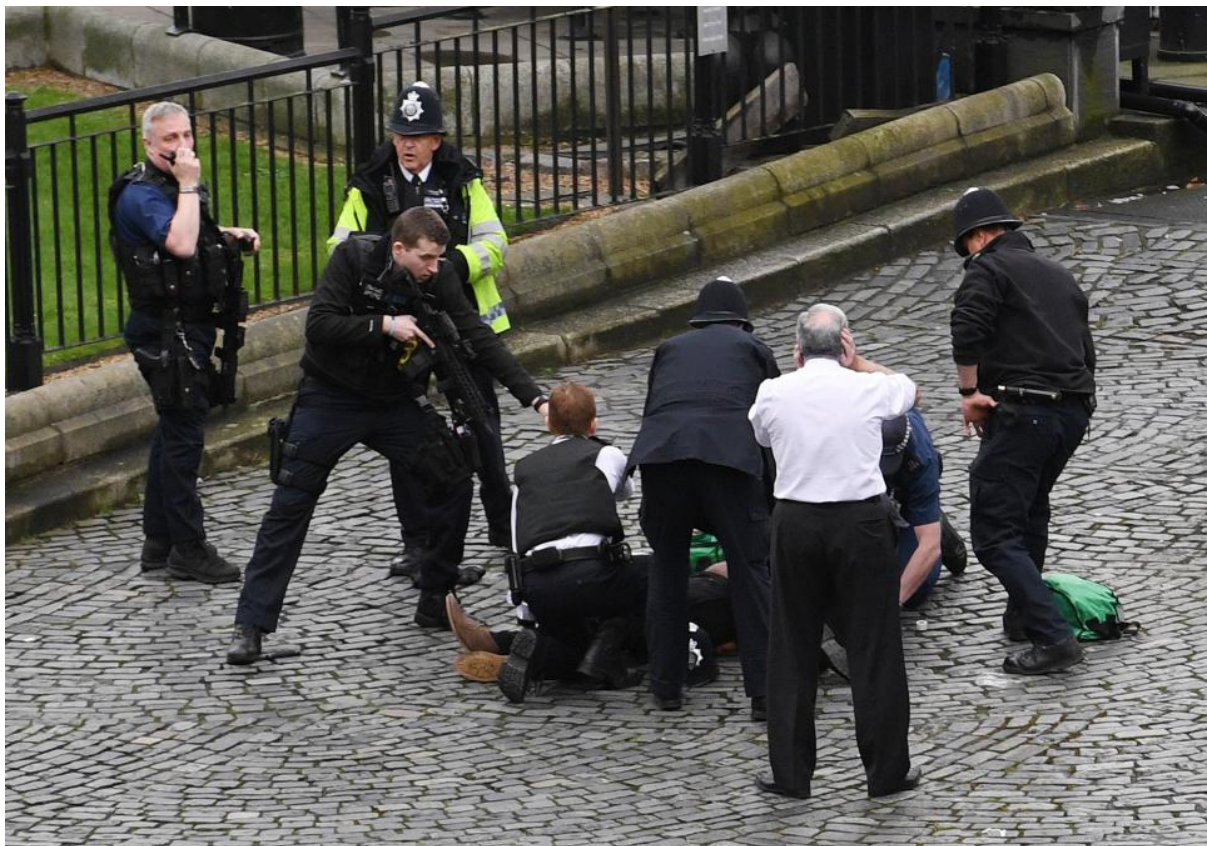


How British Press and Islamist Lobbies Exploited London Attack to Smear US Expert Walid Phares

by Rebecca Bynum



Last week, a network of leftist British journalists and bloggers, backed by Islamist propagandists, manipulated a partial tweet posted by US counter terrorism expert, Walid Phares, to provoke a mass smear campaign against him for political reasons. Here is the troubling story.

On the morning of the bloody Jihadi attack near the Parliament in London, commentators around the world and in the US were assessing the type of weapons used, the location, the areas closed off by police and the state of Jihadi terrorism in

Britain, Europe and the world. Early in the day, Dr. Phares was interviewed on the phone by British-born Fox Business Channel anchor Stuart Varney about the goals of terrorist in attacking large aggregations of civilians in London. The video was posted on Twitter that same morning.

Later Phares was invited to be interviewed on *Fox News*' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" that evening, to follow up on the first interview. The Twitter account of the expert announced that the panel will debate the attack using a teaser from the first interview. Minutes later, Islamist and leftist accounts extracted the "teaser sentence" – "one man can shut down a city" – and claimed Walid Phares had reported on *Fox News* that the "attacker had effectively shut down the city of London." That wasn't at all what the expert had said or meant. His tweet was a follow up teaser on the discussion he had in his first interview where he discussed the terrorists' intentions and goals to cause massive disruption and, if possible, to shut down a town or a city. The tweet used the word "can" not "did." The error was not on his part, but on the part of those hysterical Twitter users who jumped to conclusions without a careful reading of the tweet.

Few minutes later, as if it were coordinated, [BBC Newsbeat](#) posted an article blasting Phares for "non-factual assertions" that the city was shut down, even though he had only discussed what the Jihadists *aimed to* accomplish, not what was accomplished in this case. The title "People mock Fox News claim that terror attack 'shut down city,' took a swipe at *Fox News* channel, generating more hate mail from online accounts which quickly degenerated into extreme anti-American and fierce anti-Trump rhetoric.

The [BBC tweet](#) generated hundreds, perhaps thousands of tweets assailing Dr. Phares, smearing him and belittling his credentials. The insults hurtled against him, with extremely vulgar words, opened the appetite of other UK based publications such as [The Telegraph](#), [Metro](#), [Huffington Post UK](#),

etc. All claiming that because the city was not “shut down,” Britain was somehow victorious, or at any rate, was not being cowed by Jihad terror despite the decades of official appeasement leading up to this most recent attack.

