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**Reflections on Election Fraud and its
Persistence in Modern Democracy**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
A History of Electoral Corruption	4
Election Fraud in the United Kingdom.....	6
The role of the Courts	8
UK Electoral Law	9
Governmental Responsibility for Elections	9
The 2006 Electoral Administration Act	9
United States of America	10
The Role of the Judiciary in American Elections	14
Electoral Authoritarianism.....	15
The tools of the electoral autocrat	16
Elections in Putin’s Russia.....	16
It’s not just Putin	17
Failed Electoral Authoritarianism	19
Conclusion	19
References.....	19
Epilogue by L. Burke Files DDP CACM, President AACI.....	23

Executive Summary

I have been obsessively interested in electoral corruption since I first began my studies at the University of Wales and took a course covering the history of corruption. After over thirty years in electoral politics my interest in the subject persists to this day. My first attempt to win an election was in a small Welsh valley town called Aberdare. My attempt to win the parliamentary seat failed when I was not selected as the candidate for the Labour Party as the result of a deal between some of the local trade unions. Two of the unions had made an agreement over which candidate to support and this swung the decision against me. I was extremely angry and saw it as a corrupt practise, but in reality this was just how trade unions worked within the Labour Party at the time. As a firm believer in the mantra if you can't beat them, join them, I subsequently became a trade union member and have remained so to this day! After that initial failed attempt to win a seat, I was eventually chosen to contest the constituency of Walsall South on behalf of the Labour Party – a seat everyone at the time believed was unwinnable. So it was with some surprise that in 1974 I won the seat and entered Parliament for the first time. I would later be re-elected nine times before eventually choosing to retire in 2010. Over the course of my 35 plus years in parliament, democracy and elections became one of the subjects I focused on both at home and abroad. As a Member of Parliament I was also chosen to sit on the UK delegations to the NATO and OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies and through my membership of both organisations spent much time travelling the world as an election observer. As a result of this I have witnessed first hand a significant amount of election fraud.

In this paper I offer a detailed examination of election fraud, both looking at the history of the problem and it's continuing influence in the world today. I hope by offering my insights and experience gained over the last forty years I can provide a useful perspective on the matter at hand. As will become clear in the pages that follow election fraud is not an issue for the history books. Whilst the perception may be that this is no longer a problem for Western democracies I hope to show

that this is an issue that all democracies should be concerned with, both old and new. To demonstrate this I will offer a number of case studies including the UK and the USA to show that even in the oldest of democracies we must still be vigilant.

Introduction

With the expansion of global democracy throughout much of the twentieth century elections have now become widespread; indeed they are now the accepted political norm. There is now barely a country that does not hold periodic elections, even in those that we would not consider democracies there is often the pretence of holding elections. The growth of democratisation, particularly falling within what the academic Samuel Huntington has called the “three waves of democratisation” [1] has witnessed the progressive enhancement of standards leading to acceptable and what has often been called “free and fair” elections. Yet fraud in some forms persists. And while the temptation may be to argue that election fraud is an issue for new and emerging democracies, my own experience (as both a former Member of Parliament, and a long serving election observer with the OSCE) would suggest that election fraud and corruption remains a problem for even well established democracies.

The British historian Lord Acton (1834 – 1902) once said ‘the one prevailing evil of democracy is the tyranny of the majority, or rather of that party, not always the majority, that succeeds by force or fraud, in carrying elections’ [2]. He may have been descriptively correct at the time of writing and his analysis continues to have great relevance today. The principal perpetrators of election fraud are those governments whose leaders continue to use a wide variety of methods to deny their political opponents the opportunity of winning elections. They may use the machinery of the state to make it highly unlikely that power can be legitimately transferred via the ballot box. We are still witnessing in countries like Zimbabwe and Kazakhstan more than just old-fashioned ballot stuffing but a high degree of complex election manipulation that in some instances can include voter intimidation, violence and even murder.

Over the course of my career in public life I have studied many forms of fraud and corruption, and in that time I have come to consider that election fraud is one of the most serious forms of corruption. I put to you a statement of my own that will unlikely survive as long as Lord Acton's but which I believe is just as important – 'election fraud is one of the worst, if not *the* worst, form of fraud; in that whole Governments, whole economic, political and social systems and much of the wealth therein can be stolen as a result of corrupt elections'. It is not necessary to be poor to be guilty of electoral fraud, deception, and crime. Where serious fraud exists it is generally organised directly or indirectly by the executive in order to sustain its political or financial hegemony. However there are numerous cases where oppositions have indulged in major and serious election fraud.

A History of Electoral Corruption

Before I look at the current state of election fraud I would like to examine the history of election fraud, as doing so will inform our understanding of the current practices seen within our democratic states. In the 18th and 19th centuries where elections took place they did so, with few honourable exceptions, in situations where the franchise was severely restricted. The passage of legislation to extend the vote (to women for example) had barely begun. Gradually however international norms began to be established in the early 20th Century.

There are many definitions of what electoral crime is. Bribery and corruption are but two elements. As writers Alvarez, Hall and Hyde have identified there is little agreement as to how we can define electoral fraud –

“The relative nature of election fraud and the widely variant historical, cultural and institutional contexts in which election fraud has occurred make the development of a clear and consistent definition (of electoral fraud) a complicated, if not impossible, undertaking.” [3]

The definition that I generally ascribe to is that developed by the UK Electoral Commission in 2003 when they conducted a review into fraud.

They defined what they saw as three key elements of election fraud –

“**Electoral fraud:** Deliberate wrong-doing in the electoral process, which is intended to distort the individual or collective will of the electorate.

Electoral malpractice: The breach by an election professional of his or her relevant duty, resulting from carelessness or neglect rather than deliberate intent.

Non-electoral fraud: Deliberate wrong-doing involving the electoral process, but which is intended to influence or defraud an individual or body unrelated to the electoral process.” [4]

Regardless of the specific definition that you ascribe to the thing that unites all aspects of electoral fraud, as the Electoral Commission highlights, is “the intention to distort the will of the electorate.” [5]

I use the term corruption, not very precisely, but for convenience to encompass a wide range of illegal activities that can influence the outcome of elections. In the 19th Century these activities, not all of which were actually illegal, included:

- Direct bribery
- Indirect bribery
- Corruption
- Intimidation
- Ballot stuffing
- Exclusion of many sectors of society through a restrictive franchise.
- Unfair electoral boundaries producing an enormously different ratio of electors to population.
- Illegal funding of parties

The list is far from complete but covers what were the most pervasive elements. In my experience observing elections around the world it is a sad truth that I have witnessed first hand many of these activities still in existence in the 21st century.

