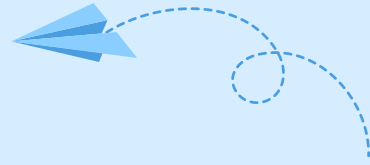




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Terrorism as a Strategic Threat to the UAE

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TERRORISM AS A STRATEGIC THREAT TO THE UAE

Potential dangers that can be faced by a country now or in future deter it from achieving her objectives and visions. The Gulf region has always been politically instable even before the 21st century. However, the chances of a conventional warfare threat have reduced, since the last conventional war between Iraq and Iran was conducted. Instead, asymmetrical warfare threats such as terrorism have become a concern. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) face threats imposed by natural disasters and criminal activities. Terrorism is an issue of concern to many countries in the world, particularly in the Middle East. Lately, researches have shown that terrorists are becoming more bold and aggressive in their activities. The UAE government and policy makers show their concern about the matter, because terrorism can make the achievement of their Vision 2030 impossible (Sprusansky & Hanley, 2015). Terrorism is a main threat to the development and economic growth of the United Arab Emirates.

The UAE government has a responsibility of working towards the objectives of the Vision 2030. The vision promotes peace, multicultural diversity, and economic growth. It will only be possible to achieve if the law enforcement unit is diligent in addressing internal insecurity issues. The law enforcement is responsible for arresting the law breakers and punishing them. The military should always be ready for a conventional attack from the neighboring violent countries.

Through well-established diplomatic relations between UAE and other

nations, they can quickly ask for aid at time of crisis. Iran is the biggest threat to other Middle East countries due to its extensive human resources (Ehteshami, 2013). However, through international relations, the Emirates can increase their human resources. Peace will enable economic prosperity of the country. Studies show that the majority of investors put finances in secure areas. UAE is one of the countries with the largest economic potential in the world. It has the thirty-first rank among the worlds' most industrious countries (Ehteshami, 2013). UAE will attract many foreign investors due to its significant oil resources and a large number of tourists. By 2030 it will enable multicultural diversity and economic growth.

Terrorism poses a threat to the UAE, as its 2030 vision aims at creating a society that is secure and prosperous. Terrorists make the image of security impossible. The rate of terror attacks in the UAE is high due to its proximity to unstable and hostile countries. This year alone major attacks have affected people in several parts of the UAE. Recently there was an attack on a civilian aid ship. Terrorists are becoming better-organized, so that their attacks are becoming more advanced too. Statistical evidence shows that terrorism has been on the rise in the UAE in the recent past decades (Harvell & Nisbett, 2016). Continued investments and activities of foreign countries such as the United States are partially responsible for this scenario. Terrorists have always targeted the USA government and citizens, including their investments and offices in other countries. The increase in terror attacks in the UAE may also be related to the anti-terrorist operations, conducted by this nation's government. UAE and other Middle East countries that are striving for peace and development

have good relationships with the United Nations. The UN is concerned with international peace among other objectives. The support provided by the UAE to the UN may have made terrorists in the neighboring countries bitter and vengeful.

Currently a significant terrorism threat to the UAE is imposed by the Daesh terrorist group. Daesh is a terrorist group in Iraq and Syria. It is formally known under the name al-Qaeda, and it holds several ideologies about the Islam religion. It believes in the absolute rejection of any innovation since the time of Mohammed and claims that any activity against the writing of the Quran must be eliminated. They aim at involving all Muslims into their course (Ehteshami, 2013). UAE is an Islamic state, and thus it is targeted by this group. Daesh is a well-organized and funded faction, so each of its attacks is carefully planned. It has well-trained and equipped fighters. Reports claim that Daesh funds its activities through criminal actions such as illegal exploiting of oil reserves and drug trafficking. The UAE has oil reserves that are strategic targets for terrorists. These terror attacks undermine the UAE's economic, political, and social growth. The UAE government should plan how to overcome terrorism in order to ensure peace.

