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Unpacking the Philippines' 2018 National Security Strategy: Examining the Case of the South China Sea Dispute

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Introduction

In July 2018, for the first time, the Philippines released its National Security Strategy (NSS). Designed to operationalize the National Security Policy (NSP) published a year before, the NSS not only aims to integrate the country's "major security policies, goals, responsibilities and courses of action" but also "articulate the national interest" and "convey the [Philippines'] intentions."¹

The aim of this policy brief² is to discuss how the NSS seeks to promote Philippine national security interests in the South China Sea (SCS). In particular, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How does the NSS perceive the regional security environment of the Indo-Asia-Pacific particularly, with respect to the SCS?; 2) How does the NSS articulate Philippine national security interests in the SCS and what are the identified courses of action to pursue such interests?; and 3) What are the challenges in promoting Philippine interests in the SCS?

To answer these questions, this paper shall use the theory on strategy developed by Arthur F. Lykke. Focusing on the nation-state, strategy has been defined as the "employment of the instruments (elements) of power (political/diplomatic, economic, military, and informational) to achieve the political objectives of the state in cooperation or in competition with other actors pursuing their own objectives."³ For Lykke, a strategy has three main elements: 1) "ends (objectives)" which are the "objectives that, if accomplished, create, or contribute to, the achievement of the desired end state;" 2) "ways (strategic concepts/courses of action)" explain "how" the ends are to be accomplished by the employment of resources;" and 3) "means (resources)" refer to the "specific resources [to] be used in applying the concepts to accomplish the objectives."⁴ In understanding and developing a strategy, Lykke also stressed the importance of considering risks which explain the gaps "between what is to be achieved and

the concepts and resources available to achieve the objective."⁵ This paper argues that while the NSS presents some of the key elements of a strategy in the SCS, the Philippines faces daunting challenges in promoting its interests in Southeast Asia's maritime heartland.

Indo-Asia-Pacific Strategic Environment

Mindful of a seemingly unconventional approach to Philippine foreign policy, NSS provides an insight on how Manila—particularly the defense and security establishment—perceives the geostrategic environment, as well as how to navigate the challenging currents of international relations in the region. "The Philippines' current external security environment," the NSS provides, "is marked by increased uncertainty and unpredictability."⁶ The strategy document further underscores that the rivalry of major powers is "the most important long-term strategic concern" of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.⁷ This geostrategic competition is driven largely by the "rise of China" which has "generated policy concerns" in the region.⁸ The NSS also recognizes the geographical vulnerability of the country. Situated between the South China Sea (SCS) and the broader Pacific ocean—essentially the grand chessboard of Washington and Beijing—the Philippines, particularly its location and natural resources, have "provided a strong temptation to expansionist powers."⁹

Cognizant of its security environment, the NSS identifies the dispute over the SCS—in particular the West Philippine Sea (WPS)—as "the foremost security challenge to the Philippines' sovereignty and territorial integrity."¹⁰ While the current Philippine administration has openly expressed its affection for the Chinese leadership,¹¹ the document describes Beijing's presence in the SCS as "aggressive," which is partly spawned by the Asian power's "increasing demand for energy resources, and renewed stirrings of nationalism."¹² As such, the NSS admits that Manila

“suddenly [gave] the same attention to territorial defense as it does to internal security threats.”¹³ The document candidly acknowledges that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is “one of the weakest in Asia,” a condition which raises “doubt [in Manila’s] ability to protect and defend [the] sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the country.¹⁴

Promoting Philippine SCS Interests

Based on its hierarchy of priorities, the NSS identifies three sets of Philippine national interests: “core,” “important,” and “other.”¹⁵ In each of the aforementioned categories, there are relevant national security interests in the SCS. Under “core” category, the relevant security interests are: 1) “Preservation of the sovereignty and integrity of the national territory;” and 2) “Pursuit of independent foreign policy in the exercise of national sovereignty and self-determination.”¹⁶ The salient “important” national interest is the “[d]evelopment of credible armed forces.”¹⁷ The pertinent “other” national interests are: 1) “Adherence to international agreements;” 2) “Participation...in the United Nations and other international fora;” and 3) “Promotion of dialogue and negotiation to solve any issues of mutual interest.”¹⁸ To note, the NSS harmonizes these interests with what it calls as the “goals” of national security, which are the “action areas” that “form the basis for the formulation of agency/institutional courses of actions.”¹⁹ Understood in Lykke’s theory, the following relevant national security goals can be viewed as the “ends” of the NSS with respect to the SCS: 1) “Safeguard and preserve national sovereignty and territorial integrity;” 2) “Ensure maritime and airspace security;” and 3) “Strengthen international relations.”²⁰

