

Why Does Sri Lanka Need a “National Security” Oriented National Security Policy?



By Kasuni Ranasinghe

“National Security” was one of the main discussion points in the propaganda campaigns of all major contenders of the Presidential election. War-time Defence Secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, was elected as the 7th president of the country, stressing the security gap. The Easter Sunday attack brought attention to the security of the country that appeared as



religious fundamentalism and extremism again after a decade of the end of the 30 years brutal war. Many have pointed this as a failure of the government and accused of dismantling the military intelligence service. Even the report of the select committee of parliament on the Easter Sunday attack (21st April 2019) has accused the President, former Secretary Defence as the Director of SIS and IGP as failed in fulfilling duties. “..... the

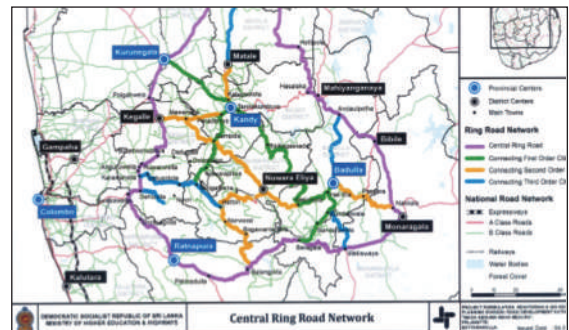
PSC observes that the President failed on numerous occasions to give leadership and also actively undermined government and system including having ad-hoc NSC meetings and leaving key individuals from meetings.....”.

And regarding Defence Secretary and others, PSC noted as “that whilst the greatest responsibility remains with the Director SIS, others too failed in their duties. Within the security and intelligence apparatus, the Secretary MOD, IGP, CNI and DMI failed in their responsibilities. All were informed of the intelligence information before the Easter Sunday attacks but failed to take necessary steps to mitigate or prevent it...” However, now former Defence Secretary Hemasiri Fernando and IGP Pujith Jayasundara are arrested for further investigations. The victims are not pleased with the solutions tabled by the government, which created a trust deficit between the government and citizens.

Meanwhile, the country is in an alarming debt trap with China and a drastic economic downturn. India’s interest over strategic infrastructures such as Mattala Airport, newly open Jaffna International airport and Trincomalee harbour is becoming a challenge to the sovereignty and peace of the country. Also, other threats (apart from interest over infrastructure) coming from India are crucial, and that has historically proven. South India seems to be the key customer of Jaffna International Airport, and at the same time, the Southern Province of India is one of the primary

breeding grounds for ISIS as well as for the LTTE. Thus the potential of the airport to be a floodgate for Islamic extremists and LTTE is high if the immigration is not carefully monitored.

Meanwhile, proposals are coming from USA such as Status of Forces Agreement-SOFA, Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement – ACSA and now with the Millennium Challenge Cooperation- MCC. None of these agreements is completely evil, and the theory of conspiracy is not directly applicable to any of them. All pros and cons are visible if terms and conditions are prudently appraised. Practically,



implementations of SOFA and ACSA are challenging to Sri Lanka as the power of negotiation with the USA is limited. The MCC is an important initiative addressing two of the crucial issues of the country; transport development and digitalizing land titles. Both are identified as key parameters of poverty reduction and human development initiatives of the government. However, the security concern is with the proposing GIS and CCTV monitoring systems with the potential of accessing personal information of individuals. The closure or termination is also problematic for the country. Sri Lanka has no potentials to terminate the agreement, if a case, the grant will be converted to a loan and has to repay the grant, interest, earnings as well as assets. In case of a breach, the country will be financially trapped with USA and consequences will be similar or worse than the cancellation of the Colombo Port City project of China. Sri Lanka will be another significant case study digitalising to Djibouti of how massive investments go wrong for the hosting country and becoming a regional facilitator for Military bases. The results would be terrible if the SOFA has signed with no reviews.

