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Voting machine fiasco: SAIC, VoteHere and Diebold ... *Scam to vet software?*

By Lynn Landes

Online Journal Contributing Writer

August 20, 2003—The voting machine wars are heating up and the implications of vote fraud in America are even more ominous.

Computer scientist Avi Rubin, whose Johns Hopkins University team found serious flaws in Diebold Election Systems software, abruptly resigned from VoteHere, another election software company.

In a related story, on August 6t Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R) gave a contract to Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to review the Diebold Election System's software in preparation for elections in Maryland. The report is due in four weeks.

Monday, Avi Rubin announced his resignation from VoteHere, an elections systems company. His statement reads: "Effective immediately, I am resigning from the Technical Advisory Board of VoteHere, and I am returning all stock options, which have never been exercised, and which are not entirely vested." Unexercised stock options may be the least of Rubin's problems.

Rubin's relationship with VoteHere was a surprise to many.

He does not list the affiliation on his website that features an extensive and detailed listing of his work. In fact, Rubin's announcement appears to be in response to an interview with this reporter regarding questions about his affiliation with VoteHere.

In his statement, Rubin says, "...I had not had any contact with VoteHere since I signed on to their board over 2 years ago, and I simply did not remember nor think about it. In hindsight, that is very unfortunate."

And that, as they say, is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

VoteHere is being sued by its former engineer, Dan Spillane, for wrongfully firing him in retaliation to his repeated warnings of potential defects in voting software applications and in the certification process.

SAIC is a behemoth military defense contractor with a shadowy, if not tarnished, reputation, while former SAIC executives also have ties to VoteHere. Why is that important? VoteHere is a growing company, which aspires to provide cryptography and computer software security for the electronic election industry.

Former president, chief operating officer, and vice chairman of SAIC is Admiral Bill Owens, who is now Chairman of the Board for VoteHere. Owens also served as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was a senior military assistant to Secretaries of Defense Frank Carlucci and Dick Cheney. Carlucci's company is Carlyle Group, while Vice President Dick Cheney's former employer is Halliburton.

Another former SAIC board member, also on the board of VoteHere, is ex-CIA Director Robert Gates, a veteran of the Iran-Contra scandal.

VoteHere is already benefiting from the Diebold debacle, as it will be partnering with Sequoia Voting Systems, "to provide a new level of electronic ballot verification to customers of the AVC Edge touch screen voting system," according to the VoteHere website.

SAIC, which is supposed to vet Diebold's elections software, is itself in the elections business.

On a webpage of Diversified Dynamics (recently purchased by Northrop Grumman), a 1998 legal notice states, "Diversified Dynamics has brought the election process to the technological level of the new millennium by designing the world's most advanced electronic vote recording and election management system. We were supported in this effort by the engineering and software capabilities of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a world leader in systems development and integration."

All of the above companies are military defense contractors as well as information technology (IT) firms, whose clients include state governments and federal agencies.

Is it a conflict of interest when an industry insider reviews the software of a competitor?

Yes. However, these conflicts of interest may not necessarily discredit the Johns Hopkins report. The basic tenet of the report is true, say many computer experts who have reviewed Diebold's software. It is riddled with back doors that can be easily opened, an "open door" so to speak to vote fraud. It does, however, bring into question some of the conclusions of the report.

For example, computer voting expert Dr. Rebecca Mercuri has made it clear that although a machine may be used to produce a paper ballot, the ballot itself must be voter-verified and "hand counted" in order to ensure integrity to the voting process. In an interview with this reporter, Rubin said that he's "against" electronic voting. However, in the Hopkins report, the authors use language that indicates that they believe that paper ballots should be used for audits or recounts only.

It should be also noted that the handicapped are being used by the election services industry to push for mandated electronic voting, and the Hopkins report strongly supports this strategy: "A voting system must be comprehensible to and usable by the entire voting population, regardless of age, infirmity, or disability."

That's code for "electronic voting is the only way to go." Tell that to the Canadians and other countries around the world that hold elections, which include the handicapped, without a Pandora's Box of electronic wizardry.

Meanwhile SAIC is a piece of work all by itself.

"The federal government, its main customer, often doesn't want the public to know what the company [SAIC] is doing and, as one of the nation's largest employee-owned corporations, it escapes investor scrutiny," writes AP correspondent Elliot Spagat, in a July 26, 2003, article.

J. Robert Beyster founded SAIC on February 3, 1969, "with a couple of consulting contracts, one from Los Alamos and one from Brookhaven National Labs," according to the SAIC website. Today, SAIC has racked up more than \$5.9 billion in annual revenues.

Bev Harris and her investigative team have dug up some interesting facts about SAIC. It seems that SAIC has had its share of legal troubles.

In a 1995 article in the Web Review, editor Stephen Pizzo paints a disturbing picture of SAIC. "In 1990 SAIC was indicted by the Justice Department on 10 felony counts for fraud in its management of a Superfund toxic cleanup site. (SAIC pleaded guilty.)