Echoing Lykke’s theoretical framework, the NSS calls for the “combined and coordinated use of all the instruments of national power—political and legal, diplomatic, informational and intelligence, economic and technological, and military and law enforcement.”²¹ Arguably, the “ways” of achieving the desired “ends” in the SCS are intertwined with each other. As such, the strategic courses of action in promoting Philippine interests in the SCS outlined in the NSS may be construed in three broad areas: 1) enhance the capabilities of the AFP; 2) strengthen alliance and partnerships; and 3) support bilateral and multilateral efforts in managing tensions.

First, enhance the capabilities of the AFP.

The NSS underscores the need for the Philippines “to project a [sic] minimum defense credibility.”²² Indeed,

the strategy document stresses the “need to increase the size and deterrent capability of the Navy and Air Force as quickly as possible to serve as [the Philippines’] external defense, protect [the country’s] national territory, and modernize all branches of the [AFP].”²³ Moreover, the NSS notes the necessity to “[i]dentify and acquire equipment to provide nationwide 24/7 domain awareness, and effectively manage and control Philippine air and maritime spaces.”²⁴ The need for the AFP to focus on external defense is strongly suggested by the NSS as it notes that the AFP “has been performing multifarious functions” which has placed “a strain on its limited equipment and resources.”²⁵

Manila’s main initiative to strengthen its military is through the current AFP Modernization Program (AFPMP), which is governed by Republic Act (RA) no. 10349 that was signed into law by then-President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2012.²⁶ Extending the original AFPMP for another fifteen years, the modernization program is divided into three five-year “horizons.”²⁷ Under the first horizon (2013-2017), the Philippines acquired, among others, 12 FA-50 lead in fighter trainer jets from South Korea, 3 Hamilton-class cutters from the United States (US), and 2 strategic sealift vessels from Indonesia.²⁸

To note, the first horizon cuts across the administrations of Presidents Aquino and Rodrigo Duterte. Shortly after coming to power in 2016, the Duterte government announced that it will continue the AFPMP.²⁹ The second horizon (2018-2022) will be implemented during President Duterte’s term, which will end in 2022. In June 2018, the Department of National Defense (DND) announced that Malacañang has approved of the assets and equipment to be acquired under the second horizon. For the Philippine Navy (PN), the items to be acquired include: corvettes, submarines, amphibious assault vehicles, anti-submarine helicopters, attack crafts, medium lift helicopters and multi-role vessels.³⁰ For its part, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) will acquire: multi-role fighters, radar systems, light and medium lift aircraft, heavy lift helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, helicopters (attack and combat utility), special mission and long-range patrol aircraft.³¹ It remains to be seen, however, if all of the aforementioned assets and equipment will be acquired.

In addition, the Philippines also began the repair of its runway in Thitu (Pag-asa) island,³² as well as the construction of light houses³³ in its occupied features. Moreover, state media reported that a PAF base will be constructed in southern Palawan province in 2019, which is near the disputed SCS.³⁴

Second, strengthen alliance and partnerships. Noting that America is the world's "only superpower" and the Philippines' "sole defense treaty ally," the strategy document emphasized that US security presence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is a "stabilizing force."³⁵ Mindful of US President Donald Trump's vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," the NSS reaffirmed Manila's commitment to work with Washington on a whole range of security and economic concerns.³⁶

Together with their US counterparts, Philippine officials have worked, with less fanfare, to improve bilateral relations. In May 2018, key figures from the Philippines' national security apparatus, led by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, visited the Hawaii-based US Indo-Pacific Command.³⁷ During the September 2018 meeting of the Mutual Defense Board and Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB), the allies agreed to increase the security cooperation activities for the ensuing year—from 261 activities in 2018 to 281 in 2019.³⁸ In October 2018, American and Philippine marines conducted the "Kaagapay ng mga Mandirigma ng Dagat" (KAMANDAG) or "Cooperation of Warriors of the Sea" amphibious landing exercise.³⁹ Later that month, Admiral John M. Richardson, US Navy Chief of Naval Operations, visited the Philippines—including a trip to the AFP's Western Command, the military unit in charge of defending the Philippines' territory in SCS.⁴⁰

