



**Admiral WWEC Fernando, VSV,ndc,psc**



**ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES 2020**  
**INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES**



# ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES 2020

**“Sea Power of an Island Nation and  
Admiral Clancy Fernando,”**

In honor of late  
Admiral Wannakuwatta Waduge Erwin Clancy Fernando  
VSV, ndc, psc



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## ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES 2020

This publication includes speeches delivered during Annual Memorial Lecture Series 2020 by General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd) WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, State Ministry of National Security and Disaster Management, Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage RSP, VSV, USP, rcds, psc Director General of Institute of National Security Studies and Admiral Thisara Samarasingha RSP, VSV, USP,ndc, psc, DBA on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The views expressed herein do not represent a consensus of views amongst the worldwide membership of the Institute as a whole.

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## ABOUT US

The Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) is the premier think tank on national security of Sri Lanka established under the Ministry of Defence, to understand the security environment and to work with the government to craft evidence-based policy options and strategies for debate and discussion to ensure national security. The institute will organize events of national and international importance and conduct a broad array of research and analysis on national security for the Ministry of Defence.





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## **OUR VISION**

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

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## **OUR MISSION**

"To enhance National Security of Sri Lanka through excellence in research, education and networking."



## Admiral W.W.E.C. Fernando, VSV, ndc,psc



Late Admiral W.W.E.C. Fernando, NRX 0011 was born on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1938 and educated at Prince of Wales College, Moratuwa. He was enlisted to Sri Lanka Navy as an Officer Cadet on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1953, and on completion of 05 months of basic training in the country proceeded for training at the

Britannica Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, United Kingdom. During his naval career he was promoted to Midshipman in 1959, Acting Sub Lieutenant in 1960 and Sub Lieutenant on 01<sup>st</sup> March 1962, Lieutenant on 01<sup>st</sup> April 1963, Lieutenant Commander on 01<sup>st</sup> April 1971 and Commander on 01<sup>st</sup> March 1978. He was thereafter promoted to the ranks of Captain and Commodore on 01<sup>st</sup> January 1984 and 01<sup>st</sup> July 1986 respectively. In 1991, he was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral and the Chief of Staff Navy, and Vice Admiral on appointment to the office of the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy.



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Admiral W.W.E.C. Fernando held the memberships of the British Institute of Management, and the Nautical Institute of U.K and had obtained a Master's Degree in Defence Studies. He had also been conferred with the certificate of Master Mariners. He was the first President of Sri Lanka Branch of the Nautical Institute of U.K.

To his immense credit, he devised the first ever cryptography system, 'SINHALE' in SLN, and authored the book on 'Customs and etiquettes of Services'.

Amongst the courses he had followed, Sea Training on board Pakistani Naval Flotilla from 15<sup>th</sup> January to 12<sup>th</sup> August 1963, Communication Specialization Course at INS Vendurathi, India from 01<sup>st</sup> September 1968 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 1969, Staff Course at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, India from 17<sup>th</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> December 1977 and National Defence College Course in New Delhi from 03<sup>rd</sup> January 1987.

Admiral W.W.E.C. Fernando had been awarded Ceylon Armed Services Long Services Medal and Clasp, Sri Lanka Navy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal, Sri Lanka Armed Services Medal, President's Inauguration Medal, Purna Bhumi Medal and Vishishta Seva Vibushanaya Medal.

He was targeted by LTTE for intensifying war by cutting off their MSR across the Jaffna lagoon and assassinated in Colombo by a suicide bomber on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1992; and was posthumously promoted to the rank of Admiral.

## **General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd),**

**WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil**

**Secretary to the Ministry of Defence &  
State Ministry of National Security & Disaster Management**



General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd) is an iconic leadership figure in Sri Lanka who was elevated to the Four Star General Rank by H.E. the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

As a gallant military leader with a distinguished military career spanning over 35 years; holding a number of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments and having almost two years of service as a Government Official of Sri Lanka, General Gunaratne is currently holding Secretary appointments in both Ministry of Defence and State Ministry of National Security and



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Disaster Management; two main administrative appointments in the Government administrative system. Thereby he acts as the principal defence policy maker and advisor on defence/National Security related matters to H.E. the President and the State Minister for National Security and Disaster Management. Further to the colossal extent of vital responsibilities absorbed by General Gunaratne, he also holds the Chairmanships of Presidential Task Forces to ‘Build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society’ and for ‘Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka’.

Being a renowned Senior Military Officer, the role played by him as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 53 Division during the final phase of the Humanitarian Operation was highly admirable and has made its records in the contemporary war history of Sri Lanka. He has served as the Commander, Security Forces, Wannai and during the latter stages of his military career, he has held two Principal Staff Officer Appointments at Army Headquarters as the Adjutant General (AG) and Master General Ordinance (MGO). He has also held the prestigious Colonel of the Regiment appointments of the Mechanized Infantry Regiment, Special Forces (SF) Regiment and the Gajaba Regiment in alternate timings and has extended a noteworthy service to all three Regiments during these tenures.



As a highly qualified personage; he possesses a Master's Degree in the field of 'Art and Science of Warfare' from the University of Balochistan and has earned his highest military academic qualification (ndc) from esteemed military institution; National Defence College, India. He also possesses an MPhil in 'Defence and Strategic Studies' from University of Madras.

