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Subject: (Reuters) Assad says peace chances with Israel up in the air

DAMASCUS (Reuters) - Western efforts to renew peace talks between Syria and Israel are focusing on finding common ground, but nothing has crystallized yet and the chances of success are unknown, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said. In his first public assessment of U.S. and French moves to relaunch the talks, Assad told Turkey's TRT television that envoys from the two countries are trying to accommodate Syria's demands for the return of the Golan Heights and Israel's security objectives.

Assad said that if the talks were to resume they would be initially indirect, similar to the last four rounds that were mediated by Turkey and broke off in 2008 without a deal.