

Impact of Terrorism on the Society: The Kenyan Experience

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Abstract

The global concern over the threat of terrorism by physical destruction and losses, deaths, suffering to humanity, economic loss, insecurity, and the general challenge to social order and polity in the society cannot be underscored. As most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are churned in civil conflicts, Kenya has remained relatively peaceful for decades and played host to millions of refugees fleeing neighboring countries. However, since 1998, terrorism-related activities have been on the rise in the country posing a major threat to national security and development. The impact of terrorism cuts across social, cultural, economic and political lens of the society. The nature of terrorist activities in Kenya has been changing and escalating in magnitude, leaving many innocent citizens as victims, while in some incidences, the country held at ransom by the terror groups. With over 15 years of experience on terror attacks, Kenya is becoming more vulnerable and easy target for terror groups. This paper provides a descriptive analysis of the experiences, challenges and lessons learnt from the recurrent incidences of terrorism in Kenya. Despite efforts made by government and other agents to curb the menace, much is yet to be achieved. The authors have highlighted inadequate capacity; lack of preparedness; poor co-ordination and strategy; and information faults as some of the major shortfalls. It is our conclusion that despite the threats posed by terror activities, the Kenyan society in general seem not to be learning a lesson and if so, with reactive rather than pro-active approach. The paper recommends that for Kenya to achieve its efforts in combating terrorism and terror-related activities, well co-ordinated, multi-sectoral and pro-active measures should be espoused and implemented from the grassroots (county) to national government level. Besides, enhancement of national security to deal with terrorism and emergency handling capacity should be given priority.

Keywords: *Terrorism, Impact, Experiences, Lessons, Kenya*

Introduction

One of the most direct and serious security threats facing governments of the world is terrorism. It is a transnational crime that goes beyond the purview of the state security. It has increasingly become a global problem that requires concerted action by the community of nations (Omeje & Githigaro, 2010). Terrorism is defined as a premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003), whereas international terrorism means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. Terrorism has gained international attention because of its overall effect on nation-states and societies. Its adverse social and political ramifications have had very significant economic consequences, as they have forced governments in the world to finance counter-terrorism measures, which in return, have burdened the economy, primarily through adverse effects on the defense budgets as well as on general budget figures. Terrorism has negatively affected not only the national economies, but also the international economies.

With the end of the Cold War, there were dramatic improvements in the ease of transnational communication, commerce and travel. However, there remained significant constraints upon multilateral cooperation against terrorism. Where cooperation occurred, states preferred small groupings of like-minded states, often operating at the regional level, through ad hoc mechanisms. Certainly, states had cooperated multilaterally in some ways and had, for example, negotiated 12 international conventions on terrorism-related offences at the UN platforms (Aldrich, 2002).

Disappointingly, the terrorists have adapted to this new international environment and turned technological advances of the 20th century into the destructive enablers of the 21st century. Terrorist groups need safe havens, intelligence on the environment they will operate in, training and recruitment bases, logistic support and other infrastructure. These can only be achieved by obtaining external support to sustain their acts of terror (Aden, 2005). As a result of freer and more open borders, this environment unwittingly provides access to havens and capabilities to terrorists. Once entrenched in a safe operating environment, terrorist networks can begin to solidify and expand. The terrorist organization's structure, membership, resources, and security

determine its capabilities and reach. The Sub-Saharan African region has experienced prolonged and severe intra- and inter-state conflict, leading to instability, poverty, and political isolation that make it vulnerable to terrorist exploitation. For instance, civil war in Somalia has left the country without a fully functioning national government since 1991 and has been an important factor fuelling the spread of violent radicalism in East Africa today.

Kenya has long been an African success story, a place that has been relatively stable, peaceful and prosperous despite being in a neighborhood rocked by major disasters for decades. There has been endless civil wars in Somalia; genocide in Rwanda; and famine in Ethiopia. Yet these calamities have, by and large, not spilled over to Kenya, which has been the turning point of East Africa, serving as a business, transportation and tourist hub. Kenya has always been one of the most outward-looking African countries with its linkages and relationship with the U.S, Europe, the Middle East and some countries of Asian continent.