Washington has also supported the AFPMP. In 2018 alone, the US provided the Philippines with Scan Eagle Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) and the Special Airborne Mission Installation and Response (SABIR) system, both of which aim to boost the intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance capabilities of the AFP.⁴¹ In addition to providing the Philippine Marine Corps with personal protective equipment, the US also announced that it will transfer four OV-10 Bronco light attack planes to the PAF.⁴² In an apparent move to further improve relations, US Defense Secretary James Mattis announced the return of the Balangiga Bells to the Philippines.⁴³ To recall, in his 2017 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Duterte has publicly criticized Washington over the issue of the bells, which he described as reminders of "gallantry and heroism" against "American colonizers."⁴⁴

Beyond the Philippines-US alliance, the NSS has called for enhancing ties with security partners. Japan and Viet Nam are the Philippines' "strategic partners," while Australia is a "comprehensive partner."⁴⁵ Acknowledging Tokyo's "proactive contribution to peace" initiative, the strategy document reaffirms the "strengthened strategic

partnership" between the Philippines and Japan.⁴⁶ Thus far, it appears that President Duterte has sustained his predecessor's initiative of forging close security cooperation between Manila and Tokyo. In 2018, Japan has completed the turnover of all of the ten multi-role response vessels (MRRVs) to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), an initiative under the Maritime Safety and Capability Improvement Project funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.⁴⁷ Participating in the Philippines-US KAMANDAG exercises, Japan donated military training aircraft to the Philippine Navy (PN), as well as spare parts and maintenance equipment to the PAF.⁴⁸ President Duterte, who declared that the Philippines-Japan strategic partnership has entered a "golden age," personally welcomed a visiting Japanese flotilla—which included helicopter carrier JS Kaga (DDH-184)—last September 2018.⁴⁹ In December 2018, as a sign of deepening strategic partnership between the two countries, Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana confirmed that Japan had offered to sell its air defense radar technology to the Philippines.⁵⁰ The technology could aid Manila in protecting its territory by monitoring aircrafts and vessels that traverse, enter or leave the country.⁵¹

While not explicitly mentioned in the NSS, the Philippines-Viet Nam strategic partnership is a crucial security relationship between two ASEAN member-states. Both SCS claimants, the two countries have developed confidence-building measures, particularly the military interaction in Southwest Cay—previously occupied by the Philippines and is currently under Viet Nam's control—where officers from both countries play sports and share information on topics that include maritime security.⁵²

The NSS identifies Australia, along with other states like India, South Korea, and Russia, as "crucial in the peace, stability, and prosperity of the broader Indo-Asia-Pacific region."⁵³ Similar to Viet Nam, the Philippines-Australia comprehensive partnership was not explicitly mentioned in the NSS. Nevertheless, Manila's partnership with Canberra is crucial as both are part of the US-led hub-and-spokes system of bilateral alliances in the region. Moreover, Australia is the only country, apart from the US, with which the Philippines has a Visiting Forces Agreement.

Third, support bilateral and multilateral efforts to manage tensions. The NSS suggests a careful management of the SCS with China. While it reaffirms Manila's legal victory over China at the international arbitral tribunal and called for a media campaign to promote the ruling, the strategy document stresses that the Philippines "will tread

with prudence on [the] complex and delicate [SCS] issue and will carefully calibrate its diplomatic moves to avert the costly consequences of any potential outbreak of armed confrontations in the disputed sea region.”⁵⁴ Consistent with its pledge to give China a “soft landing” and not to “taunt or flaunt” the decision, the Duterte administration issued a restrained and carefully worded response to the ruling’s outcome.⁵⁵ Shortly thereafter, President Duterte named former President Fidel V. Ramos as his special envoy to China. Building in his close ties with the Chinese, President Ramos noted that his mission is to “break the ice” in the then-frosty Philippines-China relations.⁵⁶ Following Ramos’ visit to Hong Kong in August 2016, Duterte made a state visit to China two months later.