The term 'election fraud' is used throughout the world, and often has slightly different meanings, but it is a term that covers a whole range of different types of malpractice, fraud and deliberately poor administration of elections. Many different types of fraud can be distinguished, the following are notable examples:

- Attempting to manipulate the number of people who are able to vote. This can be done by allowing non eligible citizens to vote, intimidating eligible citizens into not casting their votes, or by delivering false information to people eligible to vote causing them to turn up at an incorrect polling station or arrive on the wrong day altogether.
- Private groups have been known to volunteer to collect voter registration forms from voters and return to the registrars the forms of only the individuals who mirror the groups' political beliefs.
- Bribery and intimidation to persuade voters to vote in a certain way.
- Any effort to manipulate the counting of votes which then go on to be certified, causing a false result [6].

Democracy in recent centuries began slowly; the famous American political scientist Samuel Huntington identified three waves of democracy with the latest beginning around 1989. Those who form part of that "Third Wave" did so with remarkable speed, induced, in part, by the pressures for democratisation, good governance and human rights demanded by NATO and the EU as a precondition for entry into their ranks. That speed came at a price, namely imperfections and inadequacies at what had been created in a hurry. This included a very heavy dose of crime and general corruption, a carry on from the era of Communism. It is not my intention to consider the different approaches to establishing democratic governance, regardless to say that few countries have achieved a perfect democratic state. Even some of the oldest and largest democracies cannot claim to have achieved perfect democratic governance. The two countries that I am most

familiar with for example, the UK and the US, don't come out too well when compared with other democratic states.

If we look at the *Economist Intelligence Unit's* Democracy Index [7] (an annual report on the state of democratic countries) we can see clearly that even well established democracies still have room for improvement. Their study divides governments into one of four categories –

1. Full democracies
2. Flawed democracies
3. Hybrid regimes
4. Authoritarian

In their most recent Index *The Economist* Intelligence unit puts the UK at number 14 – barely in the Premiership of democracies! [8] Predictably the top positions go to the Scandinavian countries plus the Netherlands. Galling for the Brits is Australia's position at number 6! The United States unfortunately sits even further down the rankings at number 19 and scores poorly on the functioning of government and political participation elements.

As I mentioned earlier, the twentieth century saw a significant increase in global democracy during the third wave of democratisation spurred by the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union. As David Potter in the book *Democratization* [9] says

“Democratization has been a major global phenomenon during the 20th Century. It has spread with particular vigour since the 1970s ... this rapid political transformation began in Southern Europe in the mid 1970s, spread to Latin America, and parts of Asia in the 1980s, and then moved on to parts of sub – Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s”.

Regrettably, towards the end of the century we began to witness something of regression. There are many forms of democracy that need not bother us nor will I do any justice to the enormous number of definitions for in the sake of brevity I will note

there is precious little agreement on how to define it. Though if we take an institutional view, that is what are the structures necessary for democracy, to take place there is a certain commonality of approach. It will include constitutionalism, rule of law, competitive political parties, freedom of speech and association, a competitive legislature (including an opposition with a capital O in the British sense i.e. a formal Her Majesties Loyal Opposition or less structured opposition with a small o); the list is long but I would like to highlight three particularly essential components.

1. Wide participation
2. Electoral competition with a secret ballot.
3. Periodic elections.

Of all the many criteria for describing a country as democratic and to a lesser extent as democratising is “free and fair elections”. The term was previously used by election observers when assessing the outcome of an election, and while it is still widely used in some circles (including the media) it is no longer in vogue with election specialists (i.e. the UN, OSCE, EU etc) who prefer the phrase “meeting international standards”. It would be wrong to say election fraud is tolerated, but there are relatively few countries that have avoided election fraud completely. In many countries electoral fraud is rampant, indeed systemic.

What follows is an examination of electoral fraud in two different forms of democracy. I will initially look at two countries that the Economist has classified full democracies – the United Kingdom and the United States. I will show that even in these long established democracies electoral fraud remains an issue for concern. I will then look at the other end of the spectrum – those classified as authoritarian. I will examine the concept of electoral authoritarianism and present examples of whole scale electoral corruption.

Election Fraud in the United Kingdom

As someone who has spent his career in politics I have had plenty of opportunity to witness British

democracy at its best, and its worst. For the UK the history of election fraud goes back to the very earliest days of democracy.

The Greeks of Ancient Athens are widely accepted as the originators of democracy. It is beyond my self-imposed remit to argue the merits and demerits of Athenian democracy, other than to say they designed elaborate measures to ensure the will of the electors was translated into reality and not allowed to be manipulated through fraud. Italian city states in the medieval era found their endeavours to have honest elections challenged by the unscrupulous. The attempts in England from the medieval period onwards to establish elections were not really designed to give more than a tiny section of the population the chance to choose who would be elected to the House of Commons. In these early elections fraud was substantial, indeed it was common practise across the country. As the size of the electorate grew (with glacial speed) throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the techniques and success of massive fraud paved the way for others to follow, sadly for a period this was a lesson many other countries sought to emulate. Britain’s American colonies replicated the mother country’s traditions of election fraud in the 17th Century. While England was the model to follow, the infant Republic learnt swiftly how to make their own adaptations and innovations. Whilst the UK passed numerous and effective laws towards the end of the 19th Century, quite successfully minimising different aspects of fraud, the US soldiered on. Even today, despite some endeavours by the courts, Congress and the institutions of State and Local Government, electoral fraud in my view remains a most serious problem in America. We will look at this later on.

Fraud was systemic in Britain throughout the 17th, 18th and much of the 19th Century and this persisted, despite some limited legislative attempts to combat it. Gerrymandering of parliamentary constituencies was strong although legislation progressively reduced it. Nowadays the independent *Boundary Commission for England* has removed the problem of gerrymandering in British politics. I could argue one possible exception however that occurred in the last few

years. Whilst the Boundary Commission is independent, its work is directed by Parliament and in 2011 there was a plan passed in Parliament to reduce the number of seats in the House of Commons. This led the Boundary Commission to conduct a review to determine how this reduction should be achieved. What resulted was a plan that many argued would have been a clear advantage to the governing Conservative party and in a subsequent vote in 2013 the plan was effectively scrapped after the Conservative's junior coalition partner (the Liberal Democrats) joined the opposition Labour Party in voting it down.

The British electorate began to slowly expand after the 1832 Reform Act and with it the country still witnessed what was called organised disfranchisement. It would take many more pages to list election corruption in this unreformed system. Yes there were bribery acts, but votes were for sale, whole electorates were paid to cast their votes in the chosen way. Even the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge couldn't elect their MPs without a combination of sophisticated and rather traditional methods of cheating. In addition to the many manifestations of bribery both direct and indirect, intimidation played a prominent role. Author Charles Seymour wrote in *Electoral Reform in England and Wales* (published in 1915), "in South Cheshire the Landlords brought their tenants to the poll to vote just like well-drilled soldiers" [9]. Influence on voters was often very strong. The Master of a Cambridge college fired his gardener for not voting for the chosen candidate; the screws were put on trades' people; the influence of Government, the military and navy could be very strong and the pulpit also echoed threats and exhortation.

