

Egypt to Israel: You made Gaza problem

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Israeli officials visiting Egypt for help with the Palestinian exodus from the Gaza Strip were told they had created the problem, an Arabic newspaper reported. The London-published Asharq Alawsat newspaper said there had been a secret five-hour meeting in Cairo led by Israeli Defense Ministry's Diplomatic-Military Bureau head, Amos Gilad. The Israelis expressed concern the breached Gaza-Sinai border would allow militants to freely smuggle weapons into the strip, the Jerusalem Post said. However, the Egyptians said while they understood Israel's concern, "Israel was the one responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip," the newspaper said. Israel has imposed such measures as fuel and power reductions on the Gaza Strip in retaliation for near-daily rocket barrages fired by Hamas militants who have controlled the area since June 2007. In Brussels, EU foreign ministers on Monday backed a proposal for the Palestinian Authority take control of the crossings, which Israel cautiously endorsed, the Post said. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was scheduled Wednesday to discuss the border with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo.

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