

Israel's belligerence against Palestine: from the Balkans to Nusantara

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1. From the collapse of the Soviet Union to the establishment of the New World Order

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the triumph of the United States as the sole hegemonic superpower of our planet in the 1990s has brought very important changes to the geopolitical situation of the countries of the Middle East. The direct and proxy wars which the US administration planned and implemented against 'seven Muslim states'²— Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Iran – were accompanied by the triumph of the US / Israeli alliance over the Arab and the Palestinian issue. The countries of the Middle East which the US / Israeli alliance targeted in different forms since 1991 were countries which had supported in one way or another the Palestinian war for independence.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union has been a pivotal moment for the people of the Middle East and Palestine in particular. For as long as the Soviet Block was in existence the US / Israeli alliance could not carry 'regime change' aggressions against Muslim states since it feared the Soviet intervention and support. The destruction of the Soviet Union and the subsequent announcement by the US president George H. W. Bush on September 11, 1990 of the establishment of a new world order,³ which would

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² See: 'US "plans to attack seven Muslim states"', *Al Jazeera*, 22 September 2003, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/9/22/us-plans-to-attack-seven-muslim-states>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³ 'Bush out of these troubled times . . . A new world order', *The Washington Post*, 12 September 1990, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/09/12/bush-out-of-these-troubled-times-a-new-world-order/b93b5cf1-e389-4e6a-84b0-85f71bf4c946/> (accessed March 11, 2023).

be dominated by the United States and Israel, proved detrimental for the Palestinian cause.

While the United States and its allies used the collapse of the Soviet Union to expand NATO in Central and Eastern Europe,⁴ and start a process of ‘regime change’ across the planet, Israel used the new global order to dismantle the Palestinian issue. United States and Israel deceived the Arab states and Palestinians from the Oslo Accords (1993) to the Arab Peace Initiative (2007) by giving them fake promises for peace. Israel did not allow the Palestinians to have their own state. During the last three decades Israel carried out many brutal military operations against Gaza and the West Bank and continued the massive colonization and Judaization of Palestine.

While Israel succeeded to totally subjugate the Palestinians of the West Bank and separate them into different zones of occupation, in Gaza it has faced major challenges since 2006 when Hamas, a Palestinian resistance movement, won the elections and organized a military resistance. Israel has carried over 12 large scale military attacks against Gaza since 2006 and has placed the enclave under a total land, air and sea blockade. Israel’s treatment of Palestinians is an ongoing genocide, much worse than what China is doing to its Uyghur Muslim population in Xinjiang. The brutal policies of Judaization, colonization, deprivation of Muslim and Christian Palestinians from their freedoms and rights, has forced many Western human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, to blame Israeli for practicing an apartheid system against the Palestinians.⁵

Apart from subjugating the Palestinians at home, Israel and its ally the United States have continued their war against Palestine even in the international arena. Part of the United States and Israel’s effort to isolate Palestine from the Muslim world were the Abraham Accords,⁶ which came after the US administration recognized Jerusalem

⁴ Enlargement and Article 10. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁵ Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁶ Alison Tahmizian Meuse, (2020-09-16). ‘Israel Inks Twin Arab Treaties with UAE, Bahrain’. *Asia Times*, September 16, 2020, <https://asiatimes.com/2020/09/israel-inks-twin-arab-treaties-with-uae-bahrain/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

as the capital of Israel in 2017.⁷ These Accords were designed by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the American president Donald Trump to create a coalition of 10 Arab Sunni states with Israel against Iran and its support for the Palestinian resistance.⁸ The accords, which were signed in 2020 between Israel, the United States, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and the normalization agreements with Morocco and Sudan⁹ and the covert alliance of Saudi Arabia with Israel,¹⁰ were a major victory for Israel in its war against the Palestinian resistance. As the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated, the Accords which were to be finalized with peace with Saudi Arabia ‘aimed to bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict’.¹¹

