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President of INSSSL



Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa
Vice President of INSSSL



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Chairman INSSSL



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.

Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage PhD RSP, VSV, USP, rcds, psc MSc (DS), MA (IS), Dip in IR, Dip in CR, FNI (Lond) is appointed as the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL)



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed International Relations expert Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage to the post of Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL). Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage is a former chief of Sri Lanka navy who retired after an active service of 37 years as a four-star Admiral. He is a highly decorated officer for gallantry and for distinguished service. He served the Sri Lanka navy during the entire spectrum of war with the LTTE terrorism and commanded various ships and four naval areas.

He is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College in India and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK. He holds a PhD from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (Sri Lanka). His doctoral thesis; 'Asymmetric Warfare at sea: The Case of Sri Lanka' is now published by Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany. He also holds MSc on defence and strategic studies from University of Madras and MA on International Studies from Kings College, London.

Admiral has represented Sri Lanka in many bi-lateral, regional and international forums, presenting papers, participating in panel discussions and chairing sessions on international politics, strategic and maritime security-related fields. Admiral Colombage has been a guest lecturer in few universities and training institutes in Sri Lanka, India and China. Admiral has also been an editor and reviewer of number of internationally renowned academic journals.

He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Colombo, Defence Services Command and Staff College (Sri Lanka), General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Bandaranaike Center for International Studies and Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute. He is a Fellow of Nautical Institute, London UK. Admiral Colombage is currently the additional secretary to President for Foreign Relations. He is a Guest Professor at Sichuan University and Leshan Normal University in China. He is also an adjunct professor at National Institute of South China Sea Studies, Haikou, China.

INSSSL holds High Level Dialogue on Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia



The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS RECAP) and the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) organized a High-Level Dialog on Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia on 3-4 March at the Hilton Hotel. This brought together experts from Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Maldives. The two-day conference comprised of six panel discussions on “Conceptualizing Water Security and Disaster Management in the Context of Climate Change”, “Navigating the Politicization of Water Resources”,

“Uncovering Economic Vulnerabilities to Water Security”, “Identifying Stakeholders and Incentivizing Long-term Engagement”, “Enhancing Scientific Perspectives in Water and Climate Policy” and “Institutionalizing Cooperative Norms in Water Governance and Disaster Risk Management”.

Sri Lanka Navy Commander KKVPH De Silva WWV & Bar, RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, ndu graced the event as the keynote speaker.



Round Table Discussion on “The Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic: Preparedness Is the Way Forward”

The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) conducted a roundtable discussion under the theme of “The Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic: Preparedness Is the Way Forward.” The event was held on the 12th of February 2020, at the INSSSL conference room.

The panel discussion was chaired by Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage, Director General of Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. The distinguished panelists consisted of Dr Neranjan Dissanayake, Consultant Respiratory Physician, Rathnapura District Hospital; Dr Paba Palihawadana, Deputy Director General of Public Health Services, Ministry of Health; Colonel (Dr) Saveen Semage, Director of Sri Lanka Army Preventive Medicine and Mental Health Services, and Wing Commander (Dr) B Rahuman Booso, the Sri Lanka Air Force Staff Officer at the Directorate of Health Services.

Director General Of the INSSSL, Admiral Colombage introduced the discussion by mentioning that the coronavirus epidemic has been a prominent topic of conversation in Sri Lanka for the past few weeks. He further mentioned that Sri Lanka’s quick response was made possible due to the President’s quick decision to appoint an action force which brought together the many relevant stakeholders. The Admiral highlighted how everyone rose up to the occasion to do their part, such as the staff at the IDH treating Sri Lanka’s first coronavirus patients with no hesitation, the Sri Lankan Airlines crew who volunteered to fly to the source of the epidemic to bring back the students, and the unstinted support provided by the armed forces. Moreover, the fact that Sri Lanka was only the fourth country to airlift its citizens from Wuhan, after the US, Japan and India, is commendable.

