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Man Behind The Curtain: The 2004 Election from a Historical Perspective

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THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN:
THE 2004 ELECTION FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

MELISSA M. MERRITT

(Under the Direction of Craig H. Roell)

ABSTRACT

The 2004 election was a very contentious display of modern democracy. It illustrated that political candidates market themselves as though they were products to be bought from a store. By utilizing newspaper articles, autobiographies, and various other sources, this study seeks to show several things. First, it illustrates the evolution of presidential campaigns from the first contested election until the controversial 2000 election. Second, it traces the rise of the “Christian Right.” It then delves into the Cold War and the “War on Terror” as a continuation of the former. Finally, the study culminates with an examination of the 2004 presidential election that draws all of these themes together to illustrate the manipulation of fear and religion used by the Republican Party in the 2004 election.

INDEX WORDS: President, Election, Christian Right, Cold War, War on Terror, 2004 Election, George W. Bush,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As an informed and concerned citizen living in the United States today, I fear the model of conformity and the intentional shaping of public opinion that our government appears to be orchestrating by using religion and fear. The most salient example of this in modern society appears in the Republican presidential campaign of George W. Bush in 2004. He positioned himself as a religious, specifically Christian, leader who was God's choice to lead our nation in uncertain times. Bush's base is the Christian Right. Historically this group has sought to Christianize American government and has waged war on secular society. Religion is an important part of the human experience, but it is a personal practice and belief system. In a democratic society, one voice should not speak for everyone.

The Bush administration also played upon public fear that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 created. Clearly, there is a terrorist threat, but there is evidence that suggests that the White House raised the terror alerts strategically in order to produce support for the President during the election year. After Bush's re-election in 2004, there has been a conspicuous absence of such threat-level raisings. This administration often refers to the "War on Terror" any time someone criticizes their actions. The administration dissuades analysis and criticism of the presidency as being unpatriotic or not American.

This thesis is not a leftist diatribe against a controversial and largely unpopular President. The goal of the work is to draw attention to the manipulation of religion and fear in the 2004 Presidential election that Republicans used to gain support for their

party. The thesis will address three main themes in order to establish a historical framework for the main argument. The marketing of the presidency from the first contested election until the controversial 2000 election will be examined in order to show that public relations and perceptions are tremendously important in a political campaign. The propaganda techniques of the Cold War will be compared to the “War on Terror,” with the contention that the latter war is a continuation of the first. The purpose of this will be to show past instances of fear mongering in order to achieve political goals. The history of the Christian Right will be addressed in order to illustrate the group’s evolution into the powerful political entity they had become by 2004 and into the present. These themes will be drawn together in the final chapter that will show the relevance they have in the 2004 election.

Works that examine the use of fear and religion by the Republican Party tend to be few in number and written by popular and controversial figures such as Al Franken and Bill Maher. The works generally are not scholarly and thus are not taken seriously. My goal is to create a well-researched scholarly thesis that would cause even the most ardent Republican and George W. Bush supporter to think and consider my argument.

There are no specific works that necessarily created the desire to write on this topic. I am extremely interested in politics and have been since I was first old enough to vote in 2000. My own personal outrage at the events of that election made me realize that politics are not fair and perhaps America is not the democratic utopia I was trained to believe it was. By watching the news and critically analyzing the world I have made observations and came to conclusions that created the idea for this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICIANS OR PACKAGES? THE MARKETING OF THE PRESIDENCY

America's founding fathers aimed to create a novel, enlightened form of government that would be devoid of factional party politics. They sought to have an electoral system through which a select group of qualified men would choose the president in a dignified manner.¹ The reality of this dream was short lived. The presidency became a highly sought after position. Contenders for the job and their supporters were willing to use questionable tactics to secure the office. The marketing of the presidency evolved over time, beginning with George Washington. Presidential candidates increasingly relied upon rhetoric and cleverly developed techniques to package themselves, even in false, ways to gain popular support. This strategy seemed necessary because voters have specific qualities they believe to be presidential. The combination of these qualities probably does not exist in one single person, and thus presidential contenders must create an image for themselves that reflects popular opinion. Candidates also often resorted to tactics that were dishonest and dishonorable in order to make their opponents look weak or unqualified. This trend reached an apex in twentieth century politics with the advent of mass media technologies.

Even as early as the second presidential election, Republican and Federalist opponents disseminated negative information about the competing candidates. Broad­sides and pamphlets portrayed Thomas Jefferson as an atheist and enemy of the Constitution. Rev. Timothy Dwight contended that if Jefferson won, the Bible would be

¹ Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

burned and prostitution would be legalized.² Likewise, handbills depicted John Adams as an aristocrat and a monarchist. Indeed, the party system evolved after this notable election, becoming thereafter a prominent feature of politics during the mid-nineteenth century.³

By the 1828 election between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, political advertising had become extremely popular.⁴ The candidates themselves generally refrained from blatantly campaigning for themselves.⁵ Nevertheless, a candidate's reputation and perception by the public became crucial to winning elections. This was largely because, by this time, voters had access to the names of electors and knew which specific candidate an elector supported.⁶ Andrew Jackson's camp made great use of their candidate's reputation as a war hero. Jackson's troops dubbed him "Old Hickory" for his determination and dedication to them.⁷ His supporters labeled him as a farmer and brave soldier who could relate to the common person. By contrast, his opponents portrayed Jackson as uneducated, lacking in culture, and inexperienced in political affairs. They also accused Jackson of murdering soldiers and massacring Indians.⁸ Significantly, Jackson formed a correspondence committee in Washington that countered these claims. This organization, which also collected campaign contributions, compiled voter lists, and issued pamphlets and broadsides, served as a precursor for the modern Democratic and

² Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *Dirty Politics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 43.

³ Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*, 8.

⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵ Florence Weston, *The Presidential Election of 1828* (Philadelphia, PA: Porcupine Press, 1974),

⁶ Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*, 5.

⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

Republican National Committees. The creation of Jackson's Democratic Party in this election also led to the emergence of the modern American party system.⁹

The election of 1840 was the first full scale presidential election.¹⁰ Campaigning efforts included speeches, parades, torches, flags, songs and banners. The incumbent, Martin Van Buren, sought to maintain his position against his opponent William Henry Harrison. Harrison was the first candidate to fabricate an image for himself that was contradictory to reality. Born the son of a wealthy governor, Harrison used campaign material that portrayed him as a farmer and woodsmen. He used log cabins, cider, and coonskin caps in order to ingratiate himself to the common voter. Van Buren's team sought to counter these falsehoods with the truth of Harrison's privileged background, but the voters had already been convinced.¹¹ His opponents claimed that Harrison was in declining health and too feeble to take on the demanding role of commander-in-chief.¹² Van Buren's supporters also impugned Harrison's military capability. Unlike his predecessors, William Henry Harrison chose to address the claims made against him, this setting a precedent that later candidates followed. Harrison was so successful in defending his reputation and exuding an image of being common that he won the election.¹³ Unfortunately, failing health caused his demise within three weeks of his inauguration and prevented him from enjoying the spoils of victory.

Despite William Henry Harrison's ardent and successful endeavors to campaign, some later candidates still viewed this action as inappropriate.¹⁴ In 1852, General

⁹ Weston, 86.

¹⁰ Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*, 9.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 11.

¹² *Ibid*, 13.

¹³ *Ibid*, 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 16.

Winfield Scott refused to engage in personal campaigning.¹⁵ In 1860, Stephen Douglas chose to go against tradition and did speak out to support himself, but his opponent, Abraham Lincoln, refrained from such activity. Douglas was the first presidential candidate ever to travel the country and campaign in person.¹⁶ Supporters of Lincoln did campaign for him, however.¹⁷ They distributed photographs of Lincoln in order to challenge caricatures. This was important because by 1860, the advertising of a candidate's image had become commonplace in campaigns.¹⁸ Lincoln's opponents portrayed him in the election as a liar, a despot, and tyrant.¹⁹ Many voters perceived Lincoln to be an abolitionist and thus abolitionists rallied behind him. Many southerners feared the Illinois-born politician would outlaw slavery and for this reason, many southern states left his name off the ballots. The people's perception of Lincoln was a major theme of the election.

