

**“Developments of the Current Situation in Afghanistan and Potential Consequences for Sri Lanka”**

**Press Release**

Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), the premier think tank on National Security established under the Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka organized a Security Salon titled “Developments of the Current Situation in Afghanistan and Potential Consequences for Sri Lanka” on the 15th of September, 2021 from 1400hrs to 1530hrs via Zoom. The session was chaired by Secretary to the Ministry of Public Security, Major General Jagath Alwis (Retd) RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, ndu, psc representing the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, and State Ministry of National Security and Disaster Management. H.E. Mohammed Ashraf Haidari, the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. The Speaker for the event was Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Director General of INSS. The proceedings were moderated by Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena, RWP and two bar, RSP, VSV, USP, nswc, psc, hdmc, Director of Communications and Publications of INSS. The audience comprised diplomatic corps, Ministry officials, representatives from Sri Lanka tri-forces, intelligence services, police, and other distinguished invitees.

H.E. Mohammed Ashraf Haidari focused on four key areas: the background of the situation before the Taliban takeover, the recent Taliban developments, the implications on the region and particularly Sri Lanka, and the necessary measures that should be taken. He stated that the Taliban engaged in war crimes, displaced government employees, destroyed service and irrigation infrastructure up to the taking over of Afghanistan. This was further facilitated by the demoralization of military forces and national resistance uprisings. In conclusion, he stated that international acceptance of the caretaker government was a key factor at this moment. The Taliban’s proposed governing framework would have to be one that was inclusive, supported women’s rights, allowed freedom of expression, and safeguarded human rights in order to be recognized by the United Nations and win international acceptance.

The Speaker Professor Rohan Gunaratna, in his speech discussed the impact of the recent developments in Afghanistan on the Sri Lankan Security landscape. He also discussed the threats and the efforts taken to minimize radicalization and extremist ideologies in Sri Lanka in order to prevent any further terrorist attacks, similar to the Easter Attack in 2019. He stated that these are results of the influence of extremist events taking place overseas. He said that the separatist ideologies have been influenced by groups outside Sri Lanka and thus we have suffered as a nation. He shared certain actions by the Taliban that were of deep concern such as the adherence to Sharia justice system, the burning of cultural and archeological manuscripts in Afghanistan, the destruction of Buddha statues and the functioning as an epicenter for narcotics. Professor also stated that preventive measures should be taken as these separatist and exclusivist ideologies always re-emerge. This was seen in the international LTTE network overseas that had gained sympathizers. He concluded his speech by stating that Sri Lanka and other countries should monitor individuals and organizations that promote extremist ideologies as they pose a severe threat to a country’s National Security. He also stated that there should be a permanent monitoring body in Afghanistan that will ensure there are no foreign terrorist organizations that are supported or based in Afghanistan.

The event concluded with the chair of the event, Major General Jagath Alwis (Retd), making his concluding remarks. He stated that Sri Lanka should discuss how the shift of power to the Taliban in

Afghanistan would affect its neighboring countries. He suggested that the best alternative would be that the UN to visit Afghanistan, attend to the people's needs and help the poor while engaging with the Taliban.