



What's Happening Here

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Coronavirus stalks the land. This essay is not merely idle criticism. Excellent remedies to the great challenges we face are close at hand, as proposed throughout this manifesto.

There's something happening here, and what it is ain't exactly UNCLEAR. Everybody look what's going down! The following is a summary of many of the wrongful activities that are taking place right now that are undermining the purposes set forth in the great Preamble to the U.S. Constitution "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Economic Schemes

See Clearly. Trump Republicans are relentless pushing an agenda that drives up private profits up by hyper-stimulating economic activities. They are depleting resources, sacrificing protections of the environmental commons, socializing costs and risks, and denying the damages and accumulating risks associated with an unfolding planetary warming-induced destabilization of the global climate. To get away with the overarching irresponsibility of this uber-scam, they are selling influence and engaging in public corruption, conspiring especially with fossil fuel companies. They are thus wrongly prioritizing short-term profits over long-term stability and the common good.

They are engaging in the age-old two-for-one capitalist scam where most of the benefits of economic activities accrue to corporate CEOs, stockholders and rich people -- and working people are left behind. Big Businesses crush collective bargaining rights in order to more easily control their employees, and ruthlessly tightly control wages and benefits, and create increased job insecurity that makes it easier for management to take advantage of workers -- and to lay them off whenever convenient for them. This state of insecurity pathologically helps keep employees from demanding better treatment and a better deal

Trump Republicans seem to subscribe to the Mushroom Theory of Management: Keep employees in the dark, heap bullshit on them, cultivate them and let them stew for a while, and finally can them when convenient.

They have staunchly allied their Party with the ruling class to further rig our economic and political systems to their radical advantage, ripping off the people, and in this time of pandemic emergency, they have just secured another huge bailout, this time for \$500 billion to be doled out by the most corrupt federal administration in American history. Democrats in Congress finally agreed to this big business bailout "slush fund" after securing reassurances that there will be transparency and accountability in funds given out. But in a naked show of corrupt intent, when Donald Trump signed the bill, he gave the finger to the American people and penned his signature to a signing statement refusing to be constrained by transparency and accountability measures.

Trump Republicans are reducing regulations that were put in place to protect people from predations by banks and big corporate entities. They are pushing devious trickle-down Big Lies and laissez-faire ideologies that benefit the few at the expense of the many.

Government Abuses of Power

Trump Republicans are acting with an unethical and immoral lack of honesty, integrity, honor, rectitude, or true

patriotic support for the best interests of the Country. They seem to abhor democratic fairness, in favor of narrow advantages for their political Party.

They are making the USA into a corporatocracy ruled by wealthy plutocrats and elites in business, government, Christian religions and conservative media.

The ruthless juggernaut of an authority-abusing regime is assuming increasingly domineering control over the airwaves and the U.S. government and the lives of the American people.

They are unconstitutionally wielding authority and overly aggressively governing by executive order and fiat and twitter proclamations, working tirelessly to diminish the power of the legislative branch to exercise oversight and hold those who are abusing power accountable.

They are exploiting the failure of Congress to limit system-corrupting Big Money political campaign contributions, and the failure by the John Roberts Supreme Court to rule fairly in numerous cases. The grandfather of these wrongly decided cases is the Citizens United case that facilitated the socially undesirable impacts of having rich people and giant corporations exert excessive influence in our national policy-making and priority setting.

They are working to promote Trump's best interests, putting Party over Country by reducing the independence of the Justice Department and going after their perceived political opponents while helping cronies and friends of the administration, as Trump and his collaborating Attorney General Bill Barr did in the Roger Stone sentencing case. By undermining the independence of the Justice Department by politically interfering in cases involving Trump loyalists, Trump stoked controversy and provoked outrage. Trump loyalists have even been put in charge of the important U.S. Attorney's Office for Washington D.C. And Trump is simultaneously seeking to harm anyone who seems to be insufficiently loyal to him personally, or who criticizes him or expresses opposition to his abuses of authority.

Trump is also putting his heavy hand on the scales of justice by attacking judges who make decisions he does not like.

