

No agreement on refueling issue

by UPI

TOKYO -- Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa failed Tuesday to agree on the anti-terrorism refueling issue. The two leaders, however, agreed to meet again this week to break a deadlock on the issue, the Kyodo news service reported. The Fukuda government is pressing for Japanese vessels to continue to provide refueling facilities in the Indian Ocean to support the U.S.-led anti-terrorism operations in and around Afghanistan. The previous agreement on this is set to expire Thursday. "Unfortunately, we did not reach an agreement," Fukuda said after his meeting with Ozawa, who heads the opposition Democratic Party of Japan. Fukuda urged Ozawa to cooperate in enacting the refueling bill "for reasons inside and outside the country," Kyodo reported. Ozawa reportedly insisted that overseas deployment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces "should be based on a proper principle, more specifically, within the framework of U.N. activities."

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