrorism in the contexts of “war on terror” has been characterised as a continuous threat from Islamic extremist (De Nelson, 2006: 193). Meanwhile, Fabiano (2009) explained that the “war on terror” is perhaps the principle metaphor used by the Bush administration to disguise US terrorism as an acceptable state policy. Another statement comes from Mahathir Mohammad (2003) that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) is a terrorist organisation in the eyes of the British but is regarded as freedom fighters worthy of financial support by the American. In addition, Faridah Ibrahim and Emma Mirza W. Mohamad (2005), argued from the general semanticist perspective, that words such as “terrorism”, “war heroes”, “fundamentalist” and “freedom fighters” are words created to dehumanise or humanise certain individuals, events, nations or objects. It is clearly seen that even scholars still do not perceive terrorism as a universal concept. In other words, the lack of understanding and diversified interest in terrorism issues had caused the polarization of interpretation and perception toward the issue. This is because interpretation really depends on the orientation of the particular individual.

The polarization of the interpretation and perception toward terrorism issues and concepts are inspired from media coverage, especially through media framing. According to Entman (1993) to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text. Alex Schmid and Janny de Graaf (in White, 2006: 261) said that media label terrorism and cover it according to their own needs. What is more, Cole (2006) states that there is a symbiotic relationship between non-state combatants and the media, but the relationship is actually more complex. The media might seek sensationalism in order to improve its ratings, but it also has a vested interest in ensuring the survival of the state. It is rare for a mainstream media source to champion the goals of a terrorist or revolutionary group. It means that mass media reporting on terrorism issues have reflected the distortion of the news framing according to the news media agenda setting. Similarly according to Giessmann (2002), the media portrays the event of terrorism as a depiction of appalling news reporting. For instance,

in the days following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, all the major television networks devoted their broadcast to continuous news coverage without commercial interruption (McDonald and Lawrence, 2008).

Additionally, after the events of September 11, 2001, the United States has framed the Southeast Asia (ASEAN) as the second front in the war on terrorism (Amitav Acharya and Arabinda Acharya, 2007; De Nelson 2004; Gershmann, 2002). That Perception was understandable since the ASEAN region is seen as the centre of operation of the Islamic Council or better known as *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), Abu Sayyaf, and the Malaysian Mujahideen Group (KMM). This development was seen as a new home base for terrorist movement that had brought down the World Trade Center (Gershman, 2002). Indonesia is among the ASEAN countries, which is still facing the issues of terrorism. It was the bomb attack on JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta, Indonesia in July 2009 that proves the issue of terrorism is still continuing. Indonesia's national media, *The Jakarta Post* reports revealed that the perpetrator of the bomb attack on JW Marriot Hotel and the Ritz-Carlton in Jakarta, Indonesia in July 2009 was Nurdin Nur Aziz Hasbi, or is part of a group of JI under the leadership of a Malaysian national Nordin M. Top (*The Jakarta Post*, July, 18th, 2009).

On the other hand, Malaysia came out, as an active country expressing views on terrorism (Faridah Ibrahim, 2008: 97) and every incident of terrorism act will certainly become the focus of Malaysia's international news. However in Malaysia, news is selected based on the evaluation and selection criteria established by every gatekeeper of a particular news organization, as well as referring to the universal guidance of Galtung and Ruge (Faridah Ibrahim and Safar Hasim, 2005: 36). Furthermore, foreign news is supplied by international news agencies known as 'the big four' – Reuters, AP, AFP, and UPI (Faridah Ibrahim, 2008: 88).

Looking at the polarization of terrorism matter and media framing, and the dependency of Malaysia's mainstream media on the international news agencies to provide the international news, one may ask is it possible for Malaysia to adopt the same news frame on terrorism issues, or perhaps create a media frame based on their own views and policy? Therefore, by looking at international news provided by international news agencies, the objective of this study is to identify to what extent the Malaysia's mainstream media namely *Utusan Malaysia* and *New Straits Times* frame terrorists acts in Indonesia.