Dr Neranjan Dissanayake, focused on addressing the clinical aspect of the coronavirus and described background of coronavirus. Dr Dissanayake outlined



some points that were of critical importance to successfully fight both the current strain of coronavirus, and future epidemics. He emphasized the importance to initiate a multidisciplinary approach, made up of officials from the veterinary institutes, wildlife authorities etc. in order to study Sri Lanka’s resident bat population. Dr Dissanayake outlined the importance of setting in place a more comprehensive screening system for incoming passengers.



Dr Paba Palihawadana, focused her address on highlighting misconceptions related to coronavirus. One important misconception was the call by some doctors for the public to wear masks. She explained the importance of considering practical realities when it comes to wearing masks. A second important misconception which Dr

Palihawadana addressed was the general public fear about everything Chinese. She emphasized that packaged food and edible products imported from China is very unlikely to have the potential of transmitting the coronavirus, because the virus cannot survive when the food is cooked at over 70 degrees Celsius.

Colonel Saveen Semage, outlined the army’s approach in prevention and quarantine spheres, with a focus on handling the operation of the Sri Lankan students who were airlifted from Wuhan. Colonel Semage outlined that the objectives for the mission were threefold: to



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prevent the introduction of the disease to the country, to prevent the spread of infection to the people involved in the evacuation process, and to seek to prevent infection within the group of the students.



Wing Commander (Dr) Rahuman Booso outlined the Air Force's role in the rescue mission, with particular emphasis on the quarantine roles undertaken by the CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense unit) of the Air Force. Wing Commander Booso outlined that the functions of the Air Forces in the context of the mission included the provision of personnel protection equipment to 16 crew members, providing training to the crew on how to handle passengers, as well as the decontamination and disinfection of crew, passengers and aircraft. A critical part of the process was identifying and liaising with the multitude of stakeholders involved, which included the health division of Sri Lankan airlines, the health division of the Airport and Aviation Authority, the Preventive Health Section of the Sri Lanka Army, amongst others.

The discussion revealed that many government and non-government agencies successfully collaborated in tackling a fast spreading epidemic at short notice. This is a positive sign for Sri Lanka's capability to tackle future epidemics. It is also vital that the recommendations outlined by the various experts are given due consideration, so that Sri Lanka's capacity to respond can be continuously strengthened.

Visit by Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), India headed by Amb. Sujab R. Chinoy, Director General of MP-IDSA visited the Institute of National Security Sri Lanka (INSSSL) on 6th March 2020. The discussion was conducted at the INSSSL Boardroom. The discussion was mainly focused on "India - Sri Lanka Relations".

At the outset, Admiral Professor Jayanath Colombage, Director General of INSSSL welcomed the delegation and thanked the head of the delegation for making a visit to INSSSL during their short stay in Sri Lanka. While appreciating the long standing friendship and relations that the two organizations are having during the past few years various key points and issues between the two countries were discussed subsequently. Prof. Chandra Ambuldeniya, former Vice Chancellor of Uva Wellassa University who was also invited for the discussion contributed much upon the Economic and Educational relations between Sri Lanka and India. Other issues that were discussed were Maritime issues, economic connectivity, indo pacific strategy and neighborhood Policies On a concluding note Director General of INSSSL invited all Indian delegates to work in harmony and close coordination with INSSSL to enhance the mutual relationship and future cooperation.

Former Director General Asanga Abeyagoonasekera Participated the 8th Fullerton Forum in Singapore



The IISS Fullerton Forum provides crucial support to the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, the Asia-Pacific's premier security summit. The 8th IISS Fullerton Forum, known as the 'Shangri-La Dialogue Sherpa Meeting' was held during the 20th -22nd January in Singapore.

Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, acting Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of the Army, Vice Admiral Piyal De Silva, Commander of the Navy, and Former Director-General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) Asanga Abeyagoonasekera participated in the sessions as key delegates, representing Sri Lanka.

Udeshika Jayasekara- Researcher of INSSSL participated in the "Dialogue for Peace" Workshop for Youth in Rishikesh, India

KAICIID (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue) partnered with Parmarth Niketan, World Organization of Scouts Movement (WOSM) and the Global Wash Alliance to hold a four days multi-tiered workshop from 14th February to 17th February 2020 at Parmarth Niketan in Rishikesh, India.

