

## BrahMos Missile Would Give Manila Instant Clout

But some critics are slamming the deal, claiming the Philippines doesn't have the required infrastructure

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*Last year, Philippines **President Rodrigo Duterte**, threw in the towel on the battle over territory in the South China Sea. Or did he?*

*According to [The Eurasian Times](#), he insinuated it was better for Manila to pursue “diplomatic endeavors” with China over the dispute, because China had the military might.*

The Philippines, of course, did not.

So why exactly, did India and the Philippines — specifically, Philippine defense undersecretary **Raymund Elefante** and Indian ambassador **Shambu Kumaran** — lay the groundwork for a secret deal to procure the deadly BrahMos missile?

As we know, the medium-range ramjet supersonic BrahMos cruise missile is a highly adaptable, effective weapon. One that would certainly make any threatening nation, ie. China, sit up and take notice.

An Indo-Russian joint venture, BrahMos, can be fired in inclined or vertical configurations from ships, submarines, aircraft and ground launchers.

Capable of hitting sea based targets beyond radar horizons, it's the perfect weapon for a small nation, that wants to do a little sabre-rattling, without having to do the R&D.

Just uncrate, and fire — a Mach 3.5 monster of destruction.

Initial versions of the BrahMos go up to the range of 290 km, but last year India tested an extended range of around 400 kilometers, with more versions of higher ranges above 1,000 kilometers currently under development.

And let's face it, whoever heard of a Filipino backing down from a fight? Does Manny Pacquiao ring a bell?

So what, exactly, is Duterte's ultimate goal? Is he crazy, like the fox? Bowing to Beijing, and

then quietly boosting the PI's coastal defenses?

Is he stealing a page from **Xi Jinping's** "Wolf Warrior" playbook — eyeing an endgame that is well down the road.

Or is this just a big mistake?

Some experts are slamming the deal, suggesting the country doesn't even have the required infrastructure to ensure that purchases are maintained and manpower is trained to maintain the systems, Eurasian Times reported.

And even with BrahMos, experts point out that the country doesn't have a budget to configure its combat ships to launch them.

While details of the procurement have not yet been revealed, New Delhi has reportedly offered a soft loan of US\$100 million to Manila, to acquire the missiles, Eurasian Times reported.

If a formal deal is signed, the defense credit line may as well be extended, which will help the Philippines in the procurement, sources said.

The Southeast Asian nation is set to become the first buyer of BrahMos, part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to expand defense exports, Eurasian Times reported.

Cruise missiles like BrahMos are a type of systems known as the "standoff range weapons" which are fired from a range sufficient to allow the attacker to evade defensive fire from the adversary.

BrahMos can even be launched from a submarine.

In March, 2013, this version was successfully tested at a depth of 50 metres from a submerged platform off the coast of Visakhapatnam, sources said.

The canister stored missile is launched vertically from the pressure hull of the submarine and uses different settings for underwater and out of the water flights.

In 2016, The Hague tribunal backed the Philippines in its case over the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

Beijing claims the entire South China Sea, stretching across 3.6 million square kilometers, as its territory.

The tribunal ruled that rocky outcrops claimed by China - some of which are exposed only at low tide - cannot be used as the basis of territorial claims, Eurasian Times reported.

"Some of the waters were within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines because those areas are not overlapped by any possible entitlement of China," the ruling said.

It also found China in violation of the Philippines' sovereign rights in those waters by interfering with its fishing and petroleum exploration and by constructing artificial islands.

However, China refused to accept the ruling and instead, has shown more aggressiveness in protecting its claims.

Meanwhile, Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program is well on its way, as the country attempts to achieve a rapid recovery — ironically, with the help of Beijing.

Chinese companies have signed two major construction contracts for a bridge link to Davao City in Mindanao and a cargo railway in Luzon.

The Subic-Clark railway project, which will cost approximately US\$940 million, will be bankrolled by China. It will also be the highest-funded G-to-G cooperation project between China and the Philippines so far.

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