

Rice visits Iraq's Kirkuk, Baghdad

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Tuesday before flying to Baghdad to discuss reconstruction. Her visit is seen to be a reinforcing call Washington made last week for Iraq to capitalize on diminishing violence and speed up legislation to allow for more self-sufficiency, Kuwait's KUNA news agency reported. Rice arrived in Kirkuk, a region that supplies more than 5 percent of the world's oil, and met with regional officials to discuss sectarian tension among Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds, the report said. She then traveled to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi President Jalal al-Talabani and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on local issues, sources said. Rice arrived in Iraq from Paris, where she attended an international meeting Monday on funding Palestinians during peace talks aimed at establishing their own state.

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