

# The Administration Adopts the 'Phares Plan' for Syria

by Rebecca Bynum



Female Troops from the Syrian Democratic Forces take up positions near the frontline (Getty images)

Writing in the [Wall Street Journal](#), Gordon Lubold and Michael R. Gordon reveal that the Trump Administration is actively trying to gather a number of units from Europe and our Arab allies to form a separation zone along the Syrian Turkish border, just such a plan as Walid Phares laid out on January 16.

The [Phares plan](#) is a solution to the Turkish demand to establish a security zone inside northern Syria, mainly in Kurdish territories. Phares advised that the projected Turkish plan to move its forces into Syrian territory would trigger a wider war and proposed instead a multi-national force to establish narrow corridor along the border to prevent PKK militants from entering Turkey and to remove the rationale for Turkish forces to enter the Kurdish areas of Northern Syria.

The Trump Administration, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, believes that such a plan is the best response to address the security concerns of our two allies, NATO member Turkey and anti ISIS ally, the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF). In fact this is a strategic response to the endless confrontation between Turks and Syrian Kurds.

Dr Walid Phares, a former foreign advisor to Presidential candidate Trump during the 2016 campaign, had argued that the response to a clash between the Erdogan Government and the SDF is to simply separate them from each other. Such a concept would answer the Turkish concerns about PKK infiltration from Syria and stop terrorists from penetrating Turkey. The plan would also secure the Kurds, who rightly fear an advancing Turkish army and militias into their lands.

The plan cited areas with special status, zones of deployments and even areas where the Kurds would pull back their artillery but not their police forces. Specifically, the “Phares plan for disengagement between Turkish and SDF forces along the Turkish Syria border” contained the following elements:

1. Both sides accept a US-led initiative and/or a UN led initiative calling for cessation of hostilities between the two parties and a start of Peace Talks.
2. The deployment of a Peace and Monitoring Force, either a multinational force or a UN force operating under Chapter 7 along the border where both parties are deployed.
3. Both the Turkish forces and SDF forces allow the international force to deploy on all observation and passage points between the two parties and to deploy units in the hills and adjacent areas on both sides of the border.
4. The SDF pull back heavy weapons from the border area but maintain police and light weapons.

5. All individuals or parties traveling from the SDF zones into Turkey should be searched by the international forces.
6. A special security status would be granted to Kobani – to be discussed later.
7. All PKK centers inside Syria should be removed by the SDF.
8. Afrin should be transferred to the international forces.
9. Manbej should be transferred to the responsibility of an Arab force.
10. The small Christian area inside Qamishli should be transferred to a European force for protection from ISIS terrorists.

Phares' plan was the only one that was offered from the private sector in Washington. It was praised by supporters in northwestern Syria and Phares sent the plan to National Security Advisor Bolton and Secretary of State Pompeo. A few weeks later, the *WSJ* revealed that almost the exact plan has been adopted by the Trump Administration.

As I wrote [many months ago](#), Walid Phares didn't land a position in the Administration in 2017, but his ideas landed in the White House. And the "Phares plan for Syria" is just the latest example.