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## Why India is pursuing military strength?

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India's Ministry of Defense report shows India's emergence as the world's biggest arms importing countries, spending more than 6 billion U.S. dollars on arms almost every year.

Rushing to get a slice of the Indian arms pie, the world's six fighter manufactures are bidding to compete for the Indian Air Force contract that will include 126 new fighters, worth 10 billion U.S. dollars.

On August 15, two U.S. Boeing F-18E / F fighters conducted a test flight at an Air Force base in Bangalore, southern India.

In addition, U.S. Lockheed Martin's F-16C / D fighter, France's new fighter Rafale (Gust), Eurofighter Typhoon, which has been developed by Britain, Italy, Spain and Germany, and Swedish JAS39 "Gripen" combat aircraft also debuted during the test flight to compete for the deal.

The government is putting in a large amount of funding for military updating. The military spending budget for this financial year has substantially increased, surging 25 percent year-on-year. The cost of procuring weapons from abroad by armed forces will reach \$30 billion by 2010.

India recently also made a big move on nuclear submarines. On July 26, India launched its first home-made nuclear-powered submarine, weighing a whopping 6000 tons. It is armed with 12 K15 missiles, each capable of carrying a 500 kg nuclear warhead to a target 750 km away.

At present, India's navy has an aircraft carrier, eight destroyers, about 40 frigates, 16 submarines, as well as a large number of auxiliary ships.

In addition, the Indian Army and Air Force are also stepping up modernization. Having been equipped with modern weapons and equipment, the Indian Army now has more than 4000 main battle tanks and is the world's largest cluster of tanks.

The Indian Air Force has more than 1000 fighters and this number also continues to expand.

There are two main reasons why India is rapidly expanding its military; one is that the country is a target for terrorist attacks, the other is arms race.

Effects from the terrorist attacks in Mumbai have not yet dispersed, but the Indian government has stressed the need to guard against a new round of terrorist attacks.

Furthermore, India has tense relations with its neighboring countries such as Pakistan and no doubt strengthening India's military puts pressure on them.

India's moves also caused concern and vigilance from Pakistan. The research and development of nuclear submarines by India will undermine the stability and threaten the peace and balance of power in South Asia, and will trigger a new arms race, said a spokesman for the Pakistan navy.