In 1896, William Jennings Bryan went directly to the people and vigorously campaigned for himself.²⁰ He traveled over eighteen-thousand miles by train and addressed five million people in over six hundred speeches.²¹ Through this means of communication, Bryan was better able to convey his message than was possible through banners or campaign songs. Bryan's political opponent, William McKinley, had access to a much larger share of campaign funds than Bryan did.²² McKinley responded to his

¹⁵ Ibid, 14.

¹⁶ Paul F. Boller, Jr., *Presidential Campaigns: From George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004),101.

¹⁷Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency* , 15.

¹⁸ Ibid, 12.

¹⁹ Jamieson, *Dirty Politics*, 43.

²⁰ Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*, 17.

²¹ Boller, 170.

²² Ibid, 171.

opponent by having constituents brought to his home by train.²³ Voters would witness a speech given by a representative for McKinley followed by a response from the candidate himself, but McKinley did not venture past his front porch in his campaign efforts.

The biggest issue in this campaign was the “Battle of the Standards,” a monetary issue caused by the depression of 1893.²⁴ McKinley and the Republicans supported the gold standard while Bryan and the Democrats supported the unlimited coinage of silver and the ratio of sixteen ounces of silver to one ounce of gold. Bryan believed that gold only helped the higher classes while silver helped everyone.²⁵ As George W. Bush did in both of his presidential campaigns, Bryan frequently relied upon religious imagery and evangelicalism in his campaign and this issue was no exception.²⁶ He proclaimed that mankind would not be crucified upon a “cross of gold”.²⁷ Though Bryan efficiently used his modest means to generate support and questionably won the popular vote, McKinley won the presidency.

Woodrow Wilson became the first presidential candidate since William Henry Harrison to publicly campaign for himself and win the election of 1912.²⁸ The inventions of radio, television, and film further popularized the practice of candidates actively campaigning for themselves. Franklin Delano Roosevelt took advantage of radio technology with his fireside chats that enabled him to reach millions more people than was possible if he was to travel and give speeches in person. Roosevelt was also able to use very effectively the radio to combat negative propaganda that criticized his New Deal

²³ Ibid, 18.

²⁴ Boller, 167.

²⁵ Ibid, 170.

²⁶ Ibid, 170.

²⁷ Ibid, 168.

²⁸ Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency*, 18.

policy.²⁹ The United States witnessed the introduction of newsreels in 1911, and by 1928 the reels contained sound.³⁰ Newsreels played in theaters before movies and reached forty million people a week at the height of their popularity. The films were comparable to present-day political television advertisements. By 1940, political campaigning made its way on to television.³¹ The year of 1948 marked the first time presidential hopefuls bought television airtime when both Harry S. Truman and Thomas Dewey utilized the medium to gain popular support. Dewey also set another precedent that year, becoming the first presidential candidate to hire an advertising agency.

By 1952, the popularity of mass media communication methods to promote candidates had increased dramatically. A need now existed for media consultants who bought airtime, checked lighting and make-up, and timed speeches.³² The Republican, Dwight D. Eisenhower enlisted the renowned services of a popular advertising agency Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn to effectively package himself and won the election during a time when Democrats were the dominant party.³³ Eisenhower heavily relied on commercials in his campaign.³⁴ He also effectively used the Cold War issue and convinced voters that his Democratic rivals were soft on communism. Similarly, George W. Bush frequently referenced the “War on Terror” in his 2004 campaign, and attempted to portray John Kerry as weak on the issue of terrorism.

The election of 1960 was important in many ways. This contest placed Richard M. Nixon, a seasoned Washington politician, against John F. Kennedy, a wealthy and

²⁹ Ibid, 26.

³⁰ Ibid, 29.

³¹ Ibid, 34.

³² Ibid, 35.

³³ Stephen J. Wayne, *The Road to the White House 1992: The Politics of Presidential Elections* (New York, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1992), 257.

³⁴ Boller, 282.

relatively inexperienced senator from Massachusetts. The way that John F. Kennedy was able to portray himself compared to Nixon was an integral part of the campaign process. John F. Kennedy was a young and attractive man of only forty-three years of age when he ran for president in 1960.³⁵ Kennedy's age caused some voters to be concerned about his qualifications for the job. Kennedy was also a practicing Catholic and this caused some of the polity to oppose him. To Nixon's credit, he refused to attack Kennedy's religion.³⁶ Nixon and his cohorts did attack Kennedy's young age and lack of experience as making him unfit for the presidency.³⁷ Kennedy emphasized his World War II naval career and service to the United States in Congress.³⁸ He attacked Eisenhower and hurt Nixon's plan to use the President's endorsement towards the end of the election to garner support.³⁹ Both candidates attempted to use the Cold War to gain support. Kennedy frequently claimed there was a "missile gap" between America and the Soviet Union, meaning that America was falling behind its rival in military capability and production of weapons.⁴⁰

Probably the most important aspect of this election was that it included the first televised presidential debate.⁴¹ Nixon believed that these debates would benefit Kennedy more than himself, but also thought he would receive too much criticism to refuse to participate.⁴² In the first of these debates, Nixon looked pale due to illness and a lack of

³⁵ Eric Sevareid. *Candidates 1960: Behind the Headlines of the Presidential Race* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), 181.

³⁶ Jamieson, 127.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 139-141

³⁸ *Ibid*, 140.

³⁹ Nixon, 22-222.

⁴⁰ Boller, 298.

⁴¹ Theodore White. *The Making of the President of 1960* (New York, NY: Atheneum Publishers, 1961), 282.

⁴² Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), 217.

make-up and this hurt his standing with the public.⁴³ Kennedy, however, appeared energetic and clever. The medium of television was probably the most decisive factor in the election. The young, amateurish Kennedy appeared to be an equal match for his older, more experienced opponent.⁴⁴ The younger candidate with less experience was able to package himself as a competent leader more qualified to be President than Vice-President Nixon. Kennedy's popularity increased greatly after the debates and helped him to defeat Nixon.

Nixon believed that the popularity of television greatly influenced the outcome of the race.⁴⁵ Reporters, producers, and commentators largely controlled which aspects of the campaigns the public would be able to see. Nixon also believed that the news media had a particular affinity for Kennedy and covered him often and in a favorable light. The reporters that followed Kennedy around during the election became his friends and admirers. Through the debates and news media coverage, television largely decided the 1960 campaign.

In the election of 1964, Barry Goldwater and President Lyndon Johnson vied for the Presidency.⁴⁶ Johnson chose the Madison Avenue advertising agency of Doyle Dane Bernbach for his campaign.⁴⁷ Bernbach's agency had orchestrated highly successful campaigns for Volkswagen and Avis. Goldwater went with a lesser-known company called the Leo Burnett Agency of Chicago.⁴⁸

⁴³ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency* 158.

⁴⁴ White, 288-289.

⁴⁵ Nixon, 225.

⁴⁶ Diamond, 25.

⁴⁷ Bates, 122.

⁴⁸ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 173.

With the aid of his advertiser, Johnson was able to run an effective ad campaign that portrayed Goldwater as an opponent of Social Security and an advocate of using the atomic bomb.⁴⁹ In the infamous Daisy commercial, a little girl played outside in a field of daisies.⁵⁰ She counted to ten and then an atomic explosion filled the screen. Lyndon Johnson's voice filled the air and contended that the stakes were too high and if human kind did not love each other, everyone would die.⁵¹ The commercial only received one dramatic airing and it implied that Barry Goldwater would bring about nuclear war.⁵² This commercial set a precedent for negative political campaign advertisements.

Johnson sought to use the Cold War and the fear surrounding it to show that he was most capable of defending America against communism. Goldwater's opponent also linked him to the Ku Klux Klan because they had endorsed his candidacy, even though in actuality the candidate had never embraced the group.⁵³ However, Goldwater had voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, during a time when the movement was at its apex. Goldwater's own actions and the way his opponent portrayed him made him an undesirable product to voting consumers.

The election of 1968 necessitated the more brutal modern-day tactics of presidential campaigns because three men ran for president: Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, and George Wallace.⁵⁴ All three candidates had respectable histories in public service. The similar past of the candidates made it difficult for voters to differentiate between the three men. This election is also particularly noteworthy because

⁴⁹ Ibid, 177-178.

