

(Press Release)

May 31, 2026
Ministry of Defense

Japan- Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting (Joint Press Statement)

On May 31, 2026, Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro, Jr., visiting Singapore to attend the 23rd IISS Asia Pacific Security Conference (Shangri-La Dialogue,) held a Defense Ministerial Meeting. The summary of the meeting is as follows:

1. At the outset of the meeting, Minister Koizumi expressed his pleasure at having another opportunity to meet with Secretary Teodoro shortly after his visit to the Philippines earlier this month. He also stated his intention to further strengthen bilateral defense relations under the “Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership,” which was elevated at the Japan–Philippines Summit Meeting held earlier this month. In response, Secretary Teodoro expressed his intention to continue close coordination based on the trust between the two countries under the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”.
2. The two Ministers welcomed the progress of concrete discussions within the working group—established at the Defense Ministerial Meeting on May 5 and comprising policy, operational, and equipment divisions of both defense authorities—toward advancing initiatives that will contribute to further strengthening Japan–Philippines cooperation under the new framework for defense equipment transfer, with a view to realizing comprehensive equipment cooperation. Following the summit meeting on May 28, where the two leaders concurred on accelerating consultations between the defense authorities on the transfer of Abukuma-class destroyers and TC-90 aircraft, the two Ministers reached a broad consensus to proceed with discussions with a view to transferring the Abukuma-class destroyers promptly after decommissioning, and one TC-90 aircraft within Japan’s FY2027. They also shared the view that, in order to realize these transfers, detailed discussions—including those on training for the Philippine Navy, maintenance and sustainment, and the proper management of the equipment after transfer—should continue to be advanced in an integrated manner within the working group, together with progress in broader defense cooperation, including in the information domain. The two Ministers further concurred in exercising their leadership to ensure early and tangible outcomes.

3. The two Ministers also welcomed the steady progress in defense cooperation between the two countries, both institutionally and operationally, including participation in the Philippines-United States co-hosted Exercise *Balikatan 41-26* under the Japan–Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), the signing of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in January this year, and the formal commencement of negotiations on an agreement on the protection of classified military information. They concurred on further strengthening defense cooperation.

4. Furthermore, taking into account that the Philippines serves as ASEAN Chair this year, the two Ministers shared the recognition that defense cooperation between Japan and ASEAN should be further strengthened.