2. The Balkan front

Israel’s diplomatic and military offensive against Palestine is waged even in the Balkans and Nusantara. Balkan countries like Albania, Bulgaria and the splinter republics of ex-Yugoslavia which, until 1991 were staunch supporters of Palestine, after the collapse of communism have established strong diplomatic and military relations with Israel. The ex-Yugoslav Republic of Kosovo which established diplomatic relations with Israel in 2021 and became the first Muslim-majority country to open its embassy in Jerusalem¹² is an example which shows the success of Israel in the Balkans against Palestine. The strategy of Israel in the Balkans has not been simply to ‘normalize’ the relations with Balkan states. After establishing diplomatic relations,

⁷ Trump Recognizes Jerusalem as Israel’s Capital and Orders U.S. Embassy to Move, The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/06/world/middleeast/trump-jerusalem-israel-capital.html>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁸ Amir Tibon, ‘Warsaw Summit Will Test U.S. Gamble on Israeli-Arab Pact Against Iran.’ *Haaretz*, February 13, 2019. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2019-02-13/ty-article/.premium/warsaw-summit-will-test-u-s-gamble-on-israeli-arab-pact-against-iran/0000017f-dc20-d856-a37f-fde078680000>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁹ Sam Zieve Cohen, ‘UAE’s Al Otaiba Goes Behind the Scenes of the Abraham Accords’. *Jewish Insider*, September 30, 2020. <https://jewishinsider.com/2020/09/uae-ambassador-al-otaiba-details-the-behind-the-scenes-on-the-uae-deal/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹⁰ Jonathan Marcus, ‘Israel and Saudi Arabia: What’s shaping the covert ‘alliance’.’ *BBC*, November 24, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42094105>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹¹ Netanyahu pushing for Saudi-Israel deal with annexation pledge - report, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-725732>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹² ‘Kosova dhe Izraeli lidhin marrëdhënie diplomatike më 1 shkurt’. *KOHA*. 29 January 2021, <https://www.koha.net/arberi/256225/kosova-dhe-izraeli-lidhin-marredhenie-diplomatike-me-1-shkurt/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

Israel has worked to turn these countries into major strategic allies in its fight against the Arabs, Iran and Palestine.

While some Balkan countries, like Serbia, have resisted Israeli advances and have kept cordial relations with the Muslim world, Albania and Kosovo, two Muslim majority countries, have decided to abandon Muslim world's general solidarity with Palestine and have joined Israel in its actions against Palestine and its supporters in the Middle East. Albania, which once had excellent relations with the Islamic World from 1991 to 1997,¹³ shifted its stance towards Israel after 1997 when the Americans supported a 'regime change' civil war in the country and brought the Socialist Party to power. After the United States administration started its global war on terror,¹⁴ Albania became a major ally of the United States in its global war against the Arab and Islamic world. In 2008 Albania initiated diplomatic relations with Israel.¹⁵ In 2011 its Prime Minister declared Iran a Nazi state¹⁶ and in 2012 it opened the Israeli embassy in Tirana.¹⁷

After the opening of their embassy in 2012, Albania undertook a number of steps to show its loyalty to Israel and the United States in their global war against political Islam. At the behest of the United States, Albania established its Counterterrorism Police Directorate in 2014. This special branch of police, whose actions are coordinated with the US Embassy in Tirana, is tasked to fight 'terrorism' and in particular target the local Muslim community and its feelings towards Palestine and the Muslim world.¹⁸ Albanian counterterrorism police has been instrumental in promoting the agenda of Israel against local Albanians who sympathize with Palestine and political Islam. Like Albania, Kosovo has followed orders from Washington to persecute its local Muslim

¹³ Olsi Jazexhi, How did Israel go from Pariah to become God's Chosen Nation in the Balkans?, The Long View, July 2021

¹⁴ Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹⁵ לראשונה: ישראל אלבניה בין מסחרית טיסה: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/2008-01-24/ty-article/0000017f-da74-dea8-a77f-de76eb0b0000>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹⁶ Albanian PM: Ahmadinejad is the new Nazi, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-415550,00.html>

¹⁷ FM Liberman will meet with senior Albanian officials and inaugurate the new Israeli embassy in Tirana, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150120034123/https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2012/pages/liberman-albanian-embassy-1-aug-2012.aspx>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

¹⁸ See for example: Hacked emails of Gledis Nano, Subject: *Ftesë për takim/ Invitation for a meeting*, April 16, 2021, Homeland Security Telegram channel.

community. In 2014 in both these Muslim majority countries Muslim believers and Sunni imams were persecuted, arrested en masse, and accused of supporting the ‘jihad in Syria’.¹⁹ During the past two decades hundreds of Muslim believers have been interrogated by counterterrorism police in both Albania and Kosovo and persecuted for their beliefs regarding Palestine, Syria, Israel, Iran, Turkey and political Islam.