⁵⁰ James B. Twitchell, *20 Ads That Shook the World: The Century's Most Groundbreaking Advertising and How It Changed Us All* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2000.),156.

⁵¹ Ibid, 157.

⁵² Ibid, 158.

⁵³ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 196.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 221.

a journalist followed Nixon's campaign and wrote a book that uncovered the ways in which Nixon packaged and sold himself to the American people as if he were soap or cola.⁵⁵ Joe McGinnis's work demonstrates the disparities between presidential candidates and the images they portrayed to voters.

Nixon and Humphrey both attempted to boost their popularity with television specials featuring such celebrities of the day as Jackie Gleason, Johnny Carson, and Bill Cosby.⁵⁶ Nixon also relied upon the Cold War issue and the War in Vietnam to generate support for himself.⁵⁷ Nixon distinguished himself sufficiently from his opponents to win the election. This could be due to in large part to the \$6,270,000 his campaign spent on television advertisements.⁵⁸ For the 1972 election, Nixon faced George McGovern. In this hotly contested election, Nixon attacked McGovern as radical and McGovern countered by attacking Nixon's inability to withdraw America from the Vietnam War. During this election, Nixon created his own advertising entity called the November Group, a decision that proved successful because he won this election as well, this time by a landslide.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Richard Nixon's participation in the Watergate scandal illustrated to the American people that the President was not above breaking the law or lying.⁶⁰ The Vietnam War also generated public scrutiny of government credibility.⁶¹ This newfound distrust of the highest position in America changed the way presidential candidates ran their campaigns. In addition to portraying characteristics associated with strong and

⁵⁵ Joe McGinnis, *The Selling of the President* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1969)

⁵⁶ Diamond, 25-26.

⁵⁷ Boller, 321.

⁵⁸ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 196.

⁵⁹ Diamond, 289.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 329.

⁶¹ Edwin Diamond and Robert A Silverman. *White House to Your House: Media and Politics in Virtual America* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995), *viv*.

competent leadership, candidates also had to illustrate their ability to be trusted. In the 1976 election, candidates had to deemphasize their role as partisan politicians and show their personal character. In order to do this, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter broke with tradition and appeared in advertisements to give personal appeals to the public.

As Richard Nixon's former Vice-President, Ford was heavily associated with Nixon, to his detriment.⁶² The presidential contender did not improve his popularity at all by pardoning Nixon for his crimes. Jimmy Carter further attacked Ford with charges of incompetence, wastefulness, and opposing social welfare programs.⁶³ Carter emphasized his own modest farming background, hard work, and identity as a Southerner. He played up his folksiness and featured common citizens in his campaign ads.⁶⁴ Carter also emphasized his Baptist faith. Both Carter's negative characterizations of Ford as well as his positive portrayal of himself were attempts to depict images rather than realities. Carter's victory came in spite of Ford's attempts to portray Carter as arrogant, over religious, and ambivalent on key issues.⁶⁵

The role of the media in politics increased significantly in the 1980's.⁶⁶ The election of 1980 pitted incumbent Jimmy Carter against former actor and California Governor Ronald Reagan. An American crisis and other alleged failures of Carter characterized the election. In 1979, several Iranians had taken fifty-three American diplomats hostage to bargain for the return of the Shah of Iran. Initially, Carter was able to use the crisis as a rallying point that garnered him popular support for his handling of

⁶² Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 330.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 366.

⁶⁴ Diamond, 28.

⁶⁵ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 363.

⁶⁶ Stephen Bates and Edwin Diamond. *The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), x.

the affair and focused attention away from high interest rates and inflation.⁶⁷ The Carter administration's handling of a fumbled attempt to rescue the hostages lessened this popularity.

Moreover, a bitter assault on Carter during the Democratic primaries by Edward Kennedy also took a huge toll on Carter's reputation. This paved the way for Reagan's advertising against his opponent. Because Kennedy caused sufficient damage to Carter's image, Reagan's ads did not need to be as overtly negative.⁶⁸ Significantly, this election saw the rise of several independent groups that were not directly affiliated with either candidate that sponsored ads supporting their particular candidate. Many of these ads accused Carter of supporting abortion and being "soft on communism," among other charges.⁶⁹ In contrast, Reagan portrayed himself as strong on defense and capable of stepping up the arms race to cause the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ Jerry Falwell, the leader of the Moral Majority, campaigned against Carter and falsely claimed that the candidate supported homosexuality.

Ronald Reagan's spokespersons limited Carter's ability to run on a negative campaign because they claimed Carter's record lacked anything positive and thus Carter's only option was negativity.⁷¹ This was due in large part to high inflation, rising unemployment, and Carter's inability to work with Congress.⁷² The Iranian hostage crisis also hurt Carter's record. He attempted to use his tenure as President as proof of his capability to do the job. Carter had achieved several successes in the Panama Canal

⁶⁷ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 381.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 401.

⁶⁹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping the Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995, 1982), 571.

⁷⁰ Boller, 357.

⁷¹ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 402.

⁷² Boller, 355.

Treaties, the Camp David accords, and an energy conservation policy.⁷³ Nevertheless, Jimmy Carter's accomplishments, his attempts to portray Ronald Reagan as unsafe, and testimonials by famous actors on Carter's behalf were not enough to allow the incumbent to maintain the presidency. Ronald Reagan won in a landslide victory.

Ronald Reagan sought to maintain his position as President in the 1984 election in which he ran against Walter Mondale, Jimmy Carter's Vice-President. Reagan had his critics. They maintained his policy of Reaganomics catered to the wealthy and created a huge deficit and that he had failed to make progress in arms limitation.⁷⁴ Mondale suffered because his opponents bitterly attacked him in the primaries and he was associated with Carter's record. Reagan had more funds with which to purchase television airtime and this factored into the outcome as well. Reagan also generated support by encouraging patriotism. His ad campaign included the song "God Bless the USA" by Lee Greenwood which proclaimed "...I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free, and I won't forget the men who died and gave that right to me..."

Mondale unsuccessfully attempted to make the polity feel uncomfortable about the consequences of Reagan's budget deficits, the threat of the Soviet Union under four more years of Reagan, and the influence of the so-called "Religious Right" on court justices.⁷⁵ The religious right, led by Reverend Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority emerged as a prominent political entity during this election.⁷⁶ Falwell claimed that President Reagan was "God's instrument for rebuilding America." Religion was a prominent feature of the election with focus on such issues as prayer in the public

⁷³ Ibid, 354-355.

⁷⁴ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 446.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 449.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 453.

schools, abortion, and tax credits for parents wanting to send their children to parochial schools.⁷⁷ Reagan himself proclaimed that religion and politics were inseparable and criticized “modern-day secularism.” George W. Bush famously admired Reagan, and emulated the merging of political campaigns and religion in the 2000 and 2004 elections.

In 1988, Reagan’s Vice-President, George Bush sought the Presidency against Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis. Bush was able to capitalize on the record of his popular predecessor. Like Reagan, Bush portrayed that America with him as president would be a utopian nation with little crime and communal relationships between citizens.⁷⁸ As John F. Kennedy had done, Bush also created an image based upon his service experience in World War II combat that depicted him as a common World War II veteran who moved to Texas to raise his family.⁷⁹ Bush omitted the fact that he went to Texas to work in the oil business and achieved success and wealth. In another contrivance, George Bush asked his wife to be more romantic on camera in order to generate the same kind of publicity Michael Dukakis and his wife were getting.⁸⁰

The Republican Party used fear tactics alleging that Dukakis was soft on crime and if he were to win, America would be terrorized and become environmentally unsound.⁸¹ Many of Bush’s advertisements against Dukakis contained blatant lies.⁸² Perhaps most notoriously, Massachusetts had a furlough system through which convicted criminals could obtain weekend passes from jail. One of these criminals, Willie Horton,

⁷⁷ Boller, 371.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 460.

⁷⁹ Diamond, 29.

⁸⁰ George Bush. *All The Best: My Life In Letters And Other Writings*. (New York, NY: Scribner, 1999),394.

⁸¹ Jamieson, Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 460-162.

