MITIGATING CRIMES & SECURING NATIONAL SECURITY USING THE NATIONAL CORE VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the effect of crimes such as gangsterism, kidnapping and terrorism on the security of Malaysia in the post-pandemic era. It also explores how issues of xenophobia and the likelihood of public demonstrations against the backdrop of the upcoming General Elections (GE15) may result in safety and security concerns. Research findings indicate an upwards trend in criminal activity as travel and movement has resumed and factors adversely affecting the economy have worked as push factors for perpetrators. Terrorism threats could resurface following the forced slowdown of the preceding years due to the pandemic. Ongoing geopolitical developments and myopic leadership campaigns from certain quarters, that leverage social media to extend their narratives, could see xenophobic reactions being played on a national level. In previous general elections, the temptation by certain parties to exploit such fault lines has been irresistible. Public demonstrations due to the upcoming GE15 with intense politicking from all quarters should also be expected. Current laws are however in place to deal with safety and security issues arising from these challenges. These are however reactionary and do no little to deal with the root causes. A holistic blueprint has been created by the National Security Council covering nine (9) Core Values which recognise that national security is not limited to military might and policing, but covers all aspects of life. These core values, if maintained, preserved, and strengthened can ensure Malaysia's continued existence as an independent, peaceful and sovereign nation.

Keywords: Gangsterism, Terrorism, Xenophobia, Demonstrations, National Security, Core Values.
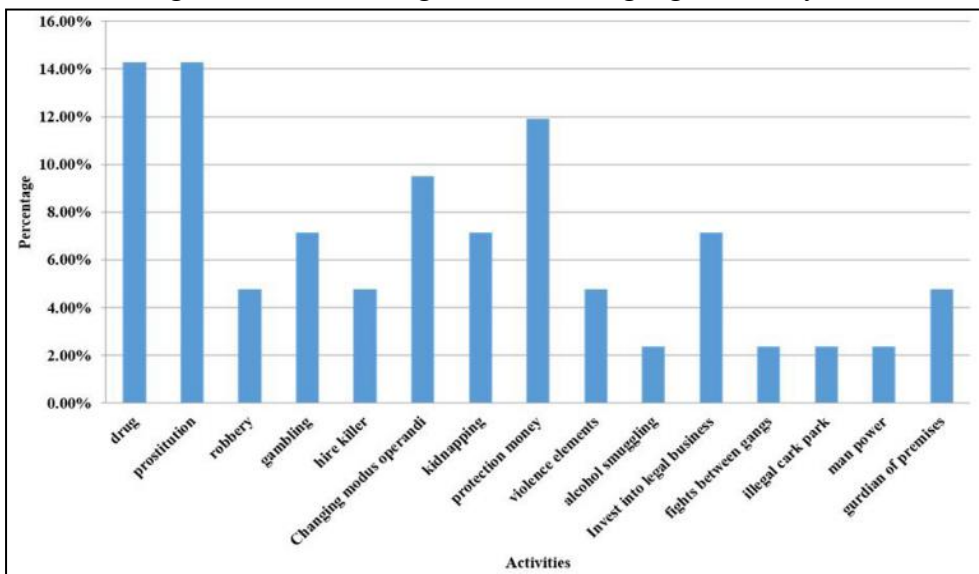
1.0   INTRODUCTION

All societies are concerned by crime, and the general public is fearful of criminal behaviour (Nathan, 2005). People must have trust in their society and faith in their future, safety, and security in the broadest terms, and as such safety and security lie at the heart of any nation's prosperity (PwC, 2019). This article examines selected criminal activity namely gangsterism and kidnappings and ongoing concerns about terrorism as Malaysia transitions to normalcy from the controlled period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Incidences also affecting Malaysia's safety and security such as public demonstrations and *xenophobia* are also examined, and how Malaysia mitigates and maintains its national security using existing laws, but holistically by using the nine (9) national core values under the NSP (MKN, 2021), which was introduced as the principal policy in confronting the various security threats.

1.1   GANGSTERISM

According to Moorthy et al. (2019), gangs' illegal activities in Malaysia cover a wide spectrum, many of which are driven by economic drivers such as prostitution, drug trafficking, and smuggling (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Various illegal activities of gangs in Malaysia

Source: Moorthy et al. (2019)

Gangsterism is also not a new phenomenon in Malaysia and has persisted in socio-economically challenged communities (Moorthy et al., 2019). It is for this reason that in addition to the financial motivation of being in a gang, gangs can give members a feeling of protection and a sense of safety in numbers (Sonterblum, 2018).