The author is a Research Analyst of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL), Ministry of Defence. Views expressed are the author's own.

Full article can be accessed at
<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/why-sri-lanka-needs-a-national-security-oriented-national-security-policy/>



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Director General Chaired the Plenary Panel at the Global Think Tank Summit 2019



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About Us

Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) is the premiere national security think tank of Sri Lanka under the Ministry of Defence.



Director General Asanga Abeyagoonasekera chaired at the plenary panel at the Global Think Tank Summit 2019 on “Thinking About the Future of Think Tanks and Public Policy in the Age of Insecurity and Instability”, with the participation from 150 top global think tanks from 55 nations around the world. Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka was among the two Think Tanks from South Asia along with Observer Research Foundation India.

It was a diverse panel from members of USA, Uruguay, Belgrade, Poland and Mongolia. Mr. Abeyagoonasekera highlighted that “think tanks need to collaborate for exchange of knowledge and for better policy advocacy, one such network is Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks, which is a unique network of scholars working on a common agenda to improve security, stability, promotion of regionalism in a least integrated region”. He further noted that Sri Lanka faced one of the largest terrorist attacks in April and what the country required was improvement in its national security which our new president will provide. Living in a challenging environment with the fourth industrial revolution, Think Tanks have a pivotal role to play analyzing data.

Amb Nirupama Rao and Prof. Raja Mohan joined INSSSL Resource Pool as Distinguished Fellows



The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) seeks to identify distinguished experts in various fields from around the world to act as Resource Persons who can contribute to the Institute owing to their significant experience and expertise in the relevant area of study.

The Resource Pool consists of over 100 experts in various fields ranging from security, economics social issues, academics and practitioner from security and military backgrounds as well as members of the diplomatic corps who serve in a non-resident capacity providing valuable expertise to further enhance the research and analysis conducted by the Institute. Amb. Nirupama Menon Rao and Prof. Raja C. Mohan became non-resident Distinguished Fellows of INSSSL.

Nirupama Menon Rao is a retired Indian diplomat, Foreign Secretary and Ambassador. She joined the Indian Foreign

Service in 1973. During her four-decade-long diplomatic career she held several important assignments. She was India's first woman spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, the first woman high commissioner from her country to Sri Lanka, and the first Indian woman ambassador to the People's Republic of China. She served as India's Foreign Secretary from 2009-2011.

C. Raja Mohan was a nonresident senior fellow at Carnegie India. A leading analyst of India's foreign policy, Mohan is also an expert on South Asian security, great-power relations in Asia, and arms control. He is the foreign affairs columnist for the Indian Express, and a visiting research professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. He was a member of India's National Security Advisory Board.



INSSSL Hosts a Panel Discussion on Violent Extremism in South Asia

Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) in partnership with the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) organized a panel discussion on 'Violent Extremism in South Asia' on 19th October 2019 at Hotel Mount Lavinia.



INSSSL hosted various discussions on Violent Extremism and Radicalization since 2017. Director General mentioned about past events in which INSSSL discussed Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). He further appreciated COSATT and KAS for their support extended to host this timely event to collaboratively share knowledge with regional scholars from Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Singapore.

The panel discussion was chaired by Prof. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, Director General of Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. The distinguished panelists consisted of Dr. Nishchal Pandey, Director of Centre for South Asian Studies, Nepal; Mr. Christian Echle, Director of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore; Mr. MR Lathiff, Commandant of Special Task Force, Sri Lanka; Prof. Suba Chandran, Professor of National Institute of Advanced Studies, India; Dr. La Toya Waha, Senior Programme Manager of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore; Mr. Shafqat Munir, Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research, Bangladesh and Ms. Nishtha Chadha, Research Assistant of Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka.