## **Concept of Terrorism**

Historically, the term “terrorism” firstly emerged and became popular in the 18th century during the French revolution reign of terror with the intention to show the government authorities to guarantee the loyalty of the people (Juergensmayer, 2003; Chomsky, 2002). In fact, another statement related to “terrorism” is a short technique by Sun Tzu 2500 years ago: “Killing one to frighten ten thousands” (Chakraborti, 2003: 316). Terrorism is also understood as the systematic use of coercive force against civilians for political goals (Norris, 2003: 6). However, the matter regarding terrorism is also part of the matter involving the mass media. It is clearly seen that the 9/11 spectacle of terror was a global media event (Kellner, 2007; Louw, 2003). This means that the mass media are also involved in shaping the understanding of the people or certain groups who have immense interest in the meaning of “terrorism” which is still questionable, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 event.

The word “terrorism” has been subjected to various interpretations. Many scholars perceive that the definition of “terrorism” is still vague and can only be understood from different perspectives and interests of individuals or certain groups. Etymologically, some scholars agreed that the word of “terror” comes from the Latin word known as “terrere” which means to terrify, or to frighten, or in other words “create sense of nervousness and anxiety (Bolz et al., 2005; Whittaker, 2004; Engene, 2004; Jurgensmeyer, 2003; Asep Syaiful M. Romli, 2000; Ahmad M. Merican, 2002; Chalk, 1996; Wilkinson, 1974). Today, we often heard of this famous adage: one nation’s terrorists are another nation’s freedom fighters. Without a doubt, this struggle for the appropriate terminology has left people in many nations in a state of confusion. In this paper, the authors refer to the term “terrorism” as a violent act of deliberate action done by anyone for a certain purpose to raise sense of fear, nervousness and anxiety among the public.

## **Terrorism Issue: Malaysia’s Response**

The 11 September 2001 incident led George W. Bush to launch a campaign on “war on terror” (Lumis, 2008), and it has emerged as an international issue and a vital concern in the U.S. foreign policy (Perl, 2003). It has also left a footprint all over the world including Malaysia. However, Malaysia has its own policy on how to respond to the issue of the war

against terrorism. Malaysia has decided to be part of the US's campaign on war against terrorism to show that Malaysia is not a heaven for terrorists. Earlier on, in December 2001 to January 2002, about 23 Muslim militants were arrested. This group dubbed "KMM2" was apparently closely connected with Jemaah Islamiah (JI). Malaysia also has close intelligence cooperation with the US and other governments on terrorist threat (Daljit Singh, 2003). Additionally, Malaysia agreed to host an anti-terrorism regional training centre as a sign of its commitment to the war on terrorism (Dillon, 2002: 3). Finally, after several years of very poor bilateral ties, Malaysia's response to the war on terrorism has been warmly welcomed by Washington (Capie and Acharya, 2002; Daljit Singh, 2003).

## **Newspapers in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, newspapers and media practitioners are controlled by laws and regulations (Mohd Safar, 2004). The concentration of media ownership – and concentration in the hands of politically affiliated companies and individuals has been the norm in Malaysia for a long time (Zaharom Nain and Kim, 2000: 266). Therefore, it can be seen that the media in Malaysia reflect the situation of government and the society in which they operate (Faridah Ibrahim, 2003: 57). This is so because the diversified political leadership in the country is represented in the government. More strictly, it is a fact that in Malaysia there are several laws regulating the freedom of the press such as the Printing Presses Act 1948, Official Secret Act 1972, Sedition Act 1948, Defamation Act 1957 and Internal Security Act 1960 (Mohd Safar, 2005; Mohd Sani Mohd Azizuddin, 2004). In short, it seems that since the British and Japanese occupation and until now, the newspapers are still a part of the government political tools to maintain its political power in Malaysia. It is because of this that the newspapers and electronic media especially the mainstream, are not as free as their alternative competitors.