Ehrlich (1973) and Becker (1968) have shown that if legal income opportunities become scarce relative to potential gains from crime, crime will become more frequent. This could be applied to gangsterism. Although Malaysia is showing signs of recovery, the pandemic did cause Malaysia's economy to contract with unemployment levels rising as much as 83 % in 2020 (FMT, 2022). Credit agency Fitch Solutions also revised Malaysia's GDP in 2021 from 4.9% to 0% (The Edge, 2021), and the poverty rate spiking to 8.4% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 5.6% the previous year (FMT, 2021).

Based on data from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in 2021, Malaysia has 72 known and active gangs involved in criminal activity. From this data, among the 72 gangs identified, 49 were confirmed to have been established in 2013, while 23 others were established in 2015 with a total amount of 9,042 active members. The main concern about gangsterism is that it may increase, as aggressive gangs have been seen in blatant turf wars for control of an area for organized crimes activities like drug pushing or gambling, i.e. economically driven objectives (Adam, 2021).

1.1.1 Certain Locations Are More Vulnerable

Gangsterism at present is more linked to certain ethnic groups although states such as the Selangor record arguably have shown more activity related to gangsterism and is deep-rooted, caused by various factors with poor economic realities being a primary driver. In a published media report (The Sun Daily, 2018), police statistics showed that ethnic Chinese, who make up 23.2% of Malaysia's population, have as many as 65 gangs, which puts them at the top among the races in terms of having the most number of secret societies. Although Indians, who account for only 7% of the population, have only 18 secret societies their gangs are the most active.

1.1.2 Countering Gangsterism

Usually prosecuted under Section 43 of the Societies Act 1966 and members who have tattoos or logos of their gangs on them can also be prosecuted under Section 52(3) of the same Act. Various sections of the Penal Code such as Section 326 voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons and Section 148 for possessing weapons and rioting are also used. On a broader scale, countering gangsterism is complicated and requires a deeper application of sociological factors underlying gang membership as highlighted by Durairaja, et al (2019) to include poor parenting style, family members who were also gangsters, gang culture in the neighbourhood, and financial difficulties.

It is viewed that gangsterism will be localized and not pervasive on a national security threat level. Once there is a return to normalcy post-pandemic, a spike in gangsterism should be anticipated. While Malaysia's policing is competent in preventing widespread gang activity, and all of the government's response to address the implications of the wider socio-economic reasons is also needed.

2.0   KIDNAPPINGS

As kidnapping is not defined as an Index Crime, officially published data for the whole of Malaysia is not available for evaluation. Perpetrators are usually charged under Section 3(1) of the Kidnapping Act 1961 and read with Section 34 of the Penal Code (ACT 574), which provides for the death sentence or life imprisonment upon conviction although several other provisions under the Acts may be applied. Based on media reports, kidnappings motivated by what appear to be economic motivations (for ransom) have become more prominent.

2.1   Examples of Recent Kidnapping Incidents

i.   Eighteen individuals were detained in connection with the kidnapping of a Palestinian man at Jalan Yap Kwan Seng. The 31-year-old victim was kidnapped at about 11 pm on Sept 28, 2022. The victim was recused

late afternoon on September 29, 2022, and the motivation was believed to be ransom, later known the motive behind it, is the role of foreign agent in Malaysia. (The Star, 2022 & Malaysia Now, 2022).

ii.   Police arrested three individuals, including the husband of a kidnapped victim, at her house in Kampung Semat Jal, Wakaf Bharu in Tumpat on September 13, 2022. The husband of the 36-year-old victim was suspected of having a disagreement with a member of a drug trafficking syndicate he belonged to (FMT, 2022).

iii.   Police detained a male suspect in his 20s in connection with the kidnapping/murder of a woman from her home Broga where the motive was ransom. (The Star, 2022).

iv.   **The body of a Bangladeshi expatriate in Malaysia was recovered 11 days after his abduction in** the forest behind a factory on Road Number 10 of Taming Jaya Industry Park, Selangor after a ransom was paid. The body was recovered based on confessional statements given by four expatriate Bangladeshis, who were arrested in connection with the abduction. (The Daily Star, 2022).

Of persistent reporting are kidnapping attempts off the coast of Sabah for the past two decades (Malay Mail, 2016), perpetrated mainly by the southern Philippines Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), notorious for kidnappings for ransom.

Nonetheless, the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) has reportedly maintained zero kidnappings along the east coast of Sabah for 2020/21, and intercepts are made by enforcement (The Star, 2020). The threat of kidnappings and cross-border incursions is generally seen in the Beluran, Kinabatangan, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Sandakan, Semporna, and Tawau districts (Crisis 24, 2021).

