



A Liberal in Search of Endless War

By Doug Bandow on 12.13.11

Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* wants endless war. He didn't exactly say that. But that would be the effect of what he proposes.

He wrote:

We cannot be the world's policeman, I know. Still, the world needs a policeman and who can it be if not the United States? We have to pick our moments, but where we can intervene, as we did successfully in Libya, we must - not alone, surely not alone, but in concert with others. Where you can do something, you must do something.

The U.S. remains the globe's sole superpower. We "can" intervene anywhere and defeat any other nation. So why stop at Bosnia and Libya? How about Nigeria and Venezuela? Burma and Saudi Arabia? Cuba and Sri Lanka? All of the despotic Central Asian nations? A lot of African and Middle Eastern nations could benefit from a good old American occupation. Heck, North Korea probably doesn't have workable and deliverable nuclear weapons. We could defeat them! Pakistan could use genuine liberation, and it doesn't have any missiles with nukes that can hit America.

In short, if the standard is "where we can," then there is no where, other than perhaps China and Russia, which are capable of hitting America with nukes, where we can't. And in a world full of tragedy, oppression, and bloodshed--even democratic India suffers from paroxysms of violence from time to time--the opportunities for intervention are endless.

In fact, war is a poor humanitarian tool. Our ethnic Albanian allies in Kosovo behaved badly, as did the Croats, also backed by America. And it is a bit early to proclaim Libya a success.

Of course, the real problem is that Cohen doesn't really mean "we" must intervene. Rather, "we" in the nation's capital must send off other people, those who have joined the military to defend their nation, to conduct glorious crusades around the world. It is a lot easier to plot endless war when others will do the fighting.

Why do we have this wonderful military that you keep talking about if we don't use it, Madeleine Albright famously asked Colin Powell? To protect America--its territory, people, and constitutional liberties. Not to police the world. Especially when doing so often leaves the U.S. less secure.