## **Framing Theory**

In the area of media and communication studies, media frames or framing has become an important branch of media studies undertaken by scholars mainly to identify more deeply about the content of media or other communication texts. The first concept of framing triggered by Bateson (1955-1972), refers to frame as the way events and issues are organised

and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals, and their audiences (Reese, 2001). According to de Vreese (2005) the process of framing can be studied from two perspectives namely frame building and frame setting. While Goffman (1974) sees frame as a strip of behaviour that leads people to read a reality, Tuchman (1978) looks at news frames as windows to the world, that means the reality of an event depends on to what extent the event can be viewed and understood by journalists and then translated into news.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) define frame as a “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue”, and it causes other events to be noticed out of happenings. Pan and Kosicki (1993) have divided the concept of frames into two perspectives, namely sociological and psychological conception. Sociologically, framing is an actively classified and organized process, that interpret our life experiences in order to make sense of them. Meanwhile, psychologically, framing is viewed as placing information in a unique context so that certain elements of the issue get a greater allocation in individual’s cognitive resources. According to McQuail (2000) framing is a way of giving some interpretation to isolated items of fact. Reese (2001) sees the frames as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.

In addition, Entman (1993) sees that framing, essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem identification, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Entman further reiterates that the strength of the concept of framing is on the process of selecting a particular issue in a communication text and making the issue more salient than the other. Finally, in this study framing is understood as an effort in selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text that have meanings.

## **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative content analysis method based on framing analysis technique by Entman (1993: 52) which contains four operational concepts of framing analysis. These are: *defining the problem* – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits,

usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose causes* – identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgements* – evaluate causal agents and their effects; *suggest remedies* – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effect. In Malaysia, most of the international news published come from foreign news agencies namely Reuters, AP, AFP and UPI which are known as 'the big four'. Malaysia also tries to balance the coverage done by these news agencies through a mechanism called the Agencies where editors combine particular news covered by all the agencies. A research on usage of news sources by Faridah Ibrahim and Safar Hasim (2005) showed that local gatekeepers prefer to use Reuters and AFP's news because these agencies are perceived as more balanced in their reporting compared to their counterparts, AP and UPI.

This study looked at the trend of media framing on the coverage of terrorism issues in Indonesia by two Malaysian mainstream newspapers, namely *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) and *The New Straits Times* (NST). A total of 20 issues of UM and 16 issues of NST in the month of July and August 2009 was analysed qualitatively using Entman's framing analysis.

### Findings: Suicide Bombing is a Terrorist Threat

Entman's four operational concepts on media framing are applied in this study. It was found that terrorism news in Indonesia covered by the two mainstream newspapers can be categorised in the four different frames. The frames are illustrated in Figure 1.

Entman's Framing Category	Explanation	Examples of framing
Defining the problem	Causal agent; measured in common cultural values	Terrorist act; militant leader Nordin Mat Top; terrorism threats
Diagnose causes	Forces creating the problem	Bomb attack; no sense of humanity; become suicide bomber because of poverty
Moral judgements	Causal agents and effects	Effects of terror on economy, tourism and trade
Suggest remedies	Justify treatments	Detailed investigations; counterterrorism; remain vigilant against extremist

Figure 1: Media Framing of Terrorism Issues in UM and NST (July and August 2009)

Figure 1 summarises several findings pertaining to the framing analysis of the coverage of terrorism issues in Indonesia presented by the two selected Malaysian newspapers. The following excerpts demonstrate the suitability of Entman's framework in understanding media framing especially on one country's newspapers' coverage on other country's affairs. However, in this case the affairs of Indonesia is also related to Malaysia.

The findings in the study showed that *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) framed the terrorism issue in Indonesia from the point of view of "suicide bombing is a terrorist threat". In this case, UM also has raised and discussed a number of crucial issues related to the act of suicide bombing such as the act of terrorism, act of militancy, the return of terrorist attack, and a large and sophisticated terrorism network. These issues prove that UM's framing of the suicide bombers in the contexts of terrorism issues accurately described the situation as a 'terrorist threat'. The following excerpts from the newspapers demonstrate media framing in the "defining the problem" category.

"...Presiden Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono menyifatkan dua letupan bom...sebagai "tindakan pengganas" (UM, 18 Julai 2009b: 17).

**Translation:** "...Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono described the two bombs explosions as a "terrorist act" (UM, 18 July 2009b: 17).

"...Polis Indonesia menyiasat kemungkinan adanya kaitan kejadian dua letupan bom hotel JW Marriott dan Ritz-Carlton di Pusat bandar Jakarta hari ini dengan ketua militan rakyat Malaysia, Nordin Mat Top" (UM, 18 Julai 2009d: 17).

