

Rice to discuss N. Korea, U.S. soldiers

by UPI

TOKYO -- North Korea's nuclear program and U.S. soldiers accused of rape are to be discussed when U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Japanese leaders meet. On the agenda for Rice were Wednesday meetings with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and defense and foreign ministers to discuss ways to jump-start stalled North Korean nuclear talks, CNN reported. Rice is expected to reaffirm with Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura and the others the need for a united effort in pressuring North Korea to submit a "complete and correct" delineation of its nuclear programs, Kyodo news agency reported. Japanese officials said they would stress during the discussions the importance of pressuring North Korea to account for abducted Japanese citizens and call for U.S. cooperation on this issue. Emotions against the U.S. military are high after the arrest of a U.S. Marine in the alleged rape of a 14-year-old Japanese girl and allegations that a U.S. Army employee raped a Filipino woman. Rice and Komura were expected to discuss ways to lessen the opportunities for U.S. troops to commit crimes, Kyodo reported. Japan is the third leg of Rice's Asian tour after stops in Seoul and Beijing.

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