

Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the 84th Araw ng Kagitingan
9 April 2026

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat!

Isang karangalan po na makasama kayong lahat ngayon.

On this solemn occasion, we stand with deep reverence to honor the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Battle of Bataan eighty-four years ago.

Beneath the towering Memorial Cross, we pay tribute to their courage, sacrifice, and resilience.

We remember not only those who fought, but also the families whose lives were forever shaped by the tragedies of war.

To the brave veterans, your service continues to leave a lasting legacy of benevolence that continues to inspire and guide future generations.

Facing history with humility and sincerity lays the very foundation of any current and future actions.

Over eight decades, Japan has proudly and unwaveringly walked the path of a peace-loving nation.

This is based upon our strong determination to never allow the devastation of war to be repeated ever again.

Last year, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the end of the war, I had two occasions to visit the Japanese Memorial Garden in Caliraya, Laguna.

In late April, I accompanied our former Prime Minister as he paid tribute to the war dead of the Philippines and Japan, offering prayers for peace and friendship.

Later in August, I hosted our annual Memorial Service in Caliraya, when we were honored to have representatives from the Philippine Government, including those from the Veterans Affairs Office, to which I wholeheartedly appreciate.

We were also deeply honored and grateful to receive a message from President Marcos, which reflected our shared commitment to lasting friendship, peace, and prosperity.

Japan stands resolute in safeguarding peace and stability through friendships and collaborations with partners.

It is through this enduring commitment, one that our predecessors embodied with resolve and foresight, that Japan and the Philippines have built not only a partnership but also a friendship that is both strong and forward-looking.

Today, the global environment is increasingly complex and uncertain.

Disruptions to key transit routes and rising tensions are already seriously impacting people worldwide, with the most vulnerable bearing the heaviest burden.

Japan remains steadfast in safeguarding the peace and stability in the Middle East, including the freedom of navigation.

Japan supports Ukraine for their recovery and reconstruction.

The South China Sea also remains a pressing concern.

With the rules-based order under increasing pressure, we are called to elevate our partnership.

Japan and the Philippines stand together as strategic partners.

As maritime democracies situated along vital sea lanes, our destinies are closely intertwined.

A safe, open, and stable maritime and air domain is indispensable, and they call on us to act with unity, clarity, and resolve.

This year, under the theme “*Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities*”, we mark the 70th anniversary of the normalization of Philippine-Japan diplomatic relations.

It is a great honor to stand before you today, reflecting on our partnership that has steadily deepened with each passing year.

I had the opportunity yesterday to visit the Government Arsenal in Bataan, where machine tools from Japan, installed in the 1960s, continue to operate to this day.

They stand as a lasting testament to the depth of our ties.

Since 1960s, Japan is honored to support the modernization of the Philippines infrastructures and public policies through our Official Development Assistance and remains the nation's largest ODA partner.

In addition to the infrastructure construction such as railways and roads, we have long been working for the enhancement of the Philippine Coast Guard operational capabilities and are currently working to deliver additional vessels to the PCG.

Our cooperation has expanded significantly in recent years.

The successful conclusion and implementation of the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) is a historic milestone, opening a new chapter in our strategic cooperation.

The signing of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in January this year further strengthens our interoperability.

This growing defense cooperation is also reflected in Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA), with the Philippines serving as its principal recipient for three consecutive years.

Two months ago, I had the honor of joining Secretary Teodoro for the handover of five (5) Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems, an initiative that enhances maritime domain awareness and strengthens our collective security.

Anchored in our shared vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, which marks its 10th anniversary this year, we continue to uphold the rule of law, freedom of navigation, and respect for sovereignty.

Together with key partners, we are committed to advancing this vision to ensure that our region remains a space of cooperation, stability, and inclusive growth for all.

Japan, the Philippines, and the United States, once divided by the tides of history, now stand united as allies and partners.

It has evolved into a robust trilateral partnership.

It is further strengthened through expanded joint engagements, including numerous Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCAs), demonstrating a shared commitment to the rule of law and regional stability.

We look forward to further demonstrating our shared commitment through upcoming exercises.

Just three days ago, approximately 420 personnel from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force began their participation in Exercise Salaknib.

Under the Reciprocal Access Agreement, Japan now takes part in joint exercise alongside humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise.

Notably, this month's Balikatan is the first iteration since the Japan-Philippine RAA entered into force, and we expect the strengthened participation from all branches of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, Ground, Maritime, and Air, as we enter this new era of defense cooperation.

Once again, I offer my deepest respect to all the veterans.

It is now our responsibility to carry forward their legacy by strengthening our partnerships and building a future of lasting peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

Magkaisa po tayo para sa isang mapayapa at matatag nakinabukasan.

Nawa'y maging gabay ang ating pagbubuklod sa pagtamo ng isang Malaya at Bukas na Indo-Pacific.

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat!