GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Economic Chaos and Political Survival

By William Cox
Global Research, October 11, 2008
11 October 2008

Region: USA

> " –That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, –That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government,… organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." **~The Declaration of Independence**

How many more lies must we listen to?

How many more political scandals must we endure?

How many more of our young people have to be grievously wounded or die in unnecessary and illegal wars, and how many more trillions of dollars in economic waste must we clean up before we are sickened enough to demand effective changes in our government?

Are we ready for a peaceful political "*evolution*" to safeguard our personal and economic freedoms in this country and to avoid committing war crimes against others?

In *Washington's Crossing*, an excellent history of the near failure of the American Revolution in the winter of 1776, David Hackett Fischer concluded that neither Washington's leadership nor the victories at Trenton and Princeton saved the revolution following his resounding defeat in New York City.

To the contrary, Washington's victories resulted from the revival of spirit that arose among the ordinary people in the Delaware Valley as they began to read Thomas Paine's *American Crisis*.

According to Fischer, "This great revival grew from defeat, not from victory. The awakening was a response to a disaster. Doctor Benjamin Rush, who had a major role in the event, believed that this was the way a free public would always work, and the American republic in particular. He thought it was a national habit of the American people (maybe all free people) not to deal with a difficult problem until it was nearly impossible."

Although we are calculating the cost in thousands of lives and billions of dollars, we cannot imagine the full extent of damage that will flow from our president's having misled our nation into an illegal war with Iraq and our innocent troops into the commission of war crimes.

We are only beginning to get a glimpse of the devastation to the American economy caused

by unrestrained deregulation and reckless Wall Street gambling, as our president threw away our hard-earned money, eliminated taxes for his wealthy friends, ran up debts for our children and grandchildren to pay in the future, tried to destroy our Social Security, encouraged the shipment of American jobs out of the country, and allowed the international value of our currency to depreciate.

All of us, liberals, conservatives *and* independents, are going to be increasingly harmed by the failures of our government and those we've allegedly elected to run it.

We must anticipate that there are more lies on their lips waiting to be told, even more ugly secrets waiting to be uncovered and even worse scandals yet to unfold.

The good news is that the American people remain the best, the bravest, and the brightest our human civilization has ever produced. America *is* the Promised Land, and Americans are an amalgamation of various ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

The American genetic pool is the most robust and diverse of any society on earth, and the revolutionary spirit continues to run deep and true in the blood lines of all who yearn for freedom and the full fruits of their labor.

The American people will survive and, ultimately, we will achieve a government that better cares for us and is less threatening to the rest of the world.

The bad news is that we will have to go through hell to get there. So, how do we brave the flames?

A National Policy Referendum

Perhaps the most basic problem with our government today is that, irrespective of the party in power, it primarily responds to the demands of large corporations and moneyed special interest groups, rather than respecting the hopes and aspirations of ordinary workers and small businesses.

Every four years, the two main political parties construct "platforms" to serve as publicity gimmicks to get their candidate elected. After the election, both parties generally ignore the policies they set forth in their platforms and begin to take care of themselves and their financial supporters, rather than to do what they said they were going to do for the rest of us.

The process is supposed to result in policies that reflect the interests of the voters, but it is a scandal at best. At worst, it is a continuing political disaster.

Access by individuals to their elected officials is the foundation of a republican form of government. However, the election of our representatives is now more dependent upon massive expenditures of campaign contributions from their corporate sponsors, their wealthy friends, and well-funded, single-issue, special interest groups rather than upon a meaningful vote by an informed electorate.

Special interest groups deploy more than 35,000 lobbyists and spend more than $10 billion each year to promote their agendas. While there are allegedly some limits on campaign contributions, there are no restraints on institutional schmoozing.

No matter how deeply we ordinary citizens dig into our pockets, we cannot financially compete with the powerful special interests. No matter how well we organize, we cannot match the influence of the financial and political insiders. No matter how often we march and picket, they will always beat us through the side door into the corridors of power.

Not only are we are no longer represented; we have also been stripped of Constitutional protections we once enjoyed. Thoughtful people of every political persuasion are increasingly alarmed about the reductions in freedom we have passively accepted in response to 9/11. Many of us, irrespective of party or political beliefs, now question whether the Bill of Rights will survive another terrorist attack, which is sure to come.

Since we have been abandoned by our government, we must collectively focus upon a peaceful method to modify our government to one which more attentively considers the needs and protection of all voters, whether Republican, Democrat, Reform, Libertarian, Green or Independent.

An intolerant, non responsive and repressive government cannot endure. The choice is whether political change results from a violent revolution or a peaceful *evolution*, from a revolt or an *evolt*.

One way we can regain control of our government is to require it to hold a National Policy Referendum every four years when we vote for our president. Such a referendum would not make law; rather the purpose would be to express the collective policy of the people through their answers to the major political questions that should most concern the new administration and Congress during their terms of office.