**Translation:** "...Indonesian police investigating the possible connection of two bombing incidents at JW Marriott hotel and the Ritz Carlton in Central Jakarta city today with militant leaders from Malaysia, Nordin Mat Top" (UM, 18 July 2009d: 17).

"...Insiden bom berani mati di Jakarta yang meragut sembilan nyawa dan menandakan kembalinya serangan pengganas di Indonesia" (UM, 25 Julai 2009: 25).

**Translation:** "...The suicide bombing incident in Jakarta killed nine people and marked the return of terrorist attacks in Indonesia" (UM, 25 July 2009: 25).

“...Ancaman pengganas masih wujud walaupun pengganas Nordin Mat Top ditembak dalam serbuan polis di Jawa Tengah hari ini” (UM, 9 Ogos 2009: 17).

**Translation:** “...The terrorism threat still exists even though terrorist, Nordin Mat Top was shot in a police raid in Central Java today” (UM, August 9 2009: 17).

“...Rangkaian pengganas yang dikaitkan dengan pengeboman di Jakarta adalah lebih besar dan canggih dari yang disangkakan...” (UM, 28 Ogos 2009: 19).

**Translation:** “...a terrorist network linked to the bombings in Jakarta and served by trained staff is larger than ever...” (UM, 28 August 2009: 19).

In terms of causes of terrorism, it was found that UM select the issue of suicide bomb attack as a cause that result in a rise in terrorism. In other words, UM see that terrorism is a result of the suicide bombers. The story of suicide bombing deals in the discourse of the incident of the suicide attacks on the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton. Additionally, UM has also raised the issues of poverty and backwardness and lack of sense of humanity among the causes of terrorism. The state of societal poverty and backwardness are deemed to be the driving factors of terrorism attacks. Similarly the lack of sensitivity towards humanity is an attitude that ignores the well-being of society at large. The following examples of news citation illustrate the “Diagnose causes” category:

“...Serangan bom di daerah perniagaan Mega Kuning itu dipercayai dilancarkan secara sepadu dan yang pertama dalam tempoh beberapa tahun sejak kerajaan mencapai kemajuan dalam menangani ancaman keselamatan...” (UM, 18 Julai 2009a: Front page).

**Translation:** “...A bomb attack in the central business Mega Kuning is believed to be launched in an integrated way and as the first in a few years since the government made progress in addressing security threats...” (UM, July 18, 2009a: Front page).

“...Al-Qaeda mengaku bertanggungjawab meletupkan bom di Hotel-hotel JW Marriot dan Ritz-Carlton di Jakarta pada 17 Julai lalu...” (UM, 30 Julai 2009: 17).

**Translation:** “...Al-Qaeda claimed to be responsible for detonating a bomb at the JW Marriott Hotels and Ritz-Carlton in Jakarta on July 17 and...” (UM, 30 July 2009: 17).

Kerja forensik mungkin membawa kepada penemuan penting siasatan serangan berani mati di hotel JW Marriot dan Ritz-Carlton yang meragut sembilan nyawa termasuk 2 pengebom tersebut (UM, 21 Julai 2009: 19).

**Translation:** Forensic work may lead to important findings of the investigation on the suicide attack at JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton who killed nine people, including the two bombers (UM, 21 July 2009: 19).

“...Presiden Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono menyeru supaya rakyat bersatu membasmi kemiskinan dan kemunduran yang menjadi pendorong seorang remaja 18 tahun bertindak meletupkan diri dalam serangan bom...” (UM, 15 Ogos 2009: 17).

**Translation:** “...The President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono urged people to unite to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment that can inspire a young person 18 years of acting by detonated himself in bomb attack...” (UM, 15 August 2009: 17).

“...beliau berkata (Presiden Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) penyerang tidak mempunyai pri kemanusiaan dan tidak mepedulikan kerosakan yang dilakukan terhadap negara...” (UM, 18 Julai 2009b: 17).

**Translation:** “...he said (President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudho Yuno) the attacker does not have a sense of humanity and ignores the damage occurred toward the country...” (UM, 18 July 2009b: 17).