As long as the ASG and similar groups are in operation, the areas mentioned will face a constant threat of kidnapping but the various security agencies appear to be highly competent in preventing the negative impact on Malaysia in the near to medium term.

3.0   DEMONSTRATIONS/PROTESTS

The Peaceful Assembly Act 2012 states that organizers of protests need only to notify the police of an assembly 10 days before it. There are no permits or licenses that are necessary to proceed with any assembly. In recent times younger Malaysians are especially vested in being vocal about their future, demanding that leaders, technocrats, and bureaucrats are held accountable for their actions, although ruling politicians rarely these sorts of demonstrations as positive (FMT, 2022).

3.1   Examples of Demonstrations

  i.   Public anger over corruption has previously led to mass demonstrations and election upsets, with the multi-billion-dollar 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal contributing to the longest-governing coalition's downfall in 2018 (Lee, 2022).

 ii.   In 2018, tens of thousands of ethnic Malays took to the streets of Kuala Lumpur to "celebrate" a government decision not to ratify a key UN anti-discrimination treaty (ICERD) (Mayberry, 2018).

iii.   In July 2021 about a thousand Malaysians staged an anti-government protest in defiance of a ban on public gatherings under coronavirus curbs, piling pressure on the embattled Prime Minister *Muhyiddin Yassin* to resign. There was a heavy police presence and officers blocked attempts by protesters to enter a central square before the rally peacefully dispersed (Al-Jazeera, 2021).

 iv.   In January 2022, some 200 protesters converged on the streets of Kuala Lumpur to demand action against Malaysian anti-graft head Azam Baki following controversy over the purchase of stocks several years ago (The Straits Times, 2022).

In general, protests are peaceful. The last time violence erupted was in 2012 during the Bersih 3.0 rally, where several journalists were attacked by

police officers, and some photographers had their cameras and memory cards destroyed after taking photos of alleged police brutality (FMT, 2012).

With Malaysia's current political landscape in a state of flux and with Covid-19-related restrictions easing on all fronts, further peaceful political protests can be envisaged especially in the lead-up to GE15 although the possibility of such protests turning violent must be considered due to Malaysia's diverse makeup and fractured political landscape. Demonstrations nonetheless can be envisaged centered in Kuala Lumpur where media coverage will be the most.

4.0   XENOPHOBIA

Xenophobia is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, whereas *racism* has a broader meaning set including "a belief that racial differences produce the inherent superiority of a particular race" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

In Malaysia *xenophobia* has existed regardless of race. Most cases of reported *xenophobia* however have been towards foreign nationals and workers, who originate from perceived lesser-developed countries. Certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media outlets have created unsubstantiated anti-Bangladeshi sentiment, playing on racially-charged stereotypes, fears of crime, and economic worries (Recruitment Reform, 2016).

4.1   Incidents of Xenophobia

The Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 brought to the surface *xenophobic* reactions following the Tablighi Jama'at mass religious gathering in Malaysia became the largest known coronavirus vector in Southeast Asia at the time (Ding, 2020). It was reported that thousands of event attendees, were urged to come forward and were assured that the authorities will not focus on their travel documents (Malay Mail, 2020). However, Malaysian authorities carried out crackdowns and arrested some 2,000 undocumented migrants including asylum-seekers and at least 98 children (Dzulkifly, 2020). With the mass arrests practiced at the time, the security and safety of Malaysia at large were

compromised as undocumented migrants were hesitant to come forward from coming forward for testing allowing the COVID-19 virus to spread.

This local discontent also affected the Rohingya community. In 2020, during the MCO, Malaysians called for more than 100,000 Rohingya refugees to be deported, asking the PN government to stop accepting any Rohingya refugee boats, and prioritise helping Malaysians amid the bleak economic outlook (Straits Times, 2020). Any previous sympathy for what was happening to the Rohingyas in Myanmar by Malaysians did not translate to the treatment of Rohingyas coming to Malaysia at the time.

Furthermore, *xenophobia* seemed to heighten after alleged postings by the president of the Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organisation Malaysia, Mr. Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani, demanding equal rights in Malaysia, surfaced, and resulting in calls for this death on social media (Rodzi, 2020). Mary Lawlor, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders, subsequently questioned Malaysia's commitment to handling the matter (FMT, 2022).

The soil could be fertile to sow such feelings of *xenophobia* in Malaysia. Welsh (2020), suggests that Malaysian political parties have intensified polarisation, as party leaders have turned to divisive rhetoric to compensate for their loss of grassroots connections and patronage resources after 2018.