The first three days was a workshop on Dialogue for Peace for youth activists from across South Asia. Apart from 75 leaders representing India, leaders from other parts of South Asia such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Afghanistan also represented the workshop.

Three days of training was followed by a working level policy component. The last day was designed as an intergenerational dialogue incorporating policy makers and the youth in breakout sessions. The day started with the youth sharing their own experiences and work in general and the experience they gained from the three days' workshop, with a particular emphasis

on presenting the needs for youth from the policy making side. This was followed by dialogical breakout sessions facilitated to deal with topics such as: How religious leaders and policy makers can better support the connection of youth to policy; how youth can actively undertake initiatives that implement these policies and processes.



Udeshika Jayasekara, Researcher from the Institute of National Security Studies under Ministry of Defence, represented Sri Lanka for this Peace workshop. She shared her experience and knowledge from Sri Lankan context.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue are tools that can help build and strengthen understanding across communities by strengthening the existing relations among communities, building new bridges between groups and promoting peaceful coexistence. Such participation is particularly important for community leaders, who can be found in different parts of society, and role models, who are increasingly among the youth. Therefore this workshop was important to foster youth leaders with the tools necessary to help strengthen coexistence among future leaders and to connect them with policy makers to strengthen youth engagement and involvement in policy processes.

Ruwanthi Jayasekera attends Kautilya Fellows Programme 2020



Kautilya Fellows Programme 2020 was organized by India Foundation in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs from 26th January till 3rd February 2020 in New Delhi, India. India Foundation is an independent research centre focused on the issues, challenges and opportunities of the Indian polity.

Being a Kautilya Fellow, Ruwanthi Jayasekera from INSSSL was privileged to attend the 3rd Edition of Kautilya Fellows Programme along with other delegates from Canada, Nepal, India, United States of America, China, Singapore, Colombia, Brazil, Turkey, Bangladesh, Australia and Jordan etc.

There were a series of lectures on Development of India's Foreign Policy, India's Contemporary Security Challenges, India's Soft Power Diplomacy, India's Trade and Defence Agreements, Indian Federalism and Democracy etc. that were conducted by distinguished scholars, diplomats and politicians. Among them were Dr. S Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Government



of India; Shri Ram Madhav, National General Secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); Shri Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation and Ms. Prabha Rao, Distinguished Scholar, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) etc.

The programme also shed some light on India's soft power interests, strategic relations with Indo-Pacific region, ASEAN members, Central Asia, Middle East and European Union etc. Apart from lectures, a visit was arranged to the foreign policy labs, where delegates had the opportunity to take part in interactive sessions on climate change, International organizations (IGO). A field visit arranged to Kurukshetra gave the opportunity for the delegates to gather a broad understanding of the significance of Indian history, culture and religion.

VISIT BY SL ARMY UNIT COMMAND COURSE TO INSSSL

Unit command Course number 6 from the Officers Career Development Centre, (OCDC) Buttala headed by the Commandant OCDC Maj Gen K J Jayaweera RWP RSP USP rcds visited INSSSL on 6th March 2020. The discussion was conducted at the INSSSL conference hall. Commandant of OCDC, Chief Instructor and, directing staffs of the of the centre and 23 student officers participated in the event. The discussion was mainly focused on "National Security Strategy and Present Challenges" and "Current Security Situation in Sri Lanka".

Opening remarks and the lecture on "National Security Strategy and Present Challenges" was delivered by the Director General INSSSL, Admiral Professor Jayanath Colombage. The lecture on "Current Security Situation in Sri Lanka" was conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Kelum Maddumage SLA, from State Intelligence Service who was invited as a guest speaker for the event.

Vital thoughts on strategy formulation, current security situation and involvement of INSSSL were deliberated during the question and answer session. In concluding the event the Director General of INSSSL invited all participants to liaise closely with INSSSL to enhance their studies at the OCDC.

Visit by Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), United States of America to INSSSL

Building Partner Capacity Team of the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) in United States of America, headed by Mr. Erik Leklen, Regional Program Leader of Institute of Security Governance (ISG) visited the INSSSL on 24th February 2020 INSSSL. The discussion was conducted at the INSSSL Boardroom focusing on "Institutional Excellence and U.S. Security Cooperation" emphasizing on common challenges and goals for security institutions.