Kenya's political stability since independence combined with its geo-strategic importance, has led it to be recognized by Western countries as a major hub for economic, diplomatic, and humanitarian activities for the East African and Horn of Africa region. However, in the past two decades, Kenya has been a target of various terror attacks attributed to terrorist elements (Aronson, 2013). On August 7th 1998, the US Embassy in Nairobi was attacked in which over 200 lives were lost. Apparently, the anti-terrorism debate in Kenya is dominated by the regional policy agenda of the US government in which the Kenyan government is considered an important ally given the country's geographical and historical strategic proximity to the Middle East and the Arab world believed in Western security agendas to be the principal source of contemporary international terrorism. Hence, with regard to the Global War on Terror (GWOT) championed by the US government, there appears to be a convergence of interest between the Kenyan state security apparatus and the US foreign policy goals on security (Jeanne and

Harold, 2007). In 1980, the Jewish-owned Norfolk hotel was attacked by the PLO. In 1998, the US embassy in Nairobi was bombed, as was the Israeli-owned Paradise hotel four years later. In 2013, the militant group Al-Shabaab killed over 80 people at Nairobi's Westgate Shopping Mall. In October 2011, a coordinated operation between the Somali military and the Kenyan military began against the Al-Shabaab group of insurgents in southern Somalia. The mission was officially led by the Somali army, with the Kenyan forces providing a support role. Since then, a series of explosions have rocked various areas in Kenya, bombings which are believed to have been retaliatory attacks by Al-Shabaab.

According to US Embassy in the past one and half decade and most recently between 2012- 2014, there have been at least 20 attacks involving grenades or explosive devices in Kenya. At least 108 people have died in these attacks, and around 300 people injured. Most of these attacks occurred in North Eastern region, including locations in Dadaab, Wajir, and Garissa and Coast region. Other attacks occurred in Nairobi. Targets included police stations and police vehicles, nightclubs and bars, churches, religious gatherings, a downtown building of small shops, and a bus station. A number of factors explain why Kenya has been a victim of past terrorist attacks. The main factors are geography, ethnic composition, political stability, unstable neighbors, poverty, Islamic fundamentalism and lax law enforcement (Adan, 2005).

Acts of terrorism have had grave economic, political, psychological and social implications in Kenya. Human lives, tourism, agriculture, and the transportation sectors have been severely affected. As asserted by Moustapha (2002) acts of terrorism have been exacerbated by technology such as the internet and satellite television increased radicalization of youths especially through religious fundamentalism, poverty, as well as increased travel and employment around the globe. Despite Kenya being a victim of repeated terrorist attacks, not much literature is available on the impact the terrorism threat has had on the country. However, little literature available highlight on the extent on terrorism in the country, hence the need of further knowledge on the impact of terrorism on the Kenyan Society, experiences, challenges and lessons learnt. This paper provides a descriptive analysis of the experiences, challenges and lessons learnt from the recurrent incidences of terrorism in Kenya.

Terrorism and its Causes in Kenya

In Kenya, as in the rest of Africa, the acts of terror can be traced back to the colonial period. The practices of attacking, raiding, capturing, and owning human beings, as well as the dispossessing of the lands of African peoples 'colonial terrorism' (Asafa, 2013). The slavers and colonizers used various forms of violence to force people to forsake their individual and group sovereignties in order to use them as commodities and to exploit their labor and economic resources. Enslaving Africans involved warfare, trickery, banditry, kidnapping, burning villages, raping, torturing, dividing and destroying communities, facilitating civil war and destroying existing leaderships and institutions and cultures; such forms of social violence can be categorized as terrorism (Falola, 2002).

Increasing numbers of terrorist attacks in Kenya have been carried out by local citizens, many of whom are recent converts recruited and trained mainly from Somalia-oriented terrorist groups. These new recruits and converts were estimated to constitute over 10% of the *Al-Shabaab* terror fighters in 2012 (KDF, 2012). Referred to as the *Kenyan Mujahideen* by *Al-Shabaab's* core members, the converts are typically young and overzealous. The living standards and socio-economic deprivation of some segments of the Kenyan society provide fertile ground for recruitment and breeding stock for terrorists. As indicated by KDF Kenya-2012, high poverty levels among the youths in Kenya have made them easier targets for the outfit's recruitment activities. Campbell and Flournoy (2001) further acknowledge the roles that marginalization and poverty play among vulnerable people, who at the end invite sectarian and inter-ethnic strife, despair, and anti-western resentment.