Apart from fighting the ‘radicalized’ Sunni Muslims, in 2016 Albanian counterterrorism police mass-arrested dozens and detained more than 200 Albanian and Kosovar Muslims on orders from the Israeli secret service. In November 2016 Israel claimed that Albanian and Kosovar Muslims ‘connected’ to ISIS had planned to attack its football team which had come to play in Albania. The Albanian and Kosovar state followed the Israeli diktat by detaining hundreds of Muslim believers who were violently beaten and assaulted by the police, even though they were all innocent.²⁰

Israel’s obsession with Balkan Muslims’ sympathies towards Palestine were repeated even in 2018 when its football team returned to play in Albania again. Israeli agents and some 1500 Albanian police turned the Elbasan Arena stadium in the city of Elbasan into a military zone in order to ‘provide safety’ for the Israeli players.²¹ Albanian fans were warned not to show any sympathy for Palestine or insult the Israeli team if they did not want to get arrested.

Since the opening of their embassy in Tirana in 2012, the relations of Albania and Kosovo with Israel have reflected the war mentality which the Israeli state demonstrates against its Arab, Turkish and Iranian neighbours. If in 1999 Israel sided with Serbia against NATO’s intervention to stop the Serbian military suppression of ethnic Muslim Albanians, after 2012 it has changed its stance by co-opting Albanian and Kosovar politicians to support Israel in its war against Palestine. Israeli officials have worked tirelessly during the past decades to create a myth which claims that Albanian Muslims

¹⁹ The Islamic State and The Balkans. Washington Sends in Prosecutors and ‘Counter-Terrorism Advisers’, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-islamic-state-and-the-balkans-washington-sends-in-prosecutors-and-counter-terrorism-advisers/5414445>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

²⁰ IMPAKT 50 – Te arrestohesh per Izraelin, <https://gazetaimpakt.com/impakt-50-te-arrestohesh-per-izraelin/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

²¹ Shqipëri-Izrael pa polici në stadium... por edhe pa tifozë, <https://www.gazetatema.net/2018/09/05/shqipëri-izrael-pa-polici-ne-stadium-por-edhe-pa-tifozë>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

love the Jews and for this reason they saved them from Nazis in Albania during World War Two.²² In the pages of Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, Israel has dedicated a section to 'Besa: A code of Honor; Muslim Albanians Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust.'²³ This section promotes the myth that Albanian Muslims loved the Jews and have no problem with Israel. This myth and the image of 'friendly Muslim Albanians' is used as a public relations argument in the Muslim world to convince the Arabs and Muslims that Muslims have no problem with Israel.

While with the outside world Israel uses Albania as an example of a country which loves Israel and Jews, Albania and Kosovo themselves have become proxy regimes which are used by the United States and Israel in their global war against Islamic political movements and states. Israel has invited dozens of Albanian and Kosovar journalists to Israel as part of its public relations offensive to burnish its image as a country of peace and tolerance. Apart from journalists, Israel has called Albanian and Kosovar ministers and chiefs of counter-terrorism police to Israel where they are instructed and trained to support Israel in its 'war against terrorism'.²⁴

In its efforts to fight the Palestinian and Islamic presence in the Balkans, Israel uses the International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT), which is hosted by the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya in the city of Herzliya in Israel, as a Mossad front organization. This organization is used to train and host different security and public officials from Albania and Kosovo who are taught how to fight Arab, Islamic and Iranian 'influence' in the Balkans. The ICT, which does not reveal its sources of funding, but receives grants from European and possibly American institutions, behaves like an agent of Mossad and the Israeli Defense Forces. Many of its lecturers are ex-IDF commanders or directors of Mossad. Its founding director, Boaz Ganor, is an Israeli government official on counter-terrorism and lecturer at the High Command Academic Courses of the Israel Defense Forces. The Board of Directors of ICT include

