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The Leader of the Revolution Muammar Al-Qathafi, right, meets with the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, left in a historic visit to Tripoli. Rice said she and the Leader "did indeed have a wide-ranging discussion in this moment in which the United States and Libya affirmed their desire to move forward in a positive way, toward a positive relationship."

## Tuareg Rebels Release Soldiers in Libyan-Brokered Deal

As a result of important Libyan diplomatic efforts to establish peace in Africa, Tuareg rebels have released the last 44 Malian soldiers who have been held hostages by these rebels.

The 44 soldiers were turned over Tuesday to the care of the Libyan consular to Mali in the Kidal region, in the vast desert frontier between Niger and Algeria. The Libyan diplomat

has led the negotiations between Mali government and the rebels.

The Libyan diplomat turned the soldiers to Mali's army chief of staff Gabriel Poudiougou in the northern city of Gao.

In a speech at the ceremony organized for the release of soldiers, Poudiougou thanked the Leader Muammar Al-Qathafi and the Libyan people for the brokering of the

agreement between his government and the rebels. On its part the Malian government has freed 11 Tuareg prisoners from custody, a move that is aimed at opening the way for formal peace negotiations to end a rebellion in the desert.

They spent the night in Kidal town, before their expected transfer Wednesday to

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## US Congress Delays Appointment of Ambassador to Libya

US lawmakers are delaying considering the appointment of a new ambassador to Libya until Tripoli puts money into a fund to pay "American victims of terrorism," Reuters reported on Monday.

A Senate committee hearing on US diplomat Gene Cretz's appointment had been provisionally set for last

Tuesday but could be rescheduled for this week at the earliest because of concern the funding had not been received, the official said.

President George W. Bush nominated Cretz for the Libya post in July 2007, but the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has not held a hearing to vote on

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## Putin: No New Cold War

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin warned the West on Thursday against starting an arms race in Europe by stationing a US missile defence shield near Russia's borders and said there was no basis for a new Cold War.

Putin blamed Washington for resurrecting Soviet-style rhetoric, Reuters said.

"Today there are no

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