

Has the Consent of the Governed Been Withdrawn, YET?

By Dave Berman

February 14, 2006

Destruction of the environment. Domestic spying and an overall loss of privacy. War, war, and more war on phony scapegoats. Depleted Uranium – Mr. Bush’s slow motion holocaust. Peaceful demonstrators labeled as terrorists. Press conferences in the free speech zone ignored by reporters on the federal payroll. No more innocent until proven guilty. New Orleans is a third world country. Bogus elections.

Had enough yet? If you are revolted, revolt! Non-violent revolution is necessary, NOW!

Last fall I wrote a white paper called *Blueprint For Peaceful Revolution*

(<http://tinyurl.com/au2pj>). *Blueprint* describes context, talking points, memes and the broader view of how We The People can catalyze large scale change using the Voter Confidence Resolution (VCR): <http://tinyurl.com/amryg>. So far only Arcata, CA has adopted the VCR. By the end of this article, I hope you’ll be ready to help your community join the peaceful revolution.

The bedrock of the VCR is simple but massive: current election conditions ensure inconclusive outcomes and provide no basis for confidence in the results reported.

Around the country, paperless electronic voting will continue, as will vote counting using secret proprietary software made by partisan corporations. These unverifiable votes

cannot be recounted, guaranteeing we will never have unanimous acceptance of the results.

To create a basis for confidence and ensure conclusive outcomes will require more than one kind of election reform. The VCR contains an election reform platform created to meet these criteria.

- 1) voting processes owned and operated entirely in the public domain, and
- 2) clean money laws to keep all corporate funds out of campaign financing, and
- 3) a voter verified paper ballot for every vote cast and additional uniform standards determined by a non-partisan nationally recognized commission, and
- 4) declaring election day a national holiday, and
- 5) counting all votes publicly and locally in the presence of citizen witnesses and credentialed members of the media, and
- 6) equal time provisions to be restored by the media along with a measurable increase in local, public control of the airwaves, and
- 7) presidential debates containing a minimum of three candidates, run by a non-partisan commission comprised of representatives of publicly owned media outlets, and
- 8) preferential voting and proportional representation to replace the winner-take-all system for federal elections;

Local control is a strong theme in the peaceful revolution and so items within the VCR's reform platform are likely to vary as more communities adopt their own customized versions. Arcata's resolution is a template for other communities. The key ideas that should be left intact are: current conditions ensure inconclusive results and inherent uncertainty; implementation of an entire comprehensive reform platform is needed to create a basis for confidence; and We The People are challenging the assumption of our Consent.

The VCR says that when election conditions prevent conclusive outcomes, the Consent of the Governed is not being sought. According to the Declaration of Independence, the "just Power" of the government derives from the Consent of the Governed. This Consent should not be assumed or taken for granted. Yet as long as we stay plugged into the current power structure, our Consent is given, however begrudgingly. The VCR is a united, community-level way to begin municipal civil disobedience. This is about non-recognition as well as non-cooperation and non-compliance.

We have already begun to see some of this municipal civil disobedience. Monroe County, PA ignored the Help America Vote Act deadline, citing an unfunded mandate, and refusing to spend taxpayer money on election machines. Utah declared local education standards trump No Child Left Behind. Who will be the first to adopt the VCR and say plainly: we don't recognize the legitimacy of this government?

As more communities embrace the VCR we will move closer to shattering the assumption of Consent. We can do this by relentlessly repeating this question: Has the Consent of the Governed been withdrawn, YET? The tone of inevitability presumes not if, but when. It may take 25, 50, 100 or more resolutions, but at some point, the consensus answer will switch from NO, to YES, the Consent of the Governed HAS been withdrawn.

This is a process by which we can manufacture a tipping point, one where we shift the balance of power between the government and We The People. That shift is my working definition of non-violent revolution, with credit to Rebecca Solnit's *Hope In The Dark*.

As we shatter the assumption of Consent we take a position of non-recognition. We deny the government's claim to legitimacy. This must be supported by other acts of non-cooperation and non-compliance. We The People will have to enable our local leaders to choose to stand with their communities, in defiance of the federal government, rather than allowing continued harm to the community through loyalty to the empire.

Secret prisons. Torture. War crimes. It is no longer valid to assume *they would never do that*. All bets are off. Non-violent revolution is necessary, NOW! Organizers in Humboldt County recently held a town hall forum on coalition building among various groups interested in seeing the withdrawal of cooperation, complicity and Consent. How can you expand this conversation into your community? You can start by circulating the Voter Confidence Resolution: <http://tinyurl.com/amryg>. And ask the question.

Dave Berman's first book, [We Do Not Consent](#) (free .pdf download), is comprised of essays published in his first blog, [GuvWurld](#). Dave's second blog, [We Do Not Consent](#), is named after his first book. Dave co-founded the [Voter Confidence Committee](#) of Humboldt County, CA.