Further, he has attended a number of seminars, workshops and conferences overseas during his career in the Sri Lanka Army and has also served in the diplomatic field as the Deputy Head of Mission in Brazil. He is an author who innovated the War Literature for the first time in Sri Lankan history and has published seven books to date, including the revolutionary war literary sensation in Sri Lanka; 'Road to Nandikadal'. He is also an eminent lyrics writer who has written seven songs thus far. He is married to Chitrani Gunaratne and they are blessed with a daughter.



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## **Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage**

**RSP, VSV, USP, reeds, psc MSc (DS), MA (IS),  
Dip in IR, Dip in CR, FNI(Lond)**

**Foreign Secretary and Director General of  
Institute of National Security Studies**



Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage assumed duties as Foreign Secretary on 14 August 2020. He has served the Sri Lanka Navy for a period of 36 years and retired as the Commander of the Navy on 01 July 2014. He is the 18th Commander of the

Sri Lanka Navy and was decorated for gallantry and commended for exceptional service to the Navy. Admiral (Prof.) Colombage 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



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studies from Madras University and MA on International Studies from Kings College, London. Admiral (Prof.) Colombage is a visiting lecturer at the University of Colombo, Defence Services Command and Staff College (Sri Lanka), 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 a Guest Professor at Sichuan University and Leshan Normal University in China and an adjunct professor at National Institute of South China Sea Studies, Haikou, China. In addition, he has been a guest lecturer in several key universities and training institutes in Bangladesh, India, Japan and Pakistan. He has also been an editor and reviewer of a number of internationally renowned academic journals. Admiral Colombage was previously Additional Secretary to H.E the President for Foreign Relations since December 2019. In addition, he is presently serving as the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka.

**Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe,  
RSP, VSV, USP, ndc, psc, DBA**

**Former Commander of the Navy & Senior Consultant of  
Colombo International Nautical and Engineering College  
(CINEC CAMPUS)**



Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe currently serves as the Senior Consultant of Colombo International Nautical and Engineering College (CINEC CAMPUS) having joined in July 2015. CINEC campus established in 1990 today is the largest, most diversified and fastest growing non-state Higher Education Institute in Sri Lanka awarding Maritime class 1 Masters and Chief Engineer management certificates of competency and degrees and post graduate degrees in Engineering, Technology, Logistics, Management, IT, Aviation Engineering, Health Science, English and Education approved by Sri Lanka's University Grants Commission and with accreditation from leading foreign universities in Australia, China, UK and USA. CINEC also manages



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## National Maritime Training Institutions in Fiji and Seychelles.

He also served as the Senior Visiting Consultant in Naval and Marine Affairs for the AL- FATTAN SHIP INDUSTRY- Abu Dhabi and currently serving as an Expert Consultant of Sichuan Institute of Quality Development Think Tank in China.

Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe having joined the Sri Lanka Navy in 1974 as an officer cadet was appointed as the 16th Commander of the Navy in 2009. His distinguished and decorated career included the award of coveted “Sword of Honour” at the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee. He also won the Best All-round International Midshipman award at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, UK in 1976 along with the prestigious appointment of Divisional Sub Lieutenant. Admiral Samarasinghe is a specialist Navigator who graduated first in order of merit at the Navigation and Direction School in India. He has followed training program in Humanitarian law and Laws of Armed conflict with ICRC in Turino, Sanremo Italy in 1999 and 2004. As a distinguished graduate, he was selected as the Admiral of the War game at Naval Staff College at New Port, Rhode Island USA in 1991, course 38. He is also a distinguish graduate of Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies Hawaii USA-Course 2003-01. Admiral



Samarasinghe's thesis on "Strategy to Defeat Maritime Terrorism" won an award at the prestigious National College of Defense New Delhi in 2005, course 45.

Admiral Samarasinghe has the distinction of commanding the Northern and Eastern Naval-theaters of operations in the humanitarian operation to defeat brutal separatist terrorism in Sri Lanka in the critical years of 2007 and 2008 respectively where Maritime operations witnessed high intensity, successful achievements on land and in the territorial waters as well as high seas. His leadership in conducting a major medical evacuation earned high praise to the Sri Lankan Navy from the Head of ICRC who witnessed the performance.

As the commander of the Navy, Admiral Samarasinghe led the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and created history when 21 Navies around the world including 7 major naval vessels honored Sri Lanka by participating in the celebrations in December 2010. Naval Chiefs of Australia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Thailand and UAE were on the same platform in Colombo. He also has the distinction of inaugurating the annual "Galle Dialogue" International Maritime Conference in 2010 which has today gathered in value and popularity around the globe.

Admiral Samarasinghe has presented and published papers at International forums in Australia, Bangladesh,



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China, Malaysia, India, UAE and USA on the subject of Maritime Security, Ocean Resources, Marine Affairs and Blue Economy.

As the Commander of the Navy and distinguished Alumni his addresses on Maritime Security and Building Partnerships to a distinguished audience over 200 high rank officers including top officials from 106 countries at the 19th International Sea Power Symposium (ISS) of the Naval War College New Port Rhode Island USA in October 2009 earned him high praise and International Recognition.

Admiral Samarasinghe was a pioneering member of the Inter-Ministerial High-Level Task Force (later DEOCOM) to prepare Sri Lanka's Submission to the United Nations for the claim of Delimitation of the Continental Margin of the Indian Ocean as per UNCLOS 76 Annex 2.

