## Republicans and Brits will count California's recall votes
**By Lynn Landes**
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October 6, 2003—When will the Democrats wake up and smell the fix? There is a reason why George Bush and his cronies wear a perpetual smirk on their faces.  There's a reason for their cocksure confidence. They may not win every election, but if they don't, it will because they chose not to. For nothing is clearer than this, Republicans dominate voting technology companies in America. And they have foreign partners.

A handful of Republican corporations and British-owned companies control the vote count in California and across the nation. Britain and it's offshore territories not only shelter corporate America from taxes due to the U.S. Treasury, the Brits are also providing a haven for vote-counting companies like Accenture, the former Andersen Consulting, currently located in Bermuda and slated to count the military online vote in 2004. It's all enough to make one wonder who won the Revolutionary War . . . American patriots or the British and American Tories?

And as California Governor Davis goes, so may go other elected officials, maybe even some Republicans. Any elected official from either party who has crossed President [sic] Bush should start worrying.

For those who are still living in the Valley of Denial, and think that the California count is a fair election, here is the breakdown.  On a geographical basis, British-based Sequoia takes the lead in the vote count in California counties. Twenty-one counties use Sequoia voting technology, 15 counties use ES&S, 14 - Diebold, six - DMF Associates, and two counties use PollStar. On the basis of registered voters, ES&S takes the lead with 7,305,680 voters, Sequoia - 3,682,051, Diebold - 2,412,971, PollStar - 1,308,789, and DMF Associates - 593,978.

ES&S, the nation's largest voting system company, is owned by the Omaha World Herald Company and has solid ties to the Republican Party. ES&S claims on their website that they tabulated "56 percent of the U.S. national vote for the past four presidential elections." Diebold Election Systems, is the second largest company with 33–35 percent of the electronic vote, according to a Diebold spokesperson. Walden O'Dell, Diebold's chief executive, recently wrote a fund-raising letter for the election of President [sic] George Bush. Then there's Sequoia. It is owned by De La Rue, a British-based company and the world's largest commercial security printer and papermaker. They also own a 20 percent stake in Camelot, the operator of Great Britain's National Lottery. Want to take any bets on who wins the California recall, the U.S. presidency in the 2004 election, and maintains control of both houses of Congress?

Of course, not all of the counties will use company technicians to program their software for the upcoming election. They may, like Los Angeles County, use county employees or independent contractors to do the job. Even if "Ralph from the county," programs the software . . . who is this guy?  Why should voters trust him to count their votes?  What ever happened to public oversight of the vote count? With voting machines counting the vote, what do poll watchers watch? What do federal observers observe? How do they enforce the Voting Rights Act? The technicians who program these machines can be manipulating votes right, left, and center . . . and nobody would be the wiser.

All the studies that show how well or poorly different voting systems work, such as the 2001 CalTech/MIT Report, do not take into account deliberate vote fraud. The researchers study "residual" or lost votes, meaning undervotes and overvotes. Even the October 2001 GAO report says, " . . . *FEC generally agrees with most of our observations and recommendations, including that human factors are not being*

*addressed in the revised voting equipment standards and that FEC needs to accelerate their development in future iterations of the standards."*

A "human factor" is the accidental or deliberate manipulation of votes by humans.

The technological takeover of the vote began over 100 years ago with the introduction of lever machines. Today, we're facing a paperless electronic and Internet voting process controlled by Republicans and the British and only god knows who else. It is making a mockery of our elections. A paper ballot, a pen, a ballot box, and a local hand-count is the simple technology that most nations use to elect their leaders. Our use of complex technology has taken public oversight completely out of the process, making our elections completely vulnerable.

And it doesn't really matter whether private corporations or public servants control the technology. Any use of mechanical or electronic voting technology is an open invitation to vote fraud and technical failure. Any use of sophisticated voting technology concentrates the risk of fraud or failure in the hands of those who control it.

If we're going to fix this mess, we need to fix it right. The machines must go. And so must the Brits, the Republicans, and anyone else who seeks to control American elections.

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