Trump Republicans are stacking federal courts with partisan judges who are chosen to be most likely to help enable this corrosion of constitutional checks and balances, and to side with their agenda and its enablers in many legal battles against their attempts to expand executive power in violation of laws and provisions of the Constitution. In doing so, they are torpedoing the independence of the federal judiciary. This is bad news because it erodes the separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution that was designed by our honorable despot-despising ancestors to providentially assure all Americans with the blessings of liberty for themselves and all their heirs -- us!

Healthcare Wrongs

Republicans have been trying their damnest for the last 10 years to eviscerate Obamacare and its preexisting conditions coverage, telling bald-faced lies about this money-addled and power-obsessed treachery against tens of millions of Americans. In the current pandemic crisis, having such a fragmented and inhumane for-profit system of medical care and health insurance actually makes everyone more vulnerable to being afflicted by the contagion.

Trump Republicans are failing to control excess profiteering on pharmaceutical drugs by giant multinational drug companies. In fact, they are in effect making it ever easier for those profiteering giants to prosper. Shareholders like it. Human being suffer.

They strongly oppose a fairer system of more affordable and universal medical care, health insurance coverage and pharmaceutical drug costs. They are failing to rein in costs for critical needs of people without medical insurance, and trying to make it easier for big insurance companies to discriminate against people who have "pre-existing conditions. Their narrow goal in this is to further increase profits for corporate behemoths involved in these industries. This turns out to be one of the most consequential aspects of the REAL overarching malaise in our society.

They are continuing to perpetuate an unjust war on drugs that has had terribly unjust and disproportionately harmful negative impacts on downtrodden poor people and black people and Latinos. This is making our *Incarceration Nation* unacceptable unfair.

The Trump administration has been slow to ramp up coronavirus testing to identify persons who are contagious, putting everyone at greater risk. Also, doctors, nurses and health professionals across the country haven't been receiving personal protective equipment they need to keep themselves and their families safe. "And when they aren't protected, patients are put at higher risk." The administration even moved to decrease nursing home oversight and infection-control regulations, making older folks more vulnerable to this contagious affliction.

Trump asked African Americans for their vote before the 2016 election, saying, "What do you have to lose." We are now seeing what his racially discriminatory, white supremacist and reactionarily insensitive policies and priorities really are. In the outcomes of impacts on racial minorities of staunch Republican opposition to expanded and improved healthcare is a form of genocidal negligence. We all have repeated the Pledge of Allegiance throughout our early school days -- well, let's demand that our leaders dramatically improve their efforts to create "one nation, under God, indivisible" in our democratic Republic for which the American flag stands.

The fickle finger of fate has given us this cruel contagious epidemic at the wrong time in history, for we need a strong national action plan, yet we have been dealt a federal government led by rigid scheming profit-prepossessed anti-government "conservatives" who are pushing a retrograde agenda. This is a true tragedy, for we have a critical need right now of honest and expert-trusting, science-believing leaders who are committed to the public health and security, and who are knowledgeable, intelligent, fair-minded, flexibly adaptive and free from the powerful sway of corrupting influences and conflicts of interest.

Taxation and Debt Intrigue

Republicans are running up the national debt in a shrewd strategic initiative of giving debt-financed tax cuts that primarily benefit the wealthy. This puts pressure on national budgets to cut spending on smart social insurance and safety net programs that help protect people, like Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps and dozens of other programs. This orgy of deficit financing is violating the basic Keynesian principle that prescribes balanced budgets or running a surplus during times of a growing economy and low unemployment, so that a safer economy is pragmatically created that ensures the government will be able to stimulate the economy when deficit spending is critically needed, like during contagious disease outbreaks, economic slowdowns and times when businesses lay off millions of working people. Check out *Intelligent Precautionary Principles - Holy Cow!*

See this gambit for what it really is. These cunning politicians are indulging in extremely short-term-oriented deficit spending for narrow partisan political benefits. This unrestrained orgy of private profiteering and public debt burdening is unsustainable, and it will leave a harsh legacy to our heirs in the future. The rash strategy paints the American people into a risk-encumbering corner and accelerates the probability and heightens the eventual severity of calamitous debt crisis. Republicans are, in essence, emulating a treacherous enemy that indiscriminately plants dangerous landmines behind them, which will potentially endanger all that follow.

