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E-Democracy: Stealing the Election in 2004

By Steve Moore
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In-depth Report: Election Fraud in America

George W. Bush has stated: "I don't plan on losing my job."(1) What the president neglects to mention is that he is willing to use any means necessary to stay in power, including stealing the November 2004 election.

Americans will never know the real vote totals because there will not be a paper trail.

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Corporations have privatized the election process and now potentially control the votes.

Plan A is simply to "buy" the election with the multi-million dollar advertising campaign now in progress.

Plan B is another Orange Code terror alert, similar to the ones manufactured five times since September 11, 2001. The use of a Red Code alert, which according to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge "basically shuts down the country," is also a real possibility. In short, if you can't "buy" the votes of the American people, you can "scare" them into voting for Bush, with or without an actual terrorist attack. 2 Plan B, in it's most extreme form, involves a military coup (disguised as emergency measures) and the suspension of the U.S. Constitution. This is the scenario outlined by retired General Tommy Franks in November, 2003.3 (See Maureen Farrell's article on page.)

Plan C involves what might be described as "a bloodless coup" by secretly rigging the 2004 election. The new black box computer voting machines leave absolutely no verifiable paper trail. Hence, there will be no way to double check a disputed election. Interestingly enough, all three black box computer manufacturers are Republican-led corporations actively involved in Bush's re-election campaign.

For example, Walden O'Dell, the CEO of Diebold, is a major fund-raiser for President Bush. O'Dell personally organized a fund raising party, attended by Vice President Cheney, which raised $600,000 for Bush's campaign. O'Dell also wrote to contributors that he was "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes for the President next year."(4) Ohio, as well as Georgia, Maryland, California and many other states have Diebold machines.

Independent Computer Experts Defend Democracy

Avi Rubin, a computer-security expert at John Hopkins University claims the new voting machines are far below the minimal security standards. John Dill, a Stanford computer scientist says: "I think the risk of (a stolen election) is extremely high."(5) Writing for the

Baltimore Sun, Avi Rubin comments:

“I still believe that the Diebold machine, and ones like them from the vendors, represent a major threat to our democracy. We have put our trust in the outcome of our elections in the hands of a few companies (Ohio-based Diebold Election systems, Sequoia Voting Systems, which is based in California and Election Systems & Software in Omaha, Neb.). They are in a position to control the outcomes of our elections, and there’s no way anyone can know if they, or someone working for them did something underhanded. And meaningful recounts are impossible with these machines.” (6)

According to the April, 2004 issue of Vanity Fair magazine, 1600 independent computer science experts, including “200 Ph.D. computer scientists” agree that black box computers are insecure, subject to internal and external hacking and place democratic elections at risk. The total number of independent computer scientists who consider Diebold machines safe, secure and verifiable is “zero.”(7)

Maryland

The State of Maryland paid 55 million dollars for 16,000 Diebold voting machines. The State asked independent computer security firms to check the machines. The firms found it “easy to cast multiple votes and over-ride the machines late-recording mechanisms.” Maryland’s 16,000 machines all had “identical locks for two sensitive mechanism.” The paid professional hackers found they could have made copies of the keys from a locksmith in 10 minutes but elected instead to successfully “pick the locks (in) less than ten seconds.”(8) Amazingly, Maryland is sticking with Diebold.

The Georgia Elections 2002

All of Georgia’s voters used Diebold machines for the 2002 elections. The incumbent Democratic Governor Ray Barnes was ahead of his Republican challenger Sonny Perdue by 11 percentage points just two days before the election according to a poll taken by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. But, for the first time in 134 years, the Republican won the Governor’s seat.

Similar surprising results happened in the Georgia Senate race. Again, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported two days before the election that Democratic incumbent Max Cleland was five points ahead of the Republican challenger, Saxby Chambliss. Yet Chambliss won by 7 percent, an amazing 12 point shift in 48 hours.(10) Soon after the election results were certified, Diebold wiped clean all the voting machines. No machine inspection. No paper trail. This pattern was repeated in surprise Republican Senate race victories in Minnesota and Colorado (another significant black box State), giving the Republicans control of the U.S. Senate.

Bev Harris, author of Black box voting: Ballot-tampering in the 21st Century (available at www.blackboxvoting.org), found a trove of Diebold program files on the web. One of the folders was called “rob.georgia.” Bev Harris burned all the information on 7 CD’s. As a result of her new knowledge, she was able to gain back door access and successfully change vote totals if she so desired and erase any audit trail of her actions. She also found that Diebold’s GEMS central server could “create minus votes.” Diebold Spokesman David Bear also told

Vanity Fair: “Yes, negative votes can be entered into GEMS.” (11) Now, why would a computer program designed to add up the vote want to take away anybody’s democratic vote? One possible answer is to fix an election.

Enter Rob Behler, who serviced Georgia’s Diebold during the summer of 2002, just before the Georgia election. Rob claims 25% of the machines just didn’t work. Some machines were replaced. New patches were installed. Amazingly, “Not one of Diebold’s 22,000 patched machines in Georgia was evaluated by Wyle and Ciber or thus qualified by NASED (State & Federal certification checkers) to be used in an election in November, 2002.” (12) No one knows what new informational programming was contained in the patches added to the Diebold machines before the election. No governmental agency carried out any inspection after the patches were installed.