In terms of morale, it was found that the UM assess that the act of terrorism has ruined the image of the economy and security of the state. The issue of security and economic image are two important matters which were discussed by UM pertaining to the investment sector. UM also see the terrorist action of Nordin Mat Top, as supporter of the extreme ideology set to attack a number of western icons. UM also raise the issues of JI as the group that should take responsibility for a series of bomb attacks in Indonesia. In addition, the issue of intelligence data and registration system of the population is also viewed by UM as other factors that may lead to the occurrence of terrorism. What can be seen is that there is an overlapping of data and lots of inaccuracy with regards to intelligence data and registration system. The following examples demonstrate the above observations.

“...Serangan bom merusak imej selamat dan memberi tamparan hebat kepada keyakinan pelabur...” (UM, 18 Julai 2009a: Front page).

**Translation:** “...the bomb attacks destroyed the image of security and gave a great blow towards investor’s confidence...” (UM, 18 July 2009a: Front page).

“...Beliau (Presiden Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) berkata tindakan keganasan mendatangkan kesan terhadap ekonomi, perdagangan, pelancongan dan imej negara...” (UM, 18 Julai 2009b: 17).

**Translation:** “...Hem (the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) said that the act of terror had effects on the economy, trade, tourism and the image of the country...” (UM, 18 July 2009b: 17).

Pengeboman berani mati di hotel JW Marriot dan Ritz-Carlton menamatkan ketiadaan serangan seumpamanya dalam tempoh empat tahun (UM, 28 Ogos 2009: 19).

**Translation:** Suicide bombing at the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton ended the absence of similar attacks in the past four years. (UM, 28 August 2009: 19).

“...Bekas akauntan itu (Noordin Mat Top) ialah pendukung ideologi sayap paling ganas dalam JI dan terlibat dalam serangan bom bali 2002...” (UM, 18 Julai 2009d: 17)

**Translation:** “...Former accountant (Noordin Mat Top) support the ideology of the most violent wing of the JI which was involved in the Bali bombing 2002...” (UM, 18 July 2009d: 17)

“...Nordin didakwa mendalangi beberapa serangan ke atas ikon-ikon Barat di Indonesia...” (UM, 10 Ogos 2009: 17).

**Translation:** “...Nordin allegedly was said to mastermind several attacks on Western icons in Indonesia...” (UM, 10 August 2009: 17).

“...Serangan bom disyaki didalangi oleh Jemaah Islamiah (JI) yang sebelum ini bertanggungjawab dalam serangan bom Bali”. (UM, 21 Julai 2009: 19).

**Translation:** "...the bombs attacks allegedly were designed by the Jemaah Islamiah that was previously responsible for the Bali bombings..." (UM, 21 July 2009: 19).

"...Kelemahan negara ini ialah ketiadaan data perisikan yang besepadu dan sistem pendaftaran penduduk yang bertindan..." (UM, 28 Julai 2009: 17).

**Translation:** "...The weakness of this country is the lack of integrated intelligence data and population registration system that overlaps..." (UM, 28 July 2009: 17).

In terms of treatment recommendation, it was found that UM highlighted the issue of investigation to identify the perpetrators of terror act and some other important issues such as participation Nordin Mat Top as a terror network of al-Qaeda, DNA tests, law enforcement that emphasize a punishment to perpetrators of terror, and regional and international issues of cooperation, especially in the exchange of information and intelligence data. Besides, it was also found that the UM play a part over the issue of preventing young generation from the extreme ideology that is much considered as a factor of terror act. See the examples of news citation as follow:

"...Kemungkinan besar serangan ini ada kaitannya dengan Nordin Mat Top, tapi kami (polis) masih menyiasat sejauh mana dia terlibat (UM, 18 Julai 2009: 17).

**Translation:** "...Is likely that these attacks are associated with Nordin Mat Top, but we (police) continued to investigate the extent to which he was involved. (UM, 18 July 2009: 17).

"...Satu sumber polis berkata, pihak berkuasa berusaha mendapatkan sample DNA daripada anak-anak Nordin dan ahli keluarganya (UM, 10 Ogos 2009: 17).