They are restructuring national taxation plans and spending policies for the overriding purpose of increasing the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few.

Divide-to-Conquer Treachery

See clearly. Trump Republicans are using relentless divide-to-conquer tactics and weaponizing fake news and following the long litany of cunning emotion-manipulating tactics of *The Demagogue's Playbook* by scapegoating immigrants and demonizing liberals.

They are floating a whole raft of false conspiracy theories, microtargeting people whose profiles make them gullibly susceptible to being angered by the disinformation. They do this with a cunning concealed motive of confusing and distracting people from what's really going on -- which is all the real coldly calculating sell-the-people-down-the-river conspiracies they are actually engaged in, which are spelled out in this essay.

What trickles down is inequality, injustices, public corruption and a divided populace that has a colossal challenge in trying to throw off the yoke of their treachery.

Trump and his supporters take a perverse pleasure in "owning the libs" in a tribal orgy of self-satisfied complicity in abusing power and exerting domineering repressive control over others. After the threat of the coronavirus

pandemic began in the U.S., Trump cynically said, "Some people said I am trolling the Democrats and maybe I am." Oh, isn't that just swell -- politicizing the response to a global pandemic in order "to own the libs".

In dividing people against each other, and scaring them, they are fooling them into going along with a corporate oligarchic agenda that will prevail against the greater good.

The author of a New York Times article observes, "The story of the coronavirus among the president's most stalwart defenders evolved into the kind of us-versus-them clash that Trump has waged for much of his life."

Republicans have chosen to politicize law enforcement, and to demonize and dehumanize undocumented immigrants. Actions like this tend to not only wreak grave injustices, but also to reduce public faith in the democratic process and subvert traditional American values.

Trump Republicans are building walls and tearing down bridges between people for partisan advantage.

The Trump administration is enforcing stringent income-based requirements for green cards and certain visas, instituting the most ambitious unilateral effort in recent history to reduce legal immigration to the country.

Foreign Affairs Roguery

Trump Republicans are governing the country like a banana republic, but with a hyper-stimulated military-industrial complex and a power-abusing hegemony of military might over peaceable conflict resolution. This endangers world peace. In a contest against Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders once said he would represent American exceptionalism, declaring, "As the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, we have got to help lead the struggle to defend and expand a rules-based international order in which law, not might, makes right."

They are further endangering peaceable coexistence by stoking sectarian conflicts between Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims, the two main schism factions of Islam in the Middle East, and they are rattling the saber against countries like Iran, exploiting violence-prone rifts between extremists.

Republicans are hyper promoting the proliferation of guns and weapons of war around the world. The United States and Russia are the world's largest arms exporters. As a result, we are witnessing people singing songs and carrying signs hooraying for conflicting sides, with scheming leaders failing to lead to improve the general welfare of the people.

Trump Republicans are hollowing out the State Department, undercutting its diplomacy functions. They are pursuing hard power military options instead of championing smarter soft power approaches.

They are taking advantage of human nature to create tribal divisions and exploit in-group fundamentalism to prevent the citizenry from uniting and coming together around common good goals.

They are allying themselves with co-conspiring autocratic rulers in countries like Russia and Saudi Arabia to continue over-exploiting fossil fuel energy resources, despite knowing the huge costs and dire outcomes associated with this wrongful course of profit prepossessed and power hungry action. Tellingly, the three biggest oil-producing countries on Earth are, by far, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Russia, and they are all aware that climate experts say we must leave 80% of the known reserves of coal, oil and natural gas in the ground during the remainder of this century. Much profit can be made, however, and much corrupt power can be usurped, by denying the necessity for "meaningful and effective measures to control climate change". As an Open Letter signed by 100 business leaders, including Donald Trump, stated in December 2009: "If we fail to act now, it is scientifically irrefutable that there will be catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet."

Trump Republicans are thus collaborating with an international cabal driven by Big Oil corruption, and they have created what Senator Bernie Sanders accurately calls "a new authoritarian axis" of countries corrupted by Oil Politics. This is Vladimir Putin's "authoritarian kleptocracy", as Bernie Sanders described it in a speech in 2018: "There is currently a struggle of enormous consequence taking place in the United States and throughout the world. In it we see two competing visions. On one hand, we see a growing worldwide movement toward oligarchy, authoritarianism and kleptocracy. On the other hand, we see a movement toward strengthening democracy, egalitarianism and economic, social, racial and environmental justice."

