

# New York Times' Nicholas Kristof promotes #MeToo witch-hunt of Woody Allen

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Nicholas Kristof, the *New York Times* columnist who has dedicated his career to promoting US wars in the name of “human rights,” has joined the #MeToo campaign with his latest attack on director and comic Woody Allen. Kristof’s article was published by the *Times* on February 3 under the headline, “Woody Allen meets #MeToo.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* has written before on the campaign against Allen, and Kristof’s role in particular. In 2014, Kristof published an open letter by Dylan Farrow, the adoptive daughter of Woody Allen and his estranged former partner, Mia Farrow, in which she repeated the accusation from 1992, when she was seven, that Allen molested her. The New York Department of Social Services determined at the time that no such abuse had taken place. Allen was never charged with an offense.

First of all, it is highly questionable from a journalistic standpoint for Kristof to publish anything on the matter, given that he has acknowledged—including in his most recent article—being a personal friend of Dylan and Mia Farrow. He has used his influential professional post at the *Times* to mount a personal vendetta. He evidently hopes that the current lynch-mob atmosphere, with careers and reputations of leading artists destroyed on the basis of (often anonymous) accusations overnight, will be a conducive environment for dealing Allen a similar fate.

In his latest article, Kristof goes from supporting Farrow’s allegations to calling for the scrapping of the presumption of innocence as a legal principle. “Yes, false accusations happen,” he writes, “and we must struggle to balance rights of victims against those of the accused—but it should be obvious now that we haven’t gotten that balance nearly right. Too often, we have deferred to the powerful and doubted the weak, creating impunity and injustice. The problem is not only abusers but more broadly a society that often disbelieves or scorns those crying for help.”

What monstrous hypocrisy from this millionaire columnist!

First, it apparently does not occur to Kristof that by referring to “victims” rather than accusers, he has already presumed what trials are supposed to determine, namely, whether or not a crime has been committed. He refers to the accused as “powerful,” and the accusers as the “weak,” to provide a “left” rationale for his anti-democratic and authoritarian program: that the right to a trial, to face one’s accusers and to the presumption of innocence must be done away with. To raise and defend these elementary principles is to “disbelieve” those “crying for help.”

Kristof’s support for #MeToo is itself revealing. This is a man who has made a career out of defending the “powerful” against the “weak,” providing the lies and propaganda to justify wars on behalf of American banks and corporations that have killed millions of people—men, women and children—across the Middle East and Africa, and created the greatest humanitarian refugee crisis since World War II.

It is not possible in the space of one article to list all the crimes that Kristof has supported. They include the wars and regime-change operations throughout the 1990s in Africa and the Balkans, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the 2011 bombing of Libya, and the ongoing bombing of Syria, first under Barack Obama and now Donald Trump. He has also called for regime change in other countries, and is on the record defending sweatshops as a positive good.

Only a few examples. In an article published February 5, 2002, “The Wrong Lessons of the Somalia Debacle,” Kristof praised the pro-war film *Black Hawk Down*, which depicts the US intervention in Somalia, as follows: “It puts you in the heart of the Mogadishu gun battle in 1993 between Somali paramilitary forces and American Army Rangers, and you leave the theater, heart pounding,

wanting to pull out a machine gun and mow down crowds of Somalis.” Kristof similarly agitated for US military intervention in Kosovo in 1999 under the banner of combating “genocide.”

On February 1, 2002, Kristof labeled the invasion of Afghanistan, initiated four months earlier, as a “merciful war,” and posited that “troops can advance humanitarian goals just as much as doctors or aid workers can. By my calculations, our invasion of Afghanistan may end up saving one million lives.” The war in Afghanistan, now in its 17th year, has devastated a country, killed hundreds of thousands and turned millions into stateless refugees.

Kristof opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq on the tactical grounds that it would not be easily winnable, but defended and amplified the lies used by the Bush administration to launch it. In an article published August 27, 2002, in the lead-up to the invasion, Kristof wrote: “President Bush has convinced me that there is no philosophical reason we should not overthrow the Iraqi government, given that Iraqis themselves would be better off, along with the rest of the world.” If “we can figure out how to win swiftly ... then I’m a jingoist too.” After the war was launched, Kristof assumed the role of a semi-official advisor to the Bush administration for the war effort.

Throughout the mid-2000s, Kristof agitated for US intervention into Sudan under the pretext of preventing genocide in the country’s Darfur region. In an April 10, 2008 article entitled “Memo to Bush,” he denounced the administration for failing to send a 10,000-strong “peacekeeping” force into the oil-rich African nation, and called for the establishment of a no-fly zone, the first step towards a bombing campaign.

In 2011, Kristof called for a no-fly zone and bombing campaign in Libya, another resource-rich African country, supposedly, this time, to avoid an imminent humanitarian massacre in Benghazi.

As NATO bombs were still dropping in April 2011, Kristof decried the fact that “the difficulties of Iraq and Afghanistan have again made many Americans ... allergic to any use of force.” In September of that year, he published a revolting, breathless on-the-ground report entitled “From Libyans: Thank you America!,” asserting that Libyan citizens were hailing the American military as “heroes of the Arab world.” The article claimed that “Libya is a reminder that sometimes it is possible to use military tools to advance humanitarian goals.”

In 2013, Kristof demanded that the Obama administration launch a war in Syria to overthrow the

Assad government, a Russian ally. He has been an ardent advocate of stepped up US intervention in Syria, and hailed the Trump administration’s launching of Tomahawk cruise missiles against Syrian air bases that threatened to provoke nuclear war with Russia.

Here is the great protector of the oppressed! Kristof’s supposed support for women obviously does not extend to those living in countries with large oil deposits or allied to American imperialism’s geo-strategic rivals.

More fundamentally, what does it say about the #MeToo campaign that a figure such as Kristof so uncritically promotes it? There is in fact a logical connection linking Kristof’s pro-imperialism and his support for #MeToo. Having spent decades providing “human rights” justifications for neo-colonial wars, he is providing the same “humanitarian” arguments for an assault on the democratic rights of the population at home.

Nor is Kristof the only war hawk to embrace #MeToo. The nexus of Democratic Party operatives, intelligence agents and #MeToo campaigners includes Madeleine Albright, the former Secretary of State under Bill Clinton who infamously declared, in a 1996 interview with CBS, that if half a million Iraqi children had been killed as a result of US sanctions, “the price is worth it.”

Ronan Farrow, Dylan’s brother, who carried out a 10-month reporting investigation into the allegations against Harvey Weinstein which helped to trigger the current campaign, has a history as a US government operative in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and worked as a special liaison for Richard Holbrooke and an advisor to Hillary Clinton.

The role of these forces is an expression of the right-wing character of #MeToo itself.

The participation of the pro-imperialist scoundrel Nicholas Kristof in this campaign should serve as yet another reminder to workers, intellectuals and young people everywhere that they must completely separate themselves from the #MeToo witch-hunt now underway.



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