Former Director General Asanga Abeyagoonasekera Attended the Raisina Dialogue 2020



Under the theme 'Navigating the Alpha Century'; The Raisina Dialogue 2020 brought together 700 international participants from over 100 countries, Foreign Ministers from 12 countries are taking part in the Dialogue. The three-day conclave started on 14th January and ended on 16th January in New Delhi.

High Level Dialogue on Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia

The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS RECAP) and the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) organized a High-Level Dialog on Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia on 3-4 March at the Hilton Hotel. This brought together experts from Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Maldives. The two day conference comprised of six panel discussions.

The High-Level Dialogue officially commenced the discussion with the first panel expressing their views on **“Conceptualizing Water Security and Disaster Management in the Context of Climate Change”**. The participants discussed the following areas of Climate Change and Disaster Management. All Panelists agreed that Climate Change is a planetary crisis like never before, that the Paris and Kyoto have failed while the Climate Change continues at unprecedented levels. The greatest alarm is in glaciers disappearing, due to rising temperatures.

There was a significant debate on the viability of the Indus- Water Treaty. Proponents of the treaty described it as a success while others argued that the treaty has no viability. A lot of ideas on the Indus dispute were expressed bringing into context the security discourse within Water Security, which is a narrative that still remains highly complicated, with the need to build consensus. Other ideas were expressed on vulnerabilities of the earth on climate change and an important need to reverse the impact of climate change, the unpredictable nature of Climate Change and the challenges of Water distribution with a very thin layer of freshwater.



The panel on **“Navigating the Politicization of Water Resources”** discussed and laid the basis for a productive discussion on water security and disaster management. In the beginning, it was noted that water is not an exceptional issue in Asia and therefore shouldn't always be linked to conflict. Even though it is a global issue, with the strategic location, Asia has captured more attention from the rest of the global players in the system. It is visible that there are many water bodies including rivers, lakes and tanks and India, Nepal, Bangladesh play a prominent role in sharing the water. What should be concentrated is, if these rivers and other water bodies have sufficient water to be shared, since the demands have grown with the increase of population, with the second highest population in the world being represented in India.

The speakers noted that water scarcity is misinterpreted very often, which creates further tension among communities and states. It was highlighted that rivers are not only transboundary, but it is also necessary to look into outcomes and benefits of them from inland navigation to economic progress. Another issue that has remained an issue for a period is the securitization of water by non-water actors, including politicians, other organizations with no connection to the grassroots community, with a primary focus on ownership of rivers rather than water as a common resource. Many have forgotten that 80-90% of water is being used for irrigation in South Asia and thus the farming community has a voice that should be considered. One fact to always keep in mind is that water is a livelihood. If ignored, cities will run out of water, creating a space for water wars, as water is becoming a sharp weapon surpassing biological and chemical weapons. Issues related to water will have a direct impact on climate change and hence delegates noted that the discourse of climate change, ecology and environment should be integrated into resource management. Engineers and Lawyers should perceive the need to take more socio economic and environmentally sustainable decisions.

The idea of common minimum programmes was brought up, which should function both nationally and regionally in order to increase the potential of water. It was designated that water should never be used as a political weapon

rather a tool of diplomacy. A basin approach was proposed as a solution to the politicization of water, which would let the community take the lead instead of obligating the responsibility to the political actors. A fact that mentioned was that the political will is needed, yet, the civil society has a responsibility to influence the policymakers. It is time that regional institutions like BIMSTEC take the leadership in environmental security and set an example to SAARC. A speaker emphasized the need for a geographical connotation, where the need to secure water can be reconceptualized based on geography and therefore proposed the establishment of Himalayan Scientific Council to empower a more scientifically driven South Asia than a politicized South Asia.

The dialogue deliberated that China is a hydro hegemon and there lies a need to incorporate China, considered as the torchbearer, to climate discussion either as an observer or as an active participant, depending on the mutual consensus of the other Asian states. Involvement of youth and more high-level cooperation of water management was proposed. This reminds that future belongs to the youth and they have an enduring role to play. Furthermore, research on integrated technologies of disaster management should be endorsed within the region, in order to tackle the lack of data regarding disaster management and importantly on available resources.