Intra-ethnic and clan conflicts also play a major role in the perpetuation of terrorism in the country. This is especially when some of the clans and ethnic groups have dual citizens and thus, seek reinforcement from any possible quarters when under threat. Others host terrorists as has been the case with refugees in Dadaab who have been blamed for instigating terror activities in the northern region of Kenya. According to Arunatilake et al. (2001), the conflicts have direct and indirect costs for a country. In the recent Lamu attacks for instance, all hotels were closed down, tourists left, job opportunities were lost, people died, and the place has become insecure and placed under a security curfew. As Concepcion et al. (2003) contends, conflicts have direct negative effects on the economy through damages to the area influenced by conflict and the costs associated with its reconstruction. This also extends to loss of production, impossibility of safe transportation of goods, the loss of tourism benefits, high unemployment and lost investments. Azam and Mesnard (2003) identified a link between the occurrence of conflicts and poor economic conditions and argue that governments aiming at combating terrorism could choose to raise military expenditures or other expenditures such as education, health, and investment to eliminate the possibility of poor people joining terrorist organizations. Literature (Pillar, 2001) shows that terrorism and terrorist groups do not arise randomly and they are not distributed evenly around the globe. The existence is attributed to the living standards and socio-economic deprivation of some segments of the society as the breeding stock for terrorists. Thus, people may join and even support terror groups as a response to societal frustration, sympathizers, and through religious-ideological affiliation.

Political Instability in the Neighboring Countries

Political instability in the neighboring countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and to a larger extent Somalia, has enabled expansion of terrorist interest into Kenya. Much of the Global War on Terror is based on its northern neighbor, Somalia. When the government of Somalia collapsed in 1991, it created a lawless society where crime and radical ideologies flourished. This has provided unrestricted movement of people and goods into and out of Somalia. Global terrorist networks like *Al-Qaida* based in the Middle East

countries took that advantage to use Somalia as their African terminal and contact point. Consequently, many terrorists from countries like Yemen and Afghanistan have used Somalia as a training and recruitment space for their terror networks.

Kenya, being strategically located has been on the receiving end. Firstly, as a host to many refugees from Somalia, some of whom are terrorists, and secondly, as the terror war zone, where terrorists activities are launched in revenge to any global efforts against terror.

Therefore, Kenya has severally been found to suffer from terrorist attacks that are retaliatory response to international rather than direct Kenya causes. For instance, in 1998, Kenya was attacked for being an ally of American interests. Many of these terrorists were refugees seeking a better life in Kenya. With a porous border and a confirmed presence of Islamic fundamentalists, Somalia poses a threat to Kenya and the rest of the world. In a joint press conference with Kenya and the United States in 2003, President Bush declared that stabilizing Somalia is essential in sustaining the war against terrorism (Mogire & Agade, 2011).

Without a proper government that can take control of the country, Somalia continues to play a direct role in the security deficiencies of Kenya. For one, Somalia's geographic location gives it the longest coastline in Africa and makes it the closest African country to the Middle East. This allows Somalia to act as a transit hub in bringing illicit items into Kenya. Most notably, the perpetrators of the 2002 Mombasa attacks transited from Somalia and smuggled weapons into Kenya through the shared border (Mogire & Agade, 2011). The lack of border security allowed most well-known East African fugitives such as, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, to transit frequently between both countries. Therefore, the lack of a government in Somalia for the last 14 years has allowed unimpeded movement of terrorists across the common border. Somalia's collapse brought an influx of Somali refugees into Kenya, allowing terrorists to blend in with the refugees, move freely across the border, and easily import terrorism into Kenya.

Lax law enforcement

Lax law enforcement has made Kenya easily accessible by terrorist networks. The Global War on Terrorism has dismantled terrorist sanctuaries, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia, but this has forced terrorists to look for safer and more accessible operational environments. Kenya, which had a relatively lax security mandate during the regime of previous governments, has provided the ideal environment for terrorists to exploit and infiltrate into the country. Those who employ terrorism, regardless of their specific secular or religious

objectives, strive to subvert the rule of law and effect change through corruption (bribery), violence and threats. The terrorists also share the misguided belief that killing, kidnapping, extorting, robbing, and wreaking mayhem to terrorize people are legitimate forms of political action.

