

## Closing Remarks at the Memorial Service

Distinguished guests, esteemed members of the bereaved families, and fellow citizens of Japan,

On this day marking the 80th anniversary of the war, we have been able to solemnly hold this memorial service. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your presence here today, especially amidst your busy schedules. My deepest appreciation goes to the esteemed representatives of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and other organizations for gracing us with your participation.

During the war, numerous people of our nations - more than 500,000 Japanese and over one million Filipinos - lost their precious lives. More than half a century has passed since the erection of this monument at Caliraya,

a poignant testament to the sacrifices made. Standing before this memorial, I am profoundly moved by the untold hardships endured by those who fought so valiantly : the longing for their families back home, their thoughts on Japan ' s future, the pain of wounds, hunger, and disease, and the ultimate agony of those who never set foot on their homeland again. Likewise, we must never forget the suffering and immeasurable grief borne by numerous Filipinos, Japanese-Filipinos, and their families, who fell victim to the battles between Japan and the forces of the Philippines and the United States. To the souls of all the war dead, we offer our most sincere and humble condolences.

We will never forget the many whose remains have yet to be repatriated. As a duty of the state, we remain steadfast in our commitment to do everything possible to bring them home as soon as possible.

In the postwar era, Japan has established an honored place in the world as a nation that cherishes peace. We remain unwavering in our pledge never again to repeat the devastation of war, and we continue to strive for a world where all people can live in peace and prosperity.

However, the unprovoked aggression of Russia against Ukraine - an act that shakes the very foundations of the international order - continues unabated, now approaching three and a half years. In the Middle East, tensions persist, particularly in Gaza, with no clear prospects for regional stability. The security environment surrounding Japan is now the most severe and complex since the end of the war.

It is precisely at such a time that, eighty years after the war, we must deeply engrave in our hearts the devastation of war and the preciousness of peace,

ensuring that the memories of these tragedies are never allowed to fade and that this legacy is passed on.

In the post war years, the relationship between Japan and the Philippines has flourished, built upon the friendship and shared values of our peoples. We now enjoy what is called a “golden age” of cooperation, a strong and enduring partnership. Eighty years after the end of the war, this friendship and cooperation extend across a broad spectrum – from economy and security to social and cultural exchanges – signaling the dawn of a new era in our bilateral ties. We report this progress to the spirits of those who perished, honoring the remarkable journey we have taken together, overcoming a harsh history to achieve this friendship and cooperation. We pledge to continue our efforts to further solidify the bonds between our two nations.

Finally, I once again pray for the repose of the souls of those who sacrificed their precious lives and became the foundation of our nation. May peace be upon the bereaved families, those gathered here today, and all Japanese nationals residing in the Philippines. Let us conclude this memorial service with a prayer for the enduring friendship and shared prosperity of Japan and the Philippines.

August 15, 2025

Kazuya Endo

Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of the Philippines