



TDS STRATEGY MEMO:

THE 2022 ELECTIONS ARE UNDER THREAT AND “WAITING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS” IS NOT A STRATEGY TO DEFEND THEM BUT A PLAN FOR PREEMPTIVE SURRENDER.

BY
ANDREW LEVISON



TDS STRATEGY MEMO:

THE 2022 ELECTIONS ARE UNDER THREAT AND “WAITING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS” IS NOT A STRATEGY TO DEFEND THEM BUT A PLAN FOR PREEMPTIVE SURRENDER.

By ANDREW LEVISON

In several key states there are one or a few large voting districts (usually urban, pro-Democratic and with large minority populations) which contain so many voters that they can decisively swing close elections. Because of their size they are also always the slowest to report even under normal circumstances – sometimes taking until the next day to fully report the results.

These large districts are uniquely vulnerable to GOP/MAGA disruption of fair elections and preparations for attacks of this kind are now occurring across the country.

As ABC News has repeatedly reported:

June 25th

Since November, one-third of election workers report feeling unsafe because of their job, according to a recent nationwide survey commissioned by the Brennan Center. Nearly one-fifth of respondents listed **threats to their lives** as a job-related concern.

As a result, election offices are reporting higher-than-normal turnover. ABC News has learned that multiple key swing states and districts are already hemorrhaging experienced poll workers, and experts are warning that the current environment could cripple efforts to recruit and retain replacements.¹

August 24th

Since the 2020 election, states across the country have seen a slow exodus of election officials prompted by an unprecedented level of **misinformation, harassment and threats**, according to election experts and officials.²

Andrew Levison is the author of *The White Working Class Today: Who They Are, How They Think and How Progressives Can Regain Their Support*. He is also a contributing editor of *The Democratic Strategist*.

¹<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/threats-pressures-faced-poll-workers-pose-existential-threat/story?id=78463963>

²<https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-false-accusations-election-fraud-prompt-election-workers/story?id=88739763>

August 30

With ten weeks to go until the 2022 midterms, dozens of state and local officials across the country tell ABC News that preparations for the election are being hampered by onerous public information requests, ongoing threats against election workers, and dangerous misinformation campaigns being waged by activists still intent on contesting the 2020 presidential election.

The efforts, many of which are being coordinated at both the national and local level, range from confronting election officials at local government meetings to training volunteers to challenge the vote-counting process on Election Day, according to election officials.³

An article in Politico describes the way voting could be disrupted in Democratic areas.

...election watchdog groups and legal experts say many of the recruits are answering the Republican National Committee's call [for poll workers] because they falsely believe fraud was committed in the 2020 election, so installing them as the supposedly unbiased officials who oversee voting at the precinct level could create chaos in heavily Democratic precincts....politically motivated poll workers could simply initiate a legal conflict at the polling place that disrupts voting and then use it as a vehicle for rejecting vote counts from that precinct.⁴

As election day 2022 approaches, this strategy of disruption can be amplified in the following ways:

1. In the days immediately before the elections the MAGA forces begin circulating stories in the GOP/MAGA media claiming to have "proof" of suspicious activity in large, pro-democratic districts.
2. On election day the GOP/MAGA media highlight claims by the new MAGA election workers of observing either "suspicious activity" or actual vote stealing. The discussion of these claims along with denials from election officials will then be reported in the mainstream media as "news."
3. On election day demonstrators mobilize in front of election offices – some of them raucous and brandishing weapons. This will also get significant TV coverage.
4. In the evening when the results are slow to come in from the large districts, the GOP candidate and the MAGA forces encourage the demonstrators to demand state intervention to "Stop the Theft."
5. Republican state officials—even those who do not want to directly endorse the claims of "vote theft"—will be too cowardly to clearly state that the protesters are lying through their teeth and that the vote counting is being done fairly. Instead they will assert that "serious questions" have been raised and that the counting should be paused until an "impartial review" can be conducted.

³<https://abcnews.go.com/US/10-weeks-midterms-election-deniers-hampering-election-preparations/story?id=89007798>

⁴<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/01/gop-contest-elections-tapes-00035758>

6. With the votes from one or more major Democratic areas thus delayed, the GOP candidate will appear to be temporarily “ahead” on the TV Network scoreboards. On this basis the GOP candidate will declare himself the “victor” and begin taking symbolic, photogenic actions like demanding the right to immediately take possession of the official office in question.
7. By the time the full results are finally announced—assuming that they ever are—the GOP candidate will already have established a bogus “new administration” complete with dramatic press conferences and photo-ops and will refuse to concede, rejecting the final results as “Fraud.”

There is nothing fanciful about this scenario. Steps similar to those described above have been taken in a variety of recent elections and there is no convincing argument for why similar events will not happen two months from now.

The Democratic Party and independent election organizations are aware of this threat and some limited steps have been taken to organize resistance to sabotage on election day. The mainstream media, on the other hand, does not want to face the reality that this is an entirely realistic scenario and to warn Americans of the danger that exists. They much prefer to discuss “politics as usual”—analyzing polls, predictions and historical precedents—and to simply hope that the scenario above will somehow not occur. They rationalize this by suggesting that responsible journalists and commentators should “wait until we see what happens.”

But by the time it becomes possible to “see what happens,” however, it will also be too late to do anything to stop the disruption from occurring. The media needs to begin now to clearly describe the danger that exists so that the public recognizes this cynical strategy as it is being executed and refuses to be fooled by it.

Every American who genuinely believes in democracy has been deeply inspired by the recent, stunning Ukrainian counterattack that has suddenly put Putin’s vastly larger armed forces on the defensive in the entire northern sector of the 1,500 mile front.

The Ukrainians did not achieve this success by “waiting to see what would happen.” They began careful map-table planning and evaluation of different strategies back in July and it was this careful, advanced planning that was central to their recent success.

Democrats should not merely admire the heroism and commitment of the Ukrainians but more importantly recognize and then emulate the careful advanced planning that was the basis for their recent success. Political journalists and commentators should begin now to warn Americans about the entirely predictable assault on the nation’s democratic institutions that now threatens to occur on election day.