Individuals and organizations could nominate policy questions; Congress would have to debate the issues in formulating 12 current policy questions to be listed on a national ballot, and the president would have to either sign or veto the bill.

To ensure passage of the policy bill, perhaps the pay of all members of Congress and the president *and* all members of their senior staffs should be withheld commencing on the New Year's Day of each presidential election year until the issues are identified. Or, maybe all national political campaign contributions to parties and candidates should be prohibited until after the policy referendum bill is passed and signed.

Once the questions are promulgated, presidential candidates (and other elected representatives) would be forced to take positions on a wide variety of real issues.

Politics has been defined as the art of not telling the truth, and politicians quickly learn to avoid telling the truth at all cost. Because there are special interests on both sides of every issue, it is impossible to please everyone, yet the politicians strive onward, lying and denying, twisting and hiding, trying to grab every vote.

The best theater can be seen during the presidential debates. Trying to get a straight answer from any of the candidates is like waiting for pigs to fly.

Most importantly, we the voters would be more likely to study and question the issues and to arrive at our own opinions, rather than to have them spoon fed to us by the corporate media.

Not only must we increasingly talk about the issues over the back fence or in the break room, we must also insist that the Fairness Doctrine eliminated by the Reagan-appointed Federal Communication Commission be resurrected to require fair comment and competing points of view by ordinary voters to be aired for all to hear.

Instead of responding emotionally to brief television and radio ads, most of which are designed to evoke a negative reaction, we would be far more likely to thoughtfully consider positive information and political analysis.

A number of countries, including Canada, Sweden and Switzerland refer policy matters to their voters for binding decisions, and the European Union resulted from a referendum in the participating countries. During its 2004 presidential election, Taiwan submitted two policy questions regarding its relations with China to voters. However, no nation presently holds a non binding policy referendum as a matter of course.

There are those who might argue that the presidential election *is* a referendum on the candidates' platforms; however, the winner-take-all results do not, in any way, suggest the level of voter support for any of the competing issues. The outcome turns far too often on which of the candidates makes the fewest mistakes or which has devised the most effective smear campaign.

A National Policy Referendum will not be a national opinion poll. The process of articulating the political questions, the more lively debate, and our thoughtful vote will validate the results far beyond that attainable by any random sampling, no matter how scientific. Voters will not be expressing a snap opinion. Nor, will voters make law. *Voters will make policy!*

A right to vote in a National Policy Referendum can be found in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which expressly provides our right to petition our government for redress. Our right to peaceably assemble and to seek redress was intended as the bedrock of our free society and as a safety valve to avoid violent revolution.

In a free society, we have a duty to avoid the use of force, even if we believe our existence under ineffectual government is being seriously threatened. It is also our duty to peacefully petition our government, before we resort to violence.

If we are to effectively modify our government through a peaceful political evolution, we must be allowed to exercise our vote in a National Policy Referendum. Otherwise, what can we do?

A Peaceful Write-in Protest

As effective as a national referendum may be to establish government policy, little good will come of it unless those we elect are forced to pay attention to our interests and to actually carry out our policies. As it is, presidential candidates say one thing and do another to the extent they believe they can get away with it, and because of party politics, we keep getting stuck with having to decide upon the lesser of two evils.

Imagine if we combined a National Policy Referendum with a grass-roots rebellion in which a majority of us were to actually *write in* the name of the person we wanted to preside over our government. Wouldn't we seize the power that legitimately belongs to the citizens of

this country and wouldn't we *evolve* a far more effective and representative government?

Can we trust the current method by which we elect our president? Are there good reasons why we should rebel against the present system?

In 2000, more than a half million voters selected Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, over George Bush, the Republican candidate. However, Bush prevailed in the Electoral College because a fraudulent election in Florida gave him that state's 20 electoral votes, even though the candidates were only separated by a few hundred popular votes.

Bush had an edge and the fix was in. His brother, Jeb, was governor and the Secretary of State chaired his reelection committee. Not only were thousands of eligible (mostly Democratic) Florida voters disenfranchised before the election, but every effort to manually recount the ballots, including thousands of rejected votes, was blocked by the Secretary of State.

A phony riot was staged by Republican Party operatives flown in from out of state to intimidate local election supervisors, and five Republican-appointed members of the U.S. Supreme Court contrived a politically-motivated decision that reversed a far more reasoned opinion by Florida's high court, which had ordered that every voter's intention be determined as accurately as possible.

Following the election, Congress passed the $3 billion Help American Vote Act, which encouraged the States to purchase secret computerized voting systems manufactured and maintained by companies whose officers uniformly support the Republican Party.

Walden W. O'Dell was the chief executive of one of those companies, Diebold Inc. In August 2003, he sent a letter to 100 wealthy friends inviting them to a Republican Party fund-raiser at his home in Columbus, Ohio. He said, "I am committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year." It appears that he did.