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Visit to INSSSL By Unit Command Course

Unit Command Course number 05, from Officers' Career Development Centre (OCDC) – BUTTALA visited the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka, (INSSSL) on 07th November 2019. The event was conducted at the conference hall in the Ministry of Defence. Commandant of OCDC, Directing staffs and students attended the event. The discussion was mainly focused on areas of 'National Security Strategy and Present Challenges' and 'Current Security Situation in Sri Lanka'.

The opening remarks were delivered by the Director General Asanga Abeyagoonasekera and he highlighted the role and

tasks of INSSSL to the forum. This was followed by a lecture on 'National Security Strategy and Present Challenges' conducted by **Cdr MTDN Kariyawasam** and lecture on 'Current Security Situation in Sri Lanka' was conducted by a representative of Directorate of Military Intelligence.

Vital thoughts on strategy formulation, the involvement of INSSSL, and its importance were shared during the 'Question and Answer' session. By concluding the event the Director General of INSSSL invited all participants to closely work with INSSSL to develop their studies and career progressions.

Udeshika Jayasekara- Researcher of INSSSL participated in iDove (Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism) Intercontinental Youth Forum in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2019

This is the 1st Inter-faith Dialogue Against Violent extremism (iDove) Intercontinental Youth Forum in Southeast Asia. This event was organized by the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) Indonesia, The African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AUC-CIDO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, with the generous support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. This



event takes place on 3-6 December in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Forum brought together young peace builders and senior peace building professionals from Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa to share experiences and exchange best practices to build peace and prevent violent extremism via

inter-faith collaboration and youth engagement. Udeshika Jayasekara, Researcher of INSSSL represented Sri Lanka at this forum.

Under 30 Experts' Forum on "Combating the Effects of Money Laundering on National Security through Anti Money Laundering (AML)"



Institute for National Security Studies (INSSSL) hosted an Under 30 expert's forum on the topic "Combating the effects of Money Laundering on National Security through AML". The event was held on the 18th of December 2019 at

the Institute for National Security Studies Premises, Suhurupaya, Battaramulla. Members of the Tri-Forces, Invitees and members of the public were the key participants.

The Institute for National Security Studies through their "Under 30 Experts' Forum tries to provide opportunities and exposure to young researchers. This is aimed at creating further discourse and debate on key and timely topics, ranging from national security threats to climate change and social cohesion.

Money laundering is an intricate and novel form of criminal activity. The implications of this criminal activity filter down to almost every cross-section of the socio-political framework, jeopardizing the effective functioning of the National Security

Mechanism and thereby the Peace and Security of a Nation-State. The evening's discussion, moderated by Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, established the validity of these arguments.

Research Assistant **Mr. K.D.D.B. Vimanga**, giving the introductory lecture, presented significant research supporting this view. His research paper provides key recommendations, to counter key structural deficiencies in Sri Lanka's Anti Money Laundering (AML) regime. Another area that was discussed was the impact of terrorist financing on National Security. Case studies on LTTE Financing Structures and ISIS Financing Structures were discussed to identify the dangers of unregulated/ unsupervised financial flows. Participants raised

key points on areas such as the effect of emerging technologies on Terrorist Financing and the use of financial systems such as the "Hafalla" as key weaknesses to effective Anti-Money Laundering.



Under 30 Experts' Program on "Implementation and Compliance of International Environment Agreements in Sri Lanka"



The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) hosted an under 30 experts forum Round Table Discussion on "Implementation and Compliance of International Environmental Agreements in Sri Lanka" by **Ms. Savithri Sellapperumage** at the INSSSL auditorium on 07th November 2019.

She observed that The Economic Forum brings the two most threatful risks to humankind and earth in 2019 and number one is Weapons of Mass Destruction and second is climate change and its environmental impacts. The Global Climate risk Index 2019 positions Sri Lanka as the second most country to get affected by environmental impacts especially with regards to environmental disasters we faced in 2017.

According to her view, we are facing yet another impact of climate change, where the quality of air has dropped below optimum levels in Colombo caused by air pollution in India. She emphasized that we must understand that this threat is no longer national it transcends national boundaries to the global level thus global approaches to mitigate the issue such as international cooperation and conventions and to bring countries working together towards this global threat.