**Translation:** "...A source from the police said, authorities are seeking DNA samples from Nordin's children and his family (UM, 10 August 2009: 17).

"...Saya (Presiden Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudho Yuno) telah mengarahkan pihak penguatkuasa undang-undang menghukum sesiapa yang terlibat dalam perbuatan ganas (UM, 18 Julai 2009: 17).

**Translation:** "...I (the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudho Yuno) has instructed law enforcement to punish those who engaged in violent acts. (UM, 18 July 2009: 17).

"...Kita (Menteri Pertahanan Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi) sentiasa bekerjasama dengan Indonesia dan antarabangsa bagi menentukan individu dan kumpulan bertanggungjawab tidak terlepas daripada undang-undang (UM, 20 Julai 2009: 3).

**Translation:** "...We (the Minister of Defence of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi) always work closely with Indonesia and international world to determine individual and a certain group which is inseparable from the law (UM, 20 July 2009: 3).

"...Pihak berkuasa Filipina dan Indonesia kini telah menukar data perisikan bagi mengesan mereka yang bertanggungjawab ke atas dua-dua serangan itu" (UM, 24 Julai 2009: 19).

**Translation:** "...The Philippines and Indonesian authorities have been changing intelligence data to locate those who were engaged in both attacks" (UM, 24 July 2009: 19).

"...Mari kita membimbing golongan muda supaya menjauhi fahaman melampau yang boleh mendorong mereka melakukan keganasan" (UM, 15 Ogos 2009: 19).

**Translation:** "...Let us guide young people to avoid extreme beliefs that lead them to the involvement in violent act..." (UM, August 15, 2009: 19).

### **Suicide Bombers as the Work of *Jemaah Islamiah* (JI)**

It was found that the *New Straits Times* (NST) framed the terrorism issue in a more specific perspective namely "suicide bombers as the work of *Jemaah Islamiah* (JI)" This means that NST emphasizes the JI as those behind the bomb blast on 17 July 2009, including some series of previous bombings in Indonesia. See the following examples of news citation:

"...Police yesterday confirmed regional terror outfit *Jemaah Islamiah* (JI) as the culprits behind the suicide blast at the hotels here,....JI, which draws inspiration from al-Qaeda, has carried out dozens of

bombing in Indonesia in the past decade, including the 2002 attacks in Bali. (NST, 20 July 2009: 24).

“...Indonesia yesterday release sketches of the faces of two men they suspect were the suicide bombers... The involvement of Jemaah Islamiah, the militants responsible for previous bombings in the region (NST, 23 July 2009: 23).

“...authorities have been under pressure to explain how suspected militants linked to radical Jemaah Islamiah (JI) network managed, undetected, to carry out double suicide bombing in here...(NST, 9 August 2009: 34).

In terms of causes of terrorism, it was found that the NST is all set to emphasise the issue of suicide bomb attacks are parts of terrorists' acts. In other words, terrorism is implied as a gruesome suicide bomb attack that killed a number of people and damaged public building. Like the UM coverage, issue of poverty and lack of unfairness are also cited in the NST as the root problem of terrorism. The following examples of news illustrated the above observations:

“...Suicide bombers posing as guests attacked the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels here setting off a pair of blasts on Friday killed eight people and wounded more than 50, authorities said (NST, 19 July 2009: 33),

“...He (Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyuno) said....after suicide bombers killed seven people at the adjacent JW Marriot and Ritz-Carlton hotels last Friday, I am sure we will find these perpetrators of terror” (NST, 24 July 2009: 33).

“...A new cache of bombing making chemicals has been discovered as part of ongoing investigations into the 17 suicide attacks against luxury hotels in Jakarta, Indonesian Police said yesterday...” (NST, 14 August 2009: 34).

“...Susilo said “poverty and injustice” were the root causes of terrorism but the killing of innocent civilians could never be justified by religion” (NST, 15 August 2009: 29).

It was found that, NST primed the JI as being morally responsible behind the action of suicide bombers including a number of previous bomb series in Indonesia. JI is morally labelled by the NST as fundamental, militants, extremist and also suspected to establish the Islamic state by

violent ways. The examples of news excerpts below illustrated the above contentions:

...JI's ultimate goal is to unite Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and southern Philippines into a fundamental Islamic state using the terrorist attack... (NST, 20 July 2009: 24).