Recognizing his strategic management skills, academic and professional achievements and leadership aptitude, he was appointed as Sri Lanka's 21st High Commissioner to Australia concurrently accredited to New Zealand and Pacific Island in 2011 and continued till 2015.

As a diplomat, his key achievements were the change of the perception of the Australian Government that



led Australia to withdraw from co-sponsoring the Human Rights Commission resolution against Sri Lanka in Geneva in 2013/14. In addition his active involvement in preventing human smuggling from the shores of Sri Lanka to Australia, success in securing two Bay Class Naval Patrol vessels as outright gifts from the Australian Government, inaugurating the first ever Joint Working Group on Human Smuggling and Transnational Crime, establishment of the Defense Section, improvement in trade, tourism, education, foreign investment and securing the strong support for Sri Lanka during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Colombo November 2013 against adverse lobbying by leading few countries is credited to Admiral Samarasinghe's factual and cogent explanations, proactive engagement and positive diplomacy.

He also had the distinction of being appointed as the ADC and High Commissioner in Attendance to His Royal Highness Prince of Wales in 1998 and 2014 respectively when HRH visited Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest of Golden Jubilee Independence Celebrations and Head of Commonwealth representing Her Majesty the Queen for the CHOGM Colombo.

In recognition of his career achievements and contribution in the Military, Diplomatic and Academic sphere, he was conferred the Doctorate of Business



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Administration (DBA) by London Graduate School of  
Commonwealth Universities in 2018.

He is a recipient of Gallantry medal for combat at sea,  
highest two medals for exemplary conduct and 8 other  
Campaign and service medals, for an unblemished career.  
He is married with a daughter 30 and a son 25.



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## **Welcome Remarks**

by

**Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage**  
**RSP, VSV, USP, rcds, psc**

Director General  
Institute of National Security Studies



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## Welcome Remarks



On the way to this auditorium, I was trying to find a reason as to why Admiral Clancy Fernando was killed by the LTTE? I came up with this answer, based on my experience in the Navy and my personal

experience with the admiral. The simple answer is, to me; he was different.

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. It's a great honor for the Institute of National Security Studies to have all of you with us this afternoon. I would like to welcome the honorable minister, our own Admiral Weerasekara and Also General Kamal Gunaratna who is the Secretary of Defence and our patron. Additional Secretary of National Security Samanthi Weerasinghe who is in charge of the Institute of National Security



Studies, and Admiral Gunasekara, who incidentally was my first commander of the Navy when I joined the Navy in 1978 and other retired Admirals. Of course, the orator of this evening, Admiral Samarasinghe. I also like to welcome our Navy Commander, Admiral Ulugetenna, and very specially madam Monica Fernando and the two sons and the families. The daughter is not here. I think she's in Africa But I'm sure in her heart, she is with us too. And also, other colleagues, senior officers, ladies and gentlemen.

I mentioned to you a reason as to why Admiral Clancy Fernando was killed. So, let me ponder upon briefly as to why I came to that conclusion. I remember in 1991, when Admiral Clancy Fernando became the commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, the things were not very good in the country. Things were not getting better. I was a very junior officer at that time. But I had the great privilege of being with Admiral Clancy on many occasions. I remember one thing he said in 1991, he said “this way, we will never ever win this war, unless we think differently, and do things differently; we are going to battle for a few more decades”. Ladies and Gentlemen, in 1991 Admiral Clancy Fernando thought differently. And I was a very young and aspiring junior officer. I just completed my landing craft assignment. And he said one day; “can we load a main battle tank into a landing craft, take the landing craft near the coast and shoot at the



LTTE? We tried that. Unfortunately, until 2006 we did not embrace the change that Admiral Clancy Fernando thought about in 1991. Only after 2006 that we started changing our tactic. Changing our thinking; to think like the enemy. Changing from a conventional military to a non-conventional; thinking asymmetric. We all know the rest is history because within a span of less than three years, our great and brave government forces defeated the mightier than thou; the LTTE. So that is what I concluded while coming here, thinking of the Admiral Clancy Fernando”

Let me also share with you, in lighter vein some other things that he thought differently. I was an officer in command of a patrol craft in Trincomalee. I was not in the Naval and Maritime Academy, but Admiral Clancy Fernando said ‘you whilst performing the duties as the Officer In Command, take charge of a cadet batch’. And incidentally I ended up being the divisional officer of two cadet batches, including that of Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenna; but by not being in the academy. So, he thought differently, he identified something in me and he said ‘You can do it, you have to come and be the cadet training officer’. And on the graduation day of the 12th intake, in which I was the training officer, he gave me a menu and then I was reading the menu and I as reading of ‘Shell kakkuttas and parsley totapoes’. I was thinking what that was; it took little time for me to realize he



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meant baked crab and parsley potatoes. So, these are the things that Admiral taught us that we all fondly remember. Very especially admiral taught us to read, to write and to fight. And he was instrumental in writing a book of reference to the Navy, BR-9 which is still being used by the Navy on custom and etiquette.

