

NBC's Failed Hit Job on Walid Phares

by Rebecca Bynum



Photo credit: AP

On Saturday June 11, after a day of NGO demonstrations in several cities “against Sharia law in the US” and counter demonstrations by pro-Islamist and far left groups, a number of opposition media outlets posted long diatribes against one of the groups involved in the anti-Sharia marches, namely Brigitte Gabriel’s 40,000 member strong ACT! for America. The latter is the largest national activist group involved in pushing back against what they perceive to be a systematic attempt by the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States to “introduce and impose fragments of Shariah Islamic Law within the US legal system.” The Ikhwan lobby – including CAIR and ISNA – as described by the Center for Security Policy, has been using lawfare and other pressures to silence American

groups expressing their opposition to the Islamization of the American legal system. The debate between the “Sharia resistance group” and the Islamist lobby has been contentious for several years now. And that day (June 10), ACT was able to show a large grassroots deployment across many cities in protest against this insidious pro-Sharia campaign.

In response, Brigitte Gabriel was severely attacked, not only by the usual suspects in the Islamist camp, but by so-called mainstream media (aka the opposition press). However, at least two members of the Sharia-apologist media, [NBC News](#), used the attacks against Gabriel to go after two more targets: The Trump administration and a former presidential campaign advisor and Middle East expert, Dr. Walid Phares. Both outlets posted separate articles with identical data and arguments. Among the latter, that “Phares is a board member of ACT! for America,” and thus they tried to imply that the Phares link proves Trump’s support for the anti-Sharia protests. Both the *Washington Post* and NBC actually lied. The 2016 foreign policy advisor to Trump (who was also a Middle East advisor to Presidential candidate Mitt Romney in 2011-2012) is not a board member nor affiliated with ACT. His name is nowhere on the NGO’s web site and his non-affiliation has been confirmed by Gabriel.

Safia Samee Ali, Ali Gostanian and Daniella Silva, authors of the NBC hit piece, went even further. They claimed Phares is a “current Trump advisor,” although he was not appointed to any government post after the election and is not advising the President currently. In the *Washington Post* piece, authors Abigail Hauslohner and Justin Moyer, used similar terminology, attempting to link Gabriel to Trump via mentioning the name of Phares in between. Both publications lied. *The Washington Post* quickly removed the paragraph citing Phares, possibly fearing legal action and/or exposure in social media. Hauslohner spent several years in Cairo, has witnessed the struggle between civil society and the Muslim

Brotherhood. She should know the difference between opposing the Islamists and being a critic of Islam. Dr Phares is the former, I am the latter.

Dr. Phares's office wrote to NBC: "Inserting Dr. Phares' name in an article and citing him as a member of an organization without even asking him is an attempt to link his name in a public discussion to which he is not a part." This is to "remind the NBC journalists to perform their due diligence before posting erroneous facts." The office continued: "Three of your writers, Safia Samee Ali, Ali Gostanian and Danielle Silvia alleged in an article published on June 10, 2017, under the title "ACT for America Stages Marches Against 'Sharia Law' Nationwide, Arrests Made" that Dr. Walid Phares sits on ACT for America's board. Since Dr. Phares is not a member of ACT of America, nor has been, nor has he appeared as a board member in any event, we ask you to remove the incorrect statement from the article ASAP. Dr. Phares reserves his right to legal recourse if his name is not removed."

NBC till this hour has not removed the false allegation nor have they yet apologized.

The question remains: why is the opposition press attempting to cite Phares' name, even if he is not involved in the subject they are writing about? According to observers, the Islamist and far left lobbies cannot find arguments to counter the former advisor's analyses, and Dr. Phares is a well-known public commentator on national security and foreign policy. Some observers believe that these attempts reveal more about the Iran regime and Muslim Brotherhood's use of opposition media against him. Often CAIR and its allies—as well as the supporters of the Iran Deal—attribute to Phares statements he never made, and/or affiliations he does not have, in an attempt to smear him. The falsehoods used by his critics is evidence they have come full circle, ending with complete intellectual failure against the expert whose books predicted the Arab Spring, the rise of ISIS, and the catastrophe of the

Iran deal.