⁸² Ibid, x.

escaped and raped a woman.⁸³ Bush's ads implied that two hundred and sixty eight murderers had escaped furlough in Massachusetts when only Horton had done so.⁸⁴ George Bush also released an advertisement that showed pictures of the Boston Harbor with signs that say "Danger/Radiation Hazard/No Swimming." The site was actually near a nuclear repair space, but Bush claimed that the waters were unsafe because Dukakis had not used his role as governor to clean the area. Further, Bush implied that Dukakis opposed gun ownership by private individuals.⁸⁵ Dukakis had actually supported gun control that would not have affected sportsmen.

Both Bush and Dukakis utilized the talents of Madison Avenue advertising agencies and both employed negative campaign tactics.⁸⁶ However, the unorganized system of advertising used by Dukakis could not successfully counter the barrage of charges that the Bush team threw his way. Dukakis's own actions did not improve his image either. He rode around in a tank to produce a photo opportunity for his campaign. He appeared silly in the tank and Bush used this to portray him as a weak leader. Bush won the election.

Nevertheless, in 1988, George Bush had promised he would not raise taxes. He went back on his word because of the poor economy. This created an image of distrust he could no longer overcome. Bush tried to run on his success with stopping Saddam Hussein and the fact that the Cold War ended during his term.⁸⁷ However, these two issues were large detriments to his second presidential attempt against Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. This was because after the initial wave of support for the first Gulf War,

⁸³ Wayne, 219.

⁸⁴ Bates, *viv.*

⁸⁵ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 477.

⁸⁶ Wayne, 212.

⁸⁷ Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, 491.

Bush's popularity dropped tremendously due to his handling of the war. The end of the Cold War also ushered out the need for a president strong on foreign policy.

Bill Clinton learned from the mistakes of Michael Dukakis and employed a tactic of having only one person in charge of advertisements to avoid confusion or contradiction.⁸⁸ Clinton's team balanced negative and positive ads in an attempt to appeal directly to the electorate.⁸⁹ Positive ads emphasized Clinton's humble background of being born in Hope, Arkansas to a widowed mother. Many of the negative ads featured clips of Bush. The most famous ads included clips of Bush's invitation to "read my lips, no new taxes." Bush did raise taxes and this hurt his creditability. Because the advertisements used Bush's own words, the content was difficult for him to defend.

Bush was handicapped in the 1992 election by his actions of the previous campaign. Voters remembered the negativity and they were not open to more of the same.⁹⁰ Because of this, the incumbent had a difficult time attacking his opponent. However, Bush did attack Clinton as lacking integrity and as likely to raise taxes.⁹¹ Clinton was also called a draft dodger and accused of committing adultery. The Bush campaign failed to use enough ads that portrayed the positive aspects of their candidate. Clinton emphasized domestic issues and this proved to be the successful strategy.⁹²

In the mid-1990's politicians had long ago solidified the importance of television advertising. This medium was constantly offering new outlets for candidates to spread their message. Ross Perot announced his candidacy for the presidency on the Larry King

⁸⁸ Ibid, 491

⁸⁹ Ibid, 493.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 49.

⁹¹ Ibid, 503-505.

⁹² Ibid, 500.

Live show.⁹³ In the 1992 election, all three candidates appeared on MTV.⁹⁴ Even television talk shows were not immune from political debate.⁹⁵ Famously, Bill Clinton appeared on the Arsenio Hall Show and wore sunglasses while playing the saxophone.

The 1992 election changed presidential campaigns in many ways. Bill Clinton largely campaigned on popular entertainment shows such as Larry King Live, Good Morning America, and the Arsenio Hall show.⁹⁶ Despite his previous opinion that an appearance on such shows by the President would be distasteful, Bush copied this strategy. Entertainment news media such as Larry King Live and comparable shows allowed candidates to bypass traditional news outlets and gain direct access to the voters. The third party candidate, Ross Perot, almost exclusively relied upon these types of shows for his campaigning. The high number of television appearances created a need for candidates to have “handlers.”⁹⁷ Officially called communication specialists or public relations consultants, these individuals coach their clients on how to behave on camera.

The presidential contest in 1996 between incumbent Bill Clinton and Bob Dole witnessed the emergence of the internet in political campaigns. Politics evolved into a new form of entertainment for the masses via talk radio, twenty-four hour news channels, and tabloids.⁹⁸ With the abundance of media outlets dedicated to politics, it almost seems like the campaign season never ends. In the new technological age, voters had access to a myriad of information that they never could have imagined before. Popularity of the internet created a seemingly limitless new outlet for presidential campaigns. However,

⁹³ Diamond, viv

⁹⁴ Jamieson, Jamieson, *Packaging of the Presidency*, xxiii.

⁹⁵ Ibid, xiii.

⁹⁶ Diamond, 2.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 108-109.

⁹⁸ Ibid, x, xii.

the new medium also allowed anonymous entities to disseminate rapidly information that could potentially damage a candidate's image whether true or false. Bill Clinton ran an effective campaign in the new information age and won re-election.

The 2000 election pitted Vice-President Al Gore against George W. Bush, the son of forty-first President George H.W. Bush. Al Gore ran on his accomplishments as second in command to Bill Clinton. The Clinton years had witnessed a decrease in the deficit and a thriving economy. Unfortunately, for Gore, Republicans highlighted Bill Clinton's indiscretions, and though Clinton himself remained popular, this negatively affected Gore's campaign. Gore waited too late to distance himself from Clinton's reputation. Though negative campaigning by his opponent hurt Gore, the Vice President also failed to foster a positive image for himself. His promises to save Social Security and his attempts to benefit from fear over environmental issues were not enough to produce a victory.

The Bush campaign machine did something very noteworthy and advertised Bush as a brand. Stickers and buttons that simply said "W" came to represent the man aiming to fill the job his father had possessed eight years prior. Like Jimmy Carter before him, Bush portrayed himself as a Washington outsider, and like Carter, Bush met with a great deal of bad publicity during the campaign. Bush had been a known alcoholic prior to his self-proclaimed religious conversion late in life. Bush's sordid past could have hurt his chances, but in some ways, it provided him with the opportunity to evoke his religion frequently throughout the campaign. Bush claimed that his favorite book was the Bible and Jesus Christ was his hero. Like other previous candidates such as Bryan, Carter, and Reagan, Bush appealed to religion to gain support. The Christian Coalition supported

Bush and helped him win the Republican Primary. Some had also accused Bush of benefiting from a great deal of nepotism, especially pertinent to an extended absence he took from his National Guard Duty service. In a rather controversial finish, in another way similar to 1896 due to the discrepancy with the popular vote, Bush assumed the presidency in January 2001.

The framers of the United States opposed factional politics and hoped for a group of intelligent and respectable men to choose the nation's leader in a stately manner. But by only the second election in the history of the America, this utopian ideal was quickly put to an end. The tactics of presidential candidates evolved over the years, but many of the most important developments occurred in the twentieth century with advances in technology including radio, movies, and television. The mass media outlets catered to large audiences and made politics seem relevant to the every day lives of Americans. Presidential hopefuls sat at the threshold of such an enormous amount of power that they were often willing to package themselves like products and, in the process, denigrate the reputations of those who stood between them and the White House.

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT

Religious and moral issues dominate contemporary politics and society. Many Christians believe that secular society is waging a figurative cultural war against Christianity in America. A myriad of secularists, however, believe that certain groups of Christians are unfairly dominating the politics of the day. One point that lacks contention is that evangelical Christians have gained a powerful voice in modern society. Protestant Christians have been a predominant force in American politics since the earliest settlements in the New World, but their influence has expanded and become more powerful in the late twentieth century. A series of religious revivals that many historians label the Second Great Awakening, laid the foundation for today's politically active evangelical Christians known as the "Religious Right."

Religion has always been an important factor in American politics and its importance persisted throughout the Founding of the United States and beyond. Nonetheless, many Protestant religious leaders felt that Enlightenment thinking and moral laxity threatened both Christianity and their own place in society. This concern, coupled with other motivating factors such as social problems like alcohol use and abuse, gambling, dueling, and the poor treatment of women, children and the poor, caused these leaders to begin a series of religious revivals, later termed Great Awakenings, aimed at inculcating Christianity into the fabric of every day life. The second cycle of these revivals emphasized the concept of using religion to bring about social reform. This paradigm shift transformed American society and had consequences that are especially salient in modern politics.