He was an officer par excellence. His untimely demise was indeed a great loss for the family, and for the entire nation. Our compere mentioned a little while ago, that you will be remembered forever in our hearts. Of course, we are grateful to have Madam Monica Fernando and the two Sons and their families on this very special occasion, where we pay our respect and gratitude to a great hero of our nation. Of course, these two sons were very small at that time. They used to come around us and play with us, so we were uncles. And the family was a lovely family. And we learnt quite a lot from Admiral Clancy Fernando's family. Despite giving his hundred percent to the nation, he still had the family at the top of his heart. So we benefitted from such a great officer and a true gentlemen and a great father. I'm so happy as the Director General of Institute of National Security Studies, that we are honoring him by talking about him. And we are blessed today to have Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe, one of the best orators the Navy has ever produced; to talk to us on a very pertinent topic which Admiral Clancy Fernando had very dear to his heart. That is 'the sea



power of an island nation'. Ladies and gentlemen, the future of Sri Lanka is in the ocean, the deep blue ocean. Unless we capitalize on it now, we are not going to be a developed country to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030. So, ladies and Gentlemen, once again let me warmly welcome all of you. It's difficult for me to mention all the names. So please forgive me for not mentioning the names. But we are deeply honored by your graceful presence this afternoon. And now I will allow the most important moment of the day; that is the oration by Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe. I think the topic we have selected is very appropriate in 1991-92 and also in 2021. So, with this, I wish you all the very best. Once again, thank you for being with us this evening. Thank you!



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# Opening Remarks

by

**General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd)**  
**WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil**

Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and  
State Ministry of National Security and  
Disaster Management



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## Opening Remarks



As the Chairman of Institute of National Security Studies, I consider this as a great pride and a privilege to address this gathering of the Annual Memorial Lecture conducted by the Institute of National

Security Studies (INSS) with the dual aims of commemorating the war heroes of Sri Lanka whilst providing the opportunity for the future generations to learn/study about the great military strategists/war heroes those have existed in the country. This prodigious endeavour initiated by the INSS is intended to share the knowledge required to instill strategic thinking and to build professionalism among the future military leaders of Sri Lanka.



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Ladies and gentlemen, this Memorial Lecture stands as the 4<sup>th</sup> Lecture among a series of lectures arranged and conducted by the INSS. This series of orations were initiated in 2017; to commemorate the great characters of Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, followed by the second in 2018 on Major General Vijaya Wimalaratne and the third on Colonel AF Laphir in year 2019.

This Memorial Lecture on Admiral Clancy Fernando was planned to be held last year, however we could not materialize the event, owing to the pandemic situation. Amidst the continuation of the pandemic, we decided to conduct this event without making any further delays.

Accordingly, today we will listen to an oration of a man of great stature and legacy; late Admiral Clancy Fernando VSV ndc psc; a role model of a great heroic military leader of our time under the theme of ‘Sea Power of an Island Nation and Admiral Clancy Fernando’.

Ladies and gentlemen, born in year 1938, Admiral Clancy Fernando had enlisted as an Officer Cadet in the Royal Ceylon Navy in year 1957 and proceeded for advanced training at the Britannia Royal Navy College in Dartmouth, United Kingdom. Since the beginning of his career as an Officer Cadet, until he became the Commander of Navy, who commanded the Sri Lanka Navy from 1st November 1991 to 16th November 1992,



he has displayed sheer dedication, bravery and loyalty to motherland in an exemplary manner.

His commitment in operation 'Balavegaya' alongside General Denzil Kobbekaduwa to land troops at Vettilakeni, which was the single largest operation ever undertaken by the Sri Lanka Navy is highly commendable. Further, the progression he has pioneered in the Sri Lanka Navy within his whole service to the nation and especially during his tenure as the Commander of the Navy to ensure the sovereignty of our beloved motherland does stand praiseworthy. However, the country had to bear the sad demise of Admiral Clancy Fernando in year 1992, as he was assassinated by the LTTE, and he is known to be the most senior officer in the Sri Lankan Military to be killed in action (KIA) in the line of Duty.

I firmly believe that this session would allow us the prospect of deeply understanding his character whilst offering the opportunity for our younger generations to expose themselves to his achievements and the absolute bravery displayed by him which is a perfect blend of tenacity and perseverance that would assist our new generations to mould their careers towards a clear, professionally vibrant future. Furthermore, this opportunity will also allow his beloved Wife and the Family Members of Late Admiral Clancy Fernando, to



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call back their past memories and to feel proud of him as a War Hero, who has extended a highly commendable, trustworthy service to the nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, as citizens of this proud island nation we all must wholeheartedly endure and apprise that the defeat of LTTE was the result of dedication, commitment and ultimate sacrifice of fallen and living war heroes. Great patriotism displayed by our war heroes from the history to date, led the citizens of Sri Lanka in yearning peace and harmony for decades. Accordingly, remembering and honouring the selfless acts of fallen war heroes, such as Admiral Clancy Fernando's contributions that he has made for the betterment of the future generations of the country is a noble gesture that we can offer to such martyrs of the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our Guest Speaker today; Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe (Retd) RSP VSV USP ndc psc; the 16th Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, is undoubtedly the most fitting personality to deliver the Memorial Oration of late Admiral Clancy Fernando. Being an exceptionally qualified, renowned professional with remarkable virtues of perseverance coupled with brilliant know how in the field of maritime culture along with the experience he has gained in working in line with late Admiral Clancy Fernando would absolutely be profitable for all of us. Therefore, I consider it as a



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privilege to listen to Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe today.