Rhetoric encompassing divisions of race, religion, and reform is far simpler to convey than policy, and fueling discontent is simpler than engaging with Malaysia's diversity. Utilizing social media, and the capacity of political leaders to deliver alternative messages, feeding polarisation can only intensify if not curbed consciously on a national level.

5.0   TERRORISM

The general counterterrorism position in Malaysian is that the danger from terrorism comes internally from religious and ethnically motivated violent extremism, arguably stoked by political leaders, unlike in Indonesia and

elswhere in the region where groups linked to Al-Qaeda and ISIS pose the gravest danger (FMT, 2021). Nonetheless, more recently PAS' "open support" for the Taliban would not have gone unnoticed by ISIS-K and might drag Malaysia unnecessarily into a fight between the Taliban and ISIS-K which are enemies (Aslam, 2022).

Malaysia has, for the most part, avoided being a direct target of these groups although Malaysia's visa-waiver program, which allows foreigners to enter Malaysia easily also creates another challenge as it has been one of the main reasons for the country is regarded as a haven, transit point, and logistics hub by terrorist groups (Nasir and Dass, 2020).

5.1   Recent Terrorism Incidents

Malaysia has so far been spared from direct or large-scale terrorist attacks compared to Indonesia and the Philippines largely due to its vast experience in dealing with the scourge of terrorism from the time of the communist insurgency. Nonetheless, Malaysia's history of links to terrorists in the region like Hambali, Nasir Abbas, Dr Mahmud Ahmad, and Nordin Mat Top must not be discounted as the current threats are regionally rooted.

To underscore this, in 2019, the Malaysian counter-terrorism apparatus arrested 16 individuals for suspected IS links and plotting attacks (Al Jazeera, 2019). The report indicated that twelve Indonesians, three Malaysians and one Indian national, were apprehended across the country, including Kuala Lumpur and Sabah. Their targets were unnamed political figures and non-Muslim groups. This comes in the wake of government information released in 2015 confirming knowledge of known 50,000 IS supporters in the country (Al Jazeera, 2015).

The Malaysian police in 2021 revealed that it had foiled a plot in January 2020 by a lone wolf IS sympathizer to kill then-Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and several other key Pakatan Harapan (PH) leaders (The Daily Express, 2021).

In 2019, Muhammad Syazani and Muhammad Nurul Amin managed to assemble the first Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) IED in Malaysia (Nasir, 2019). Investigations showed that they undertook bomb-making training with the Indonesian pro-IS group, Jemaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) based in Yogyakarta in 2018. This case highlighted the advanced bomb-making skill developed by IS and the significance of transnational links. It also shows the importance of Malaysia's cooperation with regional partners in maintaining national security.

While terrorist attacks are not a key national security problem as yet however issues linked to groups like the ASG will prevail in Sabah so long as the external threat exists. Encroachment into Malaysia however will likely be limited due to strong enforcement and monitoring technology.

5.2   Counter Terrorism Laws

Malaysia has two primary laws that deal with terrorism, namely:

, is due to the more complex nature of terrorism investigations.

6.0   TRIGGERS IMPACTING NATIONAL SECURITY

Locally, disputes relating to religion and race and how it is perceived to be managed is a sensitive trigger. The Seafield Sri Maha Mariamman Temple riots in 2018 illustrate this (Augustin, 2021). In Malaysia, the entrenched narrative of affirmative action favouring the majority ethnic group has found expression in the circles of politics, economics, social relations, and everyday life. This must be managed well (Liow, 2021).

A sudden event such as the perceived mistreatment of Muslim communities may trigger a serious retaliation on Malaysian soil. One example was the actions of a politician from the Indian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Nupur Sharma, who had made insulting statements about Prophet Muhammad, prompting Malaysia's Religious affairs minister Idris Ahmad to remind certain quarters to stop insulting Islam as it can become very sensitive

and expressed concern that such provocations could lead to untoward incidents (FMT, 2022).

Exploiting these fault lines by those in leadership or influential roles could be disastrous. Thus, Malaysia's national security is also tied to international triggers regarding the perception of mistreatment of Muslims in general and the issues surrounding Israel and Palestine.

Malaysia's international threats to national security issues such as transnational organized crime, human trafficking and smuggling, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration are critical (although not triggers per se). According to National Security Council (MKN) chairman Datuk Rodzi Md Saad, the influx of immigrants, refugee issues and cybersecurity have been identified by the National Security Council (MKN) as among 66 new challenges to national security (The Star, 2021).