²² Yael Weinstock Mashbaum, 'Jews in Albania,' *Yadvashem.org*, <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/jews-in-albania.html>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

²³ 'Besa: A code of Honor; Muslim Albanians Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust.' *Yadvashem.org*, <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/besa/index.asp>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

²⁴ Olsi Jazexhi, How did Israel go from Pariah to become God's Chosen Nation in the Balkans?, *The Long View*, July 2021

Uriel Reichman, a lieutenant of the Israeli Army who fought against Egypt, Shabtai Shavit, former head of Mossad, Aharon Scherf former director of Israel's Foreign Affairs Division and senior official in Israeli prime minister's office, Boaz Ganor and Tal Avner. As it was recently revealed in Albania, ICT and its officials have established working relations with Albanian security services and counter-terrorism police. Whenever Israel fights Palestinians, its officials send publications, directives and articles from Jerusalem Post, Times of Israel and other Israeli media to counter-terrorism police directors in Albania, where they blame the Arabs, Iran and Palestinians as criminals and terrorists. These emails and articles are translated and given to counter-terrorism police of Albania to be read, translated and distributed to the police.²⁵

In Albania, as well as in Kosovo, evangelical Christians play a detrimental role in lobbying for Israel. After the fall of communism Evangelicals have converted thousands of Albanians and Kosovars into Zionist evangelicals. They have established hundreds of foundations, churches, organisations, radio stations and even a university where they brainwash Albanians with love for 'God's chosen nation', Israel. Organisations like International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in Albania (ICEJ - Ambasada Ndërkombëtare e Krishterë e Jeruzalemit në Shqipëri), pray for Israel and lobby local politicians to support Israel against the Arabs. US Embassies in Tirana and Prishtina and the US government have been instrumental in forcing the governments of Kosovo and Albania to support Israel against the Palestinians. The promotion of Israel has come in two forms. One through the promotion of evangelicals into Albanian politics. An example is Erion Veliaj, the mayor of Tirana and his group of evangelical supporters who now are deputies in the parliament and top government officials. They were promoted and funded by different American institutions, inserted into politics and now have great influence in the ruling Socialist Party of Albania.

Secondly, during the era of the Trump administration top US state officials like the evangelical Richard Grenell, Special Presidential Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo, Ambassador Philip Kosnett and Matthew Palmer US Representative for Western

²⁵ See: Homeland Justice leaked email exchanges of Albania's Counter-terrorism chief Gledis Nanos with Ely Karmon Senior Research Scholar, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) and The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at The Interdisciplinary Center, Herzlyia, Israel, 16 May 2021 and communications of Gledis Nano with Counter-terrorism Police 16 May 2021.

Balkans, worked very hard to convince the Kosovar government to sign a 'Normalisation Agreement' with Serbia, which included establishing diplomatic relations with Israel and make Kosovo the first Muslim majority country to send its embassy to Jerusalem.²⁶ The Kosovar government which has sided with Israel, apart from becoming the first Muslim majority country to send its embassy in the Israeli occupied Jerusalem, has designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation and Kosovar Israeli lobbyists have demanded that Prishtina designates even Hamas as a terrorist organisation.²⁷

The example of Albania and Kosovo, two small Balkan countries with Muslim majority populations which until 1990s were supporters of the Palestinian issue but in the recent years have sided with Israel, reveal the desperation and success of Israel on co-opting Muslim majority countries to join its fight against Palestine and political Islam in general.

3. How is Israel fighting Palestine in Nusantara?

Israel's diplomatic war against Palestine has been waged even in Southeast Asia. While Israel has established strong relations with Thailand and Singapore, its major ambition since after the collapse of the Soviet Union has been to establish diplomatic relations with the Muslim majority countries of Malaysia and Indonesia where local Muslim communities strongly support the Palestinian cause.

Israel wants to 'normalize' its relations with the Muslim majority countries of Southeast Asia, in order to co-opt these countries and use them to fight against political Islam and the Palestinian issue. The Balkan and Arab experience shows that after normalizing the relations, Israel sends its diplomats to the host countries, who usually are Israeli Defense Force (IDF) officers with long experience on fighting against the Arabs and Islamists. It invests a lot in building cultural and security relations and tries to support and influence local security agencies to fight against political Islam and

²⁶ Olsi Jazexhi, How did Israel go from Pariah to become God's Chosen Nation in the Balkans?, The Long View, July 2021

²⁷ Ibid.

Muslim intellectuals who support Palestine.²⁸ When Israel cannot do that by itself, it uses US Embassies to influence governments and state institutions to persecute and spy on local Muslim communities, organizations and individuals under the excuse of fighting terrorism and extremism. Israeli and US officials pressure host Muslim governments to join their ‘global fight against terrorism’ which in the Balkan context means: fight against those Islamic nations who refuse to legitimize the Israeli apartheid in Palestine or support the Palestinian issue.²⁹

In countries like Malaysia where Israel has failed to find partners to support its Zionist agenda, it has resorted to espionage and terrorism. The example of Fadi M. Albatsh who was killed by Israeli Mossad in Kuala Lumpur in 2018 is one example which shows how Israel uses state terrorism to achieve its goals in Muslim majority countries which refuse to join its fight against Palestine.³⁰ Israel has carried a number of terrorist attacks in Muslim majority countries like Iran, Tunisia, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Syria by assassinating many Arab and Iranian resistance fighters who support the Palestinian cause.³¹ In the case of Malaysia, it has even recruited local Malaysians to abduct and torture Palestinians which it suspects belong to Hamas and other Palestinian resistance organizations.³² Israeli terrorist activity against Malaysia is recognized even by US government officials. In a tweet posted on May 15, 2021, by Jonathan Schanzer who served as terror finance analyst at the U.S. Treasury, the US official reported that the Israeli Defense Force ‘has begun operations to target all Hamas operatives across the world, noting that there are ‘Obviously implications for Iran, Turkey, Qatar, Malaysia, etc.’³³

²⁸ See: Homeland Justice leaked email exchanges of Albania’s Counter-terrorism chief Gledis Nanos with Ely Karmon Senior Research Scholar, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) and The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at The Interdisciplinary Center, Herzlyia, Israel, 16 May 2021 and communications of Gledis Nano with Counter-terrorism Police 16 May 2021.

²⁹ See: Olsi Jazexhi, ‘How did Israel go from Pariah to become God’s Chosen Nation in the Balkans?’, *The Long View*, July 2021

³⁰ Elijah Levy, ‘Palestinian electrical engineer shot dead in Malaysia’, *YnetNews*, 21 April 2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5236433,00.html>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³¹ ‘12 Mossad operations since 2010’, *New Strait Times*, October 19, 2022, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/crime-courts/2022/10/841808/12-mossad-operations-2010>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³² Zunaira Saieed, ‘Mossad’s agents used chalet in Malaysia to interrogate abducted Palestinian: Report’, *The Straits Times*, October 19, 2022, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/mossad-s-agents-used-chalet-in-malaysia-to-interrogate-abducted-palestinian-report>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³³ Danial Martinus, ‘Malaysia tightens security after #IsraelKoyak campaign goes viral. The country’s online hacktivism has also provoked Israel.’ May 17, 2021, Mashable SEA, <https://sea.mashable.com/culture/15691/malaysia-tightens-security-after-israelkoyak-campaign-goes-viral>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

