

More troubling, the backers of the act and the manufactures of e-voting machines are a rat's nest of conflicts that includes Northrop-Grumman, Lockheed-Martin, Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and Accenture. Why are major defense contractors like Northrop-Grumman and Lockheed-Martin mucking about in the American electoral system? And who are Accenture and EDS?

Until January 1, 2001, Accenture was known as Andersen Consulting, a part of Arthur Andersen. Despite having offshore headquarters, Accenture is a member of the U.S. Coalition of Service Industries (USCSI), an industry association that promotes vastly extending the privatization and free trade in services via the WTO and GATT. It also is a member of U.S. Trade, the coalition that pushed for fast-track trade authority. In February 2001, Accenture and election.com, the leading global election software and services company, formed "an alliance to jointly deliver comprehensive election solutions to governments worldwide. ... The companies will combine their strengths and experience in the development of election software and the use of technology to offer governments new efficiencies that aid election administration." *Election.com also has a contract with the Federal Voter Assistance program to provide online absentee balloting for the armed services. It is expected to be completely electronic, that is, have no paper trail against which to check results.*

This is worrisome because Accenture already has been involved in scandals in the United States and Canada. In the late '90s, the company was hired to overhaul Ontario's welfare service for \$50 million-\$70 million. By 2002, the project was capped at \$180 million, although the total reached \$246 million. To meet its contractual agreement with Accenture, the Ontario government was forced to cut welfare payments to \$355.71 per child in poverty and fire large numbers of social service workers. Election.com also had problems in Canada. The company contracted to provide online Internet voting for the National Democratic Party in 2003, but hackers paralyzed the central computer and disrupted voting. The security and accuracy of election.com's voting software has since come under attack by Canadian voters who also challenged the ballotless software.

EDS, another internationally oriented information technology corporation, recently received a \$51 million subcontract from Sytel Inc, a software and service provider to the Army, Air Force and Dow Chemical, among others, to "support personnel systems including personnel management, hiring and job postings, employee training, job exchange programs and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint tracking for the Department of Homeland Security."

Partisan ties

Why Northrop-Grumman, Lockheed-Martin, EDS and Accenture have been hired to alter the election process in America becomes clear when personnel is considered. The three largest voting machine companies in America are Election Systems and Software (ES&S), Sequoia and Diebold. Like Accenture, they, too, have tarnished pasts.

ES&S, formerly American Information Systems, is owned by the McCarthy Group, which was founded in the '90s by Michael McCarthy, campaign director to Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) during the

1996 and 2002 elections. In a January interview with Bev Harris on talion.com, McCarthy said that “Hagel still owns up to \$5 million in the ES&S parent company, the McCarthy Group” and that “Hagel also had owned shares in AIS Investors Inc., a group of investors in ES&S itself.” According to Harris, “Hagel did not disclose owning or selling shares in AIS Investors Inc.” to the Senate Ethics Committee, “nor did he disclose that ES&S is an underlying asset of McCarthy Group.” In an October article in the London Independent, Andrew Gumbel writes that Hagel “became the first Republican in 24 years to be elected to the Senate from Nebraska, cheered on by the Omaha World-Herald newspaper which also happens to be a big investor in ES&S.” In what can only be called a glaring conflict of interest, “80 per cent (sic) of Mr. Hagel’s winning votes—both in 1996 and in 2002—were counted, under the usual terms of confidentiality, by his own company.”

Sequoia is the second-largest company, with roughly one-third of the voting machine market. In 1999, the Justice Department filed federal charges against Sequoia alleging that employees paid out more than \$8 million in bribes. In 2001, election officials in Pinellas County, Florida, cancelled a \$15.5 million contract for voting equipment after discovering that Phil Foster, a Sequoia executive, faced indictment in Louisiana for money laundering and corruption.

Diebold is probably the best known of the three because of its recent unsuccessful attempt to quash the release of thousands of inter-office memos over the Internet. The memos show that Diebold executives were aware of bugs in the company’s software and warn that the network is poorly protected against hackers. The company also came under scrutiny because of voting irregularities caused by its machines in the 2000 election in Florida.

