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Neo Bonobo

Against the global godzilla

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The deportations, detentions, and disappearances have begun. Matched only by mass denial among Babylon's denizens, the brave new empire has struck back. The many-headed capitalist dragon is licking its lips for an Easter dinner of Iraqi children. No, it shouldn't be news that someone's stolen the century. Clearly, the global Godzilla of geopolitical, technoindustrial trauma has treated us all to a gory preview of hell.

But we are digging in for a fight; the dire reality cannot forestall our fierce desire to manifest something radically different. In the aftermath of February 15, we gather steam for mass resistance. An outspoken outsider nation is waging its own war against war and capital's ubiquitous uglification.

What was once wild conspiracy theory is now sober prophecy. The sickening miasma of life under late capitalism manufactures fear and terror — real or televised. The weight of tragedy tears at the very fabric of our historical optimism.

Now, marching behind a fork-tongued, fascist bully and his fundamentalist jihad for Ashcroft's Jesus, America prepares to renew its imperial mission. How do we stop this stupendously draconian drift? Is it hopelessly naive to believe that the universe is on the side of justice? That the arc of the future bends towards freedom? If fate is impartial, we had better not be.

The messianic grandiosity of these grave-digging demagogues ridicules our desires and disparages our faith in the necessity of peace and justice. But a handful of handpicked plutocrats cannot plunder everything! A puny faction of B-movie bad-guys subjugating six billion people? Who wrote this script?

I'm writing on the eve of war, but that's not all that has me worried. Even mainstream environmentalists have warned us that with industrial capitalism's present pace, we have less than fifty years left on the planet. Even the pious editors in the liberal punditocracy have heeded the dire warnings about global warming; they're printing apocalyptic pleas urging us, to slow the malignant menace. Mass extinction anyone? This year, massive television ratings — next year, mass graves.

It's a strange time to contemplate sustainability. The world's most powerful, unwieldy, unsustainable system taunts and teases — as it prepares to crush. Monolithic mega-masters care little for livelihoods or

lives. Press leaks about the first days of war predict a barrage of cruise missiles unlike anything we've seen; Baghdad burning under the Pentagon strategy known as "shock and awe," intended to terrify the Iraqis, quickening surrender. The possible use of tactical nukes is still on the table. (According to a national security report; other planned or proposed tactics in the tyrannical tool box include eerie elements of non-lethal war such as the use of holograms — huge projections of an enemy army or religious prophet — that psychologically manipulate the enemy into submission). All their anticipated methods of domination combined with the inevitability of error looks like a reliable recipe for revulsion. But what are we going to do about it?

Science fiction dystopias forecast this predicament quite accurately. Time to take Orwell off the shelf or hack into the *Matrix*. Many know it's bad but hesitate rather than act. Some people ignore; others preach moderation. Either way, skeptical folks must transform cynicism into solutions. Some people contend the end-of-the-world isn't around the corner, the sky isn't falling; America isn't becoming a theocratic gulag, the world a concrete desert.

I'm sick of the people pretending nothing's wrong. We're under attack, our lives threatened — not by two-bit terrorists but by a multilateral megamachine managed by avaricious monsters. Rhetorically charged assessments of our shaky circumstances may be underestimating the drama that awaits us.

Worse than the delusion that we're not in danger from the devastating system of global capitalism is cognizance of how bad things are combined with inaction. The whole world is watching and waiting for us to challenge and de-throne George W. Bush and his whole team of tyrants-in-waiting. A society without sociopath profiteers steering the ship might be a society worth sustaining. The time for silent fence-sitting, navel-gazing, apathetic day-to-day obedience is over. The window of opportunity is now. The time for serious disobedience and festive noncooperation is here.

We need a leap into tomorrow without restraint. You are the revolution.

— Neo Bonobo, Planet Earth, February 2003