**Reflection Essay – Episode VI – Death Star II Morality**

In episode VI, the rebels blow up the Empires Death Star II which is under construction. While the second Death Star was a weapon built for mass destruction, it is important to recognize that the rebels destroyed the death star in episode VI while it was *under construction*. This means that most of the people working on the construction of the Death Star were slaves, sentient robots programed by the empire, or perhaps contractors or clones. In nearly all cases it means the destruction of the Death Star causes millions, even billions of innocent people to die. It is for this reason that people question whether or not it was an act of terror.

Although billions of innocent people probably died with the destruction of the Death Star, the Death Star was not destroyed to kill innocent people. The Death Star from a militaristic sense was a high value target, a central military base that if destroyed by the rebels could deal a crippling blow to the empire. Also, it is worthy to mention that by destroying the Death Star, billions upon trillions of lives were saved in the long run by preventing the destruction of countless planets. In short, while innocent lives were taken, they were nothing more than collateral damage, an unfortunate but necessary sacrifice. According to Charles Camosy in *The Ultimate Star Wars Philosophy*, the act of terrorism is defined by *targeting* innocent people as a means of inciting fear and terror. Charles describes a tool to test whether or not an act is considered to be an act of terror. He calls it the *Camosy Pissed Test*. “I ask them to do a thought experiment in which innocents were *not* killed in the attack and then imagine whether the person or group acting would be ‘pleased or pissed’ that no innocent people were killed.” (USWP, pg. 71) In the case of the destruction of Alderaan, the attack means nothing if innocent people were not killed, because it was *intended* to *make an example of the Empire’s Power* and to establish rule by fear. If all of the innocent slaves and droids were pulled off of the Death Star just prior to its destruction, the rebels would be ecstatic. This is why the destruction of Alderaan is an act of terror, while the destruction of the Death Star II was not.

So clearly the Death Star’s destruction wasn’t terrorist, but was it *ethical?* Does the amount of lives that you’ll save by destroying a weapon that destroys planets and dealing a crippling blow to the military power of a tyrannical empire justify *killing billions of innocent people?* This is the ethical issue of proportionality. To put it crassly, was it really worth it? Is there any way to justify taking the life of an innocent person, even if it may save more innocent people in the future? In this case an argument can be made that if you reduce the ethical problem to a simple question of numbers of lives saved overall, destroying the Death Star is completely justified. Billions of lives is terrible yes, but how much more terrible is the loss of trillions of lives? I personally think that this is a completely justifiable ethical decision. Now, I pray to whatever God there may be that I will never have to make a decision as tough as this one in my short life on earth, but if I ever had to make a decision like this, I feel that I could be justified in a similar course of action. Not only was the destruction of the Death Star II *not terrorist*, but it *was ethical*.