"In 1993 the Justice Department sued SAIC, accusing it of civil fraud on an F15 fighter contract.

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In May 1995, the same month SAIC purchased NSI (Network Solutions Inc.), the company settled a suit that charged it had lied about security system tests it conducted for a Treasury Department currency plant in Fort Worth, TX."

According to a January 1994 article in the highly regarded Crypt Newsletter, edited by George Smith, "In 1992 one of Scientific Applications' (SAIC) government projects blew up in the firm's face when it was charged with fabricating environmental testing from toxic waste dumps. SAIC eventually conceded to false claims and paid \$1.3 million in penalties, a small sum compared to the estimated \$1.5 billion the firm is expected to earn in 1994."

The Los Angeles Times cites government officials declaring Science Applications (SAIC) guilty of the "largest environmental fraud . . . we've had here" and an example of "corporate greed."

On November 15, 2000, a joint venture between SAIC and Bechtel (Bechtel SAIC Company, LLC) was awarded the contract from the Department of Energy (DOE) to manage and operate the Yucca Mountain program and support extensive DOE studies of Yucca Mountain's geology, hydrology, and climate.

In Nov 24, 2002, the Associated Press reported, "Some workers at the Yucca Mountain Project said there were flaws in the process scientists used to determine whether the site was suitable for disposing the nation's nuclear waste. At least two workers claim they were either fired or transferred after raising concerns about the project's safety, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported in its Sunday editions. Susana Navarro said an audit by a prominent law firm found 'among other things, that Mr. Mattimoe's conduct as a program manager for SAIC was inconsistent with a safety conscious work environment.'"

SAIC is perhaps most notorious among Internet aficionados for buying the company, Network Solutions Inc (NSI), which received the no-bid, no-compete monopoly contract to privatize the government agency which registered domain names.

John Dillon reports in MediaFilter.org, "Initially, the service was subsidized by the government. But, in May 1993, the National Science Foundation privatized the name registry (InterNIC - Internet Network Information Center) and paid NSI \$5.9 million to administer it. In September 1995, NSI instituted the fee system. A few months earlier, it had been bought out by Science Applications International Corp (SAIC)."

SAIC's control over Internet domain names set off alarm bells.

"The shadow ruling-class within the Pentagon," describes SAIC to a tee, according to the Crypt. SAIC has strong business ties to the military and intelligence communities.

Dillon quotes James Warren, an Internet civil liberties activist, "I don't want a spook corporation, particularly a private spook corporation, to be anywhere near a control point on the global cooperative Internet."

It should be remembered that the CIA has a decades-long track record of assisting in the brutal overthrow of democratically elected governments around the world.

Recently, SAIC got the contract to assist other corporations, including Northrop Grumman, in training of the Iraqi Army.

The specter of corporations, littered with ex-CIA types, that both control the voting systems and train the armies of countries around the world, is an emerging and frightening reality.

"Currently on SAIC's board is ex-CIA Director Bobby Ray Inman, director of the National Security Agency, deputy director of the CIA, and vice director of the Defense Intelligence Agency." According to the OC (*Orange County) Weekly, "Inman worked at the highest levels of American intelligence during an era (President Ronald Reagan) when it displayed a stunning lack of it. Inman's achievements include: failing to predict the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union; prolonging violent, useless civil wars in Central America; and giving arms to terrorists in exchange for hostages (Iran-Contra)."

"During the Bush administration, Inman, Perry and Deutch—while directors of Science Applications (SAIC), were also members of the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB), an advisory group

reporting to the President and the director of Central Intelligence, which deals with production, review and coordination of foreign intelligence," reports the Crypt. Both Inman and Deutch were former directors of the CIA. William J. Perry was also a former Secretary of Defense during the Clinton Administration.

SAIC proudly lists DARPA in its annual report as one of its prime clients. DARPA is the controversial Department of Defense (DOD) subsidiary, which until recently employed Admiral John Poindexter of Iran-Contra fame. Poindexter was forced to resign when it was revealed that DARPA was prepared to trade "futures" in terrorist attacks. DARPA has also developed a program to spy on American citizens, which has civil libertarians in an uproar.

So, what should Maryland's Governor Ehrlich do? Cancel the contracts with Diebold and SAIC, throw out all of the voting machines, and order a new batch of paper ballots. And most importantly, let the people count the votes.

([Avi Rubin's statement](#) / Rubin's webpage - <http://AviRubin.com> / Johns Hopkins report - <http://avirubin.com/vote.pdf>)

Lynn Landes is publisher of [Ecotalk.org](#). Formerly she was a talk show host and regular commentator for a BBC talk radio show and environmental news reporter for DUTV in Philadelphia. Her many articles and reporter's notes on the voting systems industry can be found at the website. She can be reached at 215-629-3553 for interviews or comments.

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