The third panel on **“Uncovering Economic Vulnerabilities to Water Security”** forwarded the idea of no water no growth while highlighting existing threats from water in the region. There seems to be a possibility of lack of water in the future due to the fact that water intensive crops are being cultivated and this prevails due to unawareness and prestige in harvesting these crops etc. Despite persisting issues, water intensive goods are being exported in many Asian states, including India, Bangladesh and Sri Lank and a vast community depends on this. Even though there's less discourse, the leather industry consumes a considerable amount of water. As pointed out, agriculture is being subsidized and in Bangladesh, 90% of irrigation is fully privatized. This has turned to a situation where farmers pay the full cost of irrigation and

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It was recommended that existing legal arrangements and treaties should be reassessed, both local and regional levels. With the growth of population, changes in environment posing threats to all human beings, it is necessary to assure the treaties are applicable to today's context. Certain gaps were identified with the importance of concrete actionable goals to mitigate climate change. It was noted that understanding of Individual country circumstances in combating the challenges from Climate Change is mandatory. Furthermore, it is necessary to reuse water and effectively manage available resources in order not to create a background for water wars.

during the process, this has created 1.5 million water vendors. It was further mentioned that water and power are two drivers of the economy.

Total global losses from water related issues sum up to a total of 260 billion dollars a year and this is due to inadequate infrastructure development, poor management, inequitable allocation and lack of access to water resources. Water issues have become one of the main drivers of climate change and there's a possibility of civil unrest if climate crisis makes people deprived of their basic needs, especially with regard to the economy. Economic scarcity impacts overall environment security and markets response to scarcity to help recognizing property rights.

Recommendations from the panelists included a long-term technique to assure rainfall on demand and transmitting electricity without a medium, with an antenna to receive electricity, which would solve many of the existing issues to water security and disaster management. It was observed that national action plans such as 100-year action plan in Bangladesh, 5-year action plan in Sri Lanka, that are being designed by each state, yet the question remains on the success of implementation and hence these should be reviewed and updated promptly. Since scarcity poses threats to the entire flow regime, biodiversity, energy, social tensions, economic degradation and ultimately to political regimes, the need for radical blue thinking was proposed. Furthermore, it is necessary to subsidize less water consuming crops as a means of effectively utilizing the existing resources.



The first panel for day two of the dialogue focused on **"Identifying Stakeholders and Incentivizing Long-term Engagement"**. It was highlighted that although 10 countries have their own sub national transboundary water issues and nevertheless connected by overarching present climate crisis and its impact on water, energy and food security in the region. Panelists expressed their views that all are stuck between market liberalism and bureaucratic socialism, where numerous players try to fulfill their agendas, at times ignoring the need for sustainable retention. While there seems to be coercive power and persuasive power, the activists pay more attention to moral power, but many of them are engaging in small scale locally with less recognition and incentives by the state. The role of government is essential, yet the rate of success is highly doubtful without the

involvement of the private sector and civil representatives.

It was highly applauded when the idea of solidarities instead of stakeholders was brought up in the discussion. The present definition on stakeholders seems inaccurate with more involvement by higher authorities, while ignoring the community level voices, that are the real stakeholders in water security and disaster management. Therefore, it makes it more sensible to refer to solidarities that will respond to the voices raised by the grassroots level. Although it is comprehended that nations should sign treaties, but solidarities should intervene as policymakers, environmentalists, scientific community have different ideas that should be considered when making decisions.

The panelists proposed that it is ideal to move from state-centric approach to a people-centric approach, giving more prominence to the grassroots level, while retaining the involvement of the government. There's a need to utilize the term of solidarities rather than stakeholders and the concern should not be limited to hydrological, but hydro social. Thus, egalitarian activists, market and the government can act as solidarities and collaborate for a common minimum goal, which is the best possible option. This might need compromising at times when coming to a common ground. Even though decisions can be taken regionally, solutions should be localized in management. Another point was the incorporation of gender narratives and youth engagement in the process, when finding solutions as the future will belong to the youth and the women shouldn't always be the burden bearers considering daily water needs.

