

Israel and Egypt work on Gaza cease-fire

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Israeli and Egyptian officials Monday had talks aimed at producing a cease-fire between the Jewish state and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak met for 40 minutes in Tel Aviv with Egypt's chief intelligence officer who presented Cairo's proposal, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported. Barak told Egypt's Omar Suleiman that the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, captured in June 2006, must be included in the truce. He also said Israel demands an end to the smuggling of weapons into Gaza from Egypt and wouldn't agree to any accord which restricted the operations of Israeli forces in the West Bank. Following the talks Monday, Suleiman said he has "high expectations" that a cease-fire deal could be reached. He was scheduled to also meet with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Israel's foreign minister.

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