Israel, Zionist groups and United States government monitor closely the Muslim majority countries of Southeast Asia. They monitor mosques, universities, Islamic NGOs and Muslim expats who reside in the region for their pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli stance. An example of such monitoring is the attack against the Federal Territory Islamic Affairs Department (JAWI) in 2012 where the Simon Wiesenthal Center attacked Malaysian institutions and mosques for their criticism of Zionism.³⁴ Countries of Southeast Asia are monitored even by the U.S. Department of State for their stance towards Jews and Israel. In the reports of 2018, 2019 and 2020, for example, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad was attacked as an anti-Semite.³⁵ In the report of 2020 Mahathir was attacked for a sentence where he supported the Palestinian resistance against Israel.³⁶ Indonesia was mentioned in 2019 over the perception that 53.74% of Indonesians had that ‘Jews are enemies of Islam’ and public thinking that Jews are equal with Israel.³⁷ In 2020 Indonesia was mentioned for ‘reports of a ‘worldwide Jewish conspiracy’ spread on social media that claimed Jews, Christians, and communists were using COVID-19 and related restrictions on public gatherings to destroy Islam.’³⁸

Apart from monitoring the region for its pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli sentiments, Israeli Mossad has even a hit list for Southeast Asia where it monitors Philippine, Malaysian, Thai, Turkish, Arab and Iranian citizens and their activities in support of Palestine. Fadi M. Albatsh, who was killed by Israeli Mossad in Kuala Lumpur in 2018, was listed in the Mossad run Khalas– Hamas website, Malaysian section, which monitors and tracks pro-Palestinian activists in Southeast Asia.³⁹ Israel is particularly

³⁴ Gil Stern Stern Shefler, ‘Jewish group rebukes sermon in Malaysia’, *The Jerusalem Post*, April 3, 2012, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/jewish-group-rebukes-sermon-in-malaysia>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³⁵ See: ‘2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Malaysia’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/malaysia/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³⁶ See: ‘2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Malaysia’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/malaysia/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³⁷ See: ‘2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Indonesia’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/indonesia/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³⁸ See: ‘2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Indonesia’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/indonesia/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

³⁹ See: Khalas-Hamas, <https://www.khalas-hamas.info/home>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

concerned with Malaysia where pro-Palestinian feelings are strong. Israeli, Zionist and US organizations have attacked many Malaysian officials for their stance towards Israel. An example is the Israeli attack against the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad.⁴⁰ Mahathir has been continuously attacked even by US Department of State reports on International Religious Freedoms where he is labelled as an anti-Semite and enemy of Israel.⁴¹ Israeli media and Zionist groups like B'nai B'rith have attacked even the present Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim and have asked U.S. officials to cut ties with the Malaysian leader whom they accuse as anti-Semite.⁴² However, other Jewish groups have described Anwar as 'less toxic' with anti-Semitism than Mahathir.⁴³

Apart from targeting Malaysia and Southeast Asia with terrorism, espionage and smear campaign, Israel and the United States have tried hard to peacefully bribe Malaysia and Indonesia to join their front against Palestine.⁴⁴ Israel has invested a lot in Indonesia in particular. It has invited Indonesian Muslim clerics to visit Israel,⁴⁵ and has managed to win over even the former president Abdurrahman Wahid who in 2004 declared that Islam has no problem with Israel, but the enmity towards Israel has been caused by Arab propaganda.⁴⁶ During the presidency of Donald Trump, the Americans

⁴⁰ ERIC CORTELLESA, 'A defiant Malaysian PM defends his anti-Semitism in the name of free speech', *The Times of Israel*, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-defiant-malaysian-pm-defends-his-anti-semitism-in-the-name-of-free-speech/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁴¹ See: The following reports: '2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Malaysia', <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/malaysia/>; '2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Malaysia', <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/malaysia/>; '2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Malaysia', <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/malaysia/>,

United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁴² 'B'nai B'rith Urges U.S. Officials to Cut Ties with Malaysia's Ibrahim', *B'nai B'rith*, May 26, 2010, <https://www.bnaibrith.org/bnai-brith-urges-us-officials-to-cut-ties-with-malaysias-ibrahim-html/>, (accessed March 11, 2023).

