Joint Statement on the Meeting of Defense Ministers
From Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States
November 10, 2026

On October 28, 2026, in Cebu, Philippines, United States Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles, Japanese Minister of Defense Koizumi Shinjiro, and Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro, Jr. met on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus hosted by the Philippines. The defense leaders committed to bolster deterrence, expand interoperability, and enhance regional cooperation to ensure a stable and secure region.

The defense leaders reiterated their serious concerns about the situations in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. They reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral actions, including by force or coercion, which escalate tensions and undermine regional peace and stability.

To build on recent progress—including the recently signed Pacific Chiefs of Defense Cooperation Council (DCC) Terms of Reference and successful execution of Exercises Balikatan, Keen Sword, and regular maritime cooperative activities—the defense leaders committed to forward-looking initiatives. These include establishing a Combined Coordination Center (CCC) in the Philippines; synchronizing defense investments to support the Philippines in defending its archipelago; strengthening ministerial and senior policy-level consultations; and expanding the scope, complexity, and frequency of their combined exercises and cooperative activities.