

**JOINT LEADERS' STATEMENT**  
President's Hall, Malacañan Palace  
April 29, 2025

[00:00:20]

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.:** His Excellency Ishiba Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan; esteemed ministers and officials of both the Philippines and Japanese delegations; distinguished guest and fellow government workers; members of the media; ladies and gentlemen.

It is my honor to welcome His Excellency Ishiba Shigeru, the Prime Minister of Japan, today here at Malacañan Palace.

Our uninterrupted exchange of high-level visits over many years has demonstrated the importance that we accord to our bilateral relations, and to provide a platform to build upon our engagements for the stability, harmony, and shared benefit of our people. These are the hallmarks of a truly golden age in our bilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Ishiba and I earlier discussed the many aspects of our diplomatic, political, security, and defense cooperation. We looked forward to a robust relationship, as our diplomatic relations enter their 70th year of normalization in the year 2026.

With the spirit of reconciliation, brotherhood, and amity as foundational to our relationship, the fruits of seven decades of engagement attest to a deeply meaningful relationship where our two peoples slowly built a shared history and multifaceted cooperation.

It has been seven decades now that generations of Filipinos and Japanese have felt the benefits of our stable and wise diplomacy.

The Philippines accords great importance to its relations with Japan as its reliable and steadfast partner in the region. Japan is our second largest economic partner.

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With the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement that we have in place, we continue to look for ways to strengthen our business ties with Japan to broaden economic opportunities for Filipinos.

Japan is one of the top bilateral partners that we have for trade, investment, and development cooperation.

We appreciate Japan's development assistance, which we see as the gold standard for development cooperation. It is primarily because it supports our maritime domain awareness, infrastructure, food security, improved climate change adaptability, digital transformation, agriculture, space, cyber technology, health, energy and many others.

Our development cooperation has also played a significant role in the Mindanao Peace Process, which will uplift the lives of Filipinos and promotes economic competitiveness in Mindanao.

On defense and security cooperation, it is of note that the Philippines is the first recipient of Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA), and even as a new initiative, barely three years old, the OSA has allowed our security agencies, especially the Department of National Defense, to achieve meaningful upgrades.

Japan has been of great assistance in helping us achieve our aspiration for peace and friendship with all nations with strength and with integrity. Further, we have agreed to start negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).

I recall that when I visited Japan in 2023, our two countries committed to building a future-facing relationship. With strategic focus, my discussions with Prime Minister Ishiba today have indeed laid the groundwork for that resonant and inspiring future across many, many sectors, so that our two peoples see meaningful outcomes in their everyday lives and in the lives of their families.

I look forward to continuing our Strengthened Strategic Partnership with Japan, a country that shares our ideals and aspirations of upholding democratic institutions and a rules-based international order.

Thank you, Prime Minister Ishiba and the members of your delegation, for this fruitful and uplifting visit.

Thank you very much. [applause]

[00:10:50]

**JAPAN PRIME MINISTER ISHIBA SHIGERU:** Magandang gabi po.  
[applause]

*(Translation)* First of all, may I express my sincere gratitude for the very warm welcome accorded me from His Excellency, President Marcos, and the people of the Philippines.

*(Translation)* Philippines and Japan are neighbors connected by sea. Before meeting with President Marcos earlier, I met with second generation Filipinos of Japanese descendants and thought back on the path our two nations have tread until now.

*(Translation)* Tomorrow, I will visit the cenotaph for the Japanese war dead in Caliraya, Laguna province. In building this cenotaph, we have been very kindly given assistance from your country.

*(Translation)* Having gone through close to a century of hardships and efforts, by our forefathers, I am deeply moved that Japan and the Philippines are now partners closing on alliance. His Excellency President earlier has referred to Japan and the Philippines now is in a relationship in the golden age. For this region, as well as for the world, and also for our two peoples, this is something very meaningful.

*(Translation)* Next year, we will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the normalization of our diplomatic relations. I resolve afresh to cherish the bond Japan have built with our valued neighbor. Thus, I would like to further strengthen communication as well as cooperation with President Marcos.

*(Translation)* President Marcos and I had a frank conversation in a— a very frank and relaxed atmosphere in the small group meeting to start with on the regional as well as the global affairs. Then, in a bigger plenary meeting, we had thorough discussion on broad ranging issues covering agriculture, energy, and so forth.

*(Translation)* On security, as we see the deepening of our bilateral cooperation in a multi-layered way in the recent years, we agreed to start the negotiation on ACSA or the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement. We also confirmed to start government-to-government discussion on potential

conclusion of security of information agreement in the future. In addition, we affirmed on the importance of Japan, the Philippines, and the United States trilateral cooperation.

*(Translation)* In the economic area, I conveyed to President Marcos that Japan will cooperate with the Philippines, making use of uniquely Japanese strengths of your country to aim for the upper middle income status that His Excellency is looking for. I explained that we will work with the Philippines in a package of cooperations covering telecommunications, ASEC, energy, mineral resources, infrastructure and disaster risk reduction and others. The President and I agreed to further strengthen our partnership in these areas.

*(Translation)* Now, President Marcos has very deep insight on agriculture. I myself also served as the Minister for Agriculture, the Forestry and Industries in the fisheries in the past. Therefore, from such a perspective, I was able to have a good exchange of views with His Excellency. So in the agricultural arena as well, I very much hope that we can further deepen our cooperation.

*(Translation)* On the regional and international developments today, I also exchanged views with His Excellency, the President. I hope that our two nations will continue to closely communicate with each other to oppose attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas by force or coercion and to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific based on rule of law.

*(Translation)* On the status of the global economy, we discussed on the tariff measures taken by the United States as well as the impact felt on the multilateral free-trade regime in the world economy, because of the reciprocal retaliations seen between the United States and China. Many Japanese companies have been playing a role in the local economy here in the Philippines. I conveyed to President Marcos that I will listen carefully to the voices so that we will be able to bring forth better solutions.

*(Translation)* Now, on the Osaka-Kansai World Exposition, it is now ongoing in Japan. President Marcos has spoken of his visit to the Expo 55 years ago. Actually, I myself and President Marcos are of the same age and I myself visited the Osaka Expo three times at the time. So perhaps two of us may have been passing each other on those opportunities. [laughter]

*(Translation)* But of course, none of us knew who we are at the time, of course. [laughter]

*(Translation)* The National Day of the Philippines will be celebrated on June 7. I hope that many Filipinos will come to visit the Kansai Exposition and also other districts in Japan as well.

Salamat po. Thank you very much. [applause]

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***BAGONG PILIPINAS***