⁴³ 'Malaysia's New Prime Minister Has Less Toxic History of Antisemitism Than Predecessor Mahathir', *Haaretz*, November 24, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/2022-11-24/ty-article/malaysias-new-prime-minister-has-less-toxic-history-of-antisemitism-than-predecessor/00000184-aa84-dabe-a7ac-eedea2f90000>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁴⁴ Associated Press, 'Israel wants dialogue with Indonesia, Malaysia', *The Jerusalem Post*, August 4, 2006, <https://www.jpost.com/international/israel-wants-dialogue-with-indonesia-malaysia>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁴⁵ Muslim clerics from Indonesia pay rare public visit to Israel, *The Jerusalem Post*, December 7, 2007, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel/Muslim-clerics-from-Indonesia-pay-rare-public-visit-to-Israel>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁴⁶ Micha Odenheimer, 'A Friend of Israel in the Islamic World', *Haaretz*, July 7, 2004, <https://www.haaretz.com/2004-07-07/ty-article/a-friend-of-israel-in-the-islamic-world/0000017f-e0bd-d7b2-a77f-e3bf6e2f0005>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

promised Indonesia 1 billion USD in exchange for ‘normalizing’ ties with Israel, like a number of Arab Sunni states did through the Abraham Accords.⁴⁷

Part of Israeli / US fight against political Islam in Southeast Asia is even the demonization and isolation of Iran. Israel uses countries like Indonesia and Thailand to carry psychological warfare against Iran and its presence in the region. Like it is the normal practice in the West and in the Balkans,⁴⁸ Israeli Mossad often plants fake news in Southeast Asian media, claiming that Iranian spies operate from Malaysia and Indonesia, and recruit Thai Muslims to spy for Iran.⁴⁹ These scaremongering stories are later reproduced by Israeli⁵⁰ and Western media and are used to put pressure on the governments of Southeast Asia to cut or curtail their relations with the Islamic Republic. In 1990s’ Israel managed to get Thailand and the Philippines to arrest ‘several Hizballah operatives’.⁵¹

However, Israel is very worried with Malaysia and partially with Indonesia where the Muslim community is very pro-Palestinians. Israel perceives Malaysia as the meeting place between Iranian activities against Israel and Palestinian resistance. Israelis and Americans think that Iranian intelligence uses Malaysia to support the Palestinian war of independence, recruit Palestinians and pass on to them knowledge, money and weapons. They believe that Malaysia’s good relations with Iran was partially due to Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad anti-Semitic rhetoric.⁵²

⁴⁷ TOVAH LAZAROFF, ‘Indonesia may receive \$1 b. in US financing if it makes peace with Israel’, The Jerusalem Post, DECEMBER 23, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/trump-prods-indonesia-to-recognize-israel-with-promise-of-2-billion-652959>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁴⁸ See: Olsi Jazexhi, How did Israel go from Pariah to become God’s Chosen Nation in the Balkans?, *The Long View*, July 2021.

⁴⁹ Wassayos Ngamkhan, ‘Iran spy puts cops on alert’, Bangkok Post, June 6, 2022, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2321094/iran-spy-puts-cops-on-alert>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁵⁰ ‘Thailand put out alert for Iranian spies - report’, The Jerusalem Post, June 7, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-708682>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁵¹ Rahman Hussin, ‘How US-Iran tensions will impact Southeast Asia’, New Strait Times, January 16, 2020, <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2020/01/556870/how-us-iran-tensions-will-impact-southeast-asia>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

⁵² Chaim Levinson, ‘Malaysia Has Become Hub for Iranian Activity, Western Intel Suggests’, *Haaretz*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/iran/2019-03-21/ty-article/.premium/malaysia-has-become-hub-for-iranian-activity-western-intel-suggests/0000017f-e8f9-df2c-a1ff-fef9b4a00000>, (accessed February 02, 2023).

The US / Israeli fight or belligerence against Palestine is a work in progress in Southeast Asia. This alliance, which has not been able to achieve the same success it has in the Balkans and Europe against the Palestinian issue, has managed to somehow isolate Iran from the region and put any Malaysian and Indonesian group or public figure which support Palestine under tremendous scrutiny.

However, until now the two Muslim majority countries of Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia, have not yet established diplomatic relations with Israel, have not abandoned the Palestinian cause and have not taken hostile actions against Palestine and its supporters, like many countries in the Balkans and Europe have done since after the fall of the Soviet Union and the triumph of the US imperialism.