Prior to the recent terrorism acts in the country, there were certainly counterterrorism units that existed in both the law enforcement and intelligence arenas. The main problems, however, were based on lack of funding and well-coordinated efforts. The National Security Intelligence Service was established following the embassy bombings in 1998 and Kenya was added to the U.S. Anti Terrorism Assistance Program (Mogire & Agade, 2011). The Kenyan Government has also created an Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU), a Joint Terrorism Task Force-that has since been disbanded (Aronson, 2012), a National Counter-Terrorism Centre, and a National Security Advisory Committee. However, the problem still remains that the infrastructure has yet been seen to affect authorities' ability to identify terrorists, foil terrorist plots, and bring criminals to justice (Prestholdt, 2011).

The flawed terrorism laws in Kenya have caused grave problems and even with improved legislation over the last few years, success has been minimal. For one, the definition of terrorism is vague and thus, able to be contested by many opponents. The Kenyan government defines terrorism as anti-state violent activities undertaken by non-state entities which are motivated by religious goals (Mogire & Agade, 2011). This definition neglects terrorism based on political, ideological, and criminal rationales and thus, places an unfair target on the minority religion in Kenya. Second, actual legislation has been very difficult to pass and put into practice, therefore, the government has been operating without official and encompassing anti-terrorism laws and standards.

The 2003 Suppression of Terrorism Bill did not make it into law after a public outcry over unconstitutionality, international human rights violations, and overt discrimination against Muslims. Two years later, the Anti-Terrorism Bill of 2006 was again brought before Parliament. This bill contained many of the same issues as its predecessor and was, therefore, not passed into law. Certain crimes committed by terrorists can be prosecuted in Kenyan courts, however, there has yet to exist a comprehensive anti-terrorism law insofar as one exists in other Western democracies.

The lack of this comprehensive legislation puts Kenyan law enforcement officials in positions where they perform questionable means and violate the human rights of many in the Muslim community. Intelligence officials have been accused numerous times of unlawfully detaining suspected terrorists for lengthy periods of time and torturing suspects in attempts to gain confessions and further intelligence (Prestholdt, 2011). As the proper prosecutorial infrastructure is hardly in place, Kenyan authorities frequently hand-off terrorism suspects to neighboring countries or the United States. In one instance, after the 2010 bombing in Kampala, Uganda, the Government of Kenya transferred 13 Kenyan citizens suspected of taking part in the attacks to Uganda. The Minister of Justice declared that the rendition was illegal (Mogire

& Agade, 2011), although there was no possibility of reversing the action that had already occurred.

Effects of Terrorism in Kenya

Tourism Industry

Tourism, one of the foundation blocks of Kenya's economy, constitutes 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has been adversely affected by the repercussions of terrorism. The influx of tourists to Kenya can be estimated to over 500,000 visitors each year. Europe and the United States of America (USA) represent Kenya's traveller generating region with 70% of the market being Europeans (Switzerland, Italy, Belgium France and Britain account for the bulk of tourists). In addition, visitors come from Japan, Asia, Scandinavia, and other African countries. USA, Germany, Great Britain and some other countries, upon receiving the news about the terrorist attacks on Kenya's US Embassy in Nairobi, immediately issued travel advisories to their citizens and imposed travel bans to refrain travel to Kenya as it was deemed unsafe. Moreover, the extensive media coverage of the attacks particularly focused on Kenya's vulnerability to terrorism severely tarnished its image. These responses led to a decline in travel to Kenya and some neighboring countries as travelers feared the spillover of the terrorist attacks. For example, tourism businesses were terribly affected by the travel warnings. Tourism brought in US \$500 million in annual revenue and was losing at least \$1 million everyday due to the decline in tourism. Consequently, Kenya's tourism industry was paralyzed. Kenya suffered a decrease in tourist arrivals. This had a ripple effect on all sectors of the industry.

