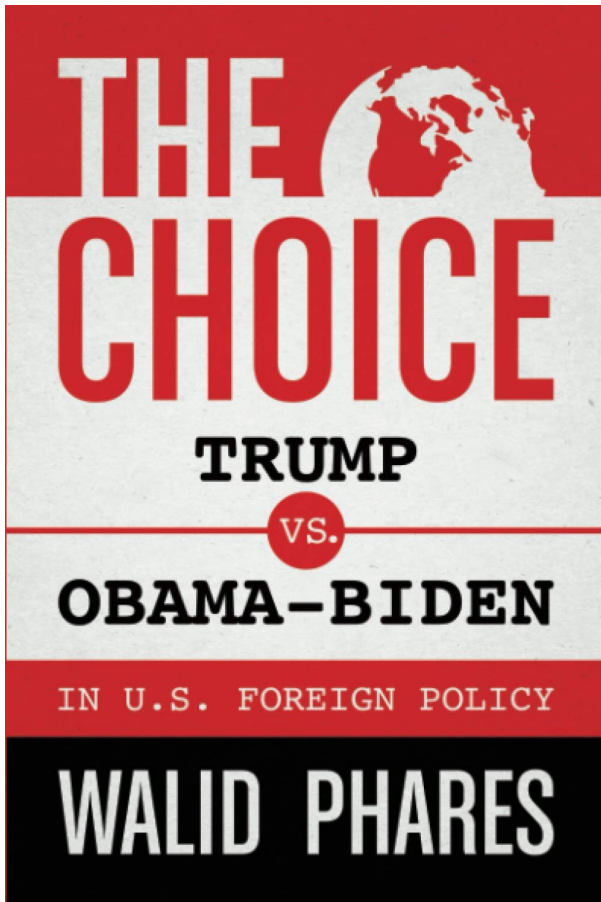


# Phares Lays Out the Big Foreign Policy Picture in 'The Choice'

by Rebecca Bynum (October 2020)



[\*The Choice: Trump vs. Obama-Biden in US Foreign Policy\*](#)

by Walid Phares

Post Hill Press

193 pages

Walid Phares is a natural teacher. He draws the issues in broad strokes so that the overall picture is clear before filling in the details. In his new book, *The Choice*, Phares focuses on the main issues, explaining clearly how particular moves affect the overall structure of US foreign policy. Most importantly, he reveals how foreign actors put pressure on US policymakers through influence operations aimed at public opinion and other enticements designed to enrich elite networks of policymakers who stand to gain wealth, power and increased social standing through the good graces of these foreign influence peddlers. The bad news is: these influence

operations are much more extensive and powerful than is generally known.

Donald Trump and his foreign policy team came along and threatened those entrenched interests, which goes a long way in explaining why he was baselessly targeted by our own intelligence agencies.

*The Choice* naturally focusses primarily on the Middle East as that is Dr. Phares' area of expertise. It begins by reminding us that the Obama foreign policy primarily consisted of appeasing our enemies in the naïve hope that they would be "tamed" by trade and commerce. Though a similar policy had existed for China over several administrations (and we've seen how that worked out), Obama expanded it to include the most vicious, radical and ideologically committed enemies we have: the Muslim Brotherhood and the theocratic, violent revolutionary regime in Tehran. Obama spurned our long-time moderate Sunni allies to partner with their Islamist enemies, enabling the Muslim Brotherhood to gain power in Egypt and elevating the mullahs on the international stage, lavishing them with pallets of cash and the promises of billions of dollars in trade deals with Europe, the US, China and Russia.

Phares explains how deep and pervasive the Ikhwan's influence on the Obama-Biden administration was by demonstrating Obama's seeming paralysis as ISIS formed, developed and then took over territory in Syria and Iraq. Some Republicans, most notably John McCain, added to the confusion by supporting radical jihadist groups in their efforts to topple President Assad of Syria. While this was going on, the Muslim Brotherhood representative in America, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), was fully on the offensive, pressuring the administration to scrub all reference to Islamist ideology as a motivating factor for terrorism in military and FBI training manuals. Turkey and Qatar both played their parts in hemming Obama in.

