

Report: Assad says he'll mediate

by UPI

DAMASCUS - Syrian officials reportedly told U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that they would work for the release of Israeli soldiers being held by the Palestinians.

The London-based Arabic newspaper al-Hayat reported that Syrian President Bashar Assad told Pelosi, D-Calif., that he would mediate between Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah and promote a prisoner exchange to include Israeli soldiers Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, YNetNews reported.

At a news conference after her meeting with Assad, Pelosi said the United States was concerned about the capture of the Israeli soldiers. Pelosi has met with the captured soldiers' relatives, who gave her the men's military tags, YNetNews reported.

Pelosi traveled to Syria over the objections of the White House, which considers Syria a sponsor of terrorism and has cut off diplomatic relations with the country.

Witnesses told YNetNews that after the meeting in the presidential palace in Damascus, Assad took Pelosi to lunch in a restaurant in the capital's ancient quarter.

Pelosi headed from Damascus to Saudi Arabia.

Report: Assad says he'll mediate by UPI