

Asia security is top U.S., Japan concern

by UPI

WASHINGTON - East Asia security is the top shared concern for U.S. President George W. Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the White House said Wednesday.

The issue will top the agenda when Bush and Abe meet Friday at Camp David, Md., said Dennis Wilder, senior director for East Asia at the National Security Council.

Wilder told reporters at the White House the two leaders will discuss "our common approach to the North Korean nuclear problem" as well as realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and defense cooperation between Washington and Tokyo.

He said Japan is the United States' "greatest strategic partner in East Asia, and an increasingly indispensable global partner."

"Japan has made the largest financial commitment of any nation, except the United States, to the rebuilding of Iraq, with a total commitment of over \$12 billion in grants, loans and debt relief," he said.

Abe is scheduled to arrive in Washington Thursday for his first visit to the U.S. capital since taking office in September 2006. Plans call for him to meet with congressional leaders, visit Arlington National Cemetery and visit wounded troops at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

He is scheduled to leave Washington Friday evening for the Middle East.

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