Religious Puritans immigrated to the New World in the early seventeenth century in order to seek a haven in which they could practice their own forms of Christian orthodoxy.⁹⁹ Although a common myth prevails that claims Puritans came to America to seek freedom from religious persecution, once settled in the English colonies they established strict social codes and used the law to harass and castigate dissenting religious groups who lived among them. Anglicanism was the established church. Religion influenced the happenings of every day social and political life. There was no popular conception of a separation between Church and State.¹⁰⁰ Other denominations such as Baptists, Lutherans, Quakers and Catholics settled in various regions throughout the colonies as well. Over time, competing denominations gave worshippers options.¹⁰¹ In order to live more freely, many parishioners chose to move to more tolerant regions and denominations. By the 1680's churches became voluntary entities that citizens chose to join only if they wanted to do so.

In the 1730's and 40's, religious leaders in America perceived a great threat to Christianity in the form of declension, or the decline of orthodoxy due to the liberalism of the day.¹⁰² This threat stemmed from the popularity of dissenting religious groups and the culture of reason and logic propagated by the Enlightenment. Religious leaders in the Great Awakening promoted the ideals of Calvinism and waged war against Arminianism, which rejected the idea of predestination and contended that human beings have unfettered, unbiased free will and thus are able to determine their own salvation by

⁹⁹ Mark A. Noll, *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980's* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 21.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰² Barry Hankins, *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960), 6.

choosing to convert to Christianity.¹⁰³ The desires to establish Christianity's dominant place in American society and to counter contemporary liberal ideology led to the First Great Awakening. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were the vanguards of this religious phenomenon, which lasted from approximately 1739 to 1744.¹⁰⁴

Alleged causes of religious decline, both real and perceived, were numerous. The American Revolution was a serious impediment to the spread and practice of Christianity during the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ This is true because of several factors. First, combat waged in the War of Independence destroyed a myriad of religious structures. In addition, political aspects of the war often divided preachers and congregations. These factors left many churchgoers without places to worship. Another consequence of the Revolution, American westward expansion, which Britain had outlawed, became possible after independence. Between 1790 and 1850, around a million Americans migrated west, leaving behind their preachers, churches, and all vestiges of organized religion.¹⁰⁶

Another threat to American Christianity, religious skepticism, became a prominent feature of aristocratic, educated dialogue.¹⁰⁷ Protestantism promoted education as a vehicle that Christians could use to study religion.¹⁰⁸ In general, common Americans with agrarian backgrounds were not familiar with contemporary European intellectual thought.¹⁰⁹ However, widespread literacy and a focus on education had the unintended consequence of allowing the wealthy and educated to access modes of

¹⁰³ Hankins, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Darrett B. Rutman, *The Great Awakening: Event and Exegesis* (Albany, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1970), 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ Hankins, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Hankins, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1976), 116-132.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, xviii.

thinking and learning that questioned religious dogma.

Though many of the Founders subscribed to Christian beliefs,¹¹⁰ some of the foremost American thinkers and politicians were all familiar with literature from the Enlightenment and the culture of Reason. Thomas Jefferson was a vocal deist.¹¹¹ Deism is a belief system that posited God as a sort of watchmaker who created the Earth and then left it to operate according to the laws of nature.¹¹² Although most educated, upper class Americans were aware of deism, and some ascribed to this belief system, it was not a prevailing ideology. Nevertheless, many Protestant ministers feared that deism would eliminate biblical Christianity.¹¹³ Preachers frequently warned their congregations about deists.¹¹⁴ New and competing beliefs systems threatened the stability of traditional Protestantism and prompted the religious community into action.

Another concern that was present in the years leading up to the Second Great Awakening was the prevalence of “moral laxity.” Luxury and materialism were rampant.¹¹⁵ Prostitution was a recognized problem. Street crime had been on the rise. The consumption of alcohol, dueling, and a lack of observance of the Sabbath were concerns.¹¹⁶ Many Protestants harshly criticized the institution of slavery as immoral.¹¹⁷ In addition, members of the clergy feared the decline of their importance in society.¹¹⁸ At this point, they had limited authority and an indifferent laity sometimes ignored them.

¹¹⁰ Michael Novak seeks to challenge the historical portrayal of the founders as being predominantly secular in his book, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding*. San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2002.

¹¹¹ Edward Craig, ed, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: NY: Routledge, 1998), 855.

¹¹² Mays, 122.

¹¹³ Hankins, 3.

¹¹⁴ Mays, 38.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 32.

¹¹⁶ Hankins, 16.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 74.

¹¹⁸ Mays, 48.

Preachers viewed the prevalence of impious behavior as threatening, but used it to their advantage when they played upon sinners' feelings of guilt and appealed to emotion in order to engender religious conversions made to avoid eternal damnation.¹¹⁹ To be sure, this reaped spiritual rewards, but it also ensured vital roles for the clergy within society. After the ratification of the American Constitution provided for the free exercise of religion and prevented the federal government from encouraging religious practice, preachers felt they needed to launch a second crusade to reawaken religious zeal in the United States.

The combination of these factors created anxiety that led many American Protestant preachers to begin a second series of revivals that waxed and waned from approximately 1800 to 1858. The religious fervor inspired by these revivals became known as the Second Great Awakening. The upsurge in religious revivalism regenerated interest in Christianity in the short term and led to long-term social and political activism that many Christians still practice to this day. Charles G. Finney was a leading proponent of Christian revivalism and the key figure of the Second Great Awakening.¹²⁰ He popularized the previously disfavored concept of revivals and changed the perception of them from being overly emotional western frontier experiences into a practice that became ubiquitous throughout the nation.¹²¹ Finney shaped the Second Great Awakening and laid the foundations for the social activism that it ushered in because he promoted the Arminian concept of individual choice.¹²² Finney believed that for sinners to receive

¹¹⁹ Hankins, 5.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 16.

¹²¹ Ibid, 17.

¹²² Ibid, 44.

salvation, they had to repent and live their lives in such a way to please God.¹²³ In Finney's early days of religious work, other revivalists thought his ideology and tactics were extreme.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, his critics eventually adopted Finney's approach because of its proven success rate.¹²⁵

For the religious aspects alone, the Second Great Awakening was an important factor in American history. However, its social and political implications extend far beyond the period of the revivals and conversions they produced. Religious leaders and average people came to believe that God was a benevolent entity that would not arbitrarily choose a select group to receive salvation. Revivalism rejected the Calvinist concept of predestination.¹²⁶ The doctrine of Arminianism, which gained enormous popularity through the revivals, held that God endowed man with free will and man was thus responsible for his own salvation through conversion but also good works.¹²⁷ This ideology translated into the emphasis on the importance of individuals who could foster change in their own lives as well as encouraging social reform that could in turn affect the lives of others as well. A democratization of Christianity occurred.¹²⁸ This allowed anyone and everyone to participate in religious activity and influence social reform if they chose to do so.

Participants in the religious movement opposed Calvin's idea of predestination. Their belief that one could achieve redemption through great works on Earth motivated

¹²³ Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960.),117.

¹²⁴ Hankins, 45.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 46.

¹²⁶ Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Nineteenth-Century America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1955), 97.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 92.

¹²⁸ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.)

them to secure the salvation of the masses by legislating morality. Because popular religious sentiment now held that God did not predetermine history, man realized a responsibility to perform benevolent acts to foster God's good will during life on Earth and after death. This responsibility materialized in social reform that essentially aimed at legislating morality either by judicial law or by the laws of society's mores. It is ironic to note that in a time when Protestants were embracing the concept of free will, they chose to attempt to make laws that would in effect limit the practice of individual self-determination.