As Michelle Goldberg recently wrote, Vladimir Putin seems bent on subverting the rules-based international order. "By most accounts, he's less interested in cultivating faith in his own system than in destroying belief in alternatives. He aims to paint liberal democracy as nothing but an empty slogan papering over zero-sum contests for power." As with all demagogic autocrats, Putin does this for corrupt purposes.

"In this project, Trump couldn't better serve Putin's interests if he were a conscious Russian asset. Under Trump, the U.S. has abandoned the pretense of backing democracy and human rights, meaning there are no longer any great powers that even pretend to put morality at the center of foreign affairs. The horror of this era isn't just the emergence of an axis of authoritarianism, but the fact that there are so few allies to counter it."

When Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren win the presidency and vice presidency in November 2020, this will change. Overthrowing domineering rule will be a blow against the corrosive cynicism in which authoritarianism thrives.

"Almost any Democratic president would represent a victory over the authoritarian kleptocracy Putin has sought to export all over the world." Bernie Sanders, for instance, "believes that American foreign policy should be oriented around expanding democracy in the face of what he called 'a new authoritarian axis.'"

America could become a country where we heed the voices of women and young people of all races who demand better than having plutocratic rule and nationalist demagogy. We shall overcome the tactics and tools that men like Vladimir Putin have used to bring liberalism to its knees. "To young idealists around the world, America would look -- dare I say it -- great again."

Michelle Goldberg also noted in her Feb. 24, 2020 Opinion article, "Building a multiracial social democracy is one of the great political challenges of our time. Few nations on earth have figured out how to create, in heterogenous populations, the solidarity needed to sustain a robust public sphere. Putin has exploited this difficulty, stoking tribal fears in countries with changing demographics to make liberalism look like a form of social dissolution."

Trump is ignoring the evidence that Russia is interfering in our elections right now, and is instead actively suppressing such evidence from being released -- even to Congress. An intelligence official gave a classified briefing to the House Intelligence Committee in mid February 2020, once again warning that Russia is interfering in our elections "with an eye toward aiding Trump -- as it had in 2016", as a New York Times editorial explains it.

Trump was furious about the briefing, "not over the threat of foreign meddling, but that Congress had been told about it", so he replaced the Director of National Intelligence with John Ratcliffe, a former Fox News commentator and Trump loyalist, who is regarded as one of the most conservative members of Congress. Trump had previously installed Ratcliffe as ambassador to Germany. In this firing and replacement with a loyalist, Trump further politicized U.S. intelligence agencies, putting a partisan in a position for which he is completely unqualified, having had little intelligence experience and having never run a large bureaucracy.

Back in July 2019, Trump had said he intended to nominate Ratcliffe to replace Dan Coats as the Director of National Intelligence, but then Ratcliffe was forced to withdraw his name after some senators and former intelligence officials said his resume was too thin, with no experience in the intelligence community, and that he was likely to politicize intelligence agencies. Media reports criticized the job Ratcliffe had done in his prosecutorial involvement in terrorism and immigration cases. He is a former small-town Texas mayor who had a history of embellishing aspects of his law enforcement career, so he is a poor prospect for leading the nation's seventeen intelligence agencies.

Here is another outrage-provoking instance of Trump politicizing national intelligence agencies to benefit him personally. In a reactive move reminiscent of Dick Nixon's "Friday Night Massacre", Trump made a vindictive decision on April 3, 2020, 'under the cover of darkness', to fire Michael Atkinson, the inspector general of the intelligence community. This was the duty-bound man who had rightly forwarded a whistleblower complaint to Congress concerning Trump's violations of laws and ethics, and his apparent impeachable offenses against provisions of the U.S. Constitution in the Ukraine Plot.

"Inspectors general are government watchdogs traditionally granted a great deal of independence so that they can ferret out waste, fraud and other misconduct in government agencies without fear of reprisal. But Trump has demonstrated repeatedly that he has little regard for the positions, which were created by Congress after Watergate to increase government accountability - and he expects executive branch officials to serve his interests."