With that thought in mind, finally let me extend my heartfelt gratitude to Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe for taking time off his busy schedule for attending this event to share his thoughts with us. Further, I should thank the Secretary, Foreign Ministry/ the Director General of INSS and his Staff for organizing this event amidst the restrictions imposed by COVID 19 pandemic. With utmost respect, I must also admire and honour the beloved wife of Late Admiral Clancy Fernando, Mrs. Monica Fernando and all the members of his family, and close relatives for their gracious presence here with us today.



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# Eulogy

by

**Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe,  
RSP, VSV, USP, ndc, psc, DBA**

Former Commander of the Navy &  
Senior Consultant of  
Colombo International Nautical and  
Engineering College (CINEC CAMPUS)



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## Eulogy



This Admiral Clancy Fernando Memorial Oration on Sea Power of an Island Nation is based on general concept of Sea Power and it is my own judgement and experience that I am trying to share with

you and I request you to be patient with my oration.

### **SEA POWER OF AN ISLAND NATION**

#### **Introduction**

The security, prosperity, and vital interests' countries are increasingly coupled to those of other nations.

Our Nation's interests are best served by fostering a peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance.



In addition, elements determining a nation's resilience and power include geography, population, natural resources, economic capacity, military strength, political stability and information.

Realistically, military power and its projection that are a major determinant of national power allowing the other elements to play their respective roles in a protected and secure environment.

Traditionally, island states use maritime strategy to achieve political objectives and goals with sea power acting as the main element of national power. States that do not employ their maritime strategy or mismanage it, usually face grave consequences.

The oceans connect the nations of the world, even those countries that are landlocked. Because the maritime domain, the world's oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, littorals, and the airspace above them support 90% of the world's trade, which carries the lifeblood of a global system that links every country on earth.

Covering three-quarters of the planet, the oceans make neighbours of people around the world. They enable nations to help friends in need and to confront and defeat aggression far from their own shores.

Our challenge is to apply sea power in a manner that protects Sri Lanka's vital interests even as it promotes greater collective security, stability, and trust. Defending our own homeland and defeating adversaries in war remain the indisputable ends of sea power. Hence, it must be applied more broadly if it is to continue to serve our national interests to the future.

Strategic and effective use of improvised sea power of Sri Lanka by the Sri Lanka Navy with Air and Land support in successfully countering international logistics support and supply chain of the adversary venturing bravely and courageously to high seas of international waters in 2007 and 2008 played the pivotal and a critical role in securing our national sovereignty and national security to achieve the honourable peace that we enjoy today.

## **Historical Perspective in Sea Power**

Navies are linked with constituents of Sea Power which are interlinked to each other. These constituents have been used in early Sri Lankan maritime domains.

Sri Lanka had a great history as a maritime nation with archaeological proof of the voyagers of King Parakramabahu I in the kingdom of Polonnaruwa.



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In a maritime nation, people, society and government are contributing to maritime domain development.

Sri Lanka is a small state which has greater opportunity to contribute to maritime related activities. It is the responsibility of the respective government of Sri Lanka to admire this and strengthen civil and military maritime capabilities.

It can be established that this region's strategic importance in terms of commerce and trade too was noted and as such, the Chinese Admiral Zheng has been reported to have visited the region and Sri Lanka in particular since 1405.

These historical examples prove the gamut of nature, of a concept called, 'Sea Power' and Sri Lanka being an island nation, these strategies must incorporate with National security policies of the country.

## **Sea Power**

Components of National Power of any nation will be identified as Diplomacy, Military, Economy and Information. However, it is agreed that elements which determine a nation's resilience and power include geography, population, system of education, natural resources, economic capacity, military strength, political stability and information.

In this connection military power and its projection will be the key factor of showcasing the national power whilst other elements play their respective roles to ensure a nation's aspirations in a well secured and protected environment.

It is a common phenomenon to use military strategy to achieve a well secured nation with the aim of protecting and achieving the national objectives. Traditionally, Island Nations use maritime strategy to achieve national objectives and goals with sea power as the key determinant of their national strategy.

In here, it is pertinent to mention that maritime strategy is the plan by which the maritime power of a nation is developed and used for attaining the national objectives within the sphere of the national strategy.

Along with this definition Sea Power or Maritime power is identified as the nation's ability to use the seas to safeguard and progress its national interests. Hence, it is a key pillar of national security policy and is a key enabler in the formulation and implementation of viable national and military strategies especially in Island nations like us. In addition, Maritime Power, which facilitates and enables use of seas by all stake holders to meet the national objectives.



Establishing Sea power in a country is directly helpful to strengthen the national policies. Sea power is a collective effect of military and civil maritime capabilities of a country. Military maritime capabilities can be achieved via naval operations and civil maritime capabilities can be achieved via commercial operations.

Military maritime capabilities are basically naval ships, craft, naval surveillance systems, intelligence and coastal protection units. Under civil maritime capabilities, merchant shipping, merchant marine, fishing, marine insurance, ship building and repairs can be taken into consideration. To establish sea power the combination between these two elements are essential.

In this perspective, Navy is the main instrument and manifestation of the Maritime Power of a Nation state.

The reason the Navy exists is to safeguard the nation's use of the seas for its legitimate sovereign purposes, whilst concurrently guarding against unfriendly use of the sea by others in peaceful and legitimate means.

