

Institute of National Security Studies

“Enhancing Urban Security and Safety: the Port City”

Press Release



Institute of National Security Studies (INSS); the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence, organized a virtual Closed Door Round Table Discussion on “Urban Security and Safety: the Port City,” on the 11th of June 2021 from 1400-1530 hours. INSS was the first institute to identify the importance of a strategic security plan for Colombo Port City, at a time there’s no discussion about a security plan in the foreseeable future. The panel of distinguished speakers who graced the occasion consisted of experts about Colombo security from the tri-forces of Sri Lanka; Colonel BMA Balasooriya RWP RSP USP psc, Colonel General Staff, Security Forces West from Sri Lanka Army; Captain Rohan Joseph, RSP, USP, NWC, psc, MCPS, the Commanding Officer of SLNS Rangalla, from Sri Lanka Navy and Group Captain Poojana Gunathilake WWV and Bar, RWP, RSP, USP, MMS (Mil com), Msc(Strat stu), Pg Dip (Def mgt), FAWC, psc, qfi, Commanding Officer of No. 8 Light Transport Squadron, from Sri Lanka Air Force Base in Rathmalana. The Moderator, Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena, Director of Communication and Publication welcomed the guest speakers and briefly introduced the topic in discussion, explaining the urgency to discuss the physical security of the Colombo Port City. The audience consisted of the INSS staff and invitees from the tri-forces.

When port city is emerging as an economic hub and a maritime center in the Indian ocean, ensuring security becomes the priority for all. Colonel Balasooriya highlighted that joint security operations and conducting foresight analysis are two vital actions to maximize urban security and safety within the Port City area. Captain Joseph discussed the maritime security perspective of the Colombo Port City, emphasizing the importance of a proactive rather than a reactive response to the foreseeable & unforeseeable threats befalling the new piece of land. He proposed that achieving physical security could only be effected through a multi-pronged approach & an overarching security policy & a strategy, without which the intended economic ambitions would be severely

handicapped. Referring to the aerial security dimension, Group Captain Poojana Gunathilake illustrated how the Port City will increase & diversify air movements by private entities, culminating in new security concerns. He therefore recommended to re-visit the existing aerial defence network to upgrade low level detection capabilities, & incorporate the Port City to the wider national air security framework. In sum, all three guest speakers stressed on criticality of conducting a comprehensive threat analysis and creating a national policy for the Colombo Port City.