“...Police suspect that the involvement of Jemaah Islamiah, the militants responsible for previous bombings in the region...” (NST, 23 July 2009: 31).

“...Most astounding has been how close police appeared to be... catching only Nordin Mat Top the Malaysian extremist who leads a violent JI faction believed to be behind the bombings...” (NST, 9 August 2009: 9).

In terms of the treatment recommendation, it was found that NST highlighted the issue of investigation regarding the perpetrators of terror act and issues such as investigations and more emphasis on the role of counter-terrorist squad, Detachment 88, and also raise the issue of DNA testing as a cautious step in an effort to know the perpetrators of terror act. NST also proposed anti-terrorism squad operations to find the militant networks. In addition, the NST has also suggested the control of security across Indonesia, in the form of increased vigilance against the threat of extremists. The following examples of news citation illustrated the above points:

“...Police would provide more details about their investigation, said Brig-Gen Sulsityo Ishak, Deputy Spokesman for the national police...” (NST, 19 July 2009: 33).

“...Police said that DNA sample taken from the family of Nurhasbi....and detained wives of militants for questioning in connection with the bombings...” (NST, 23 July 2009: 31).

“...The materials are being investigated by Detachment 88 counter-terrorism police to find out whether they are similar to those used by Nordin's network, He (Police spokesman Sulistyio Ishak) said...” (NST, 14 August 2009: 34).

“...Widespread crackdown by counterterrorism forces has netted hundreds of militants in recent years here, and the group was believed to be virtually wiped out...” (NST, 25 July 2009: 31).

“...As a nation we cannot be defeated by terrorism”. ...Susilo said security had to be tightened across Indonesia... (NST, 24 July 2009: 33).

“...The ex-General (Susilo) called on all Indonesians to remain vigilant against extremist blame of a series attacks, including last month’s hotel blasts here...” (NST, 15 August 2009: 29).

## **Concluding Remarks**

In the context of media framing and terrorism in Indonesia, it was found that UM defined that “Suicide bombing is a terrorist threat”. The Malaysian Malay national daily, UM has defined terrorism through selection and highlighting a number of pertinent issues such as terror act, poverty, backwardness and sense of humanity and put them into critical discourses regarding matters that had caused terrorism acts. Besides that, UM selects and highlights other important issues such as image of security and economy, violence ideology, and intelligence and national registrations systems. Analysis of news framing by UM tend to put them into the moral evaluation frame. UM also cited other issues such as investigation, law enforcement, international relations and cooperation, and extremist faith as important elements suggested for the treatment and recommendation to handle terrorism issues. It seems that the policy agenda of UM is more inclined to put the problem of terrorism in the field of normative issues namely in the field of social, economics, law enforcement, security and international relation. It means that UM pose its policy in responding to terrorism issues within the framework of the government stance, which prioritise the stability and development of social, political and economic entities.

Meanwhile, NST defined that “suicide bombers as the work of the *Jemaah Islamiah* (JI)”. NST strengthens its interpretation by selecting and highlighting some particular issues comprises of terrorist action in the form of suicide bomb attacks, poverty and the absence of fairness as ground sources of terrorism. Meanwhile, the *Jemaah Islamiah* is the most dominant issue highlighted by the NST in every arguments concerning the moral aspects of terrorist action, especially regarding the issue of suicide bomb attacks. The NST also give labels to the JI such as extremist, radical, and violence faction. Labels are metaphoric frames that not only simplify news writing but also simplify people’s understanding

of issues (Faridah Ibrahim and Emma Mirza Wati Mohamad, 2005). Besides *Ji*, the English language national daily also chooses other issues for instance; investigations, anti-terrorist squad operations, and security as point of views in discussing treatment and recommendation regarding terrorism. It seems that the policy agenda of NST is more inclined to place terrorism matter within ideological perspectives which to a certain extent slightly affect social and security areas. It means that NST look at the issue of ideology as the alternative perspective in the terrorism debate. This also reflects the global opinion.

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