The signal here, to the intelligence community and personnel in the military forces and all Americans, is not to "dare tell the president what he doesn't want to hear." This signal is wrong, for our national security is irrevocably tied to having honest, responsible and more truly patriotic officials in government.

At a briefing the day after firing Michael Atkinson, Trump endorsed the firing of Captain Brett Crozier of the Navy, who was removed from command of the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt after sending his superiors a letter pleading for help for his virus-stricken crew. An almost stupid-seeming Secretary of the Navy, another member of the Trump kakistocracy, told the thousands of sailors on the aircraft carrier in Guam that Captain Crozier, their well-regarded leader until he was fired, was either "too stupid, or too naïve" because he indirectly publicized the predicament aboard the aircraft carrier. Perhaps he went outside the hierarchical military chain of command to get help to save the crew from the contagious coronavirus, but it was a selfless act of heroism to make his extraordinary effort to take steps to stop the insidious spread of this infectious disease through the crew's tight quarters. Let us not forget that Trump also gave a presidential pardon to a convicted war criminal, a Navy Seal platoon leader who was a "toxic" character in the Iraq War, a man described as being "OK with killing anything that moved."

"While appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, inspectors general are government watchdogs traditionally granted a great deal of independence so that they can ferret out waste, fraud and other misconduct in government agencies without fear of reprisal. But Trump has demonstrated repeatedly that he has little regard for the positions, which were created by Congress after Watergate to increase government accountability, and expects executive branch officials to serve his interests."

The father of my alter ego was a life-long small business Republican who was stationed in the South Pacific during World War II, and though he was never particularly political, he would be aghast at what Trump Republicans are now doing.

The Trump administration has made a sharp dark turn toward authoritarian abuses of power and violations of the rule of law and norms of behavior.

Trump is purging people from the government who are not loyally marching lockstep with his corrupt authoritarian agenda. He and his minions are engaged in suspect business dealings, and lie habitually to try to get away with these shenanigans.

A new word has impinged on my awareness as the COVID-19 stalks the land: shambolic. The word means chaotic and disorganized and confused. Derived from the word shambles, it casts a dark light on politicians and the Demagogue-in-Chief who promised to fix the rigged systems that have created extremes of inequality and injustices in the land of the free, only to get into positions of power and then arrogantly and outrageously betray the public trust.

Instead of "draining the swamp", Trump Republicans have made the rotting morass of public corruption into a winner-take-all concession stand where crony insiders feast while the masses suffer increased privations, predations and insecurities. These divide-to-conquer schemers are rigging the economy and political system even more unfairly than they were before their power grab by deregulating and privatizing and greasing the wheels of cost externalizing schemes and risk socializing scams. They are lying through their teeth about their agenda, and relying on the "illusory truth effect" to catapult the propaganda that helps them get away with their scams. They are working to cripple vitally important government functions like State Department diplomacy and Environmental Protection Agency efforts to protect people and vital ecosystems and the global climate from mindless predations.

A good leader is a strong and responsible leader, not an authoritarian strong man who runs roughshod over the best interests of the citizenry.

If Barack Obama had indulged in even a fraction of the socially irresponsible, intentionally divisive, self-serving malfeasance and public corruption as Donald Trump has, Republicans would have reacted with such outrage that they would have hounded him out of office already. Just imagine if Barack Obama had manifested a Trump-like attitude of arrogance and snide volatile anger-prone hot-headedness, and presumptuous egomaniacal hubris, and if he had shown himself to be such a prissy prima donna who plays the aggrieved victim to get his way.

This infinitely antagonistic hypocrisy puts in proper context the irrational double standard of their apologism and enabling of Trump's treachery against the common good, and reflects a perversely immoral collateral white supremacist male domineering attitude that is racially discriminatory and gender-biased.

Trump Republicans are further trying to gain partisan advantages by encouraging gambling on stocks that benefit from the rash short-termism of public debt-stoked economic activities and easy money monetary policies.

The Advent of Socialism

They frequently attack the free press, using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to micro-target people with emotion-manipulating disinformation targeted to undermine democratic institutions and social cohesion.

