



Institute of National Security Studies

The Public Lecture on
“Military Innovations and Its Contributions to National Security”

Post Press Release

The Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), conducted a public lecture titled "Military Innovations and Its Contributions to National Security" today (Oct 24, 2024) at the “Nandimithra Auditorium” of the Ministry of Defence at the Defence Headquarters Complex in Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte.

Senior Professor Ajith De Alwis, Professor of Chemical and Process Engineering at the University of Moratuwa and Chief Innovation Officer of the National Innovation Agency was the guest speaker at the event. Representing Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, Air Vice Marshal Sampath Thuyacontha (Retd), Chief of National Intelligence Major General Ruwan Kulathunga (Retd) graced the event.

Overlooking Director General & Acting Director (Research) of INSS Colonel Nalin Herath made the introductory remarks.

The INSS as the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence, having understood the importance of defence innovation and its potential organized this lecture to raise awareness of the pivotal role of the National Innovation Agency, crucially in the National Wealth Equation Through Innovation, Defence Innovation, and partnership building. The event also sought to enhance understanding of the concept of Innovation-Based Learning (IBL), highlight the necessity of homegrown measures, solutions, and remedies, and realize the full potential of innovation.

Senior Professor De Alwis delivered a thorough and insightful presentation. He emphasized the need for innovation, stating that "we have to wage another war – an economic war." He discussed how to drive innovation by fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and government, and underscored the necessity of building a strong innovation ecosystem.

Professor Alwis emphasized the critical role of knowledge assets, contemporary thought, innovations, science, and technology in shaping a nation's development. He supported his argument by providing examples from some of the world's leading developed economies, such as Israel and South Korea, where advancements in these areas have contributed significantly to their rapid growth and global competitiveness.

His presentation also focused on Total Defence, which includes military, civil, economic, social, digital, and psychological aspects, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to safeguard national security. In addressing these elements, Professor De Alwis stressed the importance of innovation in strengthening all areas of Total Defence, ensuring national resilience in the face of modern threats.

An interactive Q and A session at the end of the lecture enable the members of the audience to have their queries answered by the guest speaker. During the session, Chief of National Intelligence presented Senior Prof. De Alwis a souvenir as a token of gratitude.

Innovation in the 21st century has become crucial for economic resilience. While academia thrived, conducting research with practical outcomes remained a challenge. However, research and development were essential for national success, enabling proactive and reactive measures for economic growth. The National Innovation Agency (NIA), established by Parliamentary Act No. 22 of 2019, was tasked with coordinating Ministries, institutions, and the private sector to create and sustain a national innovation ecosystem, supporting innovations from idea to market. The Agency's objectives were to promote understanding of social, scientific, technological, and defence innovations, and their economic impact. It also aimed to align national research with economic goals, address public and private sector obstacles to innovation, and foster a vibrant innovation ecosystem, particularly in the private sector.

Members of the Diplomatic corps, entrepreneurs, senior Defence Ministry officials, members of the think tank, researchers, tri forces officers and many distinguished invitees attended the event.