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## **2. THE BIG PICTURE IN ACTION**

The money-boys justify their central existence by pointing to the cornucopia of goods and services churned out by industrialized production with inefficiency and excessive profiteering disciplined by the competitive market. Competitive gamesmanship with each other then becomes their entire focus; success or failure will be measured by a succession of quarterly reports. Businesses must survive in the near term if they are to have any hope of long term sustainability. Other than lobbying the government to convert tax revenues to the task of providing capital and conditions that guarantee their industry's profits, the money-boys prefer to let the "market" take care of the long term.

If the economy fails to grow, business spokesmen blame "weak demand". The politicians take credit for their party's beneficent policies when the economy is growing (if on their watch), but when demand is weak ("ain't nobody got no money"), both political parties blame the other.

Few seem to ask, "Why is it necessary for the economy to grow faster than the population?" Fifty years ago there was little homelessness or species extinction, and no global warming. Why must the economy necessarily grow if its benefits are starting to be outweighed by its dangers?

point be used. For the people to tolerate the resultant wars, militarism must be promoted by the creation of an atmosphere of constant fear. If this atmosphere can be intensified during the election process, so much the better.

The survival positions of the giant corporations are relatively secure. To be sure, they devour each other, but their elite merely change their offices and letterheads and go on as before. They do, after all, produce goods and services that people feel they need, and therefore, vote for with their dollars. Governments, on the other hand, less popular in their roles as enforcers and tax collectors, face a trickier prospect. To retain credibility as servants of the people, rather than the corporate elite, they must depend on a constant stream of dis-information.

The reigning government presents us with the prospect of continual war abroad and eroding civil rights for an increasingly impoverished population at home. Meanwhile the fundamental problem facing humanity in this century--the un-sustainability of ever-expanding industrial corporatism in the context of exponential population growth--remains unthinkable to the corporate elite, at least publicly.

However, the corporate elite isn't dumb. Those composing it are perhaps in the best position of all to realize the inevitability of collapse if the present trajectory continues. If that's true, their plan must be to ride their power for all it's worth, concentrating their power and wealth to themselves so that they and their most devoted or necessary loyalists will "draw the wagons into a circle" when the crunch comes, while the rest of us are left to die under armed guard.

But this agenda isn't clear because of a third ally of the money-boys and the bully-boys--the bible-boys. How much real clout the bible-boys have with bully-boys they've helped elect to public office is unknown. Some fanatics from the fundamentalist persuasion ally themselves with the forces of death and destruction in the belief that they are facilitating the arrival of the End Days prophesied in the book of Revelations. They all must realize that Christ inveighed against war and usury. Maybe the money/bully boys figure that if -- upon their arrival at the Pearly Gates--Saint Peter gives them a hard time about their earthly antics, Armageddon-enabling will be a good fall-back justification for them.

For the average person, the need for such speculations in order to find an underlying plan to justify the wars needed to maintain elite world dominance creates such a profoundly discouraging worldview that the mind recoils. It becomes more comfortable to succumb to the bland official assurances, enticing commercials, and titillating distractions of the corporate media. As the grip of elite control tightens, we are like sleep-walkers approaching a cliff.

Chuck Metcalf

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## **THE 3RD YEAR OF THE 3RD MILENIUM: THE BIG PICTURE—09/03**

The money-boys and their buddies, the bully-boys, have won undisputed control over the United States of America, the world's only super-power. The doctrine of market-determinism prevails. We are all expected to agree that those successful in the market stole it fair and square. Money talks, and the voice of the big money boys drowns out all others. Now that they're in charge, they've carved it up to suit themselves. In very broad strokes, the picture of their world--from down here on the ground--looks like this:

Giant multi-national corporations based for the most part in America, Europe, and Japan, now have a stranglehold on the world's economy. Their tentacles of trade, production, and resource extraction reach to the farthest corners of the globe. They concentrate the control of their profits in the hands of the very few who run their hierarchical organizations from the top down.

Those few, the corporate elite, invest enough money in the selection of government officials to ensure that their agendas will be favored. By this time the corporate elite and the policy-making government officials have long been interchangeable. Together, they formulate and administer the rules by which all must live so that the wealth and power of the elite may be secured. It's their world; we just live in it.

In such an environment, the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the middle class works harder just to stay in place. The people--recognizing that the electoral system has evolved to ignore rather than serve their needs--turn off to the political action that's their only hope of redress. Even so, the corporate elite must spend big money on political advertising designed by highly paid experts to manipulate the voters who still care. They specialize in demonizing enemies, trotting out proven gut-level motivators, and the obfuscation of facts relating to voter's real interests. The costs of campaign finance dictate that only those with access to big money can run for high government office, anyway. The political "opposition" is reduced to modulating and delaying only the more egregious elite depredations of the public welfare. The result is that money talks not only in the marketplace, but in the legislative halls, administrative offices, and finally, even in the courts of law themselves. Governments like this are properly called plutocracies, not democracies.

The tasks set for the current form of plutocratic government are first and foremost, to have enough coercive force at hand in the way of police and military to guarantee the safety of the properties dear to the corporate elite, both locally and globally. For this, the money-boys need legalized bully-boys. That secured, their next priority is to assist the corporate elite in expanding their commercial empires both locally and globally. Beyond that, the availability of government contracts, tax breaks, and other access to the public treasury which a plutocratic government offers, justify the continuing exertions of well-paid corporate lobbyists.

The inevitable result of the need of the corporate elite for coercive muscle to protect their far-flung interests is a bloated military establishment, which, to be credible, must at some