Despite being a small country, Sri Lanka contains many ecosystems spread around the country. According to the Sri Lanka Forest Reference Level Submission report to UNFCCC (2017), "29.7% of Sri Lanka is forested." And its annual deforestation is about 8088 ha/yr over the period 2000-2010, corresponding to an annual deforestation rate of approx. 0.3 %.

Wetlands are given the main prominence in this presentation in understanding the implementation and compliance of international agreements. Wilpattu, one of the wetlands in Sri Lanka became very politically highlighted during last year and thus in understanding the government's position in conserving the environment, wetlands become a suitable sample to understand.

The main International Agreement chosen for the study is the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971. She noted that Sri Lanka is a signatory to

many International Environmental Conventions and have adopted National Policies accordingly and posed a question why environmental degradation still does exist.

The protection of the environment is analyzed under the Good Governance criteria of Accountability, Transparency, and Rule of law, which is a concept that also became prominent in the tenure of the present government and thus analyzed how it ensures good environmental governance.

Although Sri Lanka has implemented measures in line with the international conventions, gaps were found in compliance and practical execution. Implementing and establishing a national policy of wetlands, forming national committees, a national strategy, compiling a national directory for wetlands, establishing environmental assessment mechanisms, increasing public awareness through mainstream media, schools are some of the main measures implemented.



However she highlighted that, in actual execution and compliance, issues were found in irregular updating in the National Directory of Wetlands, clashing of information in the National Directory and the Ramsar Information Site, inactive nature of specified committees, issues with resettlement especially for IDP's in the case of Wilpattu wetland cluster, releasing lands for resettlements more than the estimated amounts from among forest reserves, ineffective coordination between ministries and agencies spearheaded by lack of transparency and negative political involvement together with the nonbinding nature of the international convention and its inability to have a legal impact/ presence nationally.

Finally, She proposed that setting national targets in conserving wetlands, updating the national directory and data on wetlands around the country, establishing a check and balance system within the institutions/ authorities involved in conserving the environment in the country, development and resettlement proposals to be processed through a methodical environmental assessment are crucial for the environment.

INSSSL Hosts a Panel Discussion on Violent Extremism.....

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The speakers expressed their views on the importance of strengthening existing networks to prevent violent extremism, Comprehending early warning signs, new trends in South Asia, Multipolar radicalization processes and the role of collective transnational identities, radicalization in a networked world and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) regulation.

It was the idea of **Dr. Pandey** that South Asian states should learn from each other and therefore cross border connectivity should be improved via sharing of experience and dissemination of knowledge. He further noted that policy incoherence was a root cause of resurgences.

Mr. Echle emphasized the importance of trust-building exercise. One of his key recommendations was to incorporate a multi-agency and a multi-lateral response. He suggested that cooperation among government, non-government and religious organizations against violent extremist networks needs to be strengthened.

DIG Lathiff noted that “all Muslims are not terrorists”. It was his idea that the authorities should pay attention to the assessment of foreign aid, de-radicalization process with special attention to parents and women. He further emphasized the importance of intelligence cooperation at the national level and gaining the assistance of technological companies.

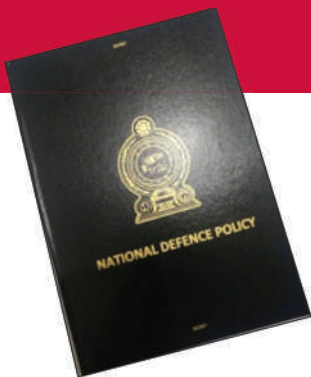
The idea of **Prof. Chandran** was that the issues lie in portraying the minority, since the majority is the biggest asset to fight violence. The policies should focus on both minority and majority, not only the minority. He noted that extremism and radicalization aren't as an issue of madrasas, but the overall education system in countries.

