



Vision
To secure Sri Lanka by nurturing visionary, collective, and decisive leaders in security policy and decision making

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About Us
Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) is the premiere think tank on national security in Sri Lanka under the aegis of Ministry of Defence

Rear Admiral (Retd) Dimuthu Gunawardena appointed as the Director (Communications and Publications) of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL)



Secretary to the Ministry of Defence has appointed Rear Admiral (Retd) Dimuthu Gunawardena to the post of Director (Communications and Publications) of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) from 01st June 2020.

Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena is a retired naval officer who has been called for active service in the Regular Naval Reserve. During his Naval career spanning over 35 years he specialized in Naval Communications and has acquired wide and varied experience at sea and ashore before retiring in April 2018. His sea career culminated in 2008 after relinquishing command of SLNS Samudura, an Offshore Patrol Vessel which was instrumental in taking an active role in the final years of the humanitarian operation in the North and the East. He has served in leadership appointments ashore such as Area Commander of North Central Naval Area, and Commandant of the Naval and Maritime Academy, in Trincomalee. He was nominated to actively participate in several national and international conferences/seminars representing the navy and the country.

He began his naval career in the third batch of the Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy and at the same time pursued his studies graduating with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in 1985 from the University of Colombo. Thereafter he obtained three master's degrees from Sir John Kotelawala Defence University in 2007, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India in 2009 and National Defence University, Pakistan in 2014 in Defence studies, Management studies and in National security and war studies respectively. In addition to medals of gallantry awarded for acts of bravery, his distinguished naval career has been recognized with awards on several occasions. Before being appointed to the INSSSL, he served as the Additional Director General of the Civil Defence Force in Sri Lanka. He is an old boy of the well known school by the sea, S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia

Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) Organized a Webinar on “Sri Lanka in the Post COVID World”

Moderator



Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena
Director
(Communications and Publications)
Institute of National Security Studies
Sri Lanka

Panellists



Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage
Director General
Institute of National Security Studies
Sri Lanka



Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja
Executive Director
Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute



Dr. Harinda Vidanage
Director
Bandaranaike Center for
International Studies

With the outbreak of the new coronavirus the world's most powerful nations have become powerless and confused as to how to defeat the invisible enemy. The main issue which is hindering is who will be reshaping the new international world order in the Post COVID world. There are multiple arguments and some anticipate accelerated major powers decline and the advent of a more multipolar world. Others predict a deepening authoritarian turn worldwide, with an emboldened regional power atop the global standings. The Institute of National Security Studies conducted a webinar on “Sri Lanka in the post COVID world”. The webinar was held on 8th June from 3p.m. - 4.30 p.m. via zoom and the speakers were the Director-General of INSSSL, Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage; the Executive Director of Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja and the Director of Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Dr Harinda Vidanage. This event was moderated by the Director (Communications and Publications) of INSSSL, Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena.

Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena welcomed all three speakers followed by a brief introduction on the present status of the pandemic and various precautionary measures taken by other countries in the world to prevent the pandemic from spreading and Sri Lanka in particular. He also mentioned that Sri Lanka is on the path to recovery with various Post COVID exit strategies that have been implemented by the government.

Director-General of INSSSL, Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage discussed the present status of the pandemic, how it was

dealt with by the government of Sri Lanka and its 3T (Testing, Tracing and Treatment) operational strategy emphasizing how the government swiftly stepped upon a humanitarian mission to lead away successfully to prevent further spread while other countries were still battling to cope with the pandemic. He also mentioned how the political leadership was quick to consult and be involved with the SAARC and NAM and coordinated with the regional countries to assist in dealing with the pandemic. With respect to post COVID new world, he discussed various aspects of the new world order, whether the next superpower will be the one with an economic might or one who fared best in providing its citizens with human security during the pandemic. While appreciating the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's health practices he proposed that the regional economic model should be revisited and the new regional order should focus mainly on medical security and food security.

The Executive Director of Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja discussed the economic perspectives on post COVID world. He initially elaborated on statistics of the growth rate of the world, predictions of IMF on an impending global financial crisis stating that it may be worse than that experienced in 2008/9. He insisted on the importance of revisiting Sri Lanka's economic relationships due to the great depression experienced in world economics. He also mentioned that due to the pandemic and its consequences, Sri Lanka may face a challenging outlook consisting of international risks of capital outflows, depressed export market and financial stress. Therefore he

stated that Sri Lanka needed to be agile and flexible to maximize the opportunities to strengthen economic security of every sector. He further discussed 5 non-ideological practical strategies to improve the economic security by modernizing agriculture and social protection. He stated that to overcome the economic downfall Sri Lanka should build fiscal and external reserve buffers domestically from Central Bank of Sri Lanka and other financial institutes to prevent falling further into debt traps. Also to improve the investment climate he proposed closing down loss making financial enterprises, corruption and cutting down interest rates and better tax revenue and administration with digitalization.