The Protestant movement aimed at converting Americans to Christianity gained momentum from a genuine desire to share the opportunity for salvation with all who would accept it. Preachers dedicated their lives to Christianizing America. The Second Great Awakening as a process served as a force that connected the western frontier to urban America. The revivals solidified an American identity and produced a common American experience. Also, the novel concept that history was not foreordained served as a motivation for the religious to encourage pious behavior in order to avoid punishments rendered in this lifetime, not only after death. One purpose of the revivals was to train Americans to behave in such a way that would please God so that he would in turn bestow his good favor upon America as a whole.¹²⁹ This ideology was particularly salient during the War of 1812. Many Americans opposed going to war with their former mother colony because of England's religious endeavors. England was a country that led efforts to Christianize its colonies with a multitude of missionaries.¹³⁰ The English also ardently opposed France during a period when Americans viewed

¹²⁹ William Gribbin, *The Churches Militant: The War of 1812 and American Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 142.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

Napoleon as being the Anti-Christ.¹³¹

A third motivation for transforming the perceived depravity of American citizens was a widespread adherence to postmillennialism.¹³² This belief system held that the world was drawing ever closer to the inevitable return of Jesus Christ so that he could embark upon his 1,000 year reign. Millenarians believed it was their duty to mold America into a place suitable for and acceptable to the Son of God. To an extent, revivals could appeal to emotion and motivate sinners to repent and actively promote acceptable Christian behavior in society. However, by fostering a political and social culture that emphasized conformity and control, conceivably, millenarians could broaden their audience and appeal to man's desire to fit in rather than simply appealing to beliefs and motivations that are often very private and individual.

Inasmuch as humankind is a complicated and diverse species, surely motivations stemmed from a sundry array of causes, not all of which were religious. A plausible but disturbing motivation for the revivals, or at least a fortuitous consequence of the revivals, was the establishment of a social code of behavior through religious practice, predicated upon the foundation of free will. The infant American nation was a place of uncertainty and great stress.¹³³ Religion served a role of providing stability for the common citizens during troubled times. It also served the role of providing order. In a country founded on the principles of freedom and in a nation that had recently revolted against authority, it was difficult to impose and enforce a strict government law code because it might seem hypocritical. The government needed a way to possess social control, but could not

¹³¹ Ibid, 55.

¹³² John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt*. (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1972), 6-7.

¹³³ Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly* 21 (Spring 1969): 27.

strictly delegate when they had openly defied Britain and broken away. The religious concepts of personal salvation and moral responsibility in popular culture produced a rubric by which members of society could judge their peers. Thus, individuals would behave accordingly without government prodding and interference in order to be accepted.

Paul E. Johnson, in *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, offers another theory of revivalism as a form of social control. Johnson contends that the owner classes of America encouraged religious practice and societal constraints on the working classes in order to foster conditions most amenable to productivity and profits. Based on the theories of Emile Durkheim, Johnson posits that a free society needs religion because it lacks fixed ranks that keep society in check. God serves as the greatest motivating factor to produce self-restraint in a society that lacks legislated codes of conduct. The revivals provided the framework that inculcated religion and the fear of displeasing God into society and produced the results of conformity and good behavior. Sunday school, which developed during this time, also served as a means to indoctrinate morality into the laity and establish the importance of manners and conformity to religious dogma and mores. Workers attended church on Sundays, generally as a requirement of employment. The same people who supervised workers at the job site often instilled them with the importance of duty and work in church services.¹³⁴ Mill owners and businessmen also paid revival preachers to come to their establishments and preach to the workers. The motivation for this was to train workers to forego negative behaviors such as drinking and

¹³⁴ Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 166-167

gambling that could affect performance at work.¹³⁵

The revivalism and religious fervor spawned social movements aimed at ending established practices deemed displeasing to God. To be sure, various social movements had existed before the Second Great Awakening. However, up until this point, eighteenth century social reform movements were disappointing.¹³⁶ By the nineteenth century, protest movements had become national, long-term causes. The upsurge in the mobilization of citizens for social causes directly correlates with the increase of revivals and belief in free will doctrine. The number of benevolence societies increased during this time. They performed humanitarian functions that assisted the poor, handicapped, and downtrodden.¹³⁷ Moral societies attacked profanity, breaking the Sabbath, dueling and lotteries among other sins.¹³⁸ The most notable reform movements of anti-slavery and abolition, women's rights, as well as temperance and prohibition had their foundations in this period as well.

Southern states were aware of the religious enthusiasm occurring in the West and eagerly awaited the emergence of revivalism.¹³⁹ Revivalists made many unsuccessful attempts to create a series of widespread popular revivals in the South, until a camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky finally created the impetus for revivalism there.¹⁴⁰ One of the greatest contemporary moral concerns in this region was the institution of slavery, and the religious fervor heightened the debate. Anti-slavery proponents and abolitionists sought to end this system of forced labor that was a sullied stain on the American

¹³⁵ Hankins, 52.

¹³⁶ Michael P. Young, "Confessional Protest: The Religious Birth of U.S. National Social Movements," *American Sociological Review* 67 (October 2002): 660.

¹³⁷ Charles Roy Keller, *The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1942), 162.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 147.

¹³⁹ Boles, 51.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 64.

reputation. Arminian doctrine focused on the importance of the individual and the idea of choice. Enslaved African Americans were a group that had no individuality or choice. Most Southerners viewed slaves as pieces of property to work or be sold as though they were livestock. Advocates of abolition believed that God created all men equally, and thus no man should own the deed to another man as though he were a piece of river front property.

Many abolitionists or anti-slavery proponents secretly taught slaves how to read and preached Christianity to them. Opponents of slavery believed the institution contradicted God's teachings of love, purity, and equality.¹⁴¹ Many Americans believed that the practice of slavery displeased God and would thus garner consequences for America as a nation. The practice also was unfavorable because it made America an unsuitable locality for Christ's return.

Reverend Theodore Dwight Weld, one of the most vocal anti-slavery proponents, promoted revivalism and traveled with Charles G. Finney on the revival circuit.¹⁴² He and his wife Angelina interviewed slaveholders.¹⁴³ They also poured through southern newspapers to find accounts of slave mistreatment. Weld's extensive research culminated in a pamphlet entitled *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*. This work sought to create dialogue and generate momentum for Weld's cause. In this pamphlet, Weld recounted the horrible conditions under which masters forced their slaves to live. He attacked the arguments offered by slaveholders in defense of their labor practices. A selection of slaves got the opportunity to have their voices

¹⁴¹ Smith, 205.

¹⁴² Hankins, 90.

¹⁴³ Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, NY: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 1.

heard through the pen of Theodore Weld. He humanized their cause and implored readers to imagine themselves or their loved ones as pieces of chattel property arbitrarily robbed of independence and freedom so that another man could profit at the expense of their health and happiness. Weld believed that all men were equal inasmuch they were all sinners created by God. He worked tirelessly to popularize the anti-slavery movement and he trained other prominent members of the movement who succeeded him.

Slaveholders used a myriad of defenses for maintaining the institution of slavery, but because most arguments against slavery were religious and moral in nature, religion became their predominant justification.¹⁴⁴ The slaveholding ethic so deeply permeated southern society that the very possession of slaves became a defining characteristic of one's moral and economic status within a community. The definition of a southern man included the qualification that one treated their slaves humanely and performed all duties required of a good master.¹⁴⁵ Though some masters were hesitant to equip their slaves with skills necessary to practice religion, such as the ability to read, others believed that slavery was an institution through which they could Christianize Africans.

Southern slaveholders turned to the Bible in order to illustrate that slavery was an acceptable Christian practice.¹⁴⁶ According to their defense, the book of Genesis indicated that slavery was permissible because it said that Abraham had slaves and servants within his household and that he had made a covenant with God swearing to protect them. In the book of Deuteronomy, proslavery proponents argued that God had ordered the Israelites to keep slaves. Slaveholders also saw the curse placed upon Ham

¹⁴⁴ Eugene Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 473

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 365-366.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 475.

by his father Noah as being a justification of slavery. Ham had witnessed his father in a drunken state of undress and his conduct thereafter caused Noah to curse Ham's son Canaan and his future descendants to be servants of Shem. Proslavery defenders also pointed out that God or Jesus did not condemn the practice of slavery anywhere in the Bible. Eugene Genovese points out that due to these multiple instances where the Bible ostensibly supports slavery, southern slaveholders seemingly had a stronger Biblical defense than did their northern adversaries.

The Civil War was the ultimate consequence of the slavery issue. The Civil War was a religious war and a consequence of Biblical debates over the morality of slavery.¹⁴⁷ Both sides read the same Bible and ascribed to the same religion, yet each side drew largely different interpretations of what those words meant. Northern abolitionists and Southern slaveholders both believed that God ordained their position and that the Bible justified it. When the South lost the war, many Southerners believed this was because they had displeased God. Bitter religious divisions over the equality of African Americans persisted into the Reconstruction period and beyond.