Next panel deliberated on **"Enhancing Scientific Perspectives in Water and Climate Policy"**. Water is one of the most significant products of the ecosystem. It was designated that water by itself is a flow of the social the elements, segments, energy and it entails broader social, cultural, spiritual systems and that the ecosystem services and ecosystem structure are constructed around each one of these.

The concept of H_2OP_4 was put forward, which includes pollution, power, profit, and politics along with water and the need to attach policy as H_2OP_5 . An issue remains as to how to translate science into policy, which seems to be one of the gravest challenges. The knowledge doesn't necessarily practically address the water issues and most significantly the global knowledge doesn't address the difficulties directly in South Asia. It was observed that Bay



of Bengal is a prominent global ocean in terms of climate change. Yet, there's very little understanding of the impact of ocean warming on the whole biological diversity of the Bay of Bengal. There is a lack of openness in data among Asian states and it was mentioned that openness is a basic need and basic push for scientific perspective and it is time to give a thought to South Asia based water science. A panelist deliberated that data doesn't create science, but it helps the continuity of the growth of science.

Today, water and energy are believed to be strategic commodity in the region and therefore the water debate goes beyond economic value or the social value, spilling over to the security domain where then countries are concerned about securing their energy requirements or water requirements.

Key recommendations included precise and concrete data on water resources, availability, current threats, predictable future disasters and management etc. to come up with the technical interventions within the region. At this stance, natural sciences and social sciences should be thoroughly consulted. Another highlight was the significance of safeguarding and developing indigenous technical knowledge. 'Think globally act locally' is to be followed by all the states in the region.



The last panel deliberated on **"Institutionalizing Cooperative Norms in Water Governance and Disaster Risk Management"**. All agreed that along with many international water resources the status quo situation tends to encourage the consolidation of competitive north, where there might be an absence of either legal regimes or collaborative inter-governmental organizations as shared water resources are perceived to be diminishing or under stress. Therefore, policymakers have a tendency to see water, less as a shared common good and increasingly as a security issue in which we need to monopolize our control of this resource.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Indus water treaty were discussed and the dispute resolution mechanism was appreciated. However, the lack of provisions on groundwater and different misinterpretation of the treaty cause noncompliance and mistrust that lead to tensions between water-sharing states. It was highlighted that there should be no replacement to the current Indus agreement, but actions such as understanding the lessons learnt in order to improve the situation in the future and

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Public Lecture on “Geo Economic and Strategic Competition in South Asia”



The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka (INSSSL) held a public lecture under the theme of “Geo Economic and Strategic Competition in South Asia”. The event was held on the 19th February 2020, at the INSSSL conference room. The guest speaker for the event was Dr. Nanda Kishor, Assistant Professor in the Department of Geopolitics and International Relations at Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India. The Director General, Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage did the welcome speech and invited the guest speaker, Dr. Nanda Kishor for his presentation.

The first point that Dr. Kishor made was that South Asia as a region is not well integrated and that countries in the region are always thinking about the issues they have had in the past and trying to find answers to those rather than focus on the present and the future. He also mentioned that countries in South Asia are reaching out to extra regional powers to sort out issues that could have been sorted out within the region itself. Dr. Kishor mentioned that Harold Mackinder had mentioned that statesmen understand the value of geopolitics and economics as they think about the generations ahead whereas the politicians do not as they only think of the next election.

In international relations we see balance of power, balance of threats and bandwagoning and though we say international politics is

structured hierarchically, that every country is important. Dr. Kishor mentioned that as an example, the size of a state is not what is important citing how a small country like Israel established itself in the world as a powerful country having been established only in 1948. Dr. Kishor further stated that the modern world should be a borderless world due to globalization, but what has happened instead is that states have become even more insecure than before and are now establishing measures to further isolate themselves from other countries. Dr. Kishor said that it is the west who created regions in the world and that we need to work within this framework which presently exists. He mentioned that due to complex interdependence, nations are reluctant to go to war with each other. He next mentioned that South Asian countries reach out to the west due to national interest rather than for ideological purposes. On non-alignment, then moved to multi-alignment and now interest alignment.

