

Mother Jones Attempts to Smear Walid Phares, Comes up Short

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For years the propaganda arm of the global Ikhwan has been attempting to damage author, foreign policy expert and scholar, Dr. Walid Phares because of the arguments he makes in the media exposing the Islamist network's activities in several countries, including in Libya.

Though his comments on Libyan affairs are very limited compared to his general volume of Mideast and international analysis, the Tripoli-based Muslim Brotherhood network targeted him as a voice speaking against the jihadi militias and supporting the Libyan National Army fighting those militias. A number of online actors, including the New Libya Report (an anti-UAE and pro-Qatar media platform based in London), have been attacking Phares and promising "investigations" against him.

It was noted that a document posted by the New Libya Report on Twitter was likely used by Mother Jones's Daniel Friedman in his attempted hit job. In Mid-November, the pro-Tripoli New Libya Report posted derogatory material on Twitter to smear Phares. They used an online form filed by Republican commentator Neil Livingstone for a consulting company supposed to include experts and consultants on risk assessment for projects in the Middle East and worldwide. Dr. Phares's name was listed as one of the experts, as well as US-Libyan entrepreneur Okba Haftar, son of Libyan General Khalifa Haftar. The company was never launched, and it was dissolved by Livingstone weeks after it was formed, but the form remained online. The Ikhwan lobby seized on it and claimed it was evidence Phares was undertaking major "business in Libya." While in fact the company never actually existed.

Because of Dr. Phares's personal relationship with Okba Haftar, who lives in the US, Mr. Friedman spent the better part of a month trying to prove that Phares had lucrative contracts just waiting for General Haftar's victory in Libya to be fulfilled and therefore that Dr. Phares was acting unethically by not disclosing this imagined potential bonanza when giving his assessment of the political situation in Libya in the media.

None of this was true, of course.

Nor was it true that Dr. Phares personally persuaded President Trump to phone General Haftar, that he lobbied a high official in the NSC this year for the administration to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group, that he "helped to organize a visit by a group of Libyan tribal chiefs aligned with Haftar to DC in 2017," nor does he own any joint business interest with Okba Haftar. Mother Jones' mirages most likely obtained as a smear dossier from Ikhwan operatives.

Mr. Friedman persisted in publishing what remained of his article, but the threatened bombshell turned out to be a dud. Dr. Phares has no conflict of interest concerning Libya or any other country in the MENA region on which he offers his assessments.

Even Mr. Friedman conceded that Dr. Phares's positions have remained remarkably consistent over the years and that "there's no evidence that Phares's relationship with Okba Haftar has impacted Phares's public statements about Libya." Perhaps he will take future allegations from those with a clear political agenda aimed at discrediting Dr. Phares with a grain of salt. He was certainly burned once.