

**Joint Statement on the Meeting of Defense Ministers
From Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States
May 31, 2025 – Singapore**

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles, Japanese Minister of Defense Nakatani Gen, Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro, Jr. and United States Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth met together on May 31, 2025 in Singapore. This marked the fourth Defense Leaders Meeting of these four countries in the last three years, underscoring their sustained and significant collaboration to advance a shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The defense leaders expressed continued serious concern about China's destabilizing actions in the East China Sea (ECS) and the South China Sea (SCS) and any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. They also reiterated their serious concern about dangerous conduct by China in the SCS against the Philippines and other countries, and stressed the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes. They underscored the importance of upholding international law, freedom of navigation and overflight, particularly as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The defense leaders called for peace and stability in the region. They underscored the importance of the central role of ASEAN and the ASEAN-led regional architecture in ensuring security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

The defense leaders announced four key developments in their partnership:

1. **Synchronizing Priority Defense Investments:** The defense leaders reaffirmed the importance of enhancing security cooperation by aligning their efforts, including infrastructure investments, to support Philippine defense priorities and a free and open Indo-Pacific. Together, the installation of Japan-made air surveillance radar systems at Wallace Air Station, the United States' continued development and integration of air domain sensors at Basa Air Base Command and Control Fusion Center, and Australia's efforts to support the growing defense infrastructure in the Philippines have collectively helped improve the Armed Forces of the Philippines' air domain awareness in the SCS. The defense leaders committed to further synchronizing

security cooperation to better support air and maritime domain awareness and other defense priorities.

2. **Enhancing Information-Sharing:** The defense leaders recognized the importance of information-sharing to establish a common operating picture in the SCS and the Indo-Pacific region. They welcomed the recent conclusion of the bilateral General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) between the United States and the Philippines, and noted that Australia and Japan intend to undertake bilateral discussions for similar agreements with the Philippines. They affirmed that these efforts will facilitate greater information-sharing and analysis, including at a combined hub for such purpose.
3. **Strengthening Cybersecurity and Resilience:** The defense leaders reached consensus on jointly investing in the Philippines' cybersecurity and resilience for defense, including through existing defense exercises and trainings. The defense leaders also recognized the importance of cooperation to counter threats to national security posed by malicious actors.
4. **Increasing Operational Coordination and Interoperability:** The defense leaders reaffirmed the significance of their operational collaboration and synchronization in the Indo-Pacific region, including in the ECS and SCS, for greater deterrence, peace, and security. Building on the success of past multilateral maritime cooperative activities, they committed to sustaining their participation and expanding the scope and frequency of such engagements with additional like-minded partners. They also reached consensus to explore planning joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities to improve interoperability and coordination on effective maritime and air domain awareness in the ECS, the SCS, and surrounding waters.

The defense leaders concurred on the importance of regularly convening meetings at ministerial and officials' levels to reinforce cooperation and coordination among the four countries. Looking ahead, they committed to continue working together and with other like-minded partners to support peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.