After the war, many Protestant religious denominations aided black freedmen.¹⁴⁸ Northern denominations formed missionary societies whose objectives were to travel south and help to mitigate the circumstances newly freed former slaves faced in a hostile environment. Their ultimate goal was to transform African Americans into productive Christian citizens.¹⁴⁹ These religious reformers idealized an egalitarian society where black and white Americans could live together peacefully. They sought to create this

¹⁴⁷ Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 109.

¹⁴⁸ Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 51.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 52.

society by educating the former slaves and encouraging feelings of unity brought about by white citizens working and suffering with black citizens in order to heal as a nation. Unfortunately and tragically, Southerners held steadfastly to their racist ideology and Jim Crow laws prevented equal treatment of African Americans until a much later time.

Women, who at this time the government disenfranchised politically and economically, had played a crucial role in the abolition movement.¹⁵⁰ Traditional gender roles dictated that women were to be subservient models of obedience and domesticity. Men expected women to do their part in families and society.¹⁵¹ However, because male society typically viewed women as the moral center of a family, it became socially acceptable for women to engage in religiously driven behavior aimed at producing social change.¹⁵² Men viewed females as the moral beings in a household and thus women were able gradually to gain power and importance in society through religious institutions and moral work. Women had the opportunity to engage in important social work via benevolence societies.

Women worked alongside men to garner support for the anti-slavery and abolition movements. By working for a cause that debunked a previously held notion and caused a paradigm shift in national thinking, women began to apply these novel ideals of individual freedom and choice to their own positions within society and within their own households. Women were fighting to end the oppression of slaves while they themselves lived within the confines of a downtrodden status.¹⁵³ The women's movement was a

¹⁵⁰ Hankins, 119.

¹⁵¹ Craig H. Roell, *The Piano in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989.), 24-25.

¹⁵² Hankins, 119.

¹⁵³ Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan

logical consequence of the feminine acquisition of moral authority and the similarities between the status of slaves and women. Revivalism produced the idea that God had created all men, women, and races equally, and that all could repent equally.

The women's rights movement stemmed from the spirit of equality introduced by the Second Great Awakening. Theodore Weld's wife Angelina and her sister Sarah Grimke were two vocal opponents of slavery who transitioned to championing women's rights causes as well.¹⁵⁴ Sarah Grimke refused to accept misinterpreted Biblical justification for female oppression.¹⁵⁵ She believed misconceptions about the validity of a male dominated society stemmed from misinterpretation of religious text. She wrote a collection of letters in which she defended an egalitarian society. Grimke quoted Biblical scripture that illustrated that God made man and woman in his own image and gave them both control over all land and ocean creatures.

The religious roles of women in the nineteenth century went further than simply allowing for a feminine sense of independence and moral authority in a male-dominated society. This newly obtained female power gave women a platform on which to dictate the actions of men. Temperance was an extension of a new sense of female empowerment and religious concerns of the day. Though concerns about the consumption of alcohol predated nineteenth century revivalism, 1826 marked the conception of a national, religious based movement.¹⁵⁶ The Women's Christian

University Press, 1981), 6.

¹⁵⁴ Hankins, 111.

¹⁵⁵ Sarah Grimke, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and Other Essays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 111.

¹⁵⁶ Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America*. (Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1969), 89.

Temperance Union played a huge organizing role in the temperance campaign.¹⁵⁷

Women witnessed male unemployment, familial neglect, and impious behavior by male householders, and wanted to curtail this conduct by outlawing ardent spirits. This action culminated with the Prohibition movement and the ratification of the eighteenth amendment in 1919 that banned the manufacturing and sale of alcohol. Because men viewed women as moral agents of contemporary American society and because of the prominent female voice of authority, women were able to use religion as a stepping-stone to a position of equality with men.

The examples of the anti-slavery/abolition movement, the advent of the American women's rights movement, and the Temperance movement illustrate social reform movements generated by the Second Great Awakening. The symbiotic relationship between Christianity and secular social problems continued beyond the revivals that served as the impetus for the concern with the piety of American society. In the late nineteenth century, organized American Protestant religious leaders realized that Christianity no longer fulfilled all of the needs of the entire nation.¹⁵⁸ The late nineteenth century had witnessed the second wave of industrialization and the rise of big business that caused massive amounts of rural citizens to immigrate to urban areas where they experienced a mixture of cultures that were not solely Protestant.¹⁵⁹ Corruption and greed in politics and business as well as a focus on materialism characterized the period.¹⁶⁰ Through the rise of big business, advancements in science, the amalgamation

¹⁵⁷ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 26.

¹⁵⁸ Douglas Carl Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture, 1920-1940* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 23.

¹⁵⁹ Marsden, 13-14.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

of cultures, and widespread access to higher education, America became a more secularized nation.¹⁶¹ Industrial capitalism replaced an agrarian economy. Life became much more difficult for the average American citizen. Socially active Protestants embraced the opportunity to combat the problems of the day.

The Social Gospel was a late nineteenth century and early twentieth century response to the moral consequences of industrialization and urbanization of American society.¹⁶² This movement promoted the application of Christian principles to quell social problems such as poverty, inequality, crime, and to engender education and prison reform. The Salvation Army, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association were a few of such organizations that emerged at this time.¹⁶³ The consequences of modernity and industrialization proved to be extremely poor living conditions for the majority of working people. Protestants recognized the plight of the average workers who often lived in slums and lacked sufficient sustenance.¹⁶⁴ The existence of sweatshops and child labor were other social ills Christian reformers sought to alleviate.¹⁶⁵ Protestant reformers and eventually government officials wanted to counteract the problems created by advancements in society and return to a simpler way of living. Populism emerged at this time as well as a rural based movement that challenged the social ills engendered by industrialization and big business.

A divergence between evangelical Christians and "liberal" Christians became

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 14.

¹⁶² Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 639-640.

¹⁶³ Donald K. Gorrell, *The Age of Social Responsibility: The Social Gospel in the Progressive Era 1900-1920* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 13.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 28.

¹⁶⁵ David Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1985), 175.

salient during this period.¹⁶⁶ Evangelicals¹⁶⁷ had gained popularity during the Second Great Awakening and in again the early twentieth century. Evangelicalism focused more on preaching and conversions than on form and orthodoxy.¹⁶⁸ Unlike many of their Protestant counterparts, evangelicals focused more on the importance of spreading the word of Christianity than alleviating social problems.¹⁶⁹ Though they did participate in social reform to help alleviate the needs of the poor, evangelicals were more inclined to seek moral reform that combated secularism and protected the place of Christianity in American society.

In the 1920's, more divisions were apparent as evangelicals produced an emerging group of fundamentalists.¹⁷⁰ Fundamentalists are a subgroup of evangelicals that militantly oppose liberal theology in the churches and value changes in culture.¹⁷¹ They believe that the Bible is inerrant, or without error. Fundamentalists also literally interpret the Bible. Secularism and human advancements challenged traditional religious dogma. Some Protestants chose to adapt modernity to their own beliefs. Fundamentalists refused to do this and instead chose to separate from society and attempt to avoid the secular threats of modernization.

Throughout the nineteenth century, evangelicals participated in social reform in waves.¹⁷² In 1859, Charles Darwin published *Origin of Species*. Evangelicals opposed

¹⁶⁶ James Davidson Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 40.

¹⁶⁷ In his book, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, James Davidson Hunter describes evangelicalism as North American conservative Protestant orthodoxy that encompasses a wide variety of religious and denominational traditions.

¹⁶⁸ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 2003), 25.

¹⁶⁹ Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, 41.

¹⁷⁰ Marsden, 57.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 1.

¹⁷² Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, 117-125.

evolution and resisted its teaching in public schools in the early 20th century on the grounds that evolution was a godless explanation for the origin of man.¹⁷³ The most famous instance of anti-evolution was the Scopes Trial in 1925. The judge in the court upheld a Tennessee law that banned the teaching of evolution.