Dr Waha commented that violent acts are not spontaneous and violence is linked to political demands. Keeping an open eye for societal developments, severe punishments for any kind of violence can be considered as steps to be taken at the national level. According to her, multilateral cooperation in intelligence, regulation and monitoring and sanctioning 'missionary missions' are compulsory to curtail this transnational issue of violent extremism.

Mr. Munir noted that radicalization spreads on online platforms and according to 2018 statistics, 12 new Facebook accounts are open every minute in Bangladesh. Recruitment and radicalization have entered a new phase of technological advancements. He emphasized on robust cooperation of South Asian states.

Ms. Chadha drew attention to the unsustainability of UAV classification model. She highlighted that the framework only governs the operation of UAV during periods of flight and relies heavily on self-registration. She recommended going towards a diligent stakeholder consultation to create an effective, user-friendly, end-to-end regulatory mechanism. All panelists warned of significant threat of extremism spiraling in South Asia and the importance of collaboration of South Asian states to mitigate this transnational issue.

INSSSL Compiled National Security Policy and National Defence Policy



Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka has compiled both National Security and National Defence policies with expertise from tri forces and civil society.

The process began in 2016 and concluded in 2019.

Director General INSSSL Represented Sri Lanka at the IISS NESAS Regional Security Conference in Oman

Director General INSSSL was invited as the first Sri Lankan representative to be present at the Regional Security Conference organized by International Institute for Strategic Studies and Near East South Asia Centre for Strategic Studies in Oman on 11th October 2019. Amb Nirupama Rao was among the distinguished invitees.

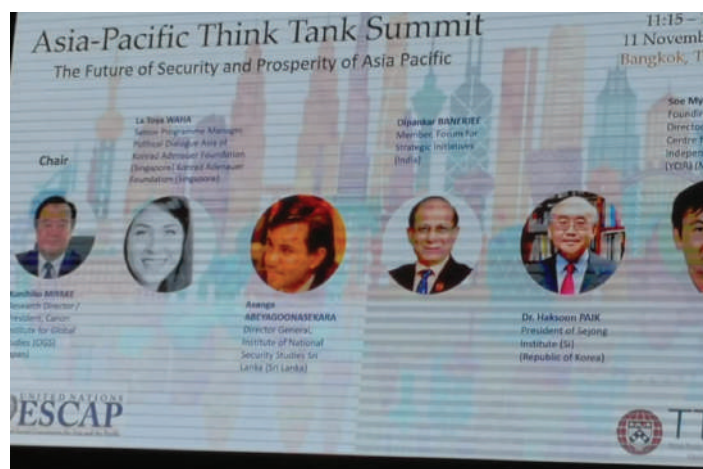


Director General Asanga Abeyagoonasekera Spoke at the Asia Pacific Think Tank Summit in Bangkok



Director General spoke at the Asia Pacific Think Tank Summit held in November 2019 in Bangkok at the United Nations Building. He shared a perspective from Sri Lanka at the opening plenary session on “Future of Security and Prosperity of Asia Pacific” and Rewards of the New World (Re)order”.

The conference was attended by distinguished scholars from many reputed think tanks around the world, including Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP), Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.



Ruwanthi Jayasekara; Researcher at INSSSL presented on Climate Change at Second BIMSTEC Think Tank Dialogue on Regional Security in New Delhi

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional multi-lateral organization founded in 1997 and comprises seven littorals; Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Thailand, Myanmar and Bhutan. Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) held the Second BIMSTEC Think Tank Dialogue on Regional Security on 27th-29th November 2019 in New Delhi, India. Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non-partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution.