Cybersecurity however is seen as an issue that will dominate the scope of national security, as Malaysia moves towards the fourth industrial revolution (IR4.0) and the influx of unverified information poses a threat to national security, as it can create a wrong perception of certain issues (Malay Mail, 2021). Malaysia's history of being linked to terror groups in the region and also returning and repatriated/deported FTFs should be of concern due to their well-trained position.

7.0 DYNAMIC MITIGATION MEASURES

Malaysia has a robust legal and enforcement framework to mitigate security and safety challenges in its many forms as highlighted in the sections above. That notwithstanding, the National Security Policy (NSP) 2021-2025 (MKN, 2021) formulated under the National Security Council Act 2016 [Act 776] was introduced as the principal policy in confronting the various security threats which have become increasingly dynamic and complex more so in the era of borderless societies and rapid technological advancements.

The NSP, via the implementation of primary strategies is aimed to ensure that key National Core Values are safeguarded thus ensuring

Malaysia's safety from all forms of threat, physical and non-physical, which may influence and corrupt people's minds. National security in this regard, is not limited to military might and policing, but covers all aspects of life, and a holistic approach is needed. The policy covers economic prosperity, social harmony, political stability and international relations, with the objective of upholding the country's security and sovereignty.

From a regional perspective, strategic cooperation through active participation in regional security and defence organisations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) and Five-Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) to safeguard national interests is necessary.

Malaysia's core values are required to be maintained, preserved, and strengthened to guarantee its survival as an independent, peaceful and sovereign nation. These none (9) core values are as follows:

Core Value 1: Territorial Sovereignty and Integrity

Territorial sovereignty and integrity are paramount to the stability and security of a nation. The creation of Malaysia comprising the states of Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Terengganu and the Federal Territories, as enshrined in the Federal Constitution, must be maintained and preserved. Malaysia's sovereignty also extends to its territorial waters as it enjoys sovereign rights to its maritime zones in accordance with the relevant international laws. Malaysia needs to protect and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity from both internal and external threats.

Core Value 2: Socio-Political Stability

Socio-political stability is vital to creating a peaceful and harmonious environment for the people of Malaysia. The Government is responsible for upholding parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy, the rule of law, sanctity of the Constitution, as well as respect for and guaranteeing of human rights based on the Federal Constitution. At the same time, the people are responsible for supporting the policies implemented by the Government to

ensure peace and stability in the country. These principles must be respected and adhered to by all Malaysians irrespective of their political beliefs, religion, ethnicity, origins or social status.

Core Value 3: National Integration

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious country. National integration is core to the strength and security of the country. It can be achieved through the bonds that unify all Malaysians. The formula for unity in a country with a plural society such as Malaysia thus depends on the various communities coming together to live with mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, understanding of the social contract that underlines the unity of the people and respect of human rights based on the Federal Constitution.

Core Value 4: Good Governance

Good governance is fundamental to national security. It concerns not only the Government but also the private sector. This is because good governance will enable a country to implement the policies that have been formulated, manage the resources of the country efficiently and effectively, gain international recognition and fulfil the expectations of the people. Good governance incorporates, among other things, high integrity, absence of corruption, honesty, trust, justice, equal rights, transparency and responsibility.

Core Value 5: Economic Integrity

Economic integrity means the country has a sustainable and resilient economy that can weather any internal or external economic threat. A weak economy will impact the stability of the country as a consequence of poverty, unemployment and dissatisfaction in society. Economic integrity also encompasses the participation, acquisition, involvement and efforts of all Malaysians towards ensuring the economic survival of the country. Furthermore, a strong economy combined with improvements in social conditions is a contributory factor towards the enhancement of national security as a weak economy has the potential to threaten national security.

Core Value 6: Social Justice

Social justice is vital to ensure national security is preserved. The protection of basic human rights for every Malaysian citizen is championed in accordance with the Federal Constitution and international laws to which Malaysia is a party (with reservations). All Malaysians, even those from minority groups, must be protected and no party should be excluded. This core value must be protected in accordance with the Federal Constitution by taking cognizance of the differences in the socio-economic status of any particular ethnic group. Thus, Government policies and provisions in the Federal Constitution which have granted special rights to groups needing them will continue to be honoured. However, the principle of social justice should not be the launching pad for any party to make excessive claims which can then threaten the security and sovereignty of the country.

Core Value 7: Sustainable Development

Sustainable development fulfils present as well as future needs to achieve a balance in economic, social, demographic and environmental development. Security must be given priority in any development plan to ensure the sustainability of the nation's resources, people's prosperity and fulfilling the needs of future generations. Unequal development may lead to an ecological and demographic imbalance.