Modern technology has made it incredibly easy for terrorists to operate. Social media such as the Internet enables them to communicate from different parts of the world and to exchange information. The ease in global communication has also played a role in the recent increase in terrorism across the continents. The Internet encourages the spread of radicalization. Many young people in the UAE get recruited into terror



groups through social media (Sprusansky & Hanley, 2015). Rebel groups such as Daesh involve young Muslims from different countries into their course. Terrorists easily convince young people to join their movement by promising money or sharing some benefits that appeal to the youth. Daesh is a well-financed group that represents a significant threat to the Emirates. The geographical location of the UAE and its proximity to such countries as Iran, where terrorism is widely spread, makes radicalization rates in this nation very high.

Due to the modern technology, the cases of cybercrime are very high in the Emirates. Most of these crimes have connections to the terror activities in the country. The UAE is one of the top-ranked countries in the world with high cases of hacking (Harvell & Nisbett, 2016). Technology enables terrorists to send messages to the government through encrypted videos and audios with no chances for the country's intelligence agencies to track them.

The UAE government has to employ effective economic, legal, intelligence, and military strategies in order to deal with these attacks. The Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 emphasizes the importance of creating a sustainable state that protects the resources of the current and future generations (Shtender-Auerbach & Bouillon, 2015). It also insists on the diversity and economic growth. Terrorism can make these goals unattainable to the UAE, because it hinders the diversity and multicultural awareness. The only possible way to achieve them is interactions with other societies.

The UAE's leading sources of revenue include the petroleum products.

However, diversity in the economic activities is essential for achieving the economic growth, projected in their vision 2030. Foreign investors will not be comfortable investing in an insecure place. As a result, neither diversity nor economic growth will occur. Dubai contributes a considerably large amount of income to the GDP through tourism. Terrorism impacts tourism negatively. The recent increase in terror attacks in the UAE has reduced the number of tourists in Dubai. Not only does the terrorism deter UAE from realizing its 2030 visions of the economic growth and peace, but it also decreases the country's income (Sprusansky & Hanley, 2015).

The government of the Emirates should invest in fighting terrorism if it aims to achieve its Vision 2030. The UAE's dependence on oil as their primary source of income will inconvenience their fight against terrorists. The oil prices have decreased at the international market that has considerably reduced the amount of revenues in the UAE. Moreover, this nation also has a small workforce rate. Therefore, the best way for it is to fight Daesh by asking for help from other countries that have the necessary financial and human resources. For instance, such country as the U.S is devoted to fighting terrorism across the globe. The UAE can also opt for diversifying its means of earning income within the country. For example, it can invest more in tourism.

The government should invest in providing education about terrorism to the youth in order to reduce the rates of radicalization. The law enforcement authorities should get actively involved in the social media as well as monitor activities and messages. An improved intelligence that

investigates terror activities in the neighboring countries would make it easier to detect threats early enough to prevent them from causing harm. The UAE has always supported the creation of regional security cooperation. It is essential for fighting militias in the Middle East, since the countries in agreement can easily share intelligence information that is crucial for saving lives and capturing terrorists. Historical data shows that collective security measures are useful for stabilizing troublesome regions. The law enforcement officers and military troops should follow the changes in technologies. It will enable them to decode messages and prevent attacks, planned by the terror groups.

Enhanced cooperation among all civilians and the national security units is vital for fighting terrorism. Coordination of the public will enable security to receive information about any suspicious behavior beforehand. It is crucial to have a quick response team at times of a security crisis. The operational unit and the decision makers have to cooperate and to make prompt and efficient decisions of handling and fighting terrorists. Economically, UAE should focus on providing sufficient security to travellers in order to encourage tourism in Dubai and other parts of the country. International investors can also be encouraged to invest their money in the Emirates if they are persuaded that the country is making steps towards achieving a peaceful and prosperous environment. The UAE will achieve its Vision 2030 only by constant fighting against terrorism.

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