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September 22, 2003

Rear Admiral (ret.) Jim Carey
National Defense Committee
P.O. Box 151473
Alexandria, Virginia 22315-1473

Dear Admiral Carey,

The El Paso County (Colorado) Clerk kindly sent me the enclosed flyer and attachments from your organization. I can only hope the statements therein concerning the SERVE experiment were made as a result of ignorance and bad information provided to you. I would be appalled to learn you made these false and dangerous claims to gain additional funding or support for your organization.

Before going on let me state that I am a former Marine and my eldest son is a disabled veteran of the Marine Corps. Any of the references in the footing on this page should establish my technical and professional qualifications. And I live with an Air Force contracting officer so I'm well up to date on DoD boondoggles.

Since November of 2001 I have served on the IEEE Voting Equipment Standards committee (P1583) attempting to set basic standards for the use of computers in elections. Except for the most basic standards set by the Federal Election Commission, no substantial equipment standards yet exist to flesh out the actions mandated by the recent Help America Vote Act. And that is for the use of computers in the closely-controlled environment of an election precinct.

I hope you would agree that protection of the integrity of the election process is of foremost importance. Yet among citizens and engineers I discuss computer voting with there is a deep distrust of the process. You appear to have seen some of the many security concerns and disclosures recently aired in the press and via the Internet about computer voting. Many of these reports can be found at www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting.htm for reference. And to the best of my knowledge Diebold has not fixed the security problems pointed out in the Johns Hopkins report but, ostrich style, have repeatedly issued press reports denying there is a problem. Incidentally, I work independently so please spare me the *ad hominem* attack you used in your article against one of the authors of the Johns Hopkins/Rice study.

Then, following the Johns Hopkins report, in August the Diebold CEO promised to throw the electoral votes of Ohio to Bush. Now whether you are for or against Bush I would hope you don't want the manufacturers of vote counting equipment determining the outcome of American elections. And for a simple demonstration of how a computer can control an election see www.wheresthepaper.org. You get honest results in the test election but Mary Smith always wins in the "*real*" election no matter how many votes you give John Doe.

It is not too surprising that the Moscow Times (www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/09/19/120.html) has a clearer view of American elections than we do:

"It's a shell game, with money, companies and corporate brands switching in a blur of buyouts and bogus fronts. It's a sinkhole, where mobbed-up operators, paid-off public servants, crazed Christian fascists, CIA shadow-jobbers, war-pimping arms dealers — and presidential family members — lie down together in the slime. It's a hacker's dream, with pork-funded, half-finished, secretly programmed computer systems installed without basic security standards by politically partisan private firms, and protected by law from public scrutiny. It's how the United States, the *"world's greatest democracy,"* casts its votes."

I became particularly concerned when I learned that Election.com, who got the SERVE contract from DoD, is majority-owned by Saudis and Yemenis in Osan Ltd. Talk about a record for terrorism. Surely none of those people would have any interest in rigging American elections? Then, to continue the shell game, Election.com teamed with, or was bought out by Accenture, the offshore successor company to Andersen Consulting of Enron fame. Incidentally, I worked on several contracts with Andersen Consulting people before the Enron scandal and they scared me then.

There is also the problem that much, if not most of the programming and engineering for computer and Internet voting equipment is probably being done by foreign workers here on an H1-B visa. I can't think of a better way to hack these voting systems than having an insider do it while getting paid for it, and then going safely back to his own country before the problem shows up. So it isn't the *"troops on some mess decks of some ship or at the NCO club on some military base"* who would seem to be the problem. And I haven't yet met an H1-B visa holder who has taken *"an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States,"* or was concerned about *"being ordered into harms way."* These are such fundamental security issues as to seem self evident, yet you have ignored or ridiculed them. And remember that oath requires you to defend against *"all enemies, foreign or domestic."* One need not propose a massive conspiracy to rig an election in order to suggest that all reasonable precautions must be taken to protect the integrity of our elections.

One of the reasons that Colorado is not participating in the SERVE experiments is that two years ago I helped kill a bill in the Colorado Senate that would have authorized Internet voting. I have enclosed a copy of the letter I wrote the committee chair at that time. The problems with Internet voting given in that letter are as valid today as they were two years ago. While technically there is no real problem for anyone being able to cast a ballot via the Internet, I know of no qualified expert in computers and voting, and I know many, who thinks that Internet voting can currently be made safe and secure, and preserve a secret ballot while ensuring the elector casting the ballot is a qualified, registered voter who has not yet voted. So you are correct that there are *"persons and groups 'out there in America'"* who do not want Internet voting using current technology with no real standards for security or the equipment in place. We are called citizens and believe that the integrity of any election is a fundamental requirement.

Consider, with SERVE we could end up with another Clinton as Commander-in-Chief. The Chinese would probably find it cheaper than the rent on the Lincoln bedroom to have their people hack an Internet voting program. And my experience suggests Siprnet has been hacked. So I'm not impressed with how well the military has handled network security, let alone transmissions over the Internet.

As an earth scientist I have worked in many far-flung places including deserts, rain forests, glaciers, high mountain peaks, blue water oceanography over the entire North Pacific and some of the South Pacific, and other fun places. While I realize the propaganda value of your statements about SERVE allowing *"troops well forward of our lines...troops in the jungle..."* and so on to vote via the Internet you are quite clearly making false promises that can't be kept.
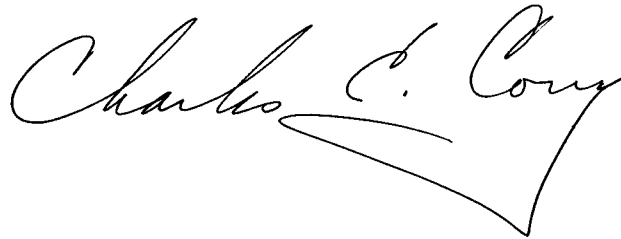
I've been there, with the best of gear. It ain't that reliable, and it ain't that lightweight that some grunt is going to want to add it to his backpack just so he can possibly vote even if Murphy isn't living in his back pocket like he does mine. My guess is that, nearly every time, an extra canteen of water is going to be much more valuable to that trooper than a laptop computer to vote with even if he can get communications through a triple-canopy forest in the rain. And I have a hard time typing when I'm scared, cold, hungry, tired, wet, and being hunted. However, good old-fashioned snail mail works most of the time from most anywhere. There is an ancient engineering adage that says if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

The problems with absentee balloting for military personnel that I've seen are more often associated with quirks and vagaries of individual state laws than with snail mail delivery of the ballots.

So what needs fixing are individual state laws.

Maybe you could get The National Defense Committee and Military.com to work on problems with absentee voting in individual states? That would be a lot more sensible than spending more taxpayer dollars ($72,000 per ballot was a trifle excessive for the first experiment) on yet another failure-prone DoD program that won't live up to its promises and may endanger the integrity of all American elections.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

Encl: Nat. Defense Comm. flyer
       Letter to Senator Alice Nichol

cc: Bob Balink, El Paso County Clerk