Treating, that is providing large quantities of food drink and other delights, was routine and pub owners dearly loved elections. With election corruption a significant problem there were numerous attempts to tackle the problem during this period. There were many debates in Parliament in the middle of the 19th century, although most of the MPs were themselves the beneficiaries of fraud. Parliament had the ability to set up a host of Select Committees that investigated

election fraud. Each burrowed away with an incredible enthusiasm for a Committee chosen by lot, without legal experience, and composed of members who may well have won their own elections through fraudulent means. I have spent many an hour reading the reports that came out of these committees and it is clear that this system of oversight was inadequate and ill prepared to effectively counter fraud.

As the pace of electoral reform quickened this parliamentary approach looked increasingly ridiculous and the task was eventually handed to the judiciary. One subsequent report condemned every election since 1832 as totally corrupt and in the final report the judges had asked over 50,000 questions. That period witnessed major reform legislation with new Acts passed in 1883, 1884, 1885 and this legislation had a significant impact, particularly the *Corrupt Practices Act* of 1883. Of course the passage of legislation was not a magic wand and fraud did not disappear immediately but progressively over a few decades.

The *Representation of the People Act* 1983 (as amended) describes election fraud as any one of the following acts:

- (1) *A person shall be guilty of an offence, if, at a parliamentary or local government election, he—*
 - (a) *fraudulently defaces or fraudulently destroys any nomination paper; or*
 - (b) *fraudulently defaces or fraudulently destroys any ballot paper, or the official mark on any ballot paper, or any postal voting statement or declaration of identity or official envelope used in connection with voting by post; or*
 - (c) *without due authority supplies any ballot paper to any person; or*
 - (d) *fraudulently puts into any ballot box any paper other than the ballot paper which he is authorised by law to put in; or*

*(e) fraudulently takes out of the polling station any ballot paper; or
(f) without due authority destroys, takes, opens or otherwise interferes with any ballot box or packet of ballot papers then in use for the purposes of the election; or
(g) fraudulently or without due authority, as the case may be, attempts to do any of the foregoing acts [11].*

The role of the Courts

The courts began to play a serious role in dealing with fraud, corruption and intimidation etc. particularly in the late 19th Century and this continues today. The courts are widely engaged following allegations of illegality and different offences can be dealt with by different structures within the Judiciary dependent upon the Act of Parliament. I refer to a few recent though well-publicised cases.

There was a quite dramatic transformation in electoral ethics after the progressive electoral reform post *Reform Act* of 1832. Electoral courts which had done so much to frighten politicians into good behaviour were rarely called for over a century. There was still legislation passed to improve the State's armoury of preventing and punishing election offences, strengthening and depoliticising boundary changes, and broadening the franchise. Women, albeit aged 29, were given the vote in 1918 partly in reward for the near abandonment of the suffragette's activities during the war but more in recognition of the legitimacy of their cause. In 1928 the age of voting was equalised to 21. Such was the success in largely eliminating election fraud that Government and Parliament grew progressively more complacent. Fraud was apparently history and the ease with which the public could vote and the absence of checks that are commonplace in most democratic (and some undemocratic) countries meant that outsiders were often aghast. Until recently no domestic or international observers were legally allowed to monitor UK elections, it remains incredibly easy to vote with ease of postal vote and

there is no requirement to present proof of identity prior to voting (as is true in many other countries). What dramatically destroyed this complacency bordering on arrogance were the local elections in 2004. Serious election fraud was perpetrated in a number of English cities but specifically in Birmingham which neighboured my own constituency.

The Birmingham case largely involved the theft of incomplete postal votes and filling them in illegally at what has been called by the election court judge "an election factory". The judge made a number of strong recommendations, in particular how to raise the barriers much higher against fraud. In his final report the Judge, Richard Mawrey QC famously compared Birmingham to a 'banana republic'. In his 192 page report he stated –

"Anybody who has sat through the case and listened to evidence of electoral fraud that would disgrace a banana republic would find this surprising...[It] indicates a state not simply of complacency, but of denial. The systems to deal with fraud are not working well. They are not working badly. The fact is that there are no systems to deal realistically with fraud." [12]

Such was the success of transferring responsibility to examine election petitions following an alleged fraudulent election following from MPs to election courts that the number of petitions virtually dried up. Until the 2004 case in Birmingham the last election court to have "voided" an election was in 1923.

The 1883 act ought to have eliminated electoral fraud, but the Birmingham case shattered this self-righteous illusion. When the 2004 case was heard before the court the judge concluded "all three Labour respondents were present in the warehouse, filling out blank ballot papers and/or altering or destroying those that did not contain votes for them" [13]. The judge also used the case as an opportunity to be, justifiably, critical of the Postal Voting system in the UK saying "cheating the system (of PV) would not require the talents of a Professor Moriati" [14]. The judge wrote in very

un-judgelike language “short of writing ‘steal – me’ on the envelopes, It is hard to see what more could be done to ensure they’re coming into the wrong hands.” [15]

The British appear to move when obliged by some public scandal. Birmingham did just that. The Government’s approach was also influenced by the desire to increase turnout, something postal voting seemed to achieve, at least in the short term. However the bad press after Birmingham led to a quick change. The Government moved very swiftly, by Governmental standards, to amend the laws regulating elections.

UK Electoral Law

Parliament has passed Acts and legislations with regards to elections for centuries. The earliest that I have been able to discover was the *Parliamentary Elections Act* of 1695. Significant legislation and Acts passed by Parliament in the last four decades include:

- *The Election Petition Rules Act* 1960
- *Representation of the People Act* 1983
- *The Parliamentary Constituencies Act* 1986
- *The Boundary Commissions Act* 1992
- *Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act* 2000
- *The Local Government Act* 2000
- *Electoral Administration Act* 2006
- *Electoral Registration and Administration Act* 2013

The British enjoyed the self-satisfaction of having amongst the best, ‘freest and fairest’ of elections and many of Acts of Parliament sought to reinforce this good practise. The Electoral Commission wrote in 2001 “the administration of elections tends to be a topic of little public interest, perhaps a reflection of the invisible efficiency of the administrative machinery.” [16] Yet this long age of innocence, indeed smugness, at the quality of our elections began to decline. Ironically the part of the country that had the most corrupt elections at the time – Northern Ireland – are now the most ethical.

Governmental Responsibility for Elections

Ultimate responsibility for the setting of election policy rests with Government and Parliament. The administration and implementation of that policy partly used to rest with the Home Office – with an amazingly small staff - until the 12th June 2003 when the Government announced plans to modernise the constitution and public services. As a result the *Department for Constitutional Affairs* was created. In 2007 the department was renamed the Department of Justice. The staff base for electoral administration is still small, but the implementation of national policy has been devolved down to municipal Government to Election Officers and their staff. There has been much criticism of this because of the non-uniformity of standards. As we will shortly discuss, the United States offers a much more complex system of dealing with election fraud and malpractice (as well as with the administration of elections), with a variety of Government organisations at Federal, State, and local levels as well as NGOs and Universities that scrutinise electoral processes.