In accordance with the October 2016 Philippines-China joint statement, the two countries established mechanisms to manage the SCS dispute. In July 2017, Manila and Beijing held the first meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the SCS which, among others, seeks to be a “platform for confidence-building measures and for promoting maritime cooperation and maritime security.”⁵⁷ Earlier, in February 2017, the two sides established Joint Coast Guard Committee (JCGC), a platform through which both sides agreed to, among others, cooperate on search and rescue, environment protection and emergency.⁵⁸

The Philippines has likewise supported multilateral conflict prevention/management mechanisms, particularly that of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The NSS underscores the importance of ASEAN in Philippine foreign policy. Also a platform for non-traditional security cooperation, ASEAN and its centrality is important “as it complements other efforts in managing the impact of geopolitical rivalry among the great powers.”⁵⁹ During the Philippines’ 2017 chairmanship, the 11th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) adopted guidelines for maritime interaction, which aims to, among others, “establish comprehensive and feasible maritime conflict management measures on the basis of confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and peaceful management of tensions that could arise at sea.”⁶⁰ In addition, the 11th ADMM created a working group to develop guidelines on air encounters between military aircrafts.⁶¹ Under Singapore’s 2018 chairmanship, the 12th ADMM issued the air military encounters guidelines.⁶² Although more work remains to be done, these agreements can nevertheless complement existing crisis management mechanisms which aim to prevent and/or deescalate tensions.

ASEAN’s main SCS initiative is the Code of Conduct (COC). Under the 2002 Declaration on Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the SCS, ASEAN and China agreed to the “eventual attainment” of the COC.⁶³ While there have been some modest progress in the years since, it was in 2017, under Manila’s stewardship of the organization, that ASEAN and China agreed to a framework for the COC.⁶⁴ The following year, ASEAN and China agreed to Single Draft SCS COC Negotiating Text (SDNT).⁶⁵

As noted earlier, Lykke’s theory notes that means or resources are crucial components of a strategy. Indeed, the NSS stresses that “[o]ne cannot have a strategy without touching on the resource aspect.”⁶⁶ In this regard, the strategy document calls for an increase in defense spending to at least two percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).⁶⁷ Moreover, the NSS calls for the development of various strategic industries to financially support national security initiatives.⁶⁸

Challenges

Thus far, it appears that the NSS has some of the key elements of strategy for the SCS, at least when viewed from Lykke’s theoretical lens. However, as a relatively weak country in the region, the Philippines faces serious challenges in promoting its interests in the SCS. In many ways, these challenges may represent what Lykke called as “risks” or the gap in achieving the ends.

First, the intensification of the geostrategic competition between the US and China. As mentioned earlier, the US-China rivalry has been identified by the NSS as a long-term regional security issue. In recent years, there appears to be some signs of an intensification of this geopolitical rivalry. Released by the Pentagon in January 2018, the Summary of the classified US National Defense Strategy (SNDS) identified China—which Washington previously called on to be a “responsible stakeholder”⁶⁹—as one of the “revisionist powers,”⁷⁰ with the aim to “reorder the Indo-Pacific region to [its] advantage.”⁷¹ China’s objective to dominate First and Second Island Chains largely through Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) is a manifestation of its strategic intentions.⁷² Indeed, in October 2018, weeks after Washington and Beijing were in a near collision in the SCS, Chinese President Xi Jinping called on the People’s Liberation Army’s Southern Theater Command, which oversees Taiwan and SCS, to prepare for war.⁷³

The geostrategic rivalry between the two powers has a profound impact on other states in the Indo-Asia-Pacific, including the Philippines. Competition at the international level creates an environment in which countries, particularly relatively smaller and weaker states, may be forced to choose sides. This is a sentiment aired by the 2018 ASEAN chairperson, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore: "The circumstances may come where ASEAN will have to choose one or the other. I hope it does not happen soon."⁷⁴ The US-China rivalry has implications for the Philippines' efforts in striking a careful balance in its relations between the two powers on a whole range of issues, including the SCS. On the one hand, the Philippines, as the NSS provides, supports the US security role in the Indo-Asia-Pacific as a stabilizing factor in the regional balance of power. But on the other hand, Manila, cognizant of its geographical proximity with China, must work closely with Beijing in managing tensions in the SCS. Indeed, balancing relations with these two powers is a diplomatic imperative. After all, as the scholar John Mearsheimer pointed out, once a great power achieves regional preeminence, it will seek to prevent other states from achieving the same status in their respective regions because "a rival power that dominates its own region will be an especially powerful foe that is essentially free to cause trouble in the fearful great power's backyard"⁷⁵—or, as Mearsheimer later called it, the "freedom to roam."⁷⁶

