

# Walid Phares

- Walid Phares is a media commentator and professor who appears on news networks to discuss topics related to Muslims. During the presidential campaign and transition, he served as a **foreign policy advisor to Donald Trump**.
- Phares has served on the **board of advisors for ACT for America**, a group the Southern Poverty Law Center describes as “**the largest grassroots anti-Muslim hate group in America**.” Shortly after the presidential election, ACT!’s head, Brigitte Gabriel, celebrated her group’s “direct line” to the White House through Phares and administration appointees who have connections to ACT.
- The Center for American Progress (CAP) identifies Phares as an actor in the “Islamophobia network.” CAP considers Phares one of numerous “validators,” a group of “individuals who **claim inside knowledge** about the realities of radical Islam” because of their Middle Eastern background.
- Phares has appeared on the Center for Security Policy’s radio show, and spoken at the group’s events as far back as 2009. Run by Frank Gaffney, the Center for Security Policy (CSP) is **considered an anti-Muslim hate group** by the Southern Poverty Law Center.
- Phares claims that “jihadists within the West pose as civil rights advocates.” His **unsubstantiated claim about “jihadist” “infiltration”** into American society and education has been echoed by groups like ACT and CSP, and activists like Pamela Geller. Like them, he believes that American Muslim organizations are front groups for the Muslim Brotherhood.
- In a 2011 *Mother Jones* investigative report, Phares was described as a “**chief ideologist” of an armed Christian group during the Lebanese civil war**. Those interviewed who knew him during the war said that Phares believed the conflict was part of an ongoing civilizational war between Muslims and Christians. Scheduled to testify at Rep. Peter King’s 2011 hearing on “radicalization in the Muslim American community,” Phares was dropped after Muslim groups highlighted his reported connection to the Lebanese militia group.
- With a PhD from the University of Miami, Phares has taught at National Defense University and serves as Provost of BAU International University in Washington, D.C. **Critics have argued that Phares is “not in the mainstream as an academic”** and have described his approach as “reduc[ing] the religion of Islam to terrorism and transformed terrorism—a tactic—into an ideology.”
- Phares was a **foreign policy advisor to Mitt Romney** during his presidential run in 2012. Prior to joining the Trump campaign as an advisor, Phares was approached by four other GOP candidates for foreign policy briefings.
- Speaking of the January 2017 executive order which many rights groups called a “Muslim ban,” Phares claimed it “is not about religion” and “not even ideology.” Earlier in July 2016, Phares spoke of Trump’s initial proposal for a ban on Muslim entry to the U.S. as “symbolic for provoking that debate on a need for a foreign policy and counter-terrorism strategy shift.”
- A long-time advisor to elected officials and a **Fox News commentator**, Phares has also served as a terrorism analyst for NBC News and has appeared frequently on Christian Broadcasting Network and the Eternal World Television Network, a Catholic channel. In 2007, he was one of the primary interviewees for a Fox News special called “Radical Islam: Terror in Its Own Words.” In 2008, he served as an expert in *The Third Jihad*, a film produced by the Clarion Project. Phares has served on the advisory board for the Clarion Project, a group the SPLC considers an anti-Muslim hate group.

**IMPACT:** A media commentator with affiliations to anti-Muslim groups, Walid Phares has advised the Trump administration and other elected officials on foreign policy.