Director, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Dr. Harinda Vidanage while appreciating how Sri Lanka super managed the pandemic brought out a few floating thoughts on foreign relations and societal aspects on Post COVID world order at the discussion. He debated that we are entering into a “post lockdown world” instead of “post COVID world” as we are still having the pandemic in the world and that we need to live with the threat. He further argued that coronavirus cannot be fought like fighting a war, but also that it should be looked like an invasion and social distance should be identified as a defensive strategy. He also stated that COVID -19 has accelerated splintering the world DGlobalizing it as tensions are already building up among certain countries with trade barriers and sees more aggression and intense competition for power between countries than before. Therefore he stated that we need to manage this systematic challenge and suggested we consider natural security as a part of national security.

During the Q & A session, the panelists discussed about several perspectives on post COVID world its challenges in economic, foreign policy and societal perspective and proposed remedial action.

Two Days International Webinar on “Role of Academicians and Tourism & Hospitality Professionals in Post COVID Scenario”

Udeshika Jayasekara, a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka (INSSSL) attended a two days International Webinar on “Role of Academicians and Tourism & Hospitality Professionals in Post COVID Scenario” conducted by the Department of Travel & Tourism Management, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India from 4th to 5th June 2020. Students,

Academicians, Industry Professionals, and Research Scholars attended this webinar

On the first day the discussion was focused on “Impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism”. Resolutions and suggestions were discussed on the second day. Udeshika Jayasekara shared her experience and knowledge from the Sri Lankan context on Tourism & Hospitality in Post COVID Scenario.

Director General Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage was invited to a Public Lecture (webinar) on “Urban Governance for Epidemic and Guarantee of the Right to Life of Vulnerable Group” at University of Political Science and Law, China on 09th May 2020.

Ruwanthi Jayasekara spoke at the Webinar on COVID-19 and future of SAARC

Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA) from Kathmandu hosted a webinar on COVID-19 and Future of SAARC on 7th May via Zoom. The panel consisted of panelists from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara, Research Assistant at INSSSL represented Sri Lanka.

During the discussion Ms. Jayasekara pointed out that SAARC was cooped up, confined, and under lockdown way before the whole world decided to go for a lockdown. In order to revive SAARC, there is a need to revive the perspectives. COVID19 is an opportunity to become more self-sufficient and better integrated. She emphasized that SAARC Nations need to incentivize the agricultural sector and promote traditional Ayurveda etc to lessen the impact of economic instability within the region.

Some other points of discussion were that not only physical connection through road air and waterways but also the connection with people and culture is highly needed. Post-COVID19 world will show a drift towards isolationism and protectionism and therefore new economic models that could strengthen the regional economy are inward-looking. It is necessary to evolve SAARC into a technological hub. SAARC is more policy-oriented and therefore it is time to become action-oriented.

Webinar

Covid – 19 and Future of SAARC



Mr. Gaurab Shamsheer Thapa
President
Nepal Forum of International
Relations Studies



Ms. Nasrin Rafiq
Director
Women's Campaign International and
Representative for Afghanistan
Programs (WCI)



Mr. Riaz A. Khokhar
Research Assistant Center for
International Strategic Studies
(CISS)



Mr. Satyendra Tripathi
Director
Lokeneeti, India



Mr. Nurul Islam Hasib
Journalist
Bangladesh Post



Ms. Megha Gupta
Director
South Asia Programme,
The International Scholar



Mr. Khampa Tshering
CEO
Bhutan NetCom



Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara
Research Assistant
Institute of National Security
Studies (INSSSL)



Mr. Alakh Ranjan
Junior Fellow
(Neighborhood Studies)
AIDIA (Moderator)

Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) Conducted a Public Lecture on "The Challenges of Cyber Security in Sri Lanka"

Guest Speaker :

Mr. Lal Dias

CEO, Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT)



The COVID-19 pandemic created an immense humanitarian crisis that severely affected almost all countries in the world. Due to the health security measures taken by the governments, it forced organizations and individuals to adopt new practices such as social distancing and working from home. As a result, more and more people began to carry out their daily transactions, purchases, office administration and even education digitally and thus became very vulnerable for cyber-attacks. Globally, a majority of the countries including developed as well as developing countries have created their cyber security strategies to prevent or minimize cyber-attacks. The Institute of National Security Studies conducted a webinar on "The Challenges of Cyber Security in Sri Lanka" The public lecture on the webinar was held on 17th June from 3.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m. via zoom and the guest speaker was **Mr. Lal Dias**, Chief Executive Officer of Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT). The webinar was moderated by Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage, Director General, INSSSL.

Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage stated that, especially during the lockdown period due to the spread of COVID-19 the dependence on digital technology by the societies had changed the paradigm of the entire world, with the challenge of being vulnerable to cyber-attacks on individuals, governments and organizations. He cited that recently, there were two major cyber-attacks on government establishments in Sri Lanka. He stated that the Colombo port is thriving to become fully digitalized, but one must not forget the vulnerability of stalling the port activities within a very short period if struck by a single cyber-attack.

