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Avatar: an all-purpose allegory

Posted By [Joshua Keating](#) ■ Wednesday, February 17, 2010 - 10:15 AM ■ [+](#) [Share](#)



James Cameron's sci-fi epic *Avatar* has become something of a political rorschach test around the world. The story of the alien Na'vi's struggles against the invasion of Earth's military-industrial complex has taken on some surprising allegorical means for movements around the world:

Palestinian protesters in the town of Bilin dressed up as Na'vi recently to protest the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

Bolivia's leftist President Evo Morales [has praised](#) *Avatar* as a "profound show of resistance to capitalism and the struggle for the defense of nature."

Chinese bloggers have [compared the film's story](#) to the exploitation of Chinese citizens by government-backed real estate developers -- a factor that may have contributed to the film being pulled from Chinese theaters.

Activists [ran ads](#) in the Hollywood newspaper *Variety* comparing the Na'vi to India's forest-dwelling indigenous tribe, the Dongria, whose territory is now threatened by a planned bauxite mine.

Environmentalists Lori Pottinger [compared](#) the story of *Avatar* to the Brazilian government's plans to build dams in the Amazon Basin.

Russian Communists described the film as an [attempt to justify](#) Barack Obama's Nobel Peace Prize.

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat [called the movie](#) "an apologia for pantheism."

David Boaz of the libertarian Cato Institute [says the movie](#) is about "defending property rights".



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