The 2006 Electoral Administration Act

As has already been briefly mentioned following the Birmingham case (and others) in 2004 the government moved to make changes to the electoral law. The 2004 cases revealed the appalling weaknesses in postal voting and the need for better voter identification. Therefore the 2006 *Electoral Administration Act* focused heavily on voter registration and postal voting. As well as fraud it sought to clean up the election processes and make them more effective. Furthermore the 1983 *Representation of the Peoples Act* was amended by the 2006 Act in relation to false registration and the design of ballot papers.

The current British armoury of prevention and punishment in terms of election fraud includes:

- 1) strengthened laws and tougher sentencing
- 2) local election officers given more power to investigate voters that they believe to be suspicious

- 3) Training of police officers at local level, so all areas have at least one policeman who knows the prevalence and means of election fraud, and are in a position to stop it from occurring.

But for all the improvements there are still acts of fraud occurring during British elections. As a prime example there is currently a case before the Crown Court where a parliamentary candidate for UKIP (a right wing political party) has been charged with several counts of electoral fraud, specifically for making a false statement in nomination papers and making a false instrument with intent. Other problems that have occurred in recent years include a number of instances where it is alleged political donations were sought to fund election campaigns in exchange for civil honours or seats in the House of Lords. UK legislation will need to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

United States of America

Given that my wife hails from the United States it is perhaps no surprise that I am almost as fascinated with American elections than I am with those here at home. I have visited America more than any other country and on a number of occasions have formally acted as an OSCE election observer during the Presidential elections. I last formally observed an American election in 2008 when Barack Obama was first elected. Through the time I have spent in America I believe and argue here whilst the UK has a longer history of election fraud, the issue today is more deep rooted in the US, particularly at local level. While it was, of course, far more extensive in the 19th Century, even US Presidents in the 20th Century are known to have had form when it came to cheating or condoning cheating carried out on their behalf. Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, John F Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson, come instantly to mind, and we shall see how fraud played a role in each of their elections.

The recorded history of electoral misdemeanours in the United States goes back as far as the 17th Century. In 1649 the first law regarding to

electoral standards was passed in the British colonies. The General Court of Warwick in Rhode Island enacted a law that decreed:

“no one should bring into any votes that he did not receive from the voters own hands, and that all votes should be filed by the Recorder in the presence of the Assembly” [17]

Even iconic politicians like Washington and Jefferson were not above “treating” in order to get elected. George Washington was questioned over the amounts he spent during his campaign when it transpired that he bought wine and spirits for the hundreds of constituencies in his district! [18] James Madison however stood apart from other politicians of the time in his election in 1770 staunchly opposed to “corrupting influence” – suffice to say he lost!

The emergence of political parties in the US only exacerbated this growing activity. It would be superfluous to do more than mention the endless variety of ways in which African-Americans were denied the vote after the Civil War and probably much earlier (some would say these methods are still used in some parts of the USA).

There were many Presidential election contests mired in heavy fraud, in fact we would go as far as to say the majority of elections exhibited serious fraud. Even heroic figures like Harry Truman, who we mentioned earlier, were implicated. He may or may not have known about the frauds. A number of biographies refer to him in his senatorial career as the member for Pendergast [19] the name of the infamous machine that ran Kansas City, Missouri. Not to be outdone by its Missouri big city competitor, St Louis was equally corrupt in elections made to major and minor offices. There are numerous books that detail how John Kennedy won his office in 1960, not least with the help of the mafia in Chicago and elsewhere and the redoubtable Mayor Daley [20]. Mayor Daley and his political machine was perhaps the most notorious example of election fraud in America. As one biography of the Mayor noted, “precinct captains were under pressure to run up the count

however they could – ghost voting, bribing voters with groceries or whiskey, getting machine partisans to vote “early and often,” or literally stuffing the ballot box.” [21] Daley’s corruption of the political process was helped in part through the control that the Chicago political machine exerted over the Board of Elections, an organisation who were supposed to protect against electoral corruption.

President Truman’s successor, Lyndon Johnson, took those corrupt skills to even higher levels – or should we say lower levels! He even cheated in his election at college. One author wrote “just as Harry Truman would never have been a national figure without the Pendergast Machine, Lyndon Johnson would never have emerged as a leader of the Democratic Party and Presidential aspirant without the support of a number of powerful Texans who knew how to deliver the vote”.

One of the most recent infamous examples of electoral malpractice was the 2000 Presidential election. Much has been written about the role of Florida in George Bush’s victory in 2000. Florida is a state where major fraud is far from unknown – and that’s putting it mildly. In fact it was the controversy surrounding the Florida election that led the OSCE two years later to mount their first observation mission in the USA. As was stated in the report at the time

“Shortcomings in Florida during 2000 included problems with voting equipment used by some counties resulting in a high rate of invalid ballots, a lack of sufficient guidance to county officials by the state Division of Elections, inadequate training of election personnel, lack of uniformity in ballot design and counting procedures, inaccuracies in the voter register, discrepancies in regulations for overseas voting, and a lack of resources for voter education. Serious allegations were also made that some of these shortcomings, in particular the wholesale disenfranchisement of felons and inaccurate maintenance of the felons list,

had a disproportionate impact on minority voters, particularly African Americans.” [22]

It would be wrong, however, to focus on Florida alone. Note the *Conyers Report* on the 2004 Presidential election in Ohio (*What Went Wrong in Ohio* [23]). Witnesses consulted in putting together the report included both Republicans and Democrats, elected officials, voting machine company employees, poll observers, and many voters who testified about the harassment they endured, some of which led to actual vote repression. The report started by stating –

“We have found numerous, serious election irregularities in the Ohio presidential election, which resulted in a significant disenfranchisement of voters. Cumulatively, these irregularities, which affected hundreds of thousand of votes and voters in Ohio, raise grave doubts regarding whether it can be said the Ohio electors selected on December 13, 2004, were chosen in a manner that conforms to Ohio law, let alone federal requirements and constitutional standards.” [24]

While shreds of the electoral chaos in Ohio were reported in the press, the issue soon faded from public view. ‘*What Went Wrong In Ohio*’ focuses on reviewing new insights into the abuse and manipulation of electronic voting machines and the arbitrary and illegal behaviour of a number of elected and election officials which effectively disenfranchised tens of thousands of voters in order to change the outcome of an election. The fact that behaviour like this means that there is need in America for a network of bodies to monitor all aspects of election, and attempt to standardise practices in order to make the massive undertaking of elections as fair as is possible.

Whilst obvious lessons have been learnt from this recent history (such as the passage of the *Florida Election Reform Act* 2001, the *Help America Vote Act* 2002) there are serious concerns that remain in place. Of particular recent concern has been the

dismantlement of key provisions of the *Voting Rights Act* by the Supreme Court. Whilst in the UK I believe the involvement of the judicial system has improved the oversight of elections and the reduction of electoral fraud, I cannot make the same statement about the US (at least not about the Supreme Court). One of the central provisions of the *Voting Rights Act* was intended to curb the tendencies of some states to restrict the vote in such a way as to disenfranchise voters from ethnic minorities. Under Sections 4 and 5 of the Act 15 proscribed states (those who had previous experience of acting in such a manner) had to have any changes to State election law approved at the Federal level to make sure they were legitimate attempts to improve elections. Despite having been in place since 1965 and regularly reauthorized by Congress, the Supreme Court, by a vote of 5-4 struck down these parts of the law, effectively making them unworkable. Since 2006 when Congress last reauthorized the legislation the Department of Justice had blocked 31 proposed changes to electoral legislation in the States. As an immediate result of this decision a number of states moved quickly to introduce new restrictive voting laws, a number of which had previously been rejected when sent to the Department of Justice for review. The truly excellent Brennan Centre for Justice, who I was lucky enough to visit with during the 2008 election, tracked the changes that were introduced following the decision by the Supreme Court.