Diebold’s CEO, Walden O’Dell is an avid supporter of George W. Bush and has come under attack for penning a fund-raising letter in which he promised to help deliver Ohio’s votes to Bush in 2004. Diebold has been retained by the state of Maryland to provide voting software for the 2004 election, but because of ongoing negative publicity, Diebold hired Scientific Applications International Corporation (SAIC) of San Diego, to assess the security of the company’s voting software.

Many SAIC officers are current or former government and military officials. Retired Army Gen. Wayne Downing, who until last summer served as chief counter-terrorism expert on the National Security Council, is a member of SAIC’s board. Also on the board is former CIA Director Bobby Ray Inman, who served as director of the National Security Agency, deputy director of the CIA and vice director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. During the first Bush administration and while on the board of SAIC, Inman was a member of the National Foreign Intelligence Board, an advisory group that reports to the president and to the director of Central Intelligence.

Retired Adm. William Owens, a former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who sits on Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s Defense Policy Board, served as SAIC’s president and CEO and until recently was its vice chairman. He now is chairman of the board of VoteHere, which seeks to provide cryptography and computer software security for the electronic election industry. Robert Gates, ex-CIA director, former SAIC board member and a veteran of the Iran-Contra scandal, also is on the board of VoteHere.

SAIC has a history of problems. In a 1995 article in Web Review, investigative journalist Stephen

Pizzo notes that in 1990 the Justice Department indicted SAIC on 10 felony counts for fraud, claiming that SAIC mismanaged a Superfund toxic cleanup site. SAIC pleaded guilty. In 1993 the Justice Department again brought charges against the company for “civil fraud on an F-15 fighter contract.” In May 1995, the company was charged with lying “about security system tests it conducted for a Treasury Department currency plant in Fort Worth, Texas.”

It is not clear how SAIC became the company of choice to evaluate security standards of the voting machine industry. Under HAVA, Bush is required to establish an “oversight committee, headed by two Democrats and two Republicans, as well as a technical panel to determine standards for new voting machinery. The four commission heads were to be in place by last February, but [as of October 13] just one has been appointed. The technical panel also remains unconstituted, even though the new machines it is supposed to vet are already being sold in large quantities,” Gumbel says.

Many computer experts agree that electronic voting represents the most feasible means of conducting large-scale elections, but not until security of the software can be established. But the voting machine companies want to retain secrecy over their codes as well as maintain control over the entire voting process, including the counting of ballots.

Most voting machines do not provide a paper trail so, in the case of a recount, all one can do is push a button and watch as the computer spits out the same set of numbers.

Americans are being rushed into this electronic voting frontier with little public awareness of the consequences. Diebold already has between 35,000 and 50,000 machines in place around the country. With the government investing nearly \$4 billion in voting machines, those who insist on ensuring that the system is secure have been shunted aside.

Perhaps this is how the administration intends to bring democracy to the world: Hold elections using voting machines supplied by Diebold, ES&S and Sequoia and elect friendly governments. Then, hope that those people who have never experienced the democratic process won't know the difference. More troubling is that many Americans may not know the difference, either.

[h**p://inthesetimes.com/comments.php?id=490_0_1_0_M](http://inthesetimes.com/comments.php?id=490_0_1_0_M)

Aristotle International used a website to sell the lists, which contain details about registered voters from nearly every state. The data includes birth dates, home addresses, phone numbers, race, income levels, ethnic backgrounds and, in some cases, religious affiliations.
<http://www.wired.com/news/evote/0,2645,61543,00.html>

ChoicePoint was the firm that Katherine Harris, Florida's Secretary of State during the 2000 elections, paid to erase 57,000 names from the voter rolls. Supposedly, these were convicted felons forbidden to vote in Florida, but 90% of them turned out to be innocent of any crime--except perhaps Voting While Black