According to the Admiral Mahan, nation with the most powerful Navy would control the world. Further, he highlighted six principles underpinning the development



of a sea power of a nation, namely, geographical position, physical confirmation, extent of territory, population size, national character and character of governance.

## **Geopolitical and Geostrategic Perspective in the Region**

The Indian Ocean has been an important location in the strategic calculations of the great powers of the world, primarily due to the economic impact of the Indian Ocean in the East-West maritime trade.

Over the past decade, South Asia and its Indian Ocean Region have emerged as a focus of tremendous international concern at the turn of the new millennium.

It should be noted that “the region is historically well known for its great strategic salience and enormous market potential...” It is established that this region has always played a significant role in the economics and politics of international relations.

It can be comprehended that the South Asia region is without a doubt located in one of the important, if not the most important locations in the world. Sri Lanka, unlike the other South Asian nations, is located in the centre of the Indian Ocean at a strategic position.



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As we all know Sri Lanka's Strategic location in the centre in the Indian Ocean (IO) and its position as an emerging maritime hub have had a considerable impact on regional political, economic and leadership land scape.

The country's geographical position is of vital interest as that dominates the sea lines of communications (SLOC) and influences the world trade plying from East to West and West to East in the IO. Hence, SLOC are strategic areas critical to our nation's lifeline.

In addition, geostrategic rivalry between the US, India and China, the increasing interest of Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and European countries in the Indian Ocean, are of much concern to Sri Lanka as she seeks to avoid disruptions in the sea lanes of communication in her maritime domains that are also used for international navigation.

Therefore, we need to enhance our sea power in all aspects, including surveillance, intelligence, deterrence, and defence capability to meet the unforeseen traditional and non-traditional maritime challenges.

Furthermore, due to the strategic relevance both China and India have shown an increasing interest towards the Indian Ocean and have towards this end,

engineered several key strategies and initiatives, i.e. the Maritime Silk Route initiative by the former and the Indian Ocean Strategy by the latter.

They have also identified Sri Lanka, with its strategic location in the Indian Ocean as an ideal focal point to implement its policies and objectives.

This illustrates the importance the Indian Ocean plays in terms of global politics and can be further understood by Admiral Alfred Mahan's statement, "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia." It is for these reasons, i.e. the surge in trade routes and the centre role it plays in global politics, that the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) will be the focal point for global interactions and increasing Sino-Indian interests.

The sea lanes in the Indian Ocean are considered among the most strategically important in the world as well as in the Sri Lankan economy. According to the Journal of the Indian Ocean Region, more than 80 percent of the world's seaborne trade in oil transits through the Indian Ocean choke points, with 40 percent passing through the Strait of Hormuz, 35 percent through the Strait of Malacca and eight percent through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

In addition to being strategically located and being the main route for sea trade, the Indian Ocean Region is



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also crucial for energy security, a resource that is abundant in the region.

Therefore, all developing societies need access the new material produced around the Indian Ocean littoral. According to Kim Beazley, Australia's ambassador to the United States, "In the long-term the Indian Ocean is going to be massively more significant in global politics than it has ever been before."

India's unique geographic location forms the cornerstone of India's aspiration to dominate the Indian Ocean or even to transform the Indian Ocean into India's Ocean. Many Indian strategists view the Indian Ocean as India's 'rightful domain' and contend that 'India will have to play a very large role in the region if the prospects for peace and cooperation are to grow'.

In addition, re-naming of Asia-Pacific plus South Asia and the IOR as the Indo-Pacific are examples that have emerged as new geopolitical and geostrategic areas where diverse and divergent interests have been set out by the different nations.

This illustrates the role the Indian Ocean currently plays and is set to play in global politics. However, the geo-strategic conditions in the IOR are still developing. The current trends being seen indicating that the three main powers involved: India, China and the US, have



their own priorities, with potential for clash, may not be conducive to the establishment of regional peace and prosperity, a dream of all concerned nations.

## **Relationship between Sea Power and Navy**

Use of sea power to influence actions and activities at sea and ashore, and the expeditionary character and versatility of maritime forces provide a nation the asymmetric advantage of enlarging or contracting its military footprint in areas where access is denied or limited.

The reach that a sea power could extend Effective influence in achieving national objectives was displayed by United Kingdom in 1982 when the Naval Task Force with merchant marines ventured 8000 nautical miles (1300km) away from UK to Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Air, sea, land and underwater battles were fought by the Naval task force using carrier borne aircraft, submarines, surface platforms, fleet auxiliaries and Royal Marines on land.

The speed, flexibility, agility and scalability of maritime forces provide joint or combined force commanders a range of options for responding to crises.



Additionally, integrated maritime operations, either within formal alliance structures (such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) or more informal arrangements (such as the Global Maritime Partnership Initiative), send powerful messages to the aggressors that the nation will act with others to ensure collective security and prosperity. Hence, Sri Lanka's maritime responsibilities are extensive, and our security interests are diverse.

We are accountable for the management, conservation, and protection of the vast exclusive economic zone in the region; an area far greater than our land mass.

In support of the Sri Lankan government, the Navy has to closely monitor the evolving maritime security situation, emerging challenges, and importantly, the tactics required to counter them in an effective way.

With the possible future expansion to the Outer Continental Margin, the task of the Sri Lanka Navy will broaden. With these responsibilities, it is suggested that the Navy has to expand in size, in resources and platforms.

