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<http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/philippines-announces-2-billion-defense-expansion/>

## Philippines Announces \$2 Billion Defense Expansion

By Ankit Panda

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Amid concerns emerging from a rising China in the South China Sea, the Philippines' government announced its intention to spend \$2 billion on defense procurement by 2017. At a speech at the Philippines' Department of National Defense, President Benigno Aquino announced the initiative, stating that bulk of the procurements would go into modernizing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and into programs that would help the country secure its national sovereignty. The Philippines is one of the claimants in the ongoing maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Additionally, it faces a persistent threat from multiple Islamic insurgency groups within its borders.

Expanding on the U.S. Department of Defense's new Offset Strategy, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has an op-ed in *DefenseOne* worth reading. The bulk of the piece is similar to what Hagel discussed in his speech at the Reagan National Defense Forum (which our own Zachary Keck discussed in some detail here on *Flashpoints*). Hagel outlined the United States' shifting strategic and budgetary focus toward technology and innovation in military hardware, including robotics, autonomous systems, miniaturization, big data, and advanced manufacturing. The idea with the new Offset Strategy is to maintain the United States' military edge in an era of shrinking budgets.

Over at *Defense News*, a report takes a look at Japan's planned ballistic missile defense (BMD) upgrades. Japan's current BMD posture is intended to counter any threat from North Korea and

revolves around its U.S.-provided Aegis-based fleet and Patriot missile systems. Currently, Japan is considering the addition of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to complement its Aegis and Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) systems. It is also looking into space-based early warning systems. As Clint Richards has highlighted on *The Diplomat*, THAAD in particular is a hairy topic in Northeast Asia as it also involves U.S. ally South Korea, creating the perception of a de facto trilateral defense agreement postured against China.

The U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction's (SIGAR) job is to tell other departments of the U.S. federal bureaucracy just how poorly things are going in Afghanistan. In his latest comments to the press SIGAR chief John Sopko minced no words in telling the Pentagon just how ineffective its bid to catalyze economic development in Afghanistan with a \$700 to \$800 million program was: according to Sopko, the program "accomplished nothing." More recently, SIGAR highlighted the rise in opium cultivation, the rise in mismanaged government funds, and the fact that hundreds of thousands of U.S.-provided small arms remain unaccounted for in Afghanistan.

Amid growing defense ties between India and Israel, New Delhi has silently lifted Israeli Military Industries (IMI) from a blacklist of defense suppliers. *Defense News* reported the development based on an Indian defense ministry source; the lifting of the ban has not been publicly announced by the Indian MoD nor by the Israeli Embassy, according to the report. The ban was imposed by India's former Congress-led government after IMI was accused of bribing officials in the government-owned Indian Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).