Unfortunately, the quick clean-up of the bloody scenes and the rush to a back-to-normal routine may not, in fact, be a signal of defiance, but rather the usual bovine response of the herd after one of its number has been taken by predatory beasts. The prey animals continue grazing as if nothing had happened. Is this brave defiance, or passive acceptance? Is terror now just a “[part and parcel](#)” of modern urban life, as suggested by London’s Mayor, Sadiq Khan? Must we just get used to it? Keep calm and carry on as our fellow citizens are being picked off by Jihadis?

Nevertheless, by the end of the day, a tsunami of calumnies, pushed by a network of British-based bloggers landed on Twitter. The general theme advanced by the leftist-Islamist cohorts was that “London was not affected as a city,” and that “the attacker was a deranged person, nothing more, nothing less.” The UK-based media machine was quick to use the tweet storm it had created to advance its own assertions: One, there is no Jihadi threat, this was just an isolated act by a deranged madman. And two, to generate an attack against one of the leading international experts in the field of counter-terrorism and Islamist ideologies. Remember that London is one of the hubs of the Muslim Brotherhood and Dr. Phares is seen by that movement as one of their nemeses. He has often shown the link between the Muslim Brotherhood ideology and the Jihadist radicalization and was an outspoken critic of the Iran deal.

Any reader attentive to Phares’ broad commentary and analysis knows very well that he is an academic who is very precise in describing facts, regardless of his political assessment. Here is the transcript of Walid Phares chat with Stuart Varney on the morning of March 22, 2017.

“Stuart Varney: Walid Phares is with us. Walid knows a thing or two about international relations and also about Mr. Trump’s foreign policy. Walid, Welcome to the show.

Walid Phares: Thank you.

Varney: What do you think of the political implications for the United States and specifically President Trump and his attempted travel ban?

Phares: Well, first of all let’s look at the facts as they are growing and as British authorities are releasing them. We have for now concerns there was a stabbing and then the shooting of the stabber. Other reports may come, but this is happening, as you just said, to link it to the general environment – at a day where in Washington dozens and dozens of countries are meeting to discuss the strategy against ISIS. This is unique. So now the big question is: If we defeat ISIS on the ground, and that would be in Mosul or in Raqqa, will that terminate the jihadi threat against the west inside this country? That will be the biggest question that this administration, but also across the pond, will have to discuss.

Varney: What gets to me, is that this is a single attacker, a single assailant, who only had a knife and a car, and just using a knife and a car, that one single assailant ***was able to close down a big chunk of central London, close down Britain’s Houses of Parliament and now we understand, close down access to and 10 Downing Street itself, which is the home of the Prime Ministers and his residence, his royal residence.*** The impact of one person with a car and a knife is simply astonishing, Walid.

Phares: Absolutely, I mean ***you just painted the impact that terrorists*** in general and maybe the jihadists, we don’t know in this case, ***want to provoke – it’s to shut down large concentrations of people – cities, towns.*** Remember in Boston, two individuals shut down Boston. We had to mobilize so many

forces. In Nice, one truck, not even a knife. Knives were used in many places in France. This is the news face of urban terrorism which would use very primitive weapons and ***have as a reaction, in liberal democracies at least, a massive shut down.***

As we see, there was no pronouncement of “shutting down London” as a description of facts. The tweet that came after and announced the next interview, built on this conversation, was as follow.

Will be on Tucker on Fox News at 9 AM EST to discuss the terror act in London. “One man can shut down a city..”

– Walid Phares (@WalidPhares) [March 22, 2017](#)

As one can clearly see, the tweet did not read, ***one man shuts down a city***, it said, and in quotes, as a title of discussion, “can.” Later in the evening, Walid Phares further analyzed the event on Fox’s “Tucker Carlson Tonight” and again, Phares made no statement about London being “shut down.”

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The question remains, why would the *BBC* launch such a dirty campaign targeting a well-known American scholar who has published a dozen books, thousands of articles and has a two decades’ track record of successful geopolitical predictions. The answer is clear: the network of UK-based media and lobbies which favors the Muslim Brotherhood, supports the Iran Deal and despises President Donald Trump, has concocted this coordinated campaign to tarnish Phares’ image, assault Fox News and more importantly, drive any real discussion of the serious jihad threat away from public consciousness.

Indeed, by creating a diversion over a misread comment posted half a world away, and generating a foolish online smear campaign about it, the orchestrators diverted attention from the actual problem: Who was the perpetrator who killed and was killed? What are his links to other Jihadists? What is the nature of the threat now deeply embedded in London or the UK? Instead the problem became *Fox News* and Donald Trump. Evidently there is a deep reluctance in Britain about addressing these crucial matters. "The city is fine as long as its bars are open" insisted many tweets. "London is will never shut down" posted others. Of course London is a heroic city, as Phares as posted several times, but the issue of what to do about the current threat is entirely lacking. As prominent British commentator Katie Hopkins wrote in the [*Daily Mail*](#). "London is a city so desperate to be seen as tolerant, no news of the injured has been released; (...) the Patriots of the rest of England versus the liberals of this city (...) The truth is, we can't go on like this."

Moreover, the political divisions in England, Europe and the US have been amplified by organized lobbies shielding the ideology of the Jihadists. On the one hand, Prime Minister May firmly described the attacker as part of the network of "Islamists terrorists," while on the other, the *BBC*-inspired smearers of Walid Phares targeted him because he is one of the pioneers in identifying Jihadism as the root of the threat.

I suggest that BBC and the mainstream media who smeared Dr. Phares should issue public apologies; first for twisting his statement and second for inciting such hatred.