As a result, ISIS ran wild all over Syria and Iraq, then started to expand in Africa and world-wide. They were not stopped until Trump came to power, quickly reclaimed their territory and killed their founder, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. ISIS as a major foreign policy problem – solved.

The Obama-Biden administration, blind to our enemies' motivating world-view, became easily manipulated into signing what Trump called the "worst deal in American history" – the Iran deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It was the desperation to hang onto this deal that may well have been a prime motivator the Trump-Russia collusion narrative which the Democrats used to try to overturn the election and remove Trump from office. Tellingly, their first target was General Michael Flynn, the incoming National Security Advisor, whose first news conference put Iran "on notice" that the deal was on the chopping block. According to Lee Smith:

Obama saw Flynn as a signal threat to his legacy, which was rooted in his July 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Flynn had said long before he signed on with the Trump campaign that it was a catastrophe to realign American interests with those of a terror state. And now that the candidate he'd advised was the new president-elect, Flynn was in a position to help undo the deal. To stop Flynn, the outgoing White House ran the same offense it used to sell the Iran deal—they smeared Flynn through the press as an agent of a foreign power, spied on him, and leaked classified intercepts of his conversations to reliable echo chamber allies.

Walid Phares was another Trump advisor targeted by Obama loyalists. According to the *New York Times*, the FBI received a "tip" from Egypt (presumably from a Muslim Brotherhood operative) that he was secretly working for the Egyptian government. He then became a target of the Mueller

investigation and was thus shut out of the administration.

With Flynn and Phares, both sidelined, the Iran deal limped on for another 16 months under Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster and Defense Secretary James Mattis (all since replaced) until Trump finally insisted on his policy to withdraw from the deal in May of 2018.

It is worth noting that Joe Biden has committed to returning to the JCPOA, which gave Iran a clear path to a nuclear weapon by 2025. Trump has declared that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon, and under his watch, we can be certain they will not.

Another key policy proposal put forward by Phares was the idea of forming an Arab coalition, or Arab NATO if you will, to counter both Iran and the radical Islamists in their midst. By making Israel the key player in this coalition, the Trump administration succeeded in brokering the first peace deal between Israel and her Arab neighbors in more than a quarter century. To say this was game-changing for the region is an understatement. But to get to that point, the Trump administration had to fight internal resistance of unprecedented scale and scope.

*The Choice* covers a wide range of foreign policy issues including China, North Korea, Russia, NATO, and Latin America as well as the Middle East. It is written in a casual essay style without Phares' usual meticulous research and extensive footnotes, but even so, it is packed with interesting information and insights. This book serves as an excellent reminder of what a nightmare the Obama years were in terms of foreign policy. The choice could not be clearer: four more years to expand on his America First foreign policy successes, for which President Trump has received three Nobel Peace Prize nominations, or, going back to a time when America projected weakness at every turn while trying desperately to appease our many enemies, all the while making deals to enrich the various foreign policy players (see Hunter Biden's payments from

Ukraine, China and Russia).

There is no doubt the Obama-Biden administration was one of the most corrupt in American history and that corruption reached all the way into the White House. The incredible effort to remove a duly-elected President undertaken by the Obama-era intelligence agencies, the FBI and the Department of Justice at the behest of the Clinton campaign, the Democratic Party, President Obama and Vice-President Biden is gradually coming to light. We have seen the lengths that Democrats in the Senate will go to derail a Supreme Court nominee during the Kavanaugh hearings. Their creed seems to be “power at all costs.”

The choice between a party that will do anything to protect its financial interests and to maintain power and President Trump, the outsider, whose interest is solely to improve the lives of the American people and secure the country with his America First policy is stark. Reading *The Choice* has brought it all home.

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