“Since the beginning of 2013, and as of December 18, 2013, restrictive voting bills have been introduced in more than half the states:

- At least 92 restrictive bills were introduced in 33 states.
- Of those, 13 restrictive bills are still pending in 5 states.
- Of those, 5 restrictive bills are currently active in 2 states, [1] in that there has been legislative activity beyond introduction and referral to committee (such as hearings, committee activity, or votes).
- 8 states have already passed 9 restrictive bills this session.” [25]

The trend continued in 2014 with the Centre tracking the introduction of 83 bills in 29 states (though only 4 bills would actually pass in two states). [26]

One of the major changes to be introduced as a result of the Florida election in 2002 was the establishment of the Electoral Assistance Commission. (EAC) has its own definition of ‘Election Crimes’ which was created in order to facilitate their studies on the subject. Their definition, whilst long winded, covers the majority of what may be considered fraudulent practices:

“Election Crimes are intentional acts of wilful failures to act, prohibited by state or federal law, that are designed to cause ineligible persons to participate in the election process; eligible persons to be excluded from the election process; ineligible votes to be cast in an election; eligible votes not to be cast or counted; or other interference with or invalidation of election results. Election crimes generally fall into one of four categories: acts of deception, acts of coercion, acts of damage or destruction, and failures or refusals to act.”
[27]

The EAC recognises that election fraud in America is by no means a new phenomenon, but also says the way in which election crimes are investigated needs to be updated. Past election fraud has been studied but these studies have been “limited in scope” and conducted with no small amount of bias. They conclude this landmark report by saying that the EAC will compile a thorough database of election crimes throughout the country, discover what election crimes exist and where they are most prevalent, and perhaps most importantly investigate the factors that cause, and prevent, the existence of election crimes.

While this sounds like a promising start, a shadow was cast over very public allegations that this report was edited by the EAC without the permission of the consultants who drafted it prior to publication. The accusation was that the changes were made for “political reasons”. While the EAC was cleared of charges as a result of a report by the Commission Office of Inspector General in March 2008, it does throw into question whether electoral fraud in America can ever be investigated on a truly non partisan basis.

The issue that the EAC were alleged to have amended the report over was voter ID and its impact on election fraud versus voter turnout. As the think tank Demos stated in a subsequent research paper “controversy over research on voter ID, voter fraud and voter intimidation conducted for the Election Assistance Commission, a federal agency created by HAVA, which suggested little evidence of voter fraud and a potentially negative impact of restrictive ID rules on voter turnout, has undermined the agency’s credibility, further politicizing the issues.” [28]

Another body that deals with the administration of elections in the US – albeit from a more financial point of view – is the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC was established when President Theodore Roosevelt recognised the need for some regulation when it came to campaign finance [29]. He wanted to eventually ban all corporate contributions for political purposes. Congress enacted several statutes between 1907 – 1966 which essentially sought to:

- Limit the disproportionate influence of wealthy individuals and special interest groups on the outcome of federal elections;
- Regulate spending in campaigns for federal office; and
- Deter abuses by mandating public disclosure of campaign finances. [30]

These efforts were then enhanced and emphasised more effectively in the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act. This Act essentially imposed more stringent restrictions on federal candidates.

However these changes proved difficult to enforce while there was no central body charged with the task. After severe financial abuses in the 1972 presidential election however action was taken on this front, and the FEC was established in 1974. Major reform was seen in 2002 with the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. This act banned national parties from raising so-called “soft money” to help with their campaign.

Unfortunately as with the Voting Rights Act, the role of the Supreme Court has had what I believe to be an extremely negative impact on the nature of campaign financing in the American elections. The Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* [31] held that the 1st Amendment of the US constitution banned the government from restricting the financing of elections by independent non-profit corporations. This and a number of other court decisions led to a surge in the amount of money spent during election campaigns. The 2012 Presidential election saw unprecedented levels of funding. As Demos put it

“The first presidential campaign cycle since the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* ruling lived up to its hype, breaking previous records for total spending and exaggerating the undue electoral power of wealthy individuals and special interests to the point of awakening unprecedented public focus on the failings of our campaign finance system.” [32]

Before the FEC was established, Congress had a far greater role in Elections and their administration. The emergence of the FEC resulted in a loss of the roles Congress once played. A cursory search of *The Rules of The House Of Representatives 2007* reveals the different functions of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the American electoral system and process. These functions are numerous, but a notable few include:

- Functions of State executive
- Regulation of times, places and manner of elections

- Have overriding control of the Federal Election Commission
- Elections held in extraordinary circumstances

The Role of the Judiciary in American Elections

The United States tries most significant cases of election fraud under federal law. When considering judges for electoral fraud cases, there are no appointed judges on either State or Federal Supreme Court level to oversee these cases. However there will, more often than not, be judges that have special interest or knowledge in areas of electoral malpractice that will often be allocated these cases. Under federal law, any citizen found guilty of an electoral misdemeanour is stripped of their right to vote in any US elections for the rest of their lives.

Recently the Supreme Court ruled on whether Indiana could make compulsory production of Real ID cards on polling day law. In its 6-3 decision in *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, the court ruled that the law, which requires Indiana voters to show photo identification at the polls, is constitutional. This issue was so contentious as the people that would be most overtly affected by this change in the law would be the poor, elderly, disabled and students.

In the majority opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens, joined by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., and Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, said the burden the law imposes is minimal and even-handed, and that the law is justifiable since it aims to “protect the integrity and reliability of the electoral process itself [33].”

Also siding with the majority, Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito Jr. wrote that the Indiana law is "eminently reasonable. The burden of acquiring, possessing, and showing a free photo identification is simply not severe, because it does not 'even represent a significant increase over the usual burdens of voting [34].”

The dissenting justices, Justices David H. Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen G. Breyer, concluded that the law "threatens to impose nontrivial burdens on the voting right of tens of thousands of the State's citizens.” They added that a “significant percentage of those individuals are likely to be deterred from voting [35].”