Mr. Lal Dias initially highlighted that for the last ten years Sri Lanka has been subjected to several cyber-attacks, but comparatively, he sees a decline in the attacks as there are only 3 attacks this year while there were 13 attacks last year. This is due to the fact that a Task force has been activated to monitor and deal with it. He stated the reason behind this is, due to the weak construction of government websites with less concern for adapting protective security

measures and due to the use of simple and obvious passwords. As a solution, he suggested that sustainable cyber security methods should be adapted by all institutions, companies, and government.

Mr. Lal Dias also described the three components of the World Wide Web (WWW); the surface web which everybody can access, the dark web and the deep web. The deep web cannot be accessed by normal browsers and used by companies for crypto transactions etc. and that it is about 500 times larger than the surface web. He went on to say that, on the other hand, the dark web is used primarily (80%) for shady illegal activities such as child pornography, sale of drugs, stolen credit card numbers, etc. by the underworld to make money. He also mentioned that it is also used to pass information by whistleblowers and to bypass censorship on social media thus having a few advantages as well. He then discussed a few preventive measures that could be taken, such as making the staff/ employees aware of pitfalls and especially phishing attacks through emails, WhatsApp etc. which are commonly used. As another preventive measure, he discussed that all organizations should have a Cyber Security Policy in place where SLCERT can help to develop them. He also emphasized that organizations should have a mechanism to continuously monitor their websites, networks, firewalls and do traffic analysis and internal audits and have periodic reviews to overcome such cyber-attacks on their websites. He also

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added that all government institutions should have a Manager appointed for Cyber security who should be independent of the employees dealing with IT in the organization.

Then Mr. Lal Dias discussed the National Information cyber security strategy stating that Sri Lanka has taken a step ahead than other developing countries in Cyber Security. He stated that CERT was established in year the 2006 and that we are a full member of the Asia Pacific CERT. The government of Sri Lanka, committed to keeping the nation safe, secure, and prosperous, introduced the first National Cyber Security Strategy in 2018 to be implemented over five years from 2019 to 2023.

The establishment of a government framework for the overall implementation of cyber security in Sri Lanka has been one of the initial thrust points in this endeavor. He also stated that Sri Lanka has the relevant legislation, policies and standards in place now, such as Payment Device Frauds Act in 2006, Electronic Transaction Act in 2006, Computer Crimes Act in 2007 and a fully functional cyber-crimes unit at the police CID to investigate cyber-crimes. Sri Lanka CERT has established sector based CERT. As examples CERT for the banking sector, CERT for the Education sector. As a part of the strategy, resilient digital governance and infrastructure was another thrust area that was discussed. With the global shortage of cyber

security professionals, he stated that he intends capacity building by training employees both in the public and private sector to have a competent workforce for cyber security. Also another thrust area discussed was the awareness and empowerment of citizens and to improve on public private and international partnerships by developing cooperation among these three segments concerning cyber security.

Finally, during the Q & A session, it discussed further the right to privacy, militarization of cyber security, the advantages and threats of cyberspace, measurements and strategies to reduce the vulnerability of the cyberspace.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara was a Panelist at the Webinar on “COVID-19 Response by BIMSTEC Countries”

COVID-19 RESPONSE BY BIMSTEC COUNTRIES



11 JUNE 2020 | 17:45

18:00 HRS DELHI & COLOMBO
18:30 HRS DHAKA & THIMPU

19:00 HRS NAYPITAW
19:30 HRS BANGKOK



BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE



NIICE
NEPAL INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ENGAGEMENT



South Asian Studies Centre, Chulalongkorn University and Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara, Research Assistant at Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL).

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara noted that Sri Lanka has a success story of battling COVID-19. She noted, “Pandemic has made us realize the resources and the potential that Sri Lanka possesses, which wasn’t recognized until we were made to live with them.” She further expressed that the decline of economies poses both short and long term threats and it is necessary that the regional economy is strengthened via possible avenues of cooperation in the domains of blue economy, air connectivity and agriculture.

Other panelists expressed the responses taken by each country and the need for BIMSTEC countries to come up with a meaningful solution in response to the pandemic. Dr. Sinthuphan pointed out the importance of building a better healthcare system in the region, in which both traditional and modern medicine would go hand in hand. It was noted that the demography of the BIMSTEC countries is different from other regions. India is acting as the net security provider of the region and therefore its role is paramount in strengthening the organization. Better and successful integration of the region will reduce the over dependence on extra regional countries.

Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE) in collaboration with Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi organized a webinar on COVID-19 Response by BIMSTEC Countries on 11th June 2020. The panelists consisted of Dr. Pramod Jaiswal; Research Director, Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement, Prof. Shahab E Khan; Research Director, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), Prof. Jirayudh Sinthuphan, Director of

Director General Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage Spoke at the Webinar on “The Impact of the Global pandemic on Shipping, Airline and Aviation Industry”

Director General Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage was invited to a Round Table Discussion (webinar) on “The Impact of the Global Pandemic on Shipping, Airline and Aviation Industry” organized by the National Chamber of Commerce, Youth Forum the National Chamber on 13th May 2020. Major General (Rtd) G.A. Chandrasiri, General (Rtd) Daya Ratnayake, Mr. Ashok Pathirage, Mr. Shehan Sumanasekara, Dr. Ruanthi De Silva

were the other panelists. The webinar was moderated by Mr. Andre Fernando. They discussed the need for independent and interdependent cross-border and domestic supply chain, need for a new economic model and development of maritime infrastructure, post COVID plans for Sri Lankan Airlines, digitalization of port infrastructure and impact of the pandemic on airports/aviation and post COVID strategies for sustainability.

