

Mueller Investigated Former Lebanese Phalangist, Trump Advisor, for Ties to Egyptian Dictator

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The ranks of Republican consultants are filled by hoaxsters, swindlers and crooks. In the era of Trump, this phenomenon has become even more pronounced. One of them is Walid Phares, a [former ideological commissar for the Lebanese Phalangist militia](#) which warred against the Muslim forces during the Civil War. Phares was the burning spear of the Maronite Christians in its fight to the death with their Muslim enemies. He allied himself with the most savage and brutal of the Christian milita leaders.

At the time, he advocated a separate Christian state for Lebanon's Christians. He even specified that it should be located in southern Lebanon, which would of course mean the expulsion of the Muslim population that occupied these lands. Phares also lobbied Israel intensively to prolong its support of the South Lebanon Army, which acted for years as Israel's proxy in the south. He failed in these efforts and, using the contacts he had developed among conservative Christians and Republicans lobbying for the Phalange, he moved to the U.S. in the early 1990s. Here he again allied himself with some of the vilest Islamophobes in the country including Pamela Geller, Frank Gaffney, and Briget Gabriel.

But unlike them, he cultivated powerful contacts in the GOP and the evangelical Christian community, which led to increasing influence in national politics. In 2012, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney named him to his foreign policy team. Later, he told people that Romney had promised him a senior foreign policy position should he win the presidency. Fortunately, that didn't happen.

When Donald Trump announced his candidacy, Phares again activated his contacts and insinuated himself into the Trump entourage. But unlike the earlier campaign, Phares was stymied in his attempts at influence. There were intelligence reports claiming that Phares was tainted in some way. Jared Kushner, who played a crucial role in Trump's foreign policy apparatus, was said to detest him for unspecified reasons. Which is quite something for someone as tainted himself, as Kushner is.

Now we've learned what blocked Phares' ascendancy in the Trump camp. Robert Mueller primarily investigated Russian meddling in the 2016 campaign. Almost all of the targets he investigated (Manafort, Page, Papadopoulos, Stone) were involved as intermediaries for the Russians. But the transcripts of Mueller's report omitted the name of the fifth individual who was targeted by his team: Walid Phares.

He, like a number of other middlemen (Elliot Broidy, Erik Prince, Joel Zamel) in the Trump orbit, was plying his trade on behalf of a foreign government: Egypt. The [NY Times report says](#):

Mr. Phares had high-level contacts in the Egyptian government and connections to a deputy minister for education, another Trump campaign official, Sam Clovis, told Mr. Mueller's investigators. Mr. Phares told Mr. Clovis that he had friends who could broker meetings between the campaign and the Egyptian government, but Mr. Clovis rejected that idea, he said.

Mr. Clovis and Mr. Phares had met with an Egyptian official at a hotel in Georgetown, according to Mr. Clovis, who could not recall the man's name for investigators. Mr. Phares tried to set up another meeting with the official, but Mr. Clovis demurred.

...Then the Republican nominee for president, Mr. Trump met in September 2016 with Mr. el-Sisi. Mr. Phares took credit for that meeting, telling Mr. Trump's daughter Ivanka in an email shortly beforehand that he had traveled to "Egypt last week, worked with them on the meeting between President Sisi and your father."

"Great that the meeting will take place tomorrow," Mr. Phares added in the email, according to congressional investigators. "This is a major victory in foreign policy. It will generate more votes."

Mr. el-Sisi visited the White House a few months after Mr. Trump was elected, the first visit by an Egyptian president to Washington since 2009. The president has embraced Mr. el-Sisi, bestowing validation on a strongman who took power in a military coup and has cracked down on dissent as he consolidates power.

Al-Sisi murdered thousands of innocent, unarmed protesters in his rise to power after overthrowing the democratically elected President, Mohammed Morsi. Morsi represented the Muslim Brotherhood and became the country's leader after it threw out the previous dictator, Hosni Mubarak. Al-Sisi's violent overthrow of Morsi, leading to the imprisonment and death of the former president, made him persona non grata for the previous U.S. administration. He was damaged goods as far as most democratic countries were concerned. That's why the junta leader needed assistance in turning things around and burnishing his reputation. A meeting with the president would work wonders on that score. And Phares delivered.

If you read his Twitter feed you will find the same anti-Muslim Brotherhood propaganda pumped out by Al-Sisi and his kleptocratic patrons in Saudi Arabia. Vague conspiracies that the Brotherhood is infiltrating the U.S. government with plans for an Islamist takeover. These dictators need a bogeyman to maintain their hold on their citizens. Without an enemy, they are afraid the people will stop cowering and begin questioning who drove their economy into a ditch; and who is siphoning off billions for their own benefit.

Phares is a canker sore in GOP politics. The thought that he could have in the past, or might still in the future, rise to a position of consequence in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus is frightening beyond belief.

But he's certainly not the only one. Earlier the NY Times reported that Elliot Broidy [performed the same role on behalf of the UAE](#), for whom he served as both a weapons dealer and political rainmaker. He also arranged for a meeting between the country's leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, and Trump. He also lobbied intensively for Trump to fire Secretary of State Tillerson for his opposition to close ties with the Gulf states and his purported sympathy for Qatar. Broidy, like Phares, was [reported to be under federal](#)

[investigation](#) by the U.S. Attorney in Brooklyn, for some of these matters.

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