They are trying to deceive people with spin broadcast by the Fox News propaganda machine, which is reinforced by far-right news and opinion commentary from outlets like Breitbart News. These news purveyors constitute a "conservative media complex" that resembles State Propaganda media in fascist regimes, and for the same purpose -- to brainwash people into supporting or tolerating their agenda of corrupt profiteering and proliferating abuses of power.

Authoritarian demagogues are using jawboning tactics and moral suasion, and bullying people and intimidating critics to get them to obey their authority, no matter how contrary to the common good.

During his impeachment trial in the Senate, Trump engaged in what was, in effect, jury tampering on a mass scale. He did this both through his egomaniacal Twitter spin and his sometimes demented proclamations on the White House lawn in front of a helicopter ready to whisk him off somewhere (often to his elite resort in Florida for some more golfing). His devious goal in his words is to insidiously manipulate public opinion.

As Catherine Rampell, an opinion columnist at The Washington Post, makes clear, Trump is not only trying to gain political advantage by scare-mongering the American people about his opponents being "socialists", but also acting as a perverse type of socialist himself. "Trump has actually implemented anti-market, Soviet-style, centrally planned policies, and he has used the power of the state to punish political enemies. He has merely chosen different beneficiaries (and victims) of his Big Government bigfooting."

"In some ways, in fact, Trump has proved himself a more successful socialist than Sanders is likely ever to be. Many of Sanders' core 'socialist' agenda items, after all, are opposed by not only Republicans but also by moderate Democrats and even Democratic leadership. Trump, meanwhile, has bullied and brainwashed his supposedly free-market party into backing a command-and-control-style economy. When it's commanded-and-controlled by Trump, anyway."

"With nary a peep from his party, Trump has tried to prop up pet industries, such as coal, by government fiat. Indeed, other Republicans have since copied his strategy at the state level."

"Likewise, in a move that once would have had Republicans screaming bloody murder, Trump has slapped tariffs on virtually every major trading partner around the world to protect favored industries, such as steel. This not only failed to rejuvenate steel but also led to widespread retaliation, including tit-for-tat tariffs aimed at farm country, a key part of the Republican base."

"Trump then decided even more central planning was in order. Again, his party didn't stop him. First, the president unilaterally decided to use taxpayer funds to bail out farmers hurt by his trade wars. When that didn't work, he did it again. In a tweet Friday, he suggested that a third bailout might yet be necessary. Already, Trump's farmer trade bailouts are more than double the size of the 2009 auto bailout."

"A decade ago — with the global economy on the verge of another depression — Republicans howled that this U.S. auto industry rescue package was 'the leading edge of the Obama administration's war on capitalism' and would set us on 'the road toward socialism'. Today, these same Republicans seem curiously unperturbed. Conservatives, likewise, complain that Sanders and his socialist allies wish to bloat budget deficits. Under Trump, of course, this has already happened. The deficit in fiscal 2019 was a whopping 48 percent higher than it was in fiscal 2017, thanks to GOP policies. And while "Crazy Bernie" does intend to jack up tax rates to (partly) offset his spending, Trump has raised some taxes on Americans, too — he's just done it more regressively, through taxes on imports

rather than income."

"Trump's version of socialism soaks the poor, not the rich."

"If conservatives are genuinely frightened by Sanders' proposed downward redistribution of wealth, they might consider the sort of redistribution practiced by Trump -- in particular, the many ways Trump has used his office to redistribute taxpayer dollars into his own pocket. Just last week, during a tour of western states, Trump elected to fly his entourage back to his hotel in Las Vegas each night rather than stay in the other cities he was visiting. Whatever Sanders' flaws, at least he doesn't try to steal everything that's not nailed down."

"If you're a Never Trumper worried that Sanders will take this country down the road to serfdom, beware: President Trump has already paved the path."

Environmental Harms

Trump Republicans are slashing budgets for the Environmental Protection Agency and denying scientific understandings in order to help corporations maximize private profits.

The list of egregious actions by conservatives in the environmental arena is too long for the space available in this essay. They are spelled out in detail in *See Clearly: Sanity During Insane Times - Book Twelve of the Earth Manifesto*. This can be viewed online.

Truly,

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