

# Viewpoint: Quo vadis America? What land is this?

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There are no warlike peoples—just warlike leaders.

—Ralph Bunche

Anger, disgust, dejection, roll like waves across the country. There is another wave as well, the strong odor of election 2004. The front page of the U.K.'s Daily Mirror of Nov. 4 carried the headline: "How can 59,054,087 people be so DUMB?" How indeed!

Publisher Michael Ruppert declares flatly that "The electoral process is dead." Columnist John Kaminski said: "Your vote didn't count last time. Why would you expect it would now?"

Kaminski told Kerry supporters and others: "Stop whining about the vote. You got exactly what you deserved. A homicidal liar with the weaponry—and the willingness to kill everyone on the planet. This is the new American dream and it's your worst nightmare. You have only yourself to thank for not paying attention. Have a nice day." (johnkaminski.com)

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John Dean, of Watergate fame, said he suspects that what he termed “religious overtones and undercurrents” had a significant role in the outcome.

Fundamentalist ministers have been bragging about the huge voter turnout they produced, according to Dean. (Common Dreams.org)

**Vibe**

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But maybe the voters weren't as dense as portrayed; maybe it wasn't all values and morality, maybe something else was at work as well. The Election Incident Reporting System recorded 29,526 incidents of voting irregularities across the country.

Illinois had 1,369; Ohio 2,334; Pennsylvania 3,632; Texas 2,094; California 2,631; New Jersey 1,455; New York 2,377; Colorado 1,070; Arizona 1,096; and Wisconsin 753.

Bev Harris, who has spent several years investigating electronic voting machines, said: “Black Box Voting has taken the position that fraud took place in the 2004 election through electronic voting machines. We base this on hard evidence, documents obtained in public records requests, inside information, and other data indicative of manipulation of electronic voting systems. What we do not know is the specific scope of the fraud. We are

working now to compile the proof, based not on soft evidence—red flags, exit polls—but core documents obtained by Black Box Voting in the most massive Freedom of Information action in history.”

That there was dirty work at the crossroads in this election is beyond denial. Cindy Cohn, legal director for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said: “A number of people who thought they were voting for Kerry, when the screen came up it showed they were voting for Bush. We’ve seen it across several voting systems, not just one machine.”

By Nov. 3, members of the Election Protection Coalition had received 4,459 reports of ballot problems, 2,867 claims of polling place irregularities, and 7,152 complaints about voter registration problems. An additional 1,074 people said they had observed voter intimidation. Common Cause reported 50,000 calls to its election hot-line, though not all of them were about voting machine problems (counterpunch.org).

The Verified Voting Foundation said the worst problems occurred in Pennsylvania and the city of New Orleans, where many voters were turned away when machines broke down, and there weren’t enough paper ballots on hand.

Diebold, the second largest voting machine company, denies that audit logs in its machines can be changed. Yet, in October 2001, a memo from executive Ken Clark stated: "Right now you can open GEMS' mdb file with MS-Access and alter its contents. That includes the audit log. This isn't anything new. In VTS you can open the database with progress and do the same." (blackboxvoting.org)

An error with an e-voting system in suburban Columbus, Ohio, gave President Bush an extra 3,893 votes. One precinct had Bush with 4,258 votes to Kerry's 260 votes. There were only 638 ballots cast in that precinct. Bush's total should have been 365.

This election did little or nothing to improve our tarnished image in the eyes of the rest of the world. An editorial in The Daily Mirror commented: "America's greatest president, Abraham Lincoln, once advised: "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." Those who voted George Bush in for four more years removed all doubt that the majority of Americans have learned little since September 11, 2001."

Columnist Brian Reade snapped: "They had somehow managed to re-elect the most devious, blinkered and reckless leader ever

put before them. The Yellow Rogue of Texas. A self-serving, dim-witted, draft-dodging, gung-ho little rich boy whose idea of courage is to yell: 'I feel good,' as he unleashes an awesome fury which slaughters 100,000 innocents for no other reason than greed and vanity." (Daily Mirror)

Terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna said there is a general consensus that the U.S., its allies and friends face a more serious terrorist threat than before 9/11. Speaking of Bush, Gunaratna said: "He realizes that without the support of the Europeans, without the support of the Asian and Middle Eastern countries, especially the Muslim countries, he cannot persist." (khaleejtimes.com–Dubai, United Arab Emirates)

The newspaper said Bush's re-election created widespread dismay among Arab populations who fear the next four years could bring wider chaos and bloodshed in their region.

One startling peculiarity about Bush supporters is that they believe the rest of the world favors Bush policies and have great regard for the president. They also believe Bush holds policy positions that, in fact, are completely the opposite of what he does embrace. This despite a number of public opinion surveys in Europe and the Mideast that

show considerable hostility toward the U.S. (Guardian Unlimited.com)

Much of the direction of American foreign policy in the next four years will be determined by the makeup of Bush's cabinet. Some observers believe Attorney General John Ashcroft and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge will be stepping down. We also may see the departure of Colin Powell and possibly Donald Rumsfeld.

There were international observers attending this election. They said they had less access to the polls than they did in Kazakhstan, that our e-voting system had fewer safeguards than in Venezuela, the ballots were less simplified than in the Republic of Georgia, and that no other country has such a complex electoral system. (smirking chimp.com)

“To be honest, monitoring elections in Serbia a few months ago was much simpler,” said Konrad Olszewski, an observer stationed in Miami, who works with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. “They (Serbia) have one national election law and use the paper ballots I really prefer over any other system.”

Kaminski argues that electronic vote fraud and “deliberately

distracting debates” are not the chief stories of this election.

“No,” he said, “there is a bigger question than vote fraud, or the manipulation of public opinion by unscrupulous media corporations, or the fact that the two political parties are actually one, and that the loyal opposition seeks only to emulate the party in power rather than oppose it, which means it no longer has a chance of winning anything. The biggest question of all is about the caliber—and the sanity—of the American people. The mask is off now.”

Publisher Ruppert, in a piece titled “Snap Out of It,” asserts: “The biggest ball and chain for us now is the notion that we might resurrect an electoral process that officially died four years ago. Anything brought to life now would be a Frankenstein rather than a happy ending to an episode of ER; and at what additional cost in terms of time and energy? America will fight for oil wherever it feels the need.” (fromthewilderness.com)

One disillusioned voter summed it up this way: “Vote, don’t vote, it doesn’t matter any more. An e-voting machine without a paper trail will only generate the results its extremist Christian Reconstructionist Dominion theocracy underpants gnomes programmers have told it to. What are ya gonna do? Vote out the people who installed the

machines? Try it. The machine  
says you voted for them.”

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