



November 2017

## SECOND UNITED STATES-SRI LANKA PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

### JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SRI LANKA

Sharing a commitment to democracy, rule of law, and the prosperity and well-being of our peoples, Sri Lanka and the United States convened the second Partnership Dialogue on November 6, 2017, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The meeting was led by Sri Lanka Foreign Secretary Prasad Kariyawasam and U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon. The Partnership Dialogue demonstrates the consolidation of cooperation between the United States and Sri Lanka, and serves to further strengthen and enhance bilateral relations in the widest sense, through regular and structured engagement.

As fellow democracies, the two governments resolved to work together toward a free and open Indo-Pacific region and for greater peace and stability around the world. The United States and Sri Lanka agreed that the security, stability, and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region should be safeguarded through the promotion of a rules-based order which would ensure that all countries that enjoy the global commons respect international



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laws and norms. Both countries agreed to advance this vision for peace and stability regionally and in international fora and stressed the particular importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight and of maintaining a maritime order based on the rule of law including unimpeded commerce, and they shared the intention to further promote cooperation and exchanges in maritime security and safety, including anti-piracy measures. Sri Lanka

emphasized its need, as an island nation, to build maritime capacity so that it can effectively patrol its own borders and safeguard its marine resources.

The vision to develop Sri Lanka as a regional hub for trade and investment in Asia, which would connect trade flows among ASEAN, India, the Middle East, and Africa through free and open seas that would be the key to growth of the region, was discussed. The United States expressed its support for Sri Lanka through trade, investment, foreign assistance and direct partnership with stakeholders throughout the country. [More](#)

### REMARKS BY FOREIGN SECRETARY PRASAD KARIYAWASAM

I am delighted and honoured to welcome Ambassador Thomas Shannon, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and his delegation, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this evening.

This is our second meeting in the last two months or so. Ambassador Shannon and I met in New York in late September, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, when he called on His Excellency the President, to discuss the growing interaction and partnership between our two countries. Ambassador Shannon also met Finance and Media Minister Mangala Samaraweera during his visit last month to Washington DC. The Hon. Speaker of our Parliament and a multi-party delegation were in Washington in late September. The level of heightened interaction between our two countries, at all levels, is indeed heartening.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Under Secretary Shannon is no stranger to Sri Lanka, and to all our leaders, and indeed to all of you.

This is his second visit to Sri Lanka. His first visit took place in December 2015. You would all recall, I am sure, that he held a press briefing in this same building during his first visit in December 2015, at which the dates for the first US - Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue were announced. Accordingly the inaugural Partnership Dialogue between the US and Sri Lanka took place in Washington DC., in February last year, 2016, shepherded by none other than, Ambassador Shannon. [More](#)

### REMARKS BY US UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS THOMAS A. SHANNON, JR

Thank you very much, Mr. Foreign Secretary. What a great pleasure to be here today in Colombo, and what a great pleasure to be standing here with you, sir. As you noted, we worked together in Washington when you were Sri Lanka's Ambassador during a period of momentous change in Sri Lanka and of enormous advancement in U.S.-Sri Lankan relationships. You played a vitally important role in fashioning that relationship and explaining it to the American people, and to the American Congress, and Executive Branch. You were a great diplomat, and I'm glad that your skill has been recognized by your own government and that you're here working as Foreign Secretary and playing such an important role in shaping Sri Lanka's diplomacy, now much further than just our bilateral relationship, but globally.

It's an enormous pleasure to be here in Colombo for the U.S.-Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue. This is the second time we have met in this format, as the Foreign Secretary has noted, and it has proven to be a valuable forum for discussion of our many important areas of collaboration. I commend Sri Lanka on its courageous decision to commit to a process of reform that promotes greater equality and prosperity for Sri Lankans regardless of ethnicity or religion. [More](#)

## REMARKS BY PRASAD KARIYAWASAM, FOREIGN SECRETARY AT THE 72ND UNITED NATIONS DAY



As the UN turns seventy-two; Sri Lanka's formal relationship with the United Nations turns sixty-two.

