

An imagined private meeting in a crowded hall: how some media hallucinates

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The “meeting” between Professor Walid Phares and Ambassador Sergey Kislyak

Back in the spring of 2017, [USAToday](#) and [CNN](#) alleged that one among the Trump advisors who was said to have “met” with the Russian ambassador to the US, Sergey Kislyak, was Dr. Walid Phares. This seems to have been erroneously related by JD Gordon, or misunderstood by the CNN reporters, who despite the fact that Dr. Phares had responded in [a statement](#) (linked in their report) have continued to push the narrative that Dr. Phares “met with” Kislyak during the Republican Convention in

Cleveland.

The CNN report on March 4, states that JD Gordon related that Dr Phares attended a meeting with him at the Case Western University with the Russian ambassador. We were accompanying Dr Phares and witnessed no such meeting. Where did it allegedly take place? In the morning session we were seated at the same table far from the diplomats. At noon we were having lunch and in the afternoon Dr Phares was on the panel. After the session ended everyone mingled and we don't recall seeing Dr Phares chatting with ambassador Kislyak though he greeted and was greeted by many diplomats. There were more than 50 diplomats in the auditorium and no one could have systematically met with all of them. Dr. Phares, obviously, would have no problem declaring that he met any diplomat, especially at a public event, but in this particular case, it simply did not happen.

As we [described earlier in the year](#), besides the fact that Phares didn't encounter the Russian ambassador, there was no visible space to conduct meetings in an auditorium like the one at Case Western University. The reporting by journalists, who were not there, versus our reporting as direct witnesses who were there, cannot stand.

During the summer, we also learned that CNN contacted the office of Dr Phares to inquire if he was at a meeting in the Seychelles islands during January 2017! Phares had never visited the Seychelles in his life and has accounted for every single day in Washington DC, either on TV or in meetings. That was another farce and CNN withdrew the inquiry.

More surprising was a letter sent and later posted online by California Senator Diane Feinstein whose judgment on national security and counter terrorism we respect, regurgitating the same old erroneous and unfounded allegation that the professor "met" the ambassador at that event in Cleveland. As if her staffers haven't even read his statements or researched the

matter at all. Feinstein's letter inviting Phares and other ex-advisors to send her documents regarding the "Russian investigation" to be examined, nine months later by the Judiciary Committee, seems to be out of touch. First the committee chair didn't sign the letter of the minority chair. Second, the senator is basing her request to Phares on media errors.

We aren't sure if the new request is a mistake, possibly rushed through due to California politics, but we can see clearly that some media are undeterred by the factual truth and relentless about perpetuating half-truths and embellishments. Some in the press are using her letter to sensationalize the issue. Thus we have decided to write this public note and post this photo, showing the nature of the so-called meeting. One photo, a thousand words: Let this ridiculous claim shatter with it.