

Israel to raise Iran in U.S. peace talks

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The issue of Iran's influence in the Middle East was on Israel's agenda in Israeli-Palestinian peace discussions in Washington Wednesday. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev made the announcement Tuesday after talks in Annapolis, Md., the Chicago Tribune reported. Progress for the day included Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas agreeing to start negotiations on an agreement Dec. 12, with the goal of establishing a peaceful two-state solution by the end of 2008. Neither Iran nor the Palestinian Hamas faction were invited to the U.S. talks although Syria agreed to participate after encouragement from the Arab League, which diplomats widely see as a positive step in the quest for regional stability, the report said. Syria agreed to attend once assured Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights would be addressed, diplomats said. The Middle East peace process has been in limbo since 2000 when President Bill Clinton tried to broker a final settlement at the end of his presidency at Camp David.

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