Tourism is highly susceptible to external shocks such as natural disasters, political instability (PI) and terrorism (Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006) because it is an industry where consumption is based on faith and trust. Events that damage that faith destabilize the tourism system and affect the elements within the structure and the surrounding environments via demand fluctuations (Neumayer, 2004). The tourism board of Kenya could try to mitigate some of the negative impacts

of the past terrorism attacks on the country by recreating a new image for the destination. Though terrorism would ultimately have a devastating impact on any country being affected, repositioning Kenya in the minds of tourists and other tourists' destination by focusing on the positives rather than the negative aspects of terrorism can aid in the process of moving forward. An example of this is the use of the US Embassy bombing as a memorial site where locals and tourists can visit.

There needs to be a crisis management portfolio that distinguishes terrorism from other forms of crisis. It should also outline in detail the measures that should be implemented before and after such a crisis. Then the portfolio should assist in painting a clear and clutter free process that should be followed after an act of terrorism to facilitate a timely recovery for Kenya's image. Because terrorism has so severely tarnished the image of Kenya's tourism product it is very crucial that only specified and highly qualified individuals should address the public and medias issues. Therefore, the portfolio will also outline all individuals who should be involved in this process with clearly defined roles and objectives.

Economic Impact

One of the most direct impacts of terrorism is on the society's economic well-being. In Kenya, where much of the foreign earning/revenue rely on tourism, agriculture and foreign investors, the economic conditions become more vulnerable whenever there is a terror attack. According to the Kenya Tourism Board, tourism accounts for 12% of Kenya's GDP as of May 2013, generating nearly 21% of foreign exchange earnings and making it the second largest after Agriculture. Terrorism affects the economy by undermining tourism sector, which is evident in massive loss of tourists due to travel advisories translating into loss of revenue caused by loss of guests, jobs and foreign earning. In terms of economic investments, terrorism affects investors' confidence in the economy. In the Kenyan cost region for instance, most Germany and Italian investors in Malindi were forced to close down their businesses due to terror threats and insecurity. As a consequence, there has been

loss of job opportunities for local workers, suppliers and a chain of other stakeholders that rely on hospitality industry.

Terror activities both in the Kenya and the Somalia international waters have been blamed for economic inflation in the country. Kenya relies on importation of most of its basic resources including energy. Terror activities like hijacking of ships inflated prices of fuel and basic industrial commodities made life costly for most Kenyans to afford. There is also economic loss encountered in loss of human capital. Whenever terror attack happens, many people lose life while many others lose their source of livelihood. Consequently, there is destruction of property and loss of bread winners for most of the families and/or homes, and the end result is poverty. Another economic cost of terrorism is in terms of compensation for the losses, medical bills and the general interruption of development plans. For instance millions of shillings intended for development are now diverted for emergency to cater for victims of terror attacks, reconstruction of the economy destroyed, compensation and reinforcement of security apparatus. The overall result is that terrorism makes an economic environment unstable for investment, leads to loss of human life depended upon for economic growth, economic inflation, diverts resources and attention and interferes with budgetary planning of the economy.

Political Impact

Terrorism and terrorist activities have led to political re-alignments in the world politics. For instance, Kenya and the rest of Africa are members to NEPAD, while the African Union through military institutions like AMISOMU have taken over political responsibilities to influence response to terror attacks. Terrorism destabilizes political arrangements, results in confusion, leads to loss of revenue, make the political system vulnerable, especially with lack of relevant policies. Consequently, terrorism challenges the existing political institutions. In Kenya for instance, there has been a tag of war and blame game between the executive, the judiciary, the police and intelligence services, with each blaming each other for ineffectiveness leading to the recurrent incidences of terror.

Terrorism also makes the political institutions vulnerable to external influences. For instance, Kenya has to rely on the US, Britain, Australia, Russia, Israel and Germany among others, for intelligence on terrorism, technical assistance, equipment and strategy. The reliance on them comes with strings attached based on the interests of the donor nation, hence, compromising political sovereignty in the country, its institutions, and kind of policy frameworks that are eventually adopted.