Dr. Kishor highlighted that world super powers such as USA wants the South Asian region to be least integrated. In Dr. Kishor’s view, they want to play one state against the other in the region and destabilize the region. Dr. Kishor said that South Asian countries are very protective of their own sovereignty and that is not helping the region to integrate. He said that countries in the region should make a few compromises in that regard in order to better integrate and to move forward.

Dr. Kishor next mentioned that due to completion of China, it has helped India to focus more on regional matters. He said that China has a major impact in the South Asian region with its Belt and Road Initiative. Dr. Kishor said that China has a larger impact on the region than USA. He said that on the issue of terrorism there is good integration among the region. Due to the constant threat of terrorism and the instability which is caused by terror attacks, states are willing to get help from other states such as sharing intelligence etc. Finally, he said that the South Asian region should consider competition seeing in external powers as an incentive to build greater integration in the region and to move forward together.

High Level Dialogue on Water Security

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deliberation of the existing issues within an institute such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, rather than creating a new institution.

The panel proposed that river basin governance should be implemented, which gives all solidarities to play their role in planning and decision making at a macrolevel, includes long term river basin vision with an integrated natural resource policy agenda and adequate investments by government and other solidarities. This idea was seconded by highlighting the significance of the participatory approach to create awareness and push the government. A comprehensive foundation of knowledge of the river basin and the natural socio-economic forces should influence an establishment of an institutional mechanism in the form of a transdisciplinary river basin organizations. Panelists remarked that it is imperative not to share the water but to share the benefits of water and this could be staged via dialogue. It was recommended that the

Consortium Of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) could maintain the platform created and continue sharing the common information and best practices, utilizing online smart technology.

Even though the government should be primarily involved, the private sector can be incorporated via CSR projects in order to bridge the existing gaps. With the high involvement of the solidarities, a path can be constructed to maximize the political will. Further research into promoting the concept of Sponge Cities within the planned city framework whereby water absorption is facilitated naturally, filtered by soil and allows reaching aquifers, with further emphasis on open green space with interconnected waterways and other channels and green roof concept to retain rainwater. The majority urged further corporation at both Track 1 and Track II levels of Dialogue, with the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate while further expanding the mandate of the above from Climate to Climate change, with checks and balances on the domestic mechanisms. The importance of Foresight Analysis in identifying the threats and challenges to water security and climate change was emphasized. With the

forementioned programme identified climate goals can be set using technologies such as delphies and scenario building by different institutions fighting to conserve water and manage natural disasters.

On a significant note, this High-Level Dialogue on Water Security and Disaster Management in Asia led to identify clear gaps and recommend practical policies to overcome them. It exposed the urgency of climate crisis and its disproportionately severe impacts on the core and vulnerable populations and overall security of south Asia and the need to secure the south Asian water tower. As an immediate response, this emphasized that with the representation of scholars in the region, a platform for updated data and information and joint research in to the new hydrology should be created, on the areas of changing precipitations to understand the impacts of river flows, water availability and water security, upcoming vulnerabilities and climate change, which could be given access to all participants and learn from best practices of each other rather than going ahead with global mechanism, which might not be comprehensively apt for this region.

Only Peace Can Avert a COVID-19 Catastrophe in Afghanistan



Amb. M. Ashraf Haidar

As of this writing, over one million people in 181 countries are confirmed to have been infected by COVID-19 (coronavirus), according to the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center. The novel pandemic has left no race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and ideology behind, as it continues ravaging all communities without distinction. Victims include citizens of all ages, genders, and diverse socio-economic status—including world leaders and celebrities in democratic and non-democratic societies alike—across the globe.

In a nutshell, COVID-19 has proven to be the single most dangerous enemy of the whole humanity for now. And it will continue to hit us, scientists warn, until such effective remedies as vaccines and therapeutic treatments have been developed and deployed on a global scale to stem the further spread of the deadly pandemic and to defeat it altogether. So far, COVID-19 has taken 64,795 lives across the world since the virus emerged in Wuhan, China last December. Most of these fatalities have occurred in developed and developing countries, including Italy, Spain, France, China, and Iran, while more and more lives are tragically being lost in the United States, where COVID-19 has been spreading rapidly.