As an officer who has served in the Foreign Service of Sri Lanka for over 30 years out of those 62 years, and served as Permanent Representative both in Geneva and in New York, and still serving as a UN Treaty Body Member, and thus serving both the UN and my country, I can confidently say that Sri Lanka's relationship with the UN is at present, probably at the best it has ever been.

The United Nations is the organisation that we, the Member States, created, following two devastating world wars. The promise that was made in the Charter that came into effect on 24th October 1945, was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and uphold instead, respect for dialogue, diplomacy, international cooperation and an international rules-based-system.

Sri Lanka, in a sense, has travelled the full-circle, locally. A country hailed as a potential Switzerland of the East at Independence in 1948, we very soon lost our way. We went

from a post-Independent nation that was respected on the international stage, to one that almost forgot the values and principles that we as a nation stood for, at the time that we joined the United Nations. Having almost driven ourselves to self-isolation, the people of our nation once again took destiny into their hands, and took the bold step, through democratic means, on the 8th of January 2015, to bring our nation back from the depths of isolation onto respectability on the international stage. Shedding divisive practices, and futile arguments that we were engaged in with the international community, we stood up once again with confidence to take responsibility for all our citizens, and to recommit to upholding the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Just 9 months later, when the United Nations turned seventy, the President, the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, the Speaker of Parliament, and Members of Parliament from different parties, all walked into this compound and joined hands with all of you, the United Nations family in Sri Lanka, to celebrate the United Nations, and to celebrate 60 years of our Membership in the United Nations. *More*

### USS NIMITZ VISIT TO SRI LANKA FIRST FOR U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER SINCE 1985



The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka for a planned port visit on October 28. The Carrier Strike Group included the USS Nimitz, the cruiser USS Princeton, and destroyers USS Howard, USS Shoup, USS Pinckney, and USS Kidd.

Reflecting the growing relationship between the U.S. and Sri Lankan navies, this is the first time an aircraft carrier has visited Sri Lanka since 1985, and follows the recent completion of the inaugural bilateral Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) naval exercise.

"Building our maritime partnership in step with Sri

Lanka's own progress on reconciliation and human rights advances our shared national goals of fostering security and stability," said U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives Atul Keshap. "I'm delighted that U.S. sailors will have the chance to visit Sri Lanka, meet with its wonderful people, and take part in public service activities at schools, hospitals, and rest homes that will improve the lives of Sri Lankans of all ages," he added. *More*



### MARSHALL LEGACY INSTITUTE HONOURS SRI LANKA ARMY MINE DETECTION DOG TEAM FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR



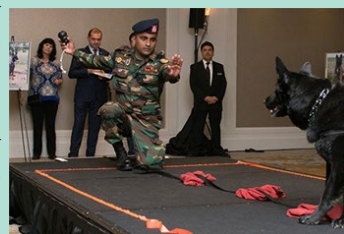
A Mine Detection Dog (MDD) Team from the Sri Lanka Army was honoured by the U.S.-based Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) at its 20th Anniversary Clearing the Path Gala in Washington

D.C. on October 24. This is the second consecutive year the honour has been bestowed on a Sri Lankan mine detection dog team.

MLI's annual gala honours individuals whose extraordinary efforts have improved lives in war-torn countries and highlights accomplishments of the past year that have made the world a safer place. *More*

For their years of excellent service and the strong bond between them, MDD Yankee and her handler Lance Corporal T.K.D. Rajapaksha of the Sri Lanka Army Engineers Humanitarian Demining Unit were presented the 2017 Dog Team of the Year award by MLI's President and Executive Director Perry F. Baltimore. The team led by Brigade Commander of the Sri Lanka Army Engineers Demining Unit Brigadier Amith Seneviratne, together with

MDD Yankee and Lance Corporal Rajapaksha were recognized for their contribution and dedication to demining efforts in Sri Lanka. Receiving the award, Lance Corporal Rajapaksha thanked MLI and its partners for their continued support to Sri Lanka and sustained efforts to combat the scourge of landmines. *More*



## SRI LANKA POISED TO LEAPFROG AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY -FINANCE MINISTER



Sri Lanka under the unity government headed by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is poised to leapfrog the economy after long years of conflict and political instability.

