

## Japan–Philippines Defense Ministers’ Joint Press Statement

May 5, 2026

On May 5, 2026, Minister of Defense of Japan Koizumi Shinjiro and Secretary of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. held a Defense Ministers’ Meeting in Manila.

The two Ministers welcomed the significant progress in operational-level cooperation between Japan and the Philippines, including the entry into force of the Japan–Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) and the signing of the Japan–Philippines Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). They also shared the view that, in addition to the bilateral joint training that Japan and the Philippines have continuously conducted in the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, the ongoing participation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces in field training during the Philippines – United States co-hosted Exercise *Balikatan 41-26*, conducted under the application of the RAA, symbolizes the deepening of operational cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, the two Ministers welcomed continued strides in multilateral training activities conducted under Japan-Philippines-U.S. and Australia-Japan-Philippines-U.S. arrangements, including Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) as well as *Balikatan 41-26*.

The two Ministers reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. They expressed serious concern over the increasing scale and frequency of China’s coercive activities in the maritime and airspace surrounding Japan, including intrusions into Japan’s territorial waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands. They also shared serious concerns regarding the situation in the South China Sea, including China’s intensification of dangerous and coercive activities against the Philippines.

Recognizing the importance of sharing situational awareness between the two countries amid the increasingly tense regional security environment, the two Ministers welcomed the deepening exchanges of views on regional affairs between the defense authorities under their direction, and confirmed that such discussions will continue.

The two Ministers also shared the view that cooperation between Japan and the Philippines is vital for national resilience of both countries. They confirmed their intention to ensure an integrated functioning of existing and new consultation platforms at the levels of Ministers of Defense, Vice Ministers, and working-level officials of both defense establishments, covering policy, operations, and defense equipment and technology cooperation, under the framework of ministerial-level dialogue. This aims to further expand and deepen policy dialogue and the defense partnership between the two countries in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Furthermore, they concurred that both sides would hold consultations, when necessary, to ensure the security of both countries and the peace and stability of the region.

The two Ministers also agreed on the urgent need to strengthen and broaden cooperation, including at the operational level, particularly to enhance maritime domain awareness capabilities. To increase the effectiveness of such cooperation, they agreed to swiftly establish relevant systems, including institutional frameworks for information sharing, and to identify and jointly advance new initiatives that contribute to deterrence for both countries and the region. In this context, the two Ministers confirmed that defense equipment and technology cooperation constitutes one such initiative and, welcoming the Government of Japan's recent revision of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology as well as its Implementation Guidelines, and signed a Statement on the Further Promotion of Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines.

In addition to strengthening bilateral cooperation, the two Ministers agreed to enhance defense partnership in multilateral settings, including Japan-Philippines-U.S., Australia-Japan-Philippines-U.S., and ASEAN.

Under the strong leadership of President Marcos, Jr. and Prime Minister Takaichi, the two Ministers expressed their steadfast determination to enhance concrete bilateral and multilateral actions under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).