Social Impact

Terrorism has had massive impact on the social life in Kenya. Today most institutions and premises such as places of worship, schools, shops, restaurants and other public utilities are unsafe. People have to be searched in order to access them. There is a general social mistrust of the other, representing insecurity. The family institutions have also been affected by terrorism through loss of their members and more recently the fact that children have not been spared by terrorists as victims of injuries and death. Children have also been recruited into terror networks in schools, clubs, churches and mosques. Terror social media are also taking advantage of the mass communication techniques to lure young people into joining the networks, sometimes without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. Religious venues have become the most active terror zones in Kenya. In fact, at one time, most people feared places of worship because of terror threats. Terrorists have also succeeded to use some religious affiliations to radicalize some youths and cause mayhem, with the intention to divide Kenyans along religious groups.

Psychological Effects

Terrorism in Kenya does not only affect tourism, economy, and social and political aspects, but also causes psychological implications among the affected populations. According to Martha (1983), terrorism is a form of psychological warfare against a society. Terrorist campaigns can be expected to psychologically affect a sizeable portion of the population of a targeted society, either directly, by harming a person or their family, or indirectly, through the extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks. However, analysis in this paper indicates that psychological effects are mostly based on individuals, not society as a whole, though it does not affect everyone to an equal degree. According to Boaz (2002), peoples' fear of terrorism is rational and irrational. It is rational in the sense that there is an ever present threat of a terrorist attack being repeated, but irrational in that the probability assigned to that potential event hence, the fear of terrorism is widespread in every society. The main question here is that how to an individual accommodates psychological fear associated with terrorism? Alan (2005) contends that the explanation for this lies in what is known as the accommodation effect. The accommodation effect means that the amount of stress created by ingrained traumatic actions actually lessens. For that reason, as terrorism becomes a regular occurrence, a process of habituation and de-sensitization may occur, and people become able to maintain a semblance of a normal life (Roy-Byrne, 2003). This implicates that people can learn to live with terrorism and psychologically cope with it.

Current Concerns on Terrorism in Kenya

Paradoxically, in today's more than ever inter-connected world, there is a growingly visible division between societies. As terrorists seek to change some aspects of society from freedom of religious expression to physical and political control over regions, the divisions between societies may result in shifting definitions of terrorism and dramatic differences in characterizations of groups or individuals as terrorists. The impact has been difficult for people living around it. The terror trauma, pain and sadness have had governments to raise their efforts to control terrorism.

As Mephram (2002) opines, purely military responses to terrorism are likely to fail and that a successful precaution against it requires a well-developed policy response and robust measures. One of the most effective actions in fighting terrorism is to identify the factors that are related to the formation of terrorism and to determine the conditions that enable terrorist groups to operate and find support for their activities (Feridun, and Sezgin, 2008). The authors argue that Kenya has always employed reactionary measures to terrorism, not putting into consideration that terrorism is a well coordinated activity that requires consistent and robust long-term measures to combat it. Kenya should advance and embrace good technology to help identify and locate terrorists and their groups, make early warnings, protect our borders, and encourage Kenyans to remain resolute in the face of adversity. Acts of terror are not extraordinary or super human activities. They are simple and predictable plans executed by people who throughout the planning and execution stages are in deep fear.

Terrorism has attracted attention from various stakeholders in the country. This has given a lot of attention to terrorism by various government institutions as well as media outlets. This has affected the psychological thoughts of many Kenyans negatively, despite the positive local capacities to respond to terror threats improving. Many citizens ask whether terrorism is different from other crimes in the society? Is terrorism part of human life and/or will it go away? Some experts argue that Kenya must continue to develop measures to thwart the existence of conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Additionally, in reference to the foregoing discussion, the most efficient way of tackling terrorism is by eliminating the conditions, which propagate or lead some people in the country to resort to terrorism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is our conclusion that despite the threats posed by terror activities, the Kenyan society in general seem not to be learning enough lessons and if so, with reactive rather than pro-active approach. The overall observation is that despite efforts made by government and other agents to curb the menace, much is yet to be achieved. It is also our concern that the local capacity to combat terrorism in Kenya is yet to be convincing and meet the threats posed. This paper recommends that for Kenya to achieve its efforts in combating terrorism and terror-related activities, well-co-ordinated, multi-sectoral and pro-active measures should be espoused and implemented from the grassroots (county) to national government level. Besides, enhancement of national security to deal with terrorism and emergency handling capacity should be given priority and de-linked from politics.

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