Looking at the scope and scale of the emergency preparedness, containment, and mitigation measures taken by these resourceful countries to defeat COVID-19, one immediately begins worrying about a lack of resources, a severe shortage of essential commodities and services, as well as widespread human vulnerabilities in the countries of the “bottom billion.” There, state institutions remain weak, healthcare systems non-existent or dysfunctional, demographics unchecked, coping mechanisms severely eroded, and economies stagnating or in a state of gradual collapse. This grim situation is further exacerbated by protracted and often imposed conflicts, which continue to be fueled by geopolitical tensions and zero-sum inter-state rivalries in regions such as the Middle East and South Asia where state actors exploit prospectless, impoverished youth by brainwashing them ideologically and militarily arming them to advance state-specific geostrategic goals.

These intertwined and ever-growing vulnerabilities of the least developed and war-ravaged societies remain a cause for grave global concern, as expressed in the well-timed statement by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on March 23, 2020,

which urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19: the common enemy that is now threatening all of humankind. “The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war,” he said. “That is why today, I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives,” the UN Secretary-General stressed.

Indeed, no country needs an immediate and total cessation of all acts of violence and deadly conflict as Afghanistan. Even before the advent of the many and sometimes overlapping conflicts of the past four decades, Afghanistan had been a least developed country with meager resources to address our dismal socio-economic indicators and abject poverty. The following decades, including the past 19 years, have hardly been kind to the suffering people of Afghanistan. Last year alone saw the killing and maiming of over 10,000 innocent civilians across the country, while “conflict-related civilian casualties with more than 100 killed and many more injured” were recorded in the 1-25 March period, according to the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA).

On March 27, 2020, the UN Security Council “condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack that took place at the Dharamshala Sikh Temple in Kabul on March 25” when 25 of our innocent citizens, including children, were killed and wounded. In addition to these frequent suicide attacks, the improvised explosive devices (IEDs), blindly planted in urban and rural Afghanistan, indiscriminately kill and cripple our innocent citizens, including women and children. And this tragedy is further compounded by the adverse effects of climate change, including droughts, floods, landslides, and avalanches. According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), “more than 14,000 people have been affected by floods, landslides, and avalanches in more than 12 provinces” across Afghanistan where recent humanitarian efforts have been hindered by ongoing violence and attacks on aid workers.

Moreover, the destruction of critical service-delivery infrastructure remains a tactic often used to further victimize the Afghan people. As of this writing, millions of Afghans, while facing multiple daily challenges, have been deprived of electricity, as the transmission lines, importing electricity from Uzbekistan, have been cut in northern Afghanistan where such attacks recur

often. Extended power cuts disable the few hospitals and clinics to respond to the basic medical needs of a displaced, malnourished, and impoverished population of vulnerable groups, most of whom are women, children, youth, and the elderly. Indeed, this is killing and maiming Afghans by other means than the direct acts of violence, which is often overlooked for holding to account those UN member-state/s that directly cause or indirectly contribute to such complex humanitarian crises in places like Afghanistan.

In the Afghan context, it is clear and well-documented that for the frequent and largescale civilian deaths due to direct and indirect acts of violence and destruction of our critical infrastructure, the Taliban are responsible. But they are not alone in committing these war crimes against suffering Afghans. Since their creation as an instrument of external strategic influence in 1994, the Taliban have enjoyed safe havens, an operational infrastructure, diplomatic support, as well as medical treatment of their wounded fighters on foreign soil in our neighborhood—from where they continue to prosecute a terror campaign across Afghanistan. At the same time, their killing machine has enabled other regional and transnational terrorist networks—such as Al Qaeda and ISIS—to further destabilize Afghanistan. In turn, this has enabled the Taliban to run a multibillion-dollar illicit drug business that has not only addicted an increasing number of poor and jobless young Afghans but it has also fed drug demand in our wider region where millions are dying of addiction generated by Taliban-produced narcotics.

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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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