

The Choice between War and More War

Democracy Fails: Corporations Win

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Democracy in the United States is only a shadow in a corporate media cave of deceit, lies and incomplete information. We stand ignorant of what the powerful are doing in our name and how the corporate media ignores key issues affecting us all.

A young professional couple from San Diego stated the weekend before the election, “we don’t think voting will make any difference so why bother?” Over 80 million eligible voters joined them by refusing to participate in the most recent election. While having been a voter for 35 years, I can’t fault them for their logic. November 2 gave us a choice between war and more war, corporate globalization and more corporate globalization, the continuation of gifting billions of dollars to Israel, the Patriot Act and an expanded Patriot Act, a police state and an seriously growing police state, media monopoly and even bigger media monopolies, and wealth inequality or an even greater wealth divide. With the only alternative to these issues being minor candidates without a snowball’s chance, for many voting seemed meaningless.

The issues where a choice was offered, abortion, Social Security, and medical care, were so under-covered by the corporate media that most voters still don’t understand the differences. Voting ended up being a faith-based decision embedded on visceral reactions to individuals instead of key societal issues.

The real winners November 2 are the military industrial complex, who will continue to feed at the 500 billion-dollar military trough and the corporate media, whose coffers were filled with billions of dollars for campaign ads.

And can we be sure we actually had a fair election among those who did vote? Election Systems & Software (ES&S), Diebold, and Sequoia are the companies primarily involved in implementing the new voting stations throughout the country. All three have strong ties to the Bush Administration. The largest investors in ES&S, Sequoia, and Diebold are government defense contractors Northrup-Grumman, Lockheed-Martin, Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and Accenture. Diebold hired Scientific Applications International Corporation (SAIC) of San Diego to develop the software security in their voting machines. A majority of officials on SAIC’s board are former members of either the Pentagon or the CIA including: – Army Gen. Wayne Downing, formerly on the National Security Council – Bobby Ray Inman; former CIA Director – Retired Adm. William Owens, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – Robert Gates, another former director of the CIA. So we have a CIA/military private firm that programmed the security in the voting machines for companies owned by some of the largest military contracts in the country. No wonder the Co-founder of the Citizens

Alliance for Secure Elections, Susan Truitt said November 3: "Seven counties in Ohio have electronic voting machines and none of them have paper trails. That alone raises issues of accuracy and integrity as to how we can verify the count. A recount without a paper trail is meaningless; you just get a regurgitation of the data. Last year, Blackwell tried to get the entire state to buy new machines without a paper trail. The exit polls, virtually the only check we have against tampering with a vote without a paper trail, had shown Kerry with a lead. ... A poll worker told me this morning that there were no tapes of the results posted on some machines; on other machines the posted count was zero, which obviously shouldn't be the case."

Our level of non-participation really means democracy has failed in the US. Democracy is the people making decisions about the important issues in their lives. Freedom is the ability to act on these decisions. Without an electoral choice democracy is non-existent and freedom only means the right to choose your own brand of toothpaste. Without an active independent media informing on the powerful we lack both freedom and democracy.

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