

'NATO, US arming Israel over projected, planned Iran war'

By [Ralph Schoenman](#)

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A prominent political analyst says NATO and the US are arming "Israel with missile capacities in relation to a projected and planned attack upon Iran."

Italy says it wants to finalize a one billion dollar deal with Israel to buy thirty M-346 training jets from the Italian-based aerospace and defense group Finmeccanica's Alenia Aermacchi unit.

Italian Premier Mario Monti said the deal would result in a "leap of quality" in industrial relations between Italy and Israel.

Press TV has conducted an interview with Ralph Schoenman, political commentator, to further discuss the issue. The following is a rough transcription of the interview.

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Press TV: Give us your thoughts on this deal and the reasoning and motives behind it.

Schoenman: Well, I want to remind you that the Italian minister of defense was in Tel Aviv in Jerusalem meeting with Netanyahu at the time of Israel's attacks upon Gaza.

At that time, the Italian defense minister announced that Italy was in complete support of Israel, militarily, and represented that Iran was behind the response of Gaza to the Israeli assassination program in Gaza. So, this military relationship has long been in preparation.

I also would point out to you that Prime Minister Mario Monti represented that the purchase of the 30 M-346 training jets from Aerospace and defense group Finmeccanica's Alenia Aermacchi was part of a military relationship with Israel.

Let's look at this closely. Finmeccanica is 33.3 percent state owned. And as part of this agreement, the Italian government will make one billion dollars worth of what are called off-set purchases from Israel's defense industry. So, the one billion dollar purchase from Israel immediately offsets one billion dollars handed over by the Italian government.

This is part of the elaborate NATO and US arming of Israel with missile capacities in relation to a projected and planned attack upon Iran. It's also related to an earlier 1.6 [billion] dollar arms deal which was announced in the Associated Press on February 26th with Azerbaijan in which Israeli defense officials confirmed that the one billion dollar deal would involve drones and anti-aircraft missile defense systems in Azerbaijan.

Danny Yatom, the former head of the Israeli Mossad spy agency, said that the timing of the deal is related to Israel's plans with respect to Iran. He continued to say [they will continue] to sell arms to its friends. The article adds that with Israel intelligence, there's a benefit from Azerbaijan's contacts with the large Iranian Azeri community. Related to this is the war of the Mossad in carrying out assassinations of nuclear scientists.

I want to emphasize that these arms deals with Italy, with NATO countries, with neighboring countries to Iran are part of a planned Israeli-US imperial assault upon Iran. That's the real context here.

Press TV: Mr. Schoenman, the Israelis just recently asked the United States for more money, 700 million dollars to be precise, for its Iron Dome missile system and other military projects which you just pointed out as well. It seems that even during these tough economic times, the US usually has no hesitations in coughing up taxpayers' money for Israel's militarily driven demands does it?

Schoenman: Well, yes. As a matter of fact, I did discuss that very question yesterday on Press TV. The 700 million dollars is but a small fraction of the actual transactions involved. It also involves missile systems with respect to missile defenses against outer space missiles, specifically those of Iran and Syria.

The sums involved, the 700 million dollars, is but the tip of the iceberg. 3.2 billion dollars has been assigned.

Beyond that, the Israelis have demanded that there should be what is called an automatic position of arms on an annual basis without review. That is to say the agreement will provide Israel with [crash-arms] missile systems, would take place year after year without the ability of Congress to review them.

This is the context here of preparations for a massive conflict in the region which threatens not only the peoples of the region but the peoples of the world.

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