The professionalism and ability of our naval forces enable us to provide safety and security against the



full spectrum of maritime security activities with confidence which is ranging from combat operations, and contribution for humanitarian assistance missions.

Our maritime forces are flexible and adaptable and capable of responding quickly and decisively to a range of situations. Now the navy extend Sri Lanka's reach and influence and have the poise and persistence to operate independently wherever they are needed in the region.

Sri Lanka Navy by virtue of its operations has a very proud and strong history of working closely with our neighbours, as well as global friends and allies.

This relationship and tradition will become increasingly important as we head into an uncertain security future where the only things, we know to expect is the unexpected.

I am concerned that the amazing, interesting and admirable work our maritime sector does silently on a daily basis is not properly understood by our stakeholders. Like most navies, we suffer from an understandable, but unfortunate, lack of awareness by the general public. Perhaps it is understandable in part because our citizens now mainly concentrate only on



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the fishery resources and have almost no exposure to ships or to the other ocean marine and maritime industry. They have become unfamiliar with the vital role that the ocean plays in global trade, commerce and security.

However the role that the Sri Lanka Navy has to play today to secure the coast and the vast area of seas around, make them to plan how best it can use its manpower, resources, infrastructure and platforms to meet current and emerging challenges.

## **Blue Economy**

The blue planet Earth is dominated by the maritime domain, with over 70 per cent of its surface is covered by water. Nearly 80 per cent of the world population lives within 200 nautical miles of the coast and about 90 per cent of the world's trade transits by sea. Oceans are central to life on Earth.

The world economy is tightly interconnected. Over the past four decades, total sea borne trade has more than quadrupled: 90% of world trade and two-thirds of its petroleum are transported by sea.

The sea-lanes and supporting shore infrastructure are the lifelines of the modern global economy, visible and vulnerable symbols of the modern distribution system

that relies on free transit through increasingly urbanized littoral regions is what needed.

The concept of Blue Economy has opened a new horizon for economic development of the coastal countries through utilizing sea and marine resources at national and international level. The concept has become a buzzword for sustainable development particularly in drafting the post-2015 development goals.

It is argued that, Island nations like us depend on oceanic economic activities like fisheries and commercial transportation.

Coastal and Island developing countries have remained at the forefront of this Blue Economy advocacy, recognizing that the oceans have a major role to play in humanity's future.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider blue economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development as it contribute to eradicating poverty as well as sustained economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all while maintaining the healthy functioning of the earth's ecosystem. Blue economy



conceptualizes oceans as 'Development Spaces' where spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use, oil and mineral wealth extraction, bio prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport.

Following areas could be identified as the fundamental principles in blue economy to support ocean industry, ocean commerce, ocean science and maritime operations;

- a. Optimizing the benefits received from the development of their marine environments such as fishery agreements, bio prospecting, oil and mineral extraction.
- b. Promoting national equity, including gender equality, and in particular the generation of inclusive growth and decent jobs for all.
- c. Properly reflecting in the development of seas beyond national jurisdiction, including the refinement of international governance mechanisms and their concerns as States proximate to seabed development.

The role of marine resources in poverty alleviation, acquiring in food productions, protecting environmental balance, facing adverse impacts of climate change and other economic possibilities are unlimited. But with the

potentialities and possibilities the challenges also accompany.

The following may be the challenges:

- a. Ensuring the sovereignty over the total coastal area.
- b. Maintaining the security over the economic area.
- c. Establishing marine friendly infrastructure for marine tourist.
- d. Protecting the area from the international smugglers.
- e. Maintaining investment friendly environment in the awarded area.
- f. Sustainable use of biodiversity.
- g. Maintaining marine and coastal ecosystems.
- h. Preserving mangrove and sea grass.
- i. Addressing climate change and managing carbon emission.
- j. Maintaining sea level rise and change in ecosystems and temperatures from coral bleaching.



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- k. Addressing ocean acidification and blue carbon.
- l. Keeping the sea area free from pollution and marine debris.
- m. The growing human population, intensification of agriculture.
- n. Technical challenges in exploration and extraction of mineral carbon and oil resources from the seabed.
- o. Involved high cost

## **Future of Sea Power**

Expansion of the global system has increased the prosperity of many nations. Yet their continued growth may create increasing competition for resources and capital with other economic powers.

Heightened popular expectations and increased competition for resources, coupled with scarcity, may encourage nations to exert wider claims of sovereignty over greater expanses of ocean, waterways, and natural resources which will result in conflicts amongst nations.

Similarly, technology is rapidly expanding marine activities such as energy development, resource



extraction, and other commercial activity in and under the oceans.

Hence, climate change is inevitable while these developments offer opportunities for growth, they are potential sources of competition and conflict for access and natural resources.

Globalization and multiculturalism will also be shaping human migration patterns, health, education, culture, and the conduct of conflict.

Those conflicts may increase and are characterized by a hybrid blend of traditional and irregular tactics, de-centralized planning and execution, and non-state actors using both simple and sophisticated technologies in innovative ways.

Weak or corrupt governments, growing dissatisfaction among the disenfranchised, religious extremism, ethnic nationalism, and changing demographics often spurred on by the uneven and sometimes unwelcome advances of globalization which exacerbate tensions and are contributors to conflict.