Director General Admiral
(Prof.) Jayanath Colombage
was invited to a
Round Table Discussion
(Webinar) on
“Post Corona Global Scenario:
Challenges and Opportunities”
at Lahore Center for Peace and
Research on 1st June 2020.

Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) Held a Discussion on Development of Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka

Moderator



Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage
Director General,
Institute of
National Security Studies Sri Lanka

Panellists



Dr. R S K Keerthisena
Additional Director General,
(Research),
Department of Agriculture



Mr. Mahesh Gammanpila
Director
National Fertilizer
Secretariat



Dr. Terney Pradeep
General Manager / CEO
Marine Environment
Protection Authority

The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) organized a webinar on “Development of Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka” on 22nd June 2020 at 4.00 p.m. via zoom. The panel consisted of Dr. RSK Keerthisena, Additional Director General (Research), Department of Agriculture; Mr. Mahesh Gammanpila, Director, National Fertilizer Secretariat and Dr. Terney Pradeep, General Manager/CEO of , Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA). The discussion was moderated by Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage, Director General, Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL). This was attended by local and international scholars.

Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage began the discussion by stating that we are self-sufficient only in rice, coconut and tea. No matter how dependent we are on dhal, we learnt to survive without dhal during the pandemic. But the question lies as to why Sri Lanka, being a tropical country with arable land, continues to import fruits and vegetables. COVID-19 has opened our eyes to the need of self-sufficiency. 400,000 hectares of land has been cultivated during the pandemic. It is unfortunate that with the high demand, there is increased usage of fertilizer with adverse effects on soil and water.

Dr. RSK Keerthisena highlighted that in modern farming “there are many and little over 80 varieties of rice in Sri Lanka, but nearly 90% of rice lands are cultivated with only 10 varieties. Traditional varieties are cultivated in less than 1% of total rice lands.” He also mentioned that there’s a tendency for traditional varieties to disappear. These are challenges to soil fertility as intensively

cultivated crops remove significant amount of nutrients from the soil through harvest. Therefore, nutrients are substituted with chemical fertilizers. It is alarming to hear that “we use around 4000 tons of pesticides per year”.

Sri Lanka ranks 26th place in fertilizer usage in the world. According to Mr. Mahesh Gammanpila, 225kg/ha of fertilizer is used for paddy cultivation, while the average production per hectare is 4.2 metric tons. It is needed to understand that more fertilizer doesn’t mean more harvest. He added that “we are adding more than 20000-23000 kg of arsenic, 40,000-50,000 kg of chromium and 20,000-30,000 kg of lead to the soil”. What is the need of importing 800,000 of metric tons straight chemical fertilizer per annum if less than 20% of fertilizers are absorbed by plants?

Mr. Gammanpila noted that what is important is improving soil texture, structure and health as this is what retains the sustainable development of agriculture. He suggested that there should be a paradigm shift from chemical fertilizers to organic fertilizers.

A stark image was further painted by **Dr. Terney Pradeep** while mentioning that only about 3% of the earth is left to grow food. He mentioned that the ocean is widely used for energy, transportation, mineral, water, leisure and health, however less used for food. He said that “International rice research institute study estimated that 83% of applied fertilizer entered surface and subsoil waters which is finally end up in the sea.” According to him, the adverse effects can be named as health toxicity, cancer, eutrophication and water quality pathogen. Due to eutrophication, there is algal bloom in

the top layer and a dead zone in the bottom layer. Dr. Pradeep further added that there is competition in nature, as corals are faced to compete with large algal blooms. His question remains unaddressed as to why people don’t comprehend the gravity of all chemicals used, end up in tissues and muscles of human beings in high doses. One issue is the lack of scientific research in the field.

The ocean plays the role of the largest carbon sink, absorbing one third of carbon emitted by human activities, which accounts for roughly two billion metric tons per year. Dr. Pradeep emphasized that “ocean is our lifeline. Ocean is the blue heart of our planet. If we don’t allow the blue heart to be beaten, life on the whole planet will be end up”.

We are glad to hear that His Excellency the President has signed Colombo Declaration reforming the resolution of sustainable nitrogen management, which was adopted at 4th session of the UN environment assembly. As per Mr. Gammanpila, the global economy wide nitrogen usage is currently ineffective with extremely large proportions of reactive nitrogen in the environment. It is a good step forward that Sri Lanka has pledged to reduce 50% nitrogen waste by 2030. He mentioned that “the vision is to have sustainable, economic and quality crop productions and eco-friendly inputs that will ensure food security and food safety to the consumers. The mission is to have a fertilizer industry that provides affordable and accessible fertilizer to farmers to achieve increased sustainable agricultural productivity and improve farm incomes”. Moreover, Sri Lanka has become a member of the International Nitrogen Management System. However, if the policies are confined to be policies without implementation, that is where we fail. Admiral Colombage highlighted that it is important to ensure sustainable development of agriculture with minimum damage to the environment.