Core Value 8: People's Security

The proliferation of ideas as well as the global security environment has brought about the transition from state-centric security to a people-centric security approach. The prosperity, welfare and rights of Malaysian citizens entrenched in the Federal Constitution must be protected and guaranteed by the Government. At the same time, the nation's rights must also be embraced and upheld by the people with full patriotic fervour and a sense of responsibility towards national security and sovereignty.

Core Value 9: International Recognition

The pragmatic, principled and neutral attitude adopted by Malaysia has thus far gained recognition and afforded continued economic, political and security cooperation from the major powers, both regionally and internationally. Bilateral and multilateral diplomatic strategies that are comprehensively formulated, supported by the implementation of a consistent foreign relations policy since independence, have created a positive image for Malaysia at the international level, and avoid interference from foreign powers in its administration and internal affairs as well as guaranteed the continued recognition of its sovereignty and interests.

To maintain and protect the National Core Values, several key strategies have been put forward under the NSP and are summarised as follows:

Strategy 1: Uphold the Federal Constitution

Enhance appreciation and respect for, as well as upholding the principles in the Federal Constitution for the interest of national stability and prosperity.

Strategy 2: Maintain Territorial Sovereignty

Improve security measures over Malaysian territory including its strategic land, maritime and aerospace domains to protect, defend as well as strengthen its sovereignty against any threat.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Territorial Integrity

Strengthen territorial integrity and defend areas subjected to overlapping claims, whether maritime, land or air, by all means including its legality, conduct surveillance and patrol over the disputed areas to ensure territorial integrity and to prevent the loss of such territories in future should matters be brought for international adjudication.

Strategy 4: Enhance Defence and Security Capacity and Preparedness

Enhance defence and national security through capacity building and preparedness. This empowerment is to balance the capacity to defend and maintain regional security and act as a deterrent against foreign intervention in the country's affairs. The defence industry, as well as defence and security research programmes too, need to be improved to reduce reliance on foreign technology.

Strategy 5: Master Critical Technology

Mastery of critical technology especially in the field of security is very important to enable Malaysia to have the ability to fully operate any security system and defence which is the heart of defending the country from any threat.

Strategy 6: Empower the Security Industry

Malaysia should develop steps to build its domestic capacity in producing security products. Dependence on security products from foreign sources should be reduced. Government and private entities should complement each other to achieve this objective. The local security industry should be able to support the sector defence, internal security, public order, disaster management, health security management, social integrity and cyber security

Strategy 7: Develop Human Resources

Every Malaysian citizen has rights and responsibilities based on it their respective duties in maintaining national security. Strengthening the education system aimed at strengthening patriotism will enable the implementation comprehensive security culture for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Strategy 8: Strengthen Intelligence Networks

Expand the spectrum of intelligence and strengthen its community networks in sharing and disseminating strategic information which is accurate and timely. Such information must also be integrated and coordinated to afford effective planning and rapid response in defending national interests.

Strategy 9: Streamline Management and Supervision of Immigrants

Stem the influx of illegal migrants, 'refugees' and asylum seekers by strengthening the mechanism for the management of immigrants in line with Malaysia's position and legal provisions in the Immigration Act 1959/1963, the Passport Act 1966 as well as related immigration regulations. This involves aspects of control borders, law enforcement, detention and delivery processes go home Efforts to strengthen the documentation process based on the provisions below Malaysian laws will continue to be streamlined and improved holistically. Efforts to combat human trafficking activities and the use of forced labour in the local industry needs to be addressed. Apart from that, the existence of institutions and international organizations related to this matter will continue to be studied from time to time while in line with the national interests that need to be given priority.

Strategy 10: Strengthen Security Forces

It is important to improve the capacity and competence of the security and enforcement teams. This is in line with the increased scope of duties and complexity of facing national security challenges. The use of new technology and the latest security tactics can improve the effectiveness of the forces.

Strategy 11: Strengthen National Systems and Institutions

Strengthen the people's acceptance of the system of Parliamentary Democracy, Monarchy, and Constitutional and national institutions based on the Federal Constitution and the principles of the Rukun Negara which is the backbone of the country's socio-political stability.

Strategy 12: Guarantee Human Rights Entrenched in The Federal Constitution

Implement human rights policies that are consistent with the provisions of the Federal Constitution and international laws that Malaysia is a party to.

Strategy 13: Foster National Unity

Strengthen national unity based on the Federal Constitution to form a Malaysian nation that has the same identity despite practising religious and cultural diversity.