The 2004 Election

These new black boxes are now in 30 States. According to Newsweek they “will be used by about 28 percent of the country in the November election.” (13) Clearly, enough machines to swing any election! The State of California will require a paper trail on all voting machines by 2006. Why not 2004? Congressman Rush Holt (Democrat, New Jersey) and Senator Hillary Clinton (Democrat, New York) have put forth bills to ensure a paper trail in all voting machines. But so far l06 Democrats have signed up for the House bill—-and just 8 Republicans. Curious how Republicans don’t want a double check paper trail. Maybe, they got Georgia on their minds. The Bill isn’t going anywhere fast. Congressman Robert Ney, a Republican from Ohio—Diebold’s home State—heads the committee dealing with the Bill.

The Common Sense Solution

Rebecca Mercuri, now at the Kennedy School of Government, has a simple solution: The actual count should be made not from computers but from the printed-out ballots. No hacking, no secret codes to company executives or insider politicians, no back door secret entries and exits. Mercuri says, “I asked myself if these ballots are used to verify the results of machines we don’t trust, why not us the ballots as actual votes?” (14) Sounds like common sense, but it’s not happening in 2004.

The Future of Democratic Elections in the US.

The majority of Americans voted for Al Gore in the 2000 elections. Bush won. He was appointed by a conservative Supreme Court. The majority of Americans will probably vote for John Kerry in the coming 2004 election. Bush may win again! This time, Bush would be appointed by Diebold Elections Systems, Sequoia Voting Systems, Election Systems & Software and their backers in the military-industrial complex. And Americans will never know the real vote totals because there will not be a paper trail. Basically, national elections have been taken out of the public domain. Corporations have privatized the election process and now potentially control the votes.

In disputes, State, local and Federal judges will side with the companies in order to protect their trade secrets. For example, take the case of a man named Danciu who ran for City Council in Boca Raton, Florida in March 2002. He expected to win by a landslide and lost by 16 per cent. Voters complained that the Sequoia machines appeared to be recording votes cast for Danciu and giving them to his opponents. Of course, Palm Beach County didn’t have the computer codes. Only the company does. It went to court. The judge denied Danciu’s

request for the software code. (15) Apparently, corporate trade secrets are more important than voter's rights.

The 2004 Election

Given the current situation in Iraq, the sluggish domestic economy and Bush's failures to defend America before 9/11, we can expect Bush to decline rapidly in the polls between now and November, 2004. A recent poll by U.S. pollster John Zogby found that 44 percent of Americans felt that Bush should be re-elected and 51% per cent believe that "someone new" should take office. A recent pool by the Pew Research Center showed only 40% approving the ways he's handling Iraq—down from 59% per cent in January, 2004. (16)

So all pre-election polls will predict a Kerry win in 2004; perhaps, by a huge margin of 8 to 10 %. Plan B, Tom Ridge's October Orange alert, will reduce this percentage only slightly because Americans are getting used to false alarms. An actual terrorist attack, unlike Spain, will create a very close election. But regardless of Kerry's exact pre-election poll lead, the final vote will favor Bush if the Republican voting machine programmers rig the vote. The result will be a bloodless coup, the end of democracy and the installation of an de facto police state. Stealing one election could be called a fluke; stealing two elections is called a "democratic dictatorship".

1. Sheldon Alberts "Failure Unthinkable Says Bush" Times Colonist, 14 April 2004, p. 1
2. David J. Rothkopf "Terrorist Logic: Disrupt the 2004 Election" Washington Post, 23 November 2003, p. B01
3. Tommy Franks Interview, Cigar Aficionado, December, 2003
4. Steven Levy "Black Box Voting Blues" Newsweek, 3 November 2003, p. 69
5. Ibid., p. 69
6. Avi Rubin "An Insider's View of Vote Vulnerability" Baltimore Sun. (See www.blackboxvoting.org , 11 March 2004.
7. Michael Shnayerson "Hack the Vote" Vanity Fair, April 2004, p. 179.
8. Tim Radford & Dan Glaister "Hi-Tech Voting Machines Threaten US Presidential Poll" Guardian Weekly, Feb. 19-25, 2004, p. 3.
9. Michael Shnayerson "Hack the Vote" Vanity Fair, April 2004, p. 168
10. Ibid., p. 160
11. Ibid., p. 162
12. Ibid., p. 168
13. Steven Levy "Ballot Boxes go Hi-Tech" Newsweek, March 29, 2004, p. 58
14. Ibid., p. 62
15. Elise Ackerman "Electronic Voting's Hidden Perils" San Jose Mercury News, 1 February 2004, p. 25A
16. Doug Saunders "Iraq Was has Bush in Trouble" Globe & Mail, 7 April 2004, p. A10.

Steve Moore is a writer and historian based in British Columbia. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research and Global Outlook Magazine.

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