The almost whole scale adaptation of electronic voting might well exacerbate the problem and facilitate even most skilled electoral manipulation rendering old fashioned ballot stuffing history, though replacing it. Concerns over electronic electoral fraud first came to light as early as 1968 in Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* printed an article describing an experiment conducted by computer scientists. It was somewhat complicated although essentially half the computer experts added a ballot counting bias into the system that would create more votes for a certain candidate, and the other group of experts tried to locate and remove the bias added to the system. While the results were complicated they clearly showed that once a bias has been added to influence computer voting, it is very hard to detect, and even harder to remove. This was the first study of many that brought to light just how flawed electronic voting could be [36]. In the late 1960s there were still no national standards for testing voting machinery or anything to say that computer programmes used for counting ballots should be tested before elections. California has taken the lead in creating state regulations for electronic voting, and Congress created federal guidelines in 1972 – responsibility for which was moved to the FEC in 1975.

The FEC and the EAC are undoubtedly the largest institutions that deal with elections in the United States in terms of administration and dealing with cases and allegations of fraud. Others may have more focussed remits, for example the National Institute of Standards in Technology (NIST) focuses on the use of technology in elections, and the National Commission on Federal Election Reform. The Congressional Research Center (CRS) is a resource solely for members of Congress and has a vast wealth of material on all

aspects of elections – including campaign finance, institutions that deal with elections, and Bills relating to elections going through Congress. Another Congressional resource that produces masses of information is the General Accounting Office (GAO), who write papers on subjects such as electoral reform, voting technology and voter participation.

Electoral administration can also be brought down to a lower State and local level. At the State level operate the Council of State Governors and the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED). These two organisations not only help run and regulate State elections but they also publish material on ways to improve and enhance electoral standards.

While a large number of different bodies and institutions are involved in the regulation of elections in the US, it is clear that the fundamental regulatory instrument – at least for federal elections – is the constitution. While the constitution only looks at how elections are administered and who can vote very broadly, in most cases where there is dispute the constitution is the basic level that is always referred to.

The American system is quite similar to the British one as many of the nefarious election procedures made the transatlantic journey. There is the same tradition of a great deal of election administration being devolved down to state and sub state level quite similar to the enormous role played by local Government in organising elections. This leaves a fairly limited role for the executive. Furthermore the electoral system is essentially British (I.e. FPTP) in American Congressional, State and Local elections. It is interesting to note that the “Bible” of rules of the House of Representatives published at the beginning of every congress is prefaced by a reproduction in over 620 pages of the rules written by Thomas Jefferson which are remarkably similar to those of the House of Commons.

Before moving onto to a look at election fraud in authoritarian states it would be remiss to neglect to mention the old, but re-emerging, problem of political party funding. We would argue that this

has been more continuously prevalent in the United States (particularly in relation to elections), but recently funding of political parties has been a large issue in the UK as well. It is taxing to definitively categorise individual cases of party funding as either fraud or simply naïve malpractice – and often it can be disputed as to whether rules have actually been transgressed at all. In the US the FEC, which has been discussed at length previously, deals with the vast majority of queries, complaints, and allegations of fraud in both the funding of parties and the funding of individual candidates campaigns. In the UK the structure for checking on such issues is more ambiguous. The House of Commons itself discusses party funding in the Justice Committee – the committee for the Ministry of Justice and therefore the committee that has the Electoral Commission within its purview. It is in this committee that party funding is discussed along with actions of the Ministry of Justice. However it is not the role of the Committee to judge on cases of alleged party funding malpractice, this is in the jurisdiction of the Electoral Commission.

As we can see through these two case studies of established democracies, election fraud remains an issue of concern that should not be ignored. Whilst we should not exaggerate the problem (it is of course not as endemic as it once was) it is something that democratic governments of all colours should ensure remains a priority.

Electoral Authoritarianism

While some may be surprised by the discussion of electoral fraud in established democracies, it is likely to come as less of a shock when discussed in relation to countries many consider authoritarian. Most of my experience with election observation has occurred in countries with little tradition of electoral practise and where elections have little impact in the actual control of power within a country. In a number of cases where I have led election observation missions we have witnessed the end of autocratic rule with elections resulting in genuine change – I think in particular of Georgia [37] and Ukraine [38] where fraudulent elections were the trigger to the so-called colour revolutions. But in a number of cases the elections I have

observed are conducted to provide the pretence of electoral legitimacy to both the citizens of the country, and the wider audience in the world. These countries are regularly referred to as Electoral Authoritarian states or pseudo-democracies.

Before we look at modern electoral authoritarianism however, it is worth remembering that this is not a modern phenomenon. As Andreas Schedler reminds us -

“the modern history of representative elections is a tale of authoritarian manipulations as much as it is a saga of democratic triumphs. Historically, in other words, elections have been an instrument of authoritarian control as well as a means of democratic governance.” [39]

We can look at countries such as Costa Rica where the then President Ascención Esquivel was reported to have sent a third of the country's electors to prison during the 1906 elections in order to control the outcome. [40]

The tools of the electoral autocrat

As elections are now the accepted international norm for democratic governance, those authoritarian states that want the appearance of democracy must therefore hold regular elections. Indeed, election day itself is often well run and without much of the historical election fraud that we have previously seen – ballot box stuffing is increasingly rare. No, the modern electoral autocrat uses a number of other tools to ensure that the election has the appearance of legitimacy but that the outcome is not in doubt.

The question that faces governments in such countries is how to have a multi party system whilst at the same time ensuring that the favoured party (such as United Russia or the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan) is the winner of any election. As can be seen in countries such as Russia (which is perhaps one of the primary examples of a modern electoral authoritarian state) there are a number of options that a government can introduce electoral law to diminish the

potential for real electoral corruption. One possible action is to limit the ability of political parties to register for the election. If the threshold is sufficiently high this can make it effectively impossible for smaller parties to establish themselves and contest the election. Even if a party is able to overcome this hurdle, they must then meet the requirements to register candidates in any election – these are similarly difficult to achieve. Requirements might include having to collect large numbers of signatures or pay ridiculously high deposits that make entry to an election the preserve of the rich. Even if a party is able to meet these requirements the state has the ultimate control and can declare the legitimacy of the collected signatures.

Elections in Putin's Russia

Perhaps the most notorious example of modern electoral authoritarianism is that of Vladimir Putin's Russian Federation. While elections have occurred regularly throughout his time as President, and of course his short break in the Prime Minister's office, there is little question amongst international election observers and academics that these elections are not legitimate and are centrally manipulated for the benefit of the political elite. I've been closely following the events in Russia for a number of decades and in 2003 I led a small mission from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to monitor their parliamentary elections, the first since Putin was elected President in 2000. As a result of the observations we made during that mission we stated that the election had serious shortcomings and concluded -

“the extensive use of the state apparatus and media favouritism to the benefit of United Russia did create an unfair environment on a country-wide basis for other parties and candidates contesting these elections. This undermines the fundamental principle that parties and candidates should be able to compete with each other on the basis of equal treatment. In turn, this has contributed to a sense of disillusionment among Russian voters, as indicated by the relatively low country-wide turnout.” [41]