The 2004 election differed from 2000 in that George Bush may have received a higher percentage of the popular vote; however, it has been proven he should have lost in the Electoral College, except for another fraudulent election, this time in (no surprise) Ohio.

The Ohio Secretary of State, Kenneth Blackwell, served as the chairman of Bush's Ohio reelection campaign and publicly called Senator Kerry, the Democratic candidate, a "disaster" sure to reap "terrible" and "horrible" results if elected. Not only did Blackwell cause the registrations of Democratic voters to be rejected because they were on the wrong weight of paper, there were too few voting machines allocated to poor (and largely Democratic) precincts.

When combined with a Republican Party program of aggressively issuing personal challenges to voters and the casting of provisional ballots, the vote suppression tactics led to long lines and waits of up to seven hours to vote, primarily in poor neighborhoods. Many people finally gave up and lost their right to vote.

Exit polls across the nation appeared to give Kerry an advantage in the popular vote, up to 3 percent in the swing states of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida. Even before the votes were counted, Blackwell was bragging that he had helped "deliver" Ohio in announcing Bush's "victory." In just these three states, the odds of the dramatic swing between the exit polls and the final tabulation have been calculated as 250 million to one!

During the joint session of Congress on January 6, 2005 to certify the electoral vote, only one dozen Democratic House members and one Democratic senator stood up to complain about the voting irregularities in Ohio. However, their objections did force a debate about Electoral College results for only the second time since 1877. After a two-hour session, the Senate voted 74-1 and the House voted 267-31 to reject the protest. Can it be said that either party truly had the interests of the voters at heart?

Our democratic republic is founded upon our ability to trust the results of our collective vote. Is there any doubt that the advent of black-box voting, systematic election fraud, and the widespread intimidation of voters dictate that *we* seize control of the election process before the chance is lost forever?

Each of us must find within us the individual courage and initiative to perform one simple rebellious act – refuse to use the computerized voting machines or any other machine ballot.

Instead of responding like laboratory animals pushing a button in response to the stimulus of the latest ten-second television smear ad, we can each take a little longer to carefully consider the candidates presented on the ballot by the various political parties.

Once we decide, we can demonstrate our literacy and our power by clearly writing in our personal choice for president of the United States, whether or not his or her name is on the ballot!

Presently, half of all voters don't bother going to the polls and less than one quarter actually elect the president for all of us. Imagine the immense power that would flow to the people if voting truly became universal.

If voter turnout was to dramatically increase, and if only 15 to 25 percent of all voters were to write in their electoral choices, trust that the politicians would be scrambling to ensure that all write-in votes cast for them are legally counted. We would quickly find all of them registering their willingness to accept every write-in vote naming them for any office of public trust.

The Future

If we simple voters are smart enough to earn a living and to figure out how to pay our taxes – if we have courage enough to fight the wars started by our government, we are also entitled to collectively establish basic policy to guide our government, and to personally write in the name of whomever we consider most qualified to effectuate our policies.

We, the ordinary voters of every party, must *evolt* against politics as usual and join in a nonviolent *evolution* to transform our government.

We must demand a national ballot for president that presents the 12 most important national policy questions *and* which lists the presidential candidates nominated by the major political parties.

All paid political advertising should be prohibited during the week before the election, and everyone should enjoy a four-day paid holiday weekend to celebrate the most sacred

sacrament of our national political religion. No voter should ever be turned away from the polls, and every vote must be patiently hand counted.

We should go to our polling place and thoughtfully answer the policy questions presented on the ballot. Then, we should carefully write in the name of the person *we* select to implement our policy.

It could take a week or two to slowly and carefully hand count (or recount) the ballots. So what! The results will be felt far beyond two weeks.

We will again evolve a new system of government that will better serve to provide freedom, justice and prosperity to all who share this fragile planet.

We will decide who is in charge of the United States and *we* will chart the direction of its future. *We are The Voters!*

William John Cox is a retired supervising prosecutor for the State Bar of California. As a police officer he wrote the Policy Manual of the Los Angeles Police Department and the Role of the Police in America for a national advisory commission. Acting as a public interest, pro bono lawyer, he filed a class action lawsuit in 1979 on behalf of every citizen of the United States petitioning the Supreme Court to order the other two branches of the federal government to conduct a National Policy Referendum; he investigated and successfully sued a group of radical right-wing organizations in 1981 that denied the Holocaust; and he arranged in 1991 for publication of the suppressed Dead Sea Scrolls. His 2004 book, You're Not Stupid! Get the Truth: A Brief on the Bush Presidency is reviewed at *http://www.yourenotstupid.com, and he is currently working on a fact-based fictional political philosophy. His writings are collected at http://www.thevoters.org, and he can be contacted at u2cox@msn.com.*

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © William Cox, Global Research, 2008

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: William Cox

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.