Ministry of Agriculture has been developing a National Agricultural Policy, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for 10 years. It is necessary to accelerate the process as this will provide solutions for issues of sustainability as well. Dr. Pradeep proposed that short, medium and long term action plans are crucial. Adding to that our way forward should consist of awareness, alternatives, reverting back to environmentally friendly systems, intensive aquaculture, monitoring and law enforcement.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara Spoke at Webinar on Water Security and Pandemic : the Implication of COVID-19 in South Asia

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Regional Project Energy Security and Climate Change Asia Pacific (KAS RECAP) organized a webinar in partnership with Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) on “Water Security and Pandemic: the Implication of COVID-19 in South Asia” on 28th May 2020 via Zoom. The panel consisted of Shafqat Munir; Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), Nilanjan Ghosh; Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Nishchal N. Pandey; Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), Ailiya Naqvi; Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research (CSCR) and Ruwanthi Jayasekara; Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL), Sri Lanka which was moderated by Christian Hübner; KAS-Regional Project Energy Security and Climate Change Asia-Pacific (RECAP).

When COVID-19 is sweeping the world, putting a third of world’s population under various

degrees of lockdown, this poses an enormous challenge to South Asia as the region is strained in water already which is crucial for combating the pandemic. Apart from that, experts found the presence of SARS-COV-2 virus in faeces, corpses and even wastewater. This poses enormous new challenges for South Asia containing the spread seeing that the region lacks adequate wastewater treatment facilities while the standard of drinking water needs to be raised. It was discussed how South Asian countries are managing their water supply under current circumstances, how the governments are combating the pandemic under strained water supply and how pandemics can spark a desire for improvement in water infrastructure within the region in the long run.

Ms. Ruwanthi Jayasekara highlighted the significance of being self-sufficient in agriculture to cater to domestic needs and nature-based

solutions to increase water availability. The pandemic in the background of natural disasters like floods and landslides poses dual risks of making people homeless and creating a breeding ground for the spread of the pandemic when people are gathered at temporary accommodations. She emphasized that Sri Lanka and South Asia should pay attention to UN risk-sensitive agriculture in strengthening livelihoods and food security. Other points discussed include developing policies that avoid development in high-risk areas by identifying hot spots of natural disasters and the immediate need for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) responses. A drop of water is never to be underestimated as Water has the power to influence the economy, politics and overall national and international security. Water governance should forever remain a priority.

Role of Sri Lanka in Asia’s Changing Geopolitics



Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage
Director General
Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL)

A Joint webinar on “Role of Sri Lanka in Asia’s Changing Geopolitics” was held on 26th of June 2020 by the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) in partnership with the Nepal Institute of International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE), where the speaker was Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage, the Director General of INSSSL.

He began the discussion relating Sri Lanka’s narrative of battling the pandemic, as it can be used as a role model by other countries in Asia. He mentioned that Sri Lanka’s death rate is just 0.55% while the world average is 2%-3% and reiterated that it was due to the swift measures taken by the government to prevent the spread of the pandemic at very early stages even before WHO declared it as a pandemic and due to the government’s policy on giving priority to human life in fighting the pandemic. He added that we were talking about a globalized world before but during COVID globalization almost stopped and we witnessed a slowbalisation leading to de-globalization and that we still cannot predict when we could revert back to the previous world order.

We were depending on the global supply chain for most of our supplies but the pandemic has made us realize that we can no more depend on it and that self-sufficiency is the answer. He also stated that fortunately Sri Lanka was self-sufficient on Rice, tea and coconut and that now we are thinking of improving agriculture and becoming self-sufficient.

When talking about the Indian Ocean region the Admiral mentioned that he could describe it in six words, strategic competition (major powers vs major powers), strategic convergence (some major powers getting together to count another) and strategic dilemma (applicable for smaller countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh which are not major players bearing the brunt of the attack major powers). He elaborated on the importance of the Indian Ocean’s importance in trade and mentioned that there are many initiatives taken such as the Indo-Pacific, Quadrilateral security dialogue (US, Japan, India and Australia) and Belt and Road Initiative by China etc. in the Indian Ocean Region. To elaborate on how dangerous the region has become, he sighted that the Indian Ocean is also one of the most

militarized oceans in the world with approximately 100-120 warships including nuclear submarines patrolling the Indian Ocean at any given time.

He further went on to say that in this world we have a big asymmetry and developing countries might be forced to choose between major powers

and sometimes even to hedge between one power against the other for survival. One way to overcome this strategic dilemma is to have a more rules based international order. Admiral also stated that there were many threats to Sri Lanka, especially terrorism, cyber-attacks, illegal fishing, ocean pollution, human smuggling, drug/narcotic smuggling weapon smuggling, money laundering and terrorist financing and elaborated that National Security should be the priority of any country and stated that as at now all the intelligence units have been brought under one umbrella for better dissemination of vital intelligence in an emergency..

