

## Politico's Jihad on Walid Phares Failed Again

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Propaganda wars by radicals often target their key opponents with smear campaigns with the goal of stripping the latter from their intellectual and political legitimacy and influence. Bolsheviks, Nazis, Fascists and Islamists have had one tactic in common over the decades: tarnishing the character of public figures, particularly writers and intellectuals, to a point where public confidence in these opponents would lessen, or be lost. Since 9/11, one of the most attacked public intellectuals in the US by the proponents of political Islamists, both by Muslim Brotherhood and Iran regime operatives, has been Professor Walid Phares.

Author, analyst, media personality and advisor to various branches of Government, Phares has a long track record of books, articles and media appearances stretching over two decades. But after his appointment as a national security advisor to Mitt Romney in 2011, a series of hit pieces by pro Iran regime and Brotherhood sympathizers have targeted him in an effort to smear his reputation. One of the articles published by the far-left Mother Jones spread false accusations against the scholar was called by National Review, "Jihad Against Walid Phares." It was a retribution against his decade long advising to the US Government on Middle Eastern affairs. The blitz campaign aimed at punishing him for rejecting Islamist and radical agendas. In 2016 after candidate Donald Trump also appointed him as a foreign policy advisor, the same gang came back to spread slander against the scholar. The goal then and now continues to be: cutting off Phares's expertise from the Administration's decision-making centers. Back in November one of the media attackers, Politico unleashed a hit on Phares as a way - they thought- to block a potential appointment in the White House. The piece was misinformed and baseless. This summer Politico, out of the blue, waged another wave of Jihad against Professor Phares, but going lower in their narrative. Phares, an expert in country conditions with Congress, agencies and media, was called upon to testify about Iraq's conditions in the case of the deportation of a Christian Chaldean in Detroit. The case was a benchmark one, as it related to a situation where several Iraqis, Christians and Muslims have entered the US, decades ago as members of families admitted legally and provided with permanent residency. Few of these individuals missed the opportunity to apply for citizenship and some among them broke the law, were prosecuted, served in jail and were released later. However once non-citizens break the law, their green cards are withdrawn, but they can continue to reside under the auspices of immigration authorities. Hundreds of these individuals lived their lives since as law-abiding residents, until they were caught in the wide move by the Administration to deport the illegal criminals on US soil. One of them, a Chaldean, Najah Konja, asked for Professor Phares to serve as an expert witness on country conditions in court to enlighten the judge and the Government on the situation inside Iraq. Phares testified as an expert as he did for many years and could present enough evidence for the court to release Konja and reinstate his status. The expert, who supports the Trump Administration, didn't address its policies but facts on the ground. The judge, a liberal, only looked at circumstances, and the Government didn't appeal. All went well, the family was elated and the community was relieved after the decision and valued Walid Phares's contribution. In fact, the latter's testimony may well become a "jurisprudence of facts" for other cases. But instead of praising Phares, the opposite camp represented by Politico, i.e, the Islamist and far left radicals and the entities claiming advocacy for the Chaldeans and other communities in Detroit, raged against the scholar. The hit piece accused Phares of helping Chaldeans that Trump wanted to deport, while supporting the President on his policies. Phares crippled the argument when he replied by email that he "is not addressing immigration policies in court but country conditions in Iraq. It is up to the judge and Government to decide based on this assessment." And they did positively. The author of the smear piece, Nahal Toosi, who by the way had written in favor of the Iran Deal and of the Muslim Brotherhood, then reverted to sleazy questioning of the "expert's fees," which she describes as "high." Calculated at federal per-hour price levels, they were not. Out of talking points, and angry at the positive response by the Chaldean and Middle Eastern community to Phares intelligent and hard work to resolve this benchmark case, Politico went back to resurrect the 2011 Hezbollah manipulated tract posted by Mother Jones. Yet the lameness of the attack didn't impact reality. The man was free, the family was elated, the justice system worked and the politicization of court didn't happen. Politico and his henchmen and mercenary bloggers lost one more time. John Hajjar is the co-Chair of the American Middle East Coalition for Democracy and commentator on US national security.