The Minister of Finance and Mass Media Mangla Samaraweera stated this when he met with the Vice President of the World Bank Annette Dixon in Washington on the sidelines to the World Bank/IMF annual conference held in Washington in October.

Minister Samaraweera said that the Sri Lankan Unity Government has been addressing key issues to

strengthen the democratic institutions.

“We are celebrating 70 years of Parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka this year and the economy will be revitalized on the strong pillars of reconciliation and democracy with far reaching reforms,” the Minister emphasized.

The Minister also briefed Ms. Dixon on Sri Lanka’s current political and economic dynamics. The Government’s policy plan for the next eight years was announced recently with the title “V2025 - A Country Enriched”. It envisages economic prosperity for all Sri Lankans, based on the principles of a social market economy. With that in mind, Minister Samaraweera said that his maiden Budget Proposals for 2018 will be presented to the Parliament on 9th November. [More](#)

## FOREIGN MINISTRY CONSULAR DIVISION WINS TWO AWARDS AT THE 19TH NATIONAL BEST QUALITY ICT AWARDS

The Consular Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was awarded the Public Sector Most Outstanding ICT Achievement Award and the Gold Award in the Government and Public Sector Category at the 19th National Best Quality ICT Awards held at the Hotel Taj Samudra on 6th October 2017.

The two awards were presented to the Consular Affairs Division in recognition of its online Electronic Document Attestation System (e-DAS) developed to provide quality services to the citizens of Sri Lanka and efforts to introduce, nurture and develop an ICT environment to improve service delivery. The e-DAS was rated

as the most innovative digital platform in the Sri Lankan public sector.

The NBQSA Ceremony is annually organized to recognize and appreciate best ICT innovations under 19 categories including the Public Sector Most Outstanding Achievement. The applications for the competition were judged by experts in the ICT industry and academia representing local and international institutions. This award ceremony was organized by the Sri Lankan Section of the British Computer Society, the Chartered Institute of IT in the UK, in collaboration with Information Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) Sri Lanka. [More](#)

## STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA: PROGRESS DESPITE A DIFFICULT LEGACY

- By Dr Harsha de Silva

At a time when the world seems to be struggling mightily to put human rights at the forefront of a global discourse burdened by conflict, fear of terrorism



and radicalisation, and real or perceived security threats of various kinds, mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Right Council gain an added importance. The UPR was enacted in 2006 by the General Assembly of the UN as a process in which the human rights record of every member state is scrutinized by fellow member states and its adherence to obligations in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human

rights instruments is tested.

Sri Lanka is reporting under the UPR mechanism for the third time this week in Geneva, with previous reports occurring in 2008 and 2012. Following more than three decades of conflict and a subsequent government which had a dubious record on human rights, I am happy to represent a government which has made vindication of human rights central to its policies. Considering the difficult legacy, it was always to be expected that the process was never going to be easy. However, there are many signs of progress on the front of human rights we were proud to present in Geneva. [More](#)

## USAID WORKS WITH SRI LANKA TO STRENGTHEN PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been working closely with the Government of Sri Lanka on disaster preparedness and response, to help address and mitigate the loss of lives and property resulting from the increased frequency of flash floods and landslides. Most recently, USAID brought the lead designer of the World Meteorological Organization’s Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS) Dr. Konstantine P. Georgakakos to Sri Lanka to work with the Ministry of Disaster Management on including Sri Lanka under a regional FFGS.

FFGS takes data from

automated rain gauges and combines it with global data from satellites in order to provide at-risk communities with accurate warnings in enough time to vacate their homes. With the Ministry’s engagement, Dr. Georgakakos examined the existing system in Sri Lanka and explored ways to improve it.

The collaboration will include extensive training on modern systems, satellite information, automated sensors, and weather prediction. The South Asia regional system is supported by USAID, the World Meteorological Organization, and the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. [More](#)