Second, China is bolstering its presence in the SCS. This is inextricably intertwined with the intensifying US-China geopolitical competition. Manila declares the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG), which constitutes portion of the Spratlys, as part of Philippine territory. Notwithstanding such declaration, the reality on the ground is that some of the Philippines' claimed areas are controlled by Beijing, even before the current government came into power. In 2013, China initiated efforts that led to the creation of artificial islands in the SCS, particularly in Subi, Gaven, Fiery Cross, Cuarteron, Johnson, Mischief, and Hughes Reefs.⁷⁷ In recent years, Beijing appears to have consolidated its strategic foothold in certain areas of the SCS through construction of facilities on the artificial islands, deployment of anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems, installation of jamming equipment, and other actions.⁷⁸ The radius of the bombers, which China landed on Woody Island in the Paracels, covers almost the entire Philippine archipelago.⁷⁹

As noted earlier, the NSS identifies the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity as a core national interest of the Philippines. However, it is

highly unlikely that that Beijing will voluntarily abandon, let alone undo, the artificial islands—and the military facilities on them—which are built on Philippine-claimed territory. Given these realities, the Philippines, in operationalizing efforts to promote the said core interest, may consider collaborating with the US and other partners in further limiting Chinese encroachments in the SCS while enhancing its defense posture to secure the rest of the archipelago and other areas with which it has sovereignty or jurisdiction. Interestingly, the Philippines has announced three "red lines" which may be viewed as in conformity with such realities. In May 2018, then-Foreign Secretary Alan Peter S. Cayetano disclosed that Manila had conveyed to Beijing the Philippines' three red lines on the SCS: 1) creation of an artificial island in Scarborough Shoal; 2) forced removal of and coercive actions against BRP Sierra Madre, a PN ship anchored near the Second Thomas Shoal; and 3) unilateral exploitation of natural resources in SCS.⁸⁰ Should China cross any of these red lines, Cayetano noted that Manila is willing to go to war.⁸¹ While ensuring that China does not cross the three lines is in line with Philippine national interests, enforcing the same requires both enhanced capabilities, and support from its ally and partners.

Third, cognizant of its limited military capability, the US commitment to the defense of the Philippines, under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), is arguably ambiguous. For years, successive Philippine administrations have sought clarification from the US government on whether or not SCS is within the ambit of the MDT. Unlike Japan, the Philippines has not received an unequivocal commitment that Washington will come to its aid in the event of an armed clash in the SCS.⁸² During the second Aquino administration, the Philippines, according to the International Crisis Group, appeared to take the matter of interpreting the MDT "into its own hand by pushing one which implies that the US would respond to an attack on Philippine forces" in the SCS.⁸³

However, Washington's ambiguity on the MDT may stem not only from obscure statutory construction but also from the fact that the US does not have a significant military presence in the Philippines to respond to contingencies in the SCS. To complicate matters, Beijing has been employing gray zone tactics in the SCS.⁸⁴ Gray zone action has been defined as "coercive and aggressive in nature, but that is deliberately designed to remain **below the threshold of conventional military conflict** and open interstate war."⁸⁵ Hence, such gray zone tactics may fall short of an "armed attack" as provided for in

the MDT. For Washington to make a public and clear-cut commitment to defend Manila in the SCS absent a credible military presence in the Philippines may lead to strategic miscalculation. Indeed, Beijing will likely test Washington's commitment and if the US fails to respond, the credibility of the San Francisco system of alliances may be questioned.

Policy Considerations

The NSS identifies the ways and means by which to promote its national security ends in the SCS. In furtherance of the NSS, apart from ensuring consistent financial support in boosting the AFP's capabilities, there are other measures and principles which may be considered.

First, coherence, prudence, and foresight are necessary in state-led actions and statements.

