



God Willing?: Political Fundamentalism in the White House, the 'War on Terror' and the Echoing Press

David Domke

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In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush and his administration offered a 'political fundamentalism' that capitalized upon the fear felt by many Americans. Political fundamentalism is the adaptation of a conservative religious worldview, via strategic language choices and communication approaches, into a policy agenda that feels political rather than religious. These communications dominated public discourse and public opinion for months on end and came at a significant cost for democracy. In particular, the administration closed off a substantive societal - and international - conversation about the meaning of the terrorist attacks and the direction of the nation by consistently: • showing antipathy toward complex conceptions of reality; • framing calls for immediate action on administration policies as part of the nation's 'calling' and 'mission' against terrorism; • issuing declarations about the will of God for America and the values of freedom and liberty; • and demonstrating an intolerance for dissent. The administration had help spreading its messages. The mainstream press consistently echoed the administration's communications - thereby disseminating, reinforcing and embedding the administration's fundamentalist worldview and helping to keep at bay Congress and any substantive public questioning. This book analyzes hundreds of administration communications and news stories from September 2001 to Iraq in spring 2003 to examine how this occurred and what it means for U.S. politics and the global landscape.

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