



International Symposium “Safeguarding the Maritime Domain for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific”

9:00 AM-12:30 PM (PHT) | 10:00 AM-1:30 PM (JST) | 6 March 2026 (Friday)

The Indo-Pacific is a region fundamentally connected by the seas. Its maritime domain should be understood as an integrated system underpinning regional security, economic resilience, energy transition, and digital connectivity. Amid growing uncertainties and tensions, safeguarding this maritime domain has become more important than ever for ensuring peace and stability across the region.

The core principles of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) are the defense of freedom and openness, which provide the essential foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Upholding these principles requires the maintenance of a rules-based order. At the same time, in light of the increasingly complex challenges the region now faces, it is imperative to develop effective strategies and capabilities to address emerging risks—particularly in the maritime domain—through closer engagement and collaboration among regional partners.

In line with this, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) and the Stratbase Institute will co-host a symposium entitled **“Safeguarding the Maritime Domain for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific”** on **March 6, 2026 (Friday)** from **9:00 AM to 12:30 PM** at the Isabela BC, Makati Shangri-La, Makati City, Philippines. **The symposium will be live-streamed on Zoom.**

The symposium aims to bring together leading scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond to share insights and explore avenues for closer and more effective cooperation. While maritime security will be a central focus, discussions will also extend to related areas such as economic security, freedom of navigation, the resilience of maritime and digital infrastructure, and the protection of the maritime environment. These discussions will contribute to deepening and updating the FOIP concept, particularly as 2026 marks the tenth anniversary of its announcement.

- Please join us for this timely discussion. You may register to participate via Zoom here https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_82fX1o5xQaqq8c0pJv2GZg#/registration
- For further information, please contact JIIA at manila202603@jia.or.jp

PROGRAM

9:00 AM – 9:05 AM **Introduction**

9:05 AM – 9:15 AM **Opening Remarks**

Prof. Victor Andres “Dindo” Manhit

President

Stratbase Institute

9:15 AM – 9:25 AM **Keynote Speech**

H.E. Endo Kazuya

Ambassador

Embassy of Japan in the Philippines

9:25 AM – 9:40 AM **Keynote Speech**

Hon. Eduardo Año

National Security Adviser and Director General

National Security Council

Panel 1: Securing Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific — Strengthening Cooperation between Japan and Regional Partners

This panel will examine how like-minded partners can strengthen maritime security in the Indo-Pacific through enhanced cooperation. It will explore practical approaches—from enhanced joint maritime cooperative activities to strategic defense planning and capability alignment—to safeguard sea lanes, uphold freedom of navigation, and protect global trade amid actions that threaten maritime security in the region.

Moderator

Dr. Charmaine Misalucha-Willoughby

Non-Resident Fellow, Stratbase Institute

Chair, Department of International Studies, De La Salle University

9:40 AM – 10:20 AM **ADM Tomohisa Takei (Ret)**

Former Chief of Staff

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

Capt. Sarabjeet Parmar

Distinguished Fellow

Council for Strategic and Defence Research

MGen. Rommel Cordova

Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, J5

Armed Forces of the Philippines

MGen. Restituto Padilla Jr. (Ret.)

*Former Spokesperson and Deputy Chief of Staff for J5, Armed Forces of the Philippines
Executive Director, Corporate Public Policy, Risk Management and Sustainability, PTC Group*

10:20 AM – 10:50 AM **Open Forum**

10:50 AM – 11:10 AM **Coffee Break**

Panel 2: Enhancing Broader Cooperation in the Maritime Domain: Deepening and Updating the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

This panel broadens the discussion beyond traditional maritime security cooperation pathways to encompass the wider strategic and economic dimensions of the maritime domain. It will explore how key maritime issues—such as the protection of critical supply chains, energy flows, and undersea and digital infrastructure—alongside defense industry cooperation, can be integrated into maritime security partnerships to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Moderator

H.E. Takio Yamada

*Executive Director, Japan Institute of International Affairs Center for Global Outreach
Former Ambassador of Japan to Vietnam*

11:10 AM – 11:50 AM **Prof. Ryosei Kokubun**

Former President of the National Defense Academy of Japan

Mr. Daniel Russel

*Distinguished Fellow
Asia Society Policy Institute*

MGen. Fabian Pedregosa

*Commander, Strategic Command
Armed Forces of the Philippines*

Dr. Chester Cabalza

*Non-Resident Fellow, Stratbase Institute
Founding President, International Development and Security Cooperation*

11:50 AM – 12:20 PM **Open Forum**

12:20 PM – 12:30 PM **Closing Remarks**

H.E. Takio Yamada

Symposium Organizers (JIIA)

Dr. Yuki Kominami

Dr. Kotaro Shiojiri

Mr. Hironobu Takezawa