On describing the way forward for Sri Lanka amidst these challenges, Admiral informed that according to the new government’s Foreign policy, there would be four pillars of which the first would be Sri Lanka’s neutrality in foreign relations. Secondly, that Sri Lanka understands that India is very important in strategic security dealings and hence will not be a strategic security concern to India. Thirdly, that Sri Lanka will not be caught up with any power games in the Indian ocean nor will it be forced to make choices or will hedge on to one side against the other and finally that Sri Lanka will not sell or give control to any of its national strategic assets to any foreign country.

Admiral stated that the Indo-pacific strategy is a US military strategy. As a developing nation, we may consider working with this strategy on financial and economic aspects. He gave his opinion on the MCC and stated that it was a 480mn US \$ grant which was almost approved by the previous government after it obtained the cabinet approval but that it would be reviewed by the new government after elections when the report given by the Presidential committee will be taken in for discussion. The controversial port Hambantota was started and completed in 2011 much before the Belt and Road Initiative was launched in 2013. He stated that however, the Colombo Port City project (256 hectares of land reclaimed from the sea) is a part of the belt and road and initiative but however, that Sri Lanka would not want to bandwagon only with China but would wish to have multiple investors coming from multiple countries for its development.

He clarified a popular misinterpretation of identifying Sri Lanka being in a debt trap to

China. He mentioned, “We were in debt to bilateral donors, multi-lateral donors and international donors to the tune of 57 billion USD and our debt to GDP ratio was more than 82%. Debt to China is limited to only 9 billion USD.

Admiral Colombage went on to say “India is now paying special attention to its immediate neighbourhood. India is more sensitive to their neighbourhood than ever before except for Pakistan”. He identified India as the ‘Black swan’ in the region. India is moving fast and we have to benefit from that. He appreciated initiatives like SAGAR, where everyone should rise and assure collective security. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of Intelligence sharing among regional states.

On a question raised on self-sufficiency, Admiral enlightened that Sri Lanka was highly dependent on imports except for tea, rice and coconuts but that there was a big revolution on agriculture after the pandemic where 400,000 Hectares of paddy was cultivated in addition to the farming that was carried out regularly and further stated that Sri Lanka has a good future in agriculture where the economy could be turned in to an agriculture-based economy with sustainable agriculture as there is a huge market for organic foods.

Admiral was determined to clarify that “Trincomalee harbour is ours and that it is not the back yard of India. We have given a portion of the Trincomalee harbour which is called the oil tank farm to the Indian Oil Company in 2002. There are 100 tanks and they are only using 15.” Discussions are going on with regard to the rest of tanks to be maintained by Sri Lanka. Adding to that, he stated that it was a world-class harbour in 1940’s up to World War 11 when it was the Head Quarters of the East Indian fleet and the Admiral insisted that we should develop it soon.

Finally, on the border disputes between China and India, he pointed out that both are nuclear and also very mature countries and that Sri Lanka would not like to get into the middle of it and requested that they should solve the issues by exercising restraint without letting it escalate to a full-blown war and find a solution through political dialogue. However, if the tension escalates it will be affecting developing countries like Sri Lanka and Nepal in the neighbourhood and hence the issue should be solved amicably.

Director General Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage was invited to a Public Lecture (webinar) on “Geopolitics in the Indian Ocean-Asymmetric Warfare Strategy for Small Littoral Nations” at NDC- Bangladesh on 08th June 2020.

INSSSL Hosted a Webinar on Energy Security for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka

Moderator



Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena
Director
(Communications and Publications)
Institute of National Security Studies
Sri Lanka

Panellists



Mr. Sulakshana Jayawardena
Director (Development)
Ministry of Power and Energy



Mr. Damitha Kumarasinghe
Director General
Public Utilities Commission of
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Energy security is a vital component of national security as access to cheap energy has become essential to the functioning of modern economies. It is a complex term with its implications in a wide range of spheres: political, economic, environmental, social, technical, etc. and due to uneven distribution of energy supplies among countries has led to significant vulnerabilities creating socio-economic and environmental consequences. To ensure access to energy for quality of life and economic development we need to consider the energy security policies for sustainable development in Sri Lanka. Both fossil fuel and renewable energy are being used for different purposes in Sri Lanka. Burning fossil fuels creates carbon dioxide gas, which harms the environment and making the earth warmer day by day. Once fossil fuels are used up they cannot be replaced, so the trend today is to use sources of renewable energy. The premier thinks tank on national security, Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) conducted a webinar on "Energy Security for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka" on 29th June from 3 p.m. - 4.30 pm via zoom and the speakers consisted of Mr. Sulakshana Jayawardane, Director (Development), Ministry of Power and Energy. Mr. Damitha Kumarasinghe, Director General, Public utility Commission of Sri Lanka and Dr. Vidura Ralapanawa (Expert on Energy). The webinar was moderated by Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena, Director (Communications and Publications) of INSSSL.

Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena in his preamble stated that "Energy security is defined as a reliable supply of energy and access to energy resources and fuel in the required quantity and quality at reasonable prices. The importance of energy security is also growing because of vast shrinking oil reserves and advancing climate changes which create increasingly powerful pressure on the reorientation of energy from fossil fuels to other types of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, bio, geothermal and hydro." He also emphasized that the production of energy is the largest source of air pollution in the world. By choosing smart energy as the

electricity provider, we will be able to help the planet without hurting our budget.

According to him, the Covid19 has had a game-changing effect in accelerating the clean energy transition in the power sector. Government, businesses and households kept the lights on during the pandemic, but with cheaper and greener energy.

Mr. Sulakshana Jayawardane initially gave an overview of Sri Lanka's installed capacity, the demand and the generation cost and said that the deficit of generation cost with the selling price was Rs. 6.70 which is the current issue. He emphasized that bringing down the generation cost or increasing the tariffs further are the two solutions and further stated that bringing the generation cost down is a more viable option with the introduction of low-cost generation sources to the system. He also differentiated the two perspectives of Energy security which is uninterrupted availability of energy systems at affordable prices and on customer point of view it is the reliability of supply of power. He also mentioned that poor power qualities can cause damages to the manufacturing process especially of the food industry and also the health industry. As an example, he cited that during the COVID period the CEB ensured an uninterrupted power supply rising to the need of the country. On the other hand, he pointed out that Energy security is vital for the communication sector as well. He also emphasized that the Ministry of Power and Energy introduced National Energy Policy in 2019 and the present President has declared in his manifesto that 80% of energy should be from renewable sources by 2030, as stated in the National Renewable energy policy. He was confident in achieving this target amidst various challenges ahead.

Then **Mr. Damitha Kumarasinghe** continued the discussion on the economic aspect of energy security by initially differentiating 'energy security' as per the definition of IEA and 'security of energy' stating that they should not be considered as same. He stated that Energy security is a different aspect of the source of energy while the Security of energy is a measure of resilience of the system from

unexpected happenings.

He then elaborated on the point as to how the insecurity of energy will impact the economy citing examples and stated that at the planning stage one must address all issues of the economy of energy security and security of energy.

Dr. Vidura Ralapanawa then made his presentation giving a strong message showing how the climatic changes could be one of the biggest challenges to National security in the future and a reason why renewable energy should play a bigger role in the energy equation.

He explained that Sri Lanka's past position on renewable energy was not satisfactory compared with other countries in the world but said that while working on the new President's manifesto of having 80% renewable energy that the situation will improve in future. He elaborated that banks in the world who were funding for supply of coal mines have now declined and that it is gradually happening to other supplies of fossil fuels as well and hence reliance on such supply chains will lead to shocks in future. He also mentioned that when large consumers stop buying fossil fuels the market drops and close down as there is no demand.

He also mentioned that Sri Lanka has a very high wind potential and solar potential and that if Sri Lanka is committed to renewable energy that we could have much over 100% energy that we would need through renewable energy by 2040 with resilience to all types of consumers against large scale failure.

The discussion ended with a Q and A session which gave more opportunities for the panel to deliberate on challenges faced at present, adaption of renewable energy and environmental impacts.

**Director General Admiral
(Prof.) Jayanath Colombage
Spoke at the Public lecture
(Webinar) on
"The Blue Economy:
Impact and Sustainable
Exploitation of Ocean Resources"
at Bandaranaike International
Diplomatic Training Institute
(BIDTI) on
21st May 2020**

Post Lockdown Strategies for Sri Lanka



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When the outbreak started, it began to beat the Sri Lankan economy, well-being and prosperity by several means such as declining economic growth, limiting people to people relationship, restrictions on travelling between districts and banning of gatherings. Though the new coronavirus started spreading at the end of November 2019 in Wuhan, no one can predict when the pandemic will end. Therefore a "post-COVID world" is a far cry from healing the whole world from COVID-19 and it is necessary to change our lifestyles and live along with it until the situation becomes normal. Hence, we are entering into a "post lockdown world" instead of "post COVID world" as we are still experiencing the worst from the pandemic in certain countries and we need to live with such a threat. In the present context, Sri Lanka is endeavouring to tackle the pandemic by a strategy of 3T (Testing, Tracing and Treatment) as operational and exit strategies.

Commencing from 26th of May, the island-wide curfew was partially removed after a two-month-long lockdown period and it was completely removed on 28th of June. Due to the outbreak, the stock market and global trade has been on the decline and it has directly impacted major economic sectors including travel, tourism, manufacturing, apparel and textiles, construction and engineering, retails and consumer, banking and finance, goods and service industries. The pandemic has created a huge decline in economic activities and it is predicted that a recession will happen which will be worse than the global financial crisis in 2008. This has directly impacted the economic downturn in Sri Lanka. The tourism sector has been drastically affected and Sri Lanka needs more strategies to increase the downturn of the aftermath.