Second BIMSTEC Think Tank Dialogue on Regional Security comprised of panel discussions that paid attention to various international security issues that should be addressed immediately by BIMSTEC member states. The panelists spoke on five thematic areas such as the Internet and social media as a tool for radicalization, Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), Environment and Climate change, Restructuring institutions and cybersecurity.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara from the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) presented on the panel on “Environment and Climate Change: Preserving



Mountains and Ocean Ecosystems”. The rest of the panel members were Mr. Langa Dorji from the Royal Government of Bhutan; Dr. Bivash Pandav, Scientist at the Department of Endangered Species Management, Wildlife Institute of India; Hon. Waseqa Khan, Member of Parliament in Bangladesh; Mr. Laxman Basnet, Former Executive Director at Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board and

Ms. Wannapa Leerasiri, Lecturer at Chiangmai University, Thailand.

According to the Ministry of Environment in Sri Lanka, 25% population lives in coastal areas. Furthermore, there are 62% of industrial units and more than 70% of tourist infrastructure there. Therefore, ocean ecosystems in Sri Lanka influence a wide variety of domains including environment, economy, politics and security. Therefore, climate change poses grave consequences if goes unheard. Ms. Jayasekara mentioned that there are various policies and institutions to mitigate threats from climate change at both regional and local levels including BIMSTEC Centre for Weather & Climate, Forest Departments, Central Environment Authorities and National Action Plans etc. However, these institutions are dispersed and it needs the strengthening of these policies and institutions, specially at

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a time where Mountain Economy and Blue Economy have come into the limelight of politics among states. It was pointed out that BIMSTEC region lacks solid data on species, current trends in ecosystems and threats and vulnerabilities etc unlike in developed states. This plays a major role in a lack of awareness and inability to devote towards

resolutions. A recommendation by Ms. Jayasekara was the dissemination of existing knowledge among BIMSTEC states via joint workshops and training sessions and kick starting an accumulation of data.

Education and awareness of climate change are of great significance. It was her proposition that this should commence at school level incorporating the practical aspects of climate change in the areas of renewable energy, smart and efficient cities and health ecosystems etc. Research is further suggested via Chapter 13 in Agenda 21. Another major recommendation was the implementation of foresight analysis at a think tank level. This would lead towards identifying the threats and vulnerabilities, building scenarios to alter the possible futures and work collaboratively today to achieve the goals. Nothing would appear in awe, if foresight analysis is implemented successfully, drawing examples from Singapore.

Some key points were highlighted at the concluding session of the Dialogue and the outcome is to be sent to the BIMSTEC Secretariat and gain the maximum support from member states to achieve goals in the BIMSTEC level. Sri Lanka as the chairman of BIMSTEC could consider strengthening its role in BIMSTEC and drive towards a better future for the region.

Panel Discussion on ‘Regional Infrastructure and Connectivity between South Asia, China and Indo-Pacific’



Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera spoke at a panel discussion on ‘Regional Infrastructure and Connectivity between South Asia, China and Indo-Pacific’ in Nepal with South and Central

Asia scholars. The event was organized by the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). He mentioned that “the newly elected President HE Gotabaya Rajapaksa has clearly spelt out his equidistant foreign policy and will not get entangled with big power rivalry. This is the correct policy for Sri Lanka to follow to balance the triple sphere of influence from India, China and US. We are living at a time when Indo-Pacific and BRI strategies are unfolding and Sri Lanka and many other South Asian nations are partners in both strategies. Smaller nations should not be given binary choices, we should work with both existing and emerging powers and their strategies to bring prosperity to our people”

Academy of Military Science (AMS) PLA Made a Visit to INSSSL



The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) hosted a delegation from the Academy of Military Science (AMS) PLA China which was organized by the Chinese Embassy, Colombo. As a part of their visit to Sri Lanka 6 officers which comprised of Major Generals, Senior Colonels and Colonels visited the institute on 27th November 2019. Head of the delegation shared his experiences on Defence White Paper

of PLA. Mr Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, Director General of INSSSL elaborately discussed on the “National Defence Policy of Sri Lanka” and its relevance to the context. The discussion was further elaborated with the inputs of military officers of Sri Lanka and research officers from the INSSSL.