Our report focused in particular in the increased concentration of power within the executive that had the direct consequence of a reduced capacity for electoral competition. It should be clear that if we were to look at the election day in isolation the result of our report may have been different, this is because as I mentioned earlier, the election day process itself was run relatively smoothly, as with most modern electoral corruption the majority of it takes place in the run up to an election. As I stated in the press conference the day after the results were declared “Given that procedures on election day were conducted in a technically correct way, it is even more regrettable that the main impression of the overall electoral process is of regression in the democratization process in Russia.” [42]

Given the timing of most electoral corruption (pre-election day) it is therefore vital that election observation begins much earlier and that is why ODIHR and the OSCE have a practise of long term observation so as much of the election process as possible can be observed. It is in this context that we should consider Russia’s behaviour towards election observation in subsequent years. When the Russian people went back to the ballot box in 2007 to elect the Duma ODIHR pulled out of their planned observation mission due to sever restrictions placed on their operation by the Russian Government. The Putin government went out of its way to block and obstruct any legitimate long-term election observation so as to reduce the amount of international criticism it received for the conduct of its electoral processes. This course of events was repeated a year later when Putin himself was up for re-election, ODIHR once again felt the restrictions placed upon them made effective long-term observation impossible. As head of ODIHR Ambassador Christian Strohal stated at the time “What is true for every election is also true for this one: transparency strengthens democracy; politics behind closed doors weakens it.” [43]

While many had hoped to see positive change in recent years, Putin’s behaviour in the last eighteen months has suggested he has no intention of enhancing the state of Russian democracy, but instead he appears to be further entrenching his position. His actions in Ukraine and indeed in the

wider Europe (sending two Tupolev TU-95 bombers to fly 15 miles off the coast of Britain [44] are provocative on a grand scale (and reminiscent of Cold War behaviour) and show just how little he cares about international opinion.

It’s not just Putin

Of course, it would be a mischaracterisation to suggest that Putin stands alone as political leader who uses the veneer of democracy to suggest democratic legitimacy. There are a number of countries, including a number in Central Asia, where elections are but a facade for autocratic rule. Take Kazakhstan for example, a country where I have had the opportunity to observe their elections on a couple of occasions. On the face of it they have a multi-party system giving the electorate a choice of candidates. However when we see that the main opposition party was, until recently, headed by the daughter of President Nazarbayev it is difficult not to see this as an attempt to control the existence of genuine opposition. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the party eventually merged with the party of the President. It is not uncommon in electoral authoritarian states to see the existence of so-called official opposition parties.

Schedler once again provides an extremely useful insight to the idea of opposition parties within electoral authoritarian states.

“By admitting multiparty competition for positions of state power, EA regimes legitimate the principle of political opposition. They may still try to shape the field of opposition actors to their own liking. Some regimes create official opposition parties and even assign convenient ideological positions to them, as in Egypt under Anwar Sadat and Senegal under Léopold Senghor.” [45]

Of course the existence of opposition parties is designed to give the appearance of openness and the freedom of political debate. And where there are opposition parties there are elections. However in these authoritarian states the decks are stacked with the opposition parties destined to play the role

of perpetual loser. Not only is the intention of these sham elections to reinforce the apparent popularity of the governing elite, but also to demonstrate the unpopularity of the opposition. In doing so this tightens the grip of the government on power and weakens the opposition forces.

If we look further into the example of Kazakhstan we can see other examples of elections holding little democratic legitimacy. President Nazarbayev was first elected in 1991 after his country became independent from the Soviet Union. This first election was not contested by a host of candidates who wished to lead their newly independent country, but was contested by just one candidate – Nazarbayev himself who had effectively already led the country since 1989 as leader of the Communist Party. As for the most recent elections in 2012 there remains serious criticisms of the election processes. As ODIHR stated in their report into the 2012 parliamentary elections –

“The preparations were technically well administered and certain legal changes were passed, aimed at introducing at least a second party into the parliament; yet, the necessary conditions for the conduct of genuinely pluralistic elections, which are a prerequisite for functioning democratic institutions, were not provided for by the authorities.” [46]

The full report from ODIHR listed a number of areas for concern, namely political parties and candidates being barred from competing on spurious grounds, whilst there were also indications of ballot box stuffing on a number of occasions. [47] The overall result of the election saw the President’s political party receiving 88% of vote, and given the threshold of votes a party must receive to secure parliamentary seats this result meant he won every seat!

Another Central Asian country that perhaps personifies the core components of pseudo-democracy is Turkmenistan. Freedom House, the wonderful American NGO has repeatedly criticised this country and in their 2013 edition of Freedom House (an excellent publication I cannot

recommend highly enough) rated the country as having freedom, civil liberty and political rights scores of 7/7, the worst possible rating. [48] In 2013 there were a number of political developments that might appear to show the strength of democracy within this country. In February of that year for example President Berdymukhammedov faced re-election and ran against a number of other candidates. Later in the same year new opposition political parties were formed. However the reality was that President Berdymukhammedov was re-elected with a staggering 97% of the vote and the candidates he faced were all closely associated with him. And the opposition parties that were formed after this election were in fact announced by the President himself and organised by close allies.

Elections for the Turkmenistan Presidency have occurred since their inception in 1991 when President Niyazov was first elected – albeit as the only candidate standing. The only change of power to have occurred in Turkmenistan since its independence was in 2006 when the President died, to be replaced by current incumbent Berdymukhammedov. Elections to the legislative body (the Mejlis) are similarly anti-democratic with it being routine for all candidates to be pre-approved by the Presidential administration. The OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights summed things up nicely in relation to Parliamentary elections in late-2013 after they accepted an invitation to run an observation mission. In their ultimate report they reported –

“The elections took place in a strictly controlled political environment characterized by a lack of respect for fundamental freedoms that are central to democratic elections. While the existence of a second political party constituted an appearance of political variety, it did not provide voters with a genuine choice between political alternatives. The absence of political pluralism and an insufficient separation of powers between different branches of government, as well as the lack of respect for fundamental freedoms, contributed to elections that need to be

significantly improved to live up to OSCE commitments and other international obligations for genuine and democratic elections.” [49]

Another country to consider as a pseudo democracy is that of Tajikistan, another Central Asian republic. In this instance there have been small attempts to improve elections (or at least give the appearance of improving elections), but as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly reported when observing the 2015 parliamentary elections –

“Some contestants provided political alternatives, yet the 1 March parliamentary elections took place in a restricted political space and failed to provide a level playing field for candidates. Although the government stated its ambition to hold democratic elections, and some improvements were made to the electoral law, restrictions on the right to stand, freedoms of expression and assembly, and access to media limited the opportunity to make a free and informed choice. The elections were not administered in an impartial manner. While election day was peaceful, significant shortcomings were noted, including multiple voting and ballot box stuffing. The disregard of counting procedures meant that an honest count could not be guaranteed, as required by OSCE commitments.” [50]

Failed Electoral Authoritarianism

Of course as recent years have demonstrated in countries such as Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia the existence of a pseudo-democratic state does not rule out democratic development and the emergence of genuine (if not perfect) elections. As I mentioned earlier, I observed the key elections in both Ukraine and Georgia that would ultimately lead to democratic revolutions. In 2003 together with the OSCE I observed the Parliamentary elections in Georgia that were widely criticised, both domestically and internationally and the results of which brought the people out onto the streets. As we said the day after the elections were declared,

“The 2 November parliamentary elections in Georgia fell short of a number of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. Inaccuracies in the voter list seriously challenged the fundamental guarantee of universal and equal suffrage, and lessened voters’ confidence in the State administration.” [51]

While that criticism may appear relatively limited, in terms of OSCE criticism of elections this is fairly strong. As a result of the so-called Rose Revolution that followed these elections, new Parliamentary elections were held a few months later, which were much more positively received by the Georgian people and international election observers.