In implementing the NSS, it is necessary that the Philippines is viewed—particularly in the international arena—as a coherent actor that pursues its national interest. In both in words and deeds, there should be efforts to lessen or avert misperceptions of Philippine foreign policy. Manila should not be viewed as abandoning its traditional ally and partners, which could have implications in their efforts to promote their mutual strategic interests. This is not to suggest that the Philippines must not engage rising powers. To the contrary, it is in the Philippines' interest to establish good relations with other states on the basis of mutual respect. However, in an evolving strategic environment governed by the dynamics of major power competition, the Philippines must exercise prudence, foresight, and calculated actions and rhetoric in dealing with countries whose interests are at variance with that of Manila—especially in the context of the SCS.

Second, the implementation of existing security cooperation agreements, as well as the exploration of similar arrangements with other countries, is a diplomatic imperative.

There is a need to fast-track the implementation of the Philippines-US EDCA. Although the first major project under EDCA was initiated at Basa Air Base in Pampanga last April 2018, broader implementation of the pact appears to have been delayed.⁸⁶ As other observers have argued, further postponements—particularly at Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan—means that Washington may find it challenging to promote closer security cooperation in the SCS.⁸⁷ Moreover, to promote closer defense cooperation and interoperability, the Philippines may explore forging a VFA with its strategic partners, Japan and Viet Nam.

Third, reasonable compromises, while not restricting freedom to maneuver, are key guidelines in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. A key outcome of Chinese President Xi Jinping's November 2018 state visit to the Philippines was the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Oil and Gas Development. Although essentially a framework for further negotiations, the MOU was described by Philippine Supreme Court (SC) Senior Associate Justice Antonio T. Carpio as a possible "formula for finally settling the maritime dispute."⁸⁸ Using Philippine service contracts as a modality for oil and gas cooperation, the MOU, Carpio added, suggests that "China will no longer claim sovereign rights in the exclusive economic zones of other claimant states but will be satisfied with half of the income."⁸⁹ However, whether or not such outcome will come into fruition will depend on the intricacies of the negotiations between Manila and Beijing.

As noted earlier, ASEAN and China have produced the Single Draft SCS COC Negotiating Text (SDNT). In that negotiating document, Beijing proposed that China and ASEAN should "not hold joint military exercises with countries from outside the region, unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection."⁹⁰ Should this provision be included in the final COC, China could effectively veto military exercises of ASEAN states with other powers such as the US. As Australia's ambassador to Manila pointed out, the COC "should not prejudice the interests of third parties or the rights of all states under international law."⁹¹ The Philippines should work with fellow ASEAN members to remove this and other objectionable provisions from the final COC. Moreover, Manila's favorable ruling in the Philippines v China case, which the NSS reaffirms, could be used as a diplomatic leverage as it gives some legal clarity to the SCS dispute.

Conclusion

Using Lykke's theoretical framework on strategy, this paper unpacked the NSS on how it lays out the ends, ways, and means of promoting Philippine national security interests in the SCS. While such elements may be present in the NSS, there are remaining challenges that could constrain Manila's efforts in protecting such interests. To conclude, apart from ensuring that the NSS is cascaded down to the relevant organs of government, the key in ensuring that the national security interests are protected and enhanced is the sustained allocation of resources on defense. After all, as the NSS points out, "it is high time [that the Philippines] think of national defense not as

a financial burden, but as a strategic investment for a safer and more secure future.”⁹²

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Endnotes

¹ Philippine National Security Council, *National Security Strategy*, 2018, Quezon City: Philippine National Security Council Secretariat, iv. Hereafter referred to as to as “NSS.”

² This policy brief is based on and portions thereof were culled from the following previous works of the author: Mico A. Galang, “The South China Sea and the Philippines’ National Security Strategy,” *PacNet* no. 61, August 28, 2018, <https://www.pacforum.org/analysis/pacnet-61-south-china-sea-and-philippines%E2%80%99-national-security-strategy> (accessed December 14, 2018); and Mico A. Galang, “Alliance, Partnerships, And The Philippines’ National Security Strategy,” *Eurasia Review*, December 3, 2018, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/03122018-alliance-partnerships-and-the-philippines-national-security-strategy-analysis/> (accessed December 14, 2018).

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