Concurrently, a rising number of transnational actors and rogue states, encouraged and enabled with unprecedented access to the global stage could cause widespread disruptions in an effort to increase their



power and influence. Their actions, often designed to purposely incite conflict between other parties, will complicate attempts to defuse and allay regional conflict.

Proliferation of weapons technology and information has increased the capacity of nation-states and transnational actors to challenge maritime access, evade accountability for attacks, and manipulate public perception.

Asymmetric use of technology will pose a range of threats to the United States and its partners. Even more worrisome, the appetite for nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is growing among nations and non-state antagonists.

At the same time, attacks on legal, financial, and cyber systems can be equally, if not more, disruptive than kinetic weapons.

Nuclear disarmament and national policies of non-aggression being incorporated to strategic engagement by relevant sea powers will pave the way for a hopeful future with no destructive confrontations but a collaborative approach for a viable solution for peace and economic development.

## Conclusion

Sri Lanka's maritime geography has had a strong influence on our history and our view of the world.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka is particularly dependent on maritime trade. Safety, security and freedom of movement at sea are critical to our economic prosperity and security.

So, we must work with other nations to keep global trade moving and to promote 'good order at sea' with all the legitimate sea farers. Not just for the region, but the entire global community.

The silent but significant and positive and contributory impact that our seafarers and merchant marine make to our national economy being employed at sea and in port operations around the world requires further recognition, support and development as a matter of urgency.

By securing our maritime environment we protect Sri Lanka's national interests while contributing to regional security and stability.

Sri Lanka's maritime interests in the region are growing, particularly as we work together with regional nations to promote security and prosperity.



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Sea power, and the way that navies operate in the 21st century must also adapt to this evolving environment. The judicious and measured use of sea power will require much greater levels of global cooperation, increased interoperability and a better shared understanding of the nature of the threats we face.

The bottom line is that we face an increasingly uncertain future, with a mix of traditional and non-traditional threats to our security. This requires us to be prepared with a range of responses up to, and including, lethal force.

On the international stage, Sri Lanka strongly emphasises cooperation as the basis for stability, especially the relationship with regional powers.

We are practicing a diversified approach to the management and prioritisation of its vast maritime area. Hence, we need more broad cooperation and a pragmatic policy based on mutual respect for the parties concerned.

Sri Lanka is in the fortunate position of being on very good terms with our near neighbours as well as other nations.

We aim to be open and transparent in our dealings with other nations and I am proud to note that the Sri Lanka Navy has always played a



significant role in building confidence, capacity, engagement with understanding and rapport between nations.

The unprecedented success of the 2010 Sri Lanka Navy's 60th Anniversary celebrations with all leading Sear Powers of the world and the region physically presenting themselves in Colombo in their strength and the 10 year internationally acclaimed progress of the "Galle Dialogue" International Maritime Conference inaugurated in 2009 are clear evidence of Sri Lanka Navy's initiative for collaborative policy for its strategic vision and engagement.

In spite of having relatively small population, Sri Lanka continues to attract regional and global powers in various pretexts to achieve their national interest of global reach and naval and maritime domination in the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lanka being a country that has honourably practiced neutrality and nonalignment within a democratic framework in their long history is now faced with influential friends, who are economically and militarily powerful, willing to engage in various modes of investment.

Sri Lanka's clean record of neutrality, non-involvement and tried and tested democratic practices



will give a clear and strong message to interested parties ready to engage with Sri Lanka. Every such investment will carry the obvious element of self-interest that Sri Lanka as a smart nation should be capable of rationalizing and visualizing strategically understanding accurately their intentions and our best options.

Anticipating and using the regional and the global picture and Geostrategic position and requirements with an open mind, is considered the prudent approach advantageous to our own benefits and interests. Accordingly, suitable engagements in education, national defence, economic stability, connectivity, and internal national mechanisms to protect and sustain the population stand out as top priorities in this endeavour.

It is well understood that self-interest is the motivator of economic investment and the competition is the economic regulator. Together these two elements of self-interest and competition guide resources to the most needed and valued position that would yield desired positive results.

The late Admiral Clancy Fernando has tried to shape the thinking of Sea Power of this island state in 80's. In 1985 and in 1987, he has authored several articles that have chapters discussing these elements that are very



prominent today. Just as he analysed the necessity of Killali Lagoon operations in 1991 after the Elephant Pass siege, I am on the opinion that he could have used his weight to focus on matters related to Sea Power in today's geo-strategic context had we continued to cherish his leadership. In an era of the end of the cold war in Indian Ocean the late Admiral foresaw the necessities of securing national interests on the oceans, taking examples of the past history which was his forte!

In conclusion I wish to leave you with the thought of the term "Smart Power" which in my opinion determines success of a nation. This is the use of a right balance of a country's "Hard Power" of military and economic means as an approach to international political relations that is combined and merged with the "Soft Power" of attraction and persuasion through business, educational, cultural, societal, technological and digital strength for exerting and influencing foreign policy and political will and values. Sea Power of an Island Nation must therefore be sensibly and judiciously manoeuvred between Hard and Soft Power to be a "Smart Power".

**Thank you!**



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# *Photo Gallery*

"Annual Memorial Lecture Series 2020"  
on 19th February 2021  
at the Main Auditorium, SUHURUPAYA



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