

U.S. Marine in Japan accused in slaying

by UPI

TOKYO -- The U.S. military in Japan says it handed over to Japanese authorities a Marine suspected in the robbery and slaying of a Japanese taxi driver. The 22-year-old suspect was turned over at the Yokosuka Naval Base, south of Tokyo, in the March 19 death of 61-year-old Masaaki Takahashi, who was found stabbed in the neck near the base, CNN reported. The incident came amid growing criticism of the U.S. military presence in Japan, and of American servicemen accused of committing crimes. Last month, CNN reported, the U.S. military planned to court martial four Marines in the 2007 rape of a 19-year-old woman in Hiroshima. The Kyodo news service reported both countries have said they do not think a review the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement is needed in light of the latest incident. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was quoted as saying Japan will continue to seek improved implementation of the agreement. Japan's opposition parties had sought a revision in the agreement with a mandatory clause for the United States to hand over its military personnel suspected of crimes to Japanese authorities, Kyodo reported.

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