Aimed at controlling the pandemic, the government enforced a strict strategy for detection and identification of contacts, quarantine, travel restrictions and isolation of houses /small villages etc., which has so far been successful in confining the pandemic to only a few identified clusters. The most important strategy in the post lockdown period is to avoid a spike of new cases. So far Sri Lanka has repatriated immigrants from 75 different countries around the world (As of 8th June 2020). According to the health reports a significant amount of immigrants were tested for COVID-19 and being positive. Therefore the priority should be adhering to guidelines given by the health authorities such as maintaining social distancing even it is difficult to maintain with limited resources and infrastructure

facilities in Sri Lanka. Several industries in the country have scaled-down operations due to the aftermath of coronavirus, but now it is high time to restart all the industries with a new hope to advance their capabilities in a more strategic way. Especially these industries should focus on surviving to thriving with remained opportunities from post lockdown.

During the lockdown period, the most popular word among the society was "self-sufficiency". When the slowbalised world expands, the minds of the people should concentrate to make the best out of available resources and capabilities of their advanced technologies rather than focusing on a global level. In Sri Lanka, it is possible to have improvements in agriculture to secure food security which will create another major job opportunity for the unemployed. As per the specialists "a mix of macroeconomic, structural, pro-poor and climate-friendly economic policies are required to build a post-COVID-19 Sri Lankan economy". Therefore Sri Lanka should focus on long term and short term strategies to overcome the economic downturn. As a result of trade and economic downturn, global demand for most of Sri Lanka's export products and services will probably stagnate in considerable amount. Hence, Sri Lanka should focus on its export market opportunities in available market conditions such as exporting health infrastructure production.

It would be a wise and possible strategy for Sri Lanka's exporters and tourism companies to seek all ways to maximize local revenues by attracting local tourists into their destinations. Here, Sri Lanka could focus on medical tourism and safe tourism where the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry has been experimented as an initial step to develop and protect the tourism industry. By then agricultural exporters can focus on local consumers, apparel exporters can modernize their production lines to supply personal protection equipment (PPE), uniforms and other local clothing needs. Sri Lanka needs to focus more on domestic production and local innovation including goods, services and the industrial sector. Most of the infrastructure development projects had stopped while the country was maintaining a curfew and this is a high time to renew the infrastructure facilities by utilizing those mechanisms.

The COVID-19 has highlighted the social inequality and the disproportionateness of public well-being. People have realized that there will not be permanent anarchy in the world order and power capabilities will depend not only on the military or economic development but with the domestic capabilities to protect their people. While using the internal strengthens to minimize the weaknesses of the economic sector due to the repercussions of the unforeseen enemy, Sri Lanka needs to pay attention to ensure human security. When it comes to transportation as a basic need of the people, government and responsible authorities need to have a solid monitoring

system and provide enough transport services to the people by implementing required rules and regulations. Further, Sri Lanka could introduce new methods of transportations instead of using public transportations. Since maintaining social distancing is essential to mitigate the spread of coronavirus from people to people, limiting public transportation would not be an effective response. While increasing public transportation, the government can encourage people to use alternative methods of transportations such as cycling. Cycling would be the most attractive and healthy solution for maintaining appropriate social distancing and it will create another major attraction for tourist arrivals and their entertainment.

It is the responsibility of the government to facilitate people with better public well-being. Hence, it is required to have a well-organized and proper communication system in every sector.

Focusing on digitalization would be another wise strategy to maintain social distancing while improving the efficiency of all services. Nowadays with the new normal situation, people are using digitalized mechanisms to facilitate their day to day life activities all over the world. Sri Lanka needs to move forward by introducing digital tools to facilitate their services and digital literacy level should be increased by using public and private institutions. There are multiple technological tools that are engaging with society like Zoom, Meet and Cisco to maintain continuous communication with people from all over the world. We can use these technical tools to make people's lives more comfortable and convenient. Furthermore, e-governing, e-trade, and e-money would be profoundly enhanced instruments in the society to steer up and regulate in a direction that is more beneficial to deal with the world as post lockdown strategies in Sri Lanka. It is time to regulate the digital platform which will be more effective to maintain social distancing while continuing the good health practices to prevent the spread of the global pandemic.

Even though the international order will not be the same as what it was, multilateralism would be the best option to survive to thrive with cooperation and coordination among the countries. Sri Lanka should not focus on aligning with one particular country but non-aligned foreign policy practices need to be practiced when engaged with foreign relations. Since Sri Lanka is already in a debt crisis, it should not rely on loans and consider developing on the available resources that we have with us. To strengthen the government, public officers and grass root level officers need to be more efficient in doing their duties and responsibilities. According to the WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo; "this crisis is first and foremost a health crisis that has forced governments to take unprecedented measures to protect people's lives to secure human security." Therefore we all have the responsibility as Sri Lankans without any discrimination to accelerate the plunged economic integration and assist to mitigate the possible post lockdown threat of COVID-19.

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