

Rice, Miliband visit Afghanistan

by UPI

KABUL, Afghanistan -- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband made a surprise visit to Afghanistan Thursday to rally NATO troops. The pair arrived from London, where Rice called for more NATO combat commitments, a New York Times correspondent reported. They first met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Rice told reporters their message was his government needed to be more involved in quelling the Taliban and al-Qaida insurgency, the International Herald Tribune reported. Rice and Miliband then traveled to Kandahar, one of the most volatile regions in the country, where they addressed about 200 NATO troops, the report said. Rice told troops the core of the fight in Afghanistan was to ensure "there cannot be the attacks against our cities and against our people that originated here." Miliband told the troops not to be discouraged by reports of NATO members' reluctance to join them and said "we will be defending you heart and soul," the report said.

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