Strategy 14: Unity Through Education

Sow and nurture the spirit and importance of unity in a plural society beginning with an education system based on the national language, Bahasa Melayu.

Strategy 15: Encourage The Spirit of Patriotism

Safety management is not the sole responsibility of the government. Security issues and threats are becoming increasingly common across sectors at various levels of government administration and people's lives. Thus to deal with this challenge, the adapted concept will be known as Comprehensive security.

Strategy 16: Control and Prevention of Ideology Contrary to Malaysian Norms

A negative culture that is against the values of Rukun Negara is a threat to the sovereignty, peace and prosperity of the country. Continuous monitoring of organizations and movements that carry out activities in the country as well needs attention. Every organizational activity in the country must comply Federal Constitution and national laws. The spirit of association in the community should be instilled with and adapted to the needs of need for safety, public order, security, welfare and socio-
local culture.

Strategy 17: Foster Self-Reliance

Foster love, pride and responsibility for the nation among the people through a total defence approach. In this sense, the interests of the country exceed that of personal concerns. In other words, people must possess a sense of patriotism and nationalism which will hinder any attempt to involve themselves in activities that may be detrimental to peace.

Strategy 18: Integrate Values of Integrity

Strengthening efforts to combat the symptoms of corruption, misappropriation and wrongdoing exercise power at all levels and sectors (public or private) through allocation laws, regulations, and policies.

Strategy 19: Reject Corruption

Whatever strategy, effort, technology and approach to maintaining national security will fail if elements of corruption, abuse of power and conduct that violates integrity occurs in administration government, private administration and community behaviour. Fighting corruption is a joint effort of each party.

Strategy 20: Cross-Sector Integration

The key to national security management Effective and efficient is the management of programs and activities at every level directed towards the sharing of human resources, information sharing, sharing assets, and expertise sharing as well as alignment of mutual legal actions complete

Strategy 21: Building Economic Resilience

Economic interests abroad need to be protected to support domestic economic growth. Industrial maintenance and Malaysian products to compete fairly internationally as well is a strategic interest of the country that needs to be strengthened. Restrictions on external parties that hinder Malaysia's economic development need to be overcome through the actions of various parties in an orderly and integrated manner.

Strategy 22: Close the Socio-Economic Gap

Increase job opportunities for local people, improve income inequality between races, transform the countryside for improving community well-being, empower communities to build a society that is productive and able to generate its income as well strengthen rural infrastructure to support the economic growth of population.

Strategy 23: Monitoring Control of Strategic and National Interests

The international economic environment allows transactions carried out involving the holding of shares in various forms of business. Part of this business scope has strategic interests in the country. The country's interests in those shares must be protected absolutely.

Strategy 24: Managing Natural Resources with Efficiency and Effectiveness

Streamlining the mechanism of managing the country's resources so that the wealth of the country is optimally adopted and at the same time encouraging the search for alternative sources to avoid excess dependence on external resources to guarantee the survival of the country.

Strategy 25: Guarantee Food Security

Ensure that the supply of food is adequate, easily accessible, safe and affordable by improving food production through optimal utilisation of land, implementation of integrated practices, intensive and sustainable farming, rice stockpiling at a level capable of meeting needs in a crisis, raising productivity by strengthening the infrastructure, especially in food-producing areas as well as improving food quality and security by extending best agricultural practices and other related areas.

Strategy 26: Maintain Cyber Security and Defence

Ensure a secured cyber environment through comprehensive risk management involving the consolidation of the security and defence infrastructure, especially the Critical Information Infrastructure of the country.

Strategy 27: Enhance The Management of Media and Eliminate False News

Place the accountability of each party in spreading information widely through the mainstream, traditional media, print media, social media and media alternative to matters related to distortion of facts, fake news, defamation, incitement and any form of narrative that challenges sovereignty, peace and the welfare of the country is disturbed.

Strategy 28: Strengthen Culture in The Digital Environment

Various applications, social media, and digital content are sourced from all over the world. It also brings foreign influences. Acceptance of global culture is recognised as important, but there should be controls aimed at having a positive impact on preserving the country's values. Cultivating a Malaysian-style digital environment is important to ensure identity, loyalty and patriotism do not fade.

Strategy 29: Sustainable Development Policies

Implement development policies taking into account existing, present and future aspects of safety, ecology and demographics. Community awareness and all interested parties between sustainable development and national security should be enhanced.

Strategy 30: Comprehensive Management of Energy Resources and Water Supply

Comprehensive management of the country's natural resources is important and must be done collectively by various parties. Through comprehensive,

integrated action and integrated guarantees for energy security, water and mineral management country can be done effectively.

