

# Liberal propagandists in US agitate for total war in Syria and Iraq

**Niles Williamson**  
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Less than 24 hours after the terrorist attack by ISIS in Paris on Friday night killed 129 people and wounded hundreds more, the chief liberal opinion writers in the United States are calling for a massive escalation of the imperialist interventions in Syria and Iraq.

The civil war in Syria stoked by the United States has already killed hundreds of thousands and turned millions more into refugees, many of whom are now desperately seeking to reach Europe. Now, the filthy propagandists on the right and what passes for the left are filling column inches in an effort to manipulate public opinion, exploiting confusion, sadness and anger to push for bloodshed on an even larger scale.

In their drive for an expanded war, no serious questions are raised about what lies behind the attacks, or about the impact of more than 14 years of unending war in the Middle East as part of the efforts of the US and its allies to assert hegemonic control over the region and its strategic resources.

Among the chief warmongers are the *New York Times'* Roger Cohen and the *Washington Post's* Richard Cohen, two journalists who represent what passes for liberal democratic opinion in the United States.

Over the last two decades there has not been a single American military intervention or imperialist provocation that either Cohen has not supported. In their endorsement and promotion of intervention in Iraq in 2003 on the basis of lies about nonexistent "weapons of mass destruction," they bear significant responsibility for the catastrophe in the Middle East which they now seek to escalate.

Roger Cohen, in a column titled "To Save Paris, Defeat ISIS" published on Saturday, calls for the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which declares an attack on one member of NATO is

an attack on all.

The *Times* columnist insists that the "only adequate measure" in response to the attacks in Paris is "military" and demands the "crushing of ISIS and the elimination of its stronghold in Syria and Iraq."

Cohen counsels his readers not to let the "protracted and inconclusive" wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to fears that military intervention may only fuel the growth of ISIS, to dissuade them from supporting the deployment of an untold number of NATO troops. He dismisses the US-led airstrikes in Iraq and Syria begun last year, which have reportedly killed more than 20,000 ISIS fighters, and more than 1,500 civilians, as "unpersuasive."

Finding himself up to his elbows in blood, he demands more! Remarkably, after noting the ongoing bombing campaign in Syria, Cohen blames "nonintervention" by the West for the eruption of violence in the Middle East and Europe.

Cohen wants his readers to overlook the fact that it was US intervention that destabilized the entire region, beginning with the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. This was followed by the toppling of the government of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in 2011 and the promotion of Islamist rebel groups as part of a campaign to overthrow the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Over the last four years, Syria has been flooded with weapons and Islamist fighters with the assistance of the CIA and US allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Tens of thousands of young men from Europe and elsewhere were encouraged to go to Syria to fight in the war against Assad. The shadowy activities of the CIA and its partner agencies ultimately gave rise to ISIS, which only became a concern for the West when it took over large swaths of northern Iraq last summer.

For his part, Richard Cohen submitted an article titled, “The Paris attacks change everything,” also published on Saturday. He claims that the assault in Paris has “changed the world in fundamental ways.”

This is the same claim that was promoted in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks to justify unlimited military escalation and far reaching attacks on democratic rights. Once again this logic is being deployed by Cohen and the like to justify further expansion of imperialist interventions and the expansion of police state measures.

American politics must now be focused exclusively on militarism and “security,” Cohen claims. It is no longer possible to imagine Bernie Sanders as president, he asserts. “Suddenly, big banks are the least of our problems.” While using Sanders as a stand-in, Cohen is in fact declaring that the widespread opposition to inequality—and war—is illegitimate. Everything must be subordinated to the needs of war.

The *Post* columnist promotes a mixture of xenophobia and disdain for the European working class, arguing that since Europe is now “awash with Muslim migrants,” the inevitable response to the attacks will be “ugly repression.”

Seeking to blame popular sentiment for the anti-refugee policies of European governments and foist future crimes on the population, Cohen warns that in the wake of the assault, “Europe will veer to the right – maybe extremely so.”

Permanent war is now reality, Cohen asserts. “The world has grown too small and dangerous for isolationists. It is too complex for the vainglorious amateur. Bad days are coming,” he states, days for which he is actively agitating.

Comparing the rise of ISIS to the rise of fascism in Europe before World War II, Cohen concludes the column by warning that the “situation in the Middle East cannot be ignored.” Such a declaration can only be interpreted as a call for total war against the populations of Syria and Iraq and portends death and destruction throughout the Middle East.



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