Conclusion

The sad fact is that election fraud and corruption is an issue that we still must consider around the world. Whilst democracy may have seen great expansion in recent decades, and elections may now be the internationally accepted norm for choosing governments, the reality is that fraud persists, even in well established democracies. In countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom where the history of elections goes back a long way election fraud is perhaps not as big a concern as it once was. However this is not to suggest there should be any degree of complacency. My own experience of a long career in politics and as an election observer tell me that election fraud needs to be constantly monitored to ensure elections continue to represent the genuine choice of the electorate.

While electoral corruption may be a smaller problem in Western democracies, unfortunately however there are a significant number of countries where elections remain tools of the autocrat to control the people and provide a veneer of legitimacy on an otherwise illegitimate government. I have witnessed first hand the lengths some governments will go to in order to control elections and political life in general. It is for this reason that I believe the work of legitimate long term international election observation

remains of vital importance in highlighting democratic infringements wherever they occur.

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Epilogue

The inquiry of Rt. Honourable Bruce George in to voter fraud comes from a lifetime of service to his country and to the European Union. His work on elections was not just looking in on local council elections, though he did that too, it was at considerable personal danger that he also over saw events in Ukraine and Georgia. Bruce George led the OSCE delegation to observe Ukrainian Elections and was the special coordinator of the OSCE chairman-in-office for the observation of the Georgian elections. This is a man who chose to put his body, not just his words, forward to attempt to obtain free and fair elections for new democratic nations. Bruce George's observations are keen, from real life, and are lessons for all democratic nations. The point of this epilogue is to reinforce the utter peril a city, state or country faces when the electoral system is perverted by creeps. This hard won insight is to be heeded.

Election fraud is not a side issue. Election fraud is not a minor issue. Election fraud and voter manipulation is real and it is more nuanced than stuffing a ballot box, but that still works too.

Northamptonshire in 1768 held what are today called the spendthrift election where tow aristocrats spent what ever it took to get elected. There were 930 electors on the books and some 1218 cast ballots. Roll forward to 1950's. My mother told me that Chicago Alderman in the 1950s bought votes for the Democratic Party. My mother told me that her and her whole family used to get \$20 each to vote. Someone watched them vote and if they voted correctly and they got \$20.00 and the choice of a free beer or a shot at a local tavern. My mother said everyone knew who was going to win well in advance so they figured they might as well get a few bucks and a pop. I was always suspicious of the story. My suspicions were confirmed when some years later I spoke to my aunt, her sister, about the affair. My aunt told me that my mother was prone to exaggeration as the spiff to vote was only \$5.00 and a beer or a shot. My aunt added that the whisky was watered it was always better to have the beer. 2015 come along and yet another Chicago Alderman candidate is accused of buying votes.

1960 - President Election - USA

Kennedy won Illinois by less than 9,000 votes out of 4.75 million cast, or a margin of 0.2%. Nixon carried 92 of 101 counties. Victory came to Kennedy. Chicago, where Mayor Richard J. Daley held back much of Chicago's vote until the late morning hours of November 9 after the rest of the votes for the state had been counted. Daley delivered to Kennedy an unprecedented Cook County victory margin of 450,000 votes representing more than 10% of Chicago's 1960 population of 3.6 million.

In Texas, Kennedy defeated Nixon by 46,000 votes, 51% to 49%. Some argued that Johnson's political machine had stolen enough votes in counties along the Mexican border to give Kennedy the victory. The cases of voter fraud discovered in Texas were incontrovertible. Fannin County had 4,895 registered voters, 6,138 voters voted for

Kennedy. In an Angelina County with 86 registered voters, Kennedy received 187 votes, Nixon 24.

"There's no question in my mind that [the election] was stolen," Earl Mazo said to the Post newspaper 2000. "It was stolen like mad. It was stolen in Chicago and in Texas." Mazo went to Chicago, obtained lists of voters in precincts that seemed shaky, and started checking their addresses. "There was a cemetery where the names on the tombstones were registered and voted," he recalled. "I remember a house. It was completely gutted. There was nobody there. But there were 56 votes for Kennedy in that house." (from New York Sun)

2009 - Bell City, California

Think that this is old news? Think again. In 2009, 19 people either living in Lebanon or dead voted in the Bell City, CA election. This tipped the election in the very small city in favor on one Oscar Hernandez. Rizzo the city manager had been plundering the cities finance and in fact had been doing so since 2005. Now Hernandez could help. Rizzo bought the loyalty of the city officials and the city counsel through – paying them off with the cabal arranging large salaries for the city counsel and other perks. Rizzo was making \$787,000 per year with 28 weeks off per year. In contrast the US President makes \$400,00 per year and there are only 52 weeks in a year. The city rotted under the weight of the corruption enabled by the voter fraud. Once established the corruption grew to include the police, more city officials, fraudulent property deals, civil rights violations, high property taxes, illegal sewer fees, and special fees from some business. All this was done and audited by a CPA firm. The city is still near bankruptcy.

2010 - Detroit Michigan, USA

Detroit has been a slush pit of voter fraud, intimidation, and corruption for over 40 years. It is really no surprise how Detroit got so bad, it was over run by dim and corrupt politicians. In 2010 there were 560,000 registered voters yet the US Census only counted 523,430 residents over 18. Really ! The utter sloth of the City Clerks office in clearing up and verifying the voters logs appears to be nothing but self serving non-efforts to preserve the status quo.

I am picking on the United States as the United States is supposed to hold the best elections in the world. Maybe they do and maybe they don't. The point is to show the utter mischief that can be done when the people's power of "one man, one vote" is obliterated by fraud, and the real consequences.

So what is the problem with voter fraud. In time, with sufficient vote fraud freedom will be wiped out and there will be no more choices. One does not need to buy all the votes, only enough in those districts and regions to tip the total in favor of the vote buyer. Then, and we have seen this happen around the globe, as Amy Chua said in World on Fire, – We will see one man, one vote one time.

Elections are too important to be allowed to be run by the elected or their agents. It has come time for an independent custodian of the voting process to be created and empowered to insure accuracy and transparency. We do this in financial services, we do this with our food and our drugs, we do this with our agricultural process, we do this with emissions, why not do the same for elections.

Voter fraud needs to be recognized as the biggest fraud and a keystone fraud in all democratic nations. Voter fraud is the sickly weed that, unless wiped out, will slowly choke off the bounty of the crop of freedom.

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