Strategy 31: Improve the People's Well-Being

Improve the quality of life and the well-being of the people by providing comprehensive amenities and services in a safe and healthy environment. Similarly, the people must be responsible and play their part in ensuring that the prosperity and security of the nation are maintained.

Strategy 32: Foster Resilience

The responsibility of taking care of the people's safety does not only lie with the entity's Government. Citizen engagement is important as part of capacity building Malaysia preserves its sovereignty, peace and prosperity. Through strengthening actions at the community level as well as strengthening programs and volunteering activities, people's resilience can be formed to protect the country.

Strategy 33: Complete Pandemic Recovery

The COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis that hit the whole world in 2020 is a bitter test for Malaysia. Negative impact on the survival the life of every party in the country needs to be restored through action balanced in terms of life and livelihood.

Strategy 34: Strengthen Diplomatic Ties

The ability to preserve national interests through diplomatic means will continue to be the core of Malaysia's Foreign Policy. Thus to ensure it can be maintained and strengthened, continuous efforts to improve its capacity and the competence of the entire government machinery need to be implemented for this purpose.

Strategy 35: Maintain Regional Cooperation

Ensure regional cooperation in promoting and defending the National Core Values such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and socio-political stability. At the regional level, Malaysia has been actively using the ASEAN platform to manage various regional conflicts.

Strategy 36: Boost Malaysia's Image

The negative things thrown at Malaysia should be immediately cleaned up and in greet with narratives that build confidence and support internationally. The spirit of patriotism can also be sown by giving support towards national brand products by every citizen. Through support and such support, the country's image will be strengthened in the eyes of the world.

Strategy 37: Encourage Strategic Thinking

It is important in every national institution planning, both by Government machinery, private entities, communities and even individuals should apply the values of strategic thinking in every planning and action. Through the introduction to the concept of Total Security that was introduced, efforts to form strategic thinking can be applied to every party

Strategy 38: Encourage Community Spirit and Volunteerism

Efforts to encourage the community to play a proper role become one of the integrated efforts as an approach to address security country together. The spirit of volunteering needs to be fostered among the people so that they can also contribute to maintaining security country.

Strategy 39: Foster a Safety Mindset

Forming a safety mindset starts at an early stage. It is also a continuous process. Therefore, for both the young generation, the middle-aged generation, and the veteran generation, the formation of a safety mindset is very important to each party to understand their respective responsibilities to the country.

Strategy 40: A Comprehensive Security Mindset

Security management is not the sole responsibility of the Government. Traditional and non-traditional security are increasingly complex in the development of world civilization. Security issues and threats are becoming increasingly common across sectors at various levels of Government administration and people's lives.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The various crimes and challenges highlighted in this article stem from pull and push factors which can be traced to a myriad of socio-economic factors including geopolitical influences. It is only in times of perceived stress will the weakness of a security and safety system becomes evident. The Malaysian legal and enforcement framework is certainly highly competent in dealing with threats to national and personal safety/security issues, however, the tackling of Malaysia's safety and security challenges must be more than reactionary to deal with threats which have become increasingly dynamic and complex.

The NSP, as the primary guide and reference for federal and state ministries and agencies, serves as an overarching policy for comprehensive national security. This holistic attempt at maintaining, safeguarding and defending the nine (9) National Core Values must be adopted earnestly by all Malaysians not just by those with administrative powers. It will require all Malaysians to make this work. The core values of Socio-Political Stability, National Unity, Social Justice and People's Security for example can be a powerful paradigm by which to tackle issues involving societal issues like gangsterism and *xenophobia* where the root causes can be dealt with long before criminality or problems manifests. The commitment to the core values to enhance Malaysia's defence and intelligence infrastructure encompassing the physical and digital environments is also critical to more efficiently deal will all manner of dangers from kidnapping and terrorism to cyber threats.

A key factor for the preservation of Malaysia's ongoing stability can be made in that the security priority for a multi-ethnic, multi-faith nation must focus on its diverse identity. There is little room for defence policy or the defence sector to play a role in this particular challenge to Malaysia's security (Noor, 2015). Indeed, there must be cultivated in the long run, a top-down approach within the country through a delicate balance of good governance, support for critical thinking education, and the introduction of a healthy, respectful manner of expression and debate even on sensitive matters such as race and religion for these values to permeate.

The NSP though its Core Values, is a bold strategy that encompasses ideals and a framework to objectively strengthen and sustain Malaysia's security and safety position going forward.

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