Churches sought to assist the poor, but also turned to the government.¹⁷⁴ Many Christians agreed with politicians in the Progressive Era with the sentiment that the government should help improve the harsh consequences of free enterprise. The Great Depression, an enormous result of big business, created a situation where poverty was ubiquitous. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, which attempted to regenerate the broken economy, consisted of social policies previously endorsed by the Northern Baptists.¹⁷⁵

After the 1920's, with few exceptions, notably active anti-communist activity in the 1950's, evangelicals and fundamentalists were inclined to withdraw largely from society and ignore the perils of popular culture for many years. However, the secularization of American society became so prevalent in the turbulent 1960's and 1970's that many evangelicals and fundamentalists felt forced to abandon traditional isolation from society and act to combat moral decline.¹⁷⁶ Though these evangelical groups had existed for decades and had consistently been quite popular, they gained prominence during this time. In the past, evangelical movements had focused on single issues such as prohibition or prayer in schools and had been largely apolitical.¹⁷⁷ The evangelical movement that emerged in the 1980's sought to combat all aspects of secular culture that contributed to the perceived moral depravity of the time. Legislative issues

¹⁷³ Ibid, 120.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 29.

¹⁷⁵ Ahlstrom, 921.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 125.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 125.

such as the removal of prayer from public schools, desegregation, and the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* had caused evangelicals great concern. The popularity and influence of rock-and-roll music and pornography shocked evangelicals.¹⁷⁸ Evangelicals vocally opposed abortion, homosexuality, and secularism.¹⁷⁹ The combination of these factors propelled them into action to engender a modern moral reformation akin to the Great Awakenings and subsequent movements. These groups encouraged like-minded citizens to become active in politics and the lobbying of Congress.¹⁸⁰

Religion has been an important aspect of American culture and its influence increased in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and many of his supporters used religion to support the civil rights cause.¹⁸¹ Jimmy Carter combined politics and religion as a vocal Southern Baptist. With the influence of such prominent religious Americans and as liberal ideology became increasingly unpopular due to failures such as the war in Vietnam and the Nixon resignation in the wake of the Watergate scandal, the Christian message began to resonate with large elements of popular society.¹⁸²

Varied Christian groups made efforts to shape American culture, but evangelicals comprised the most publicized movement.¹⁸³ The Christian Coalition, Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority, and Pat Robertson emerged as spokespeople for a form of Christianity not willing to compromise with secular society. These militant proponents of Christianity, collectively dubbed the Christian Right, sought to inform a disillusioned

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 61.

¹⁷⁹ Duane Murray Oldfield *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 1996), 35-38.

¹⁸⁰ Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, 126.

¹⁸¹ Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, 169.

¹⁸² Marsden, 85.

¹⁸³ Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, 171.

populous of their sinful nature. In the 1980's, The Christian Right began to align themselves with the Republican Party in order to propagate their agenda and inculcate their proper Christian values into American culture.¹⁸⁴ Initially, the political party was ambivalent about associating themselves with evangelicals and fundamentalists.¹⁸⁵ However, as the Christian Right gained membership, resources, and creditability in society, the Republicans began to embrace them. Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority publicly supported Ronald Reagan in the elections of 1980 and 1984. The political presence of the "Religious Right" became extremely prominent in the election years of 1992 and 1994.¹⁸⁶ The groups highlighted this union in 1995 with The Christian Coalition's "Contract with the American Family" that acted as a supplement to the Republican Party's "Contract with America."¹⁸⁷

The evangelical vote has figured most prominently in the twenty-first century. In the 2000 election, eighty-four percent of white Protestant voters who regularly attended church voted for George W. Bush and evangelical votes accounted for one-third of total votes cast for Bush.¹⁸⁸ In the 2004 Presidential election, the "Religious Right" gained a platform that allowed their message to be more widespread than ever before. Evangelicals comprise between one-fifth and one-third of the American population,¹⁸⁹ and thus are a considerable presence in politics. They actively campaigned for the re-election of George W. Bush.¹⁹⁰ They spoke to society's concerns over moral issues,

¹⁸⁴ Oldfield, 123.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 124.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 217.

¹⁸⁸ Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, 172.

¹⁸⁹ James Davidson Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 3.

¹⁹⁰ Ron Browning, "Experts discuss religion's impact on 2004 election." *The Indiana Lawyer*, 14 December 2005, 5.

particularly abortion and homosexual marriage. This political activity aimed at reforming society continues today. The Christian Coalition has a legislative agenda and voter education information on their website. Pat Robertson, a popular television evangelist who at one time ran for President, implores visitors to his website to pray for change on the Supreme Court Bench and to fight to restore Jeffersonian rights to American people. On www.jerryfalwell.com, the website's namesake delineated his mission to mobilize evangelical voters to go to the polls and vote for moral legislation. These groups do not limit their targeted audience to only like-minded Americans. To the present day, they remain vocal advocates of combining religion and politics. They promote moral legislation in a democracy that has increasingly become more secular through the passage of time.

Vocal present day crusades, that parallel earlier reform movements such as the Second Great Awakening, exemplify this activity against a definitive secular society allegedly waging a war on Christianity. Modern fears of declension are occurring during a time when over half of United States citizens identify themselves as Christians. America has evolved into a nation that aims to separate the realms of religion and government. However, religious groups are attempting to use politics to modify laws so that they limit old freedoms or prevent the adoption of new freedoms. Members in this political/moral entity seek to limit individual's ability to make their own informed moral choices by outlawing processes or concepts that they deem to be immoral and socially unacceptable. In a democratic society, it would seem that secular principals would guide legislation and individuals could use their own moral judgment to determine whether they want to utilize controversial processes such as abortion or gay marriage.

Alternatively, perhaps the Religious Right is drawing much needed attention to the ills of American popular culture. Democracy promotes rule of the majority, and at this time, evangelicals seem to comprise a majority in America. Previous Christian reformers battled social ills such as slavery and produced undoubtedly positive results. To be sure, critics opposed this activity as it occurred, but the outcome proved to be successful and popular later. The same could be true of the Religious Right.

Christianity has been a prominent force in American politics since before the Revolution. The Second Great Awakening allowed this religious driven political activity to evolve. Those influenced by the period of revivalism sought to engender social reform in order to save the masses and prepare America for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The idea that performing good works could garner salvation created a desire for the pious to recruit soldiers into God's army. This desire stemmed from several possible motivations, but the process was predicated on the fact that the action of encouraging morality was meant to produce the salvation of as many people as possible. This began with a wave of revivals that inculcated the importance of religion in society. The fervor evolved into national movements aimed at enforcing acceptable behavior. These movements were initially social but became political and legislative. To this point, this activity has culminated in the formation and the efforts of the "Religious Right." The emergence and efforts of this group can be directly traced back to the events of the Second Great Awakening.

CHAPTER 4

EXIT THE COLD WAR

The Cold War was a bitter struggle that sometimes evolved into hot conflicts and often implied the threat of nuclear war. Fear ebbed and flowed among the American public during this time because of the uncertainties in dealing with an enemy with characteristics alien from western mores and traditions. During the Cold War, many American politicians chose to highlight the communist threat to such a degree that this fomentation of anxiety resulted in the fear mongering of the McCarthy period. Politicians such as McCarthy were able to successfully win elections and pass legislation because they manipulated the emotions of the polity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fear of communism died away. Nevertheless, the concern of terrorism as perpetrated by radical Muslim sects from the Middle East quickly replaced this fear. The United States, led by George W. Bush, declared an official “War on Terror” after the horrific terrorist attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Both the Cold War and the present problems with Muslim terrorists were legitimate threats and causes for concerns. However, politicians manipulated and exaggerated threats in order to benefit themselves in various ways and to manipulate the results of elections. In this way, the “War on Terror” is a continuation of the Cold War because through government-orchestrated propaganda campaigns, politicians used these conflicts to sway the American public in various ways.

The United States and Russia have always had internal differences but their respective governments chose to cooperate and tolerate each other until the early 20th

Century.¹⁹¹ During this time, the United States decided it could no longer condone Russia's autocratic style of governing and treatment of minorities. Other events such as American alliances with Great Britain and Japan as well as U. S. interest in China upset the Russians. The Bolshevik party further strained diplomatic relations between America and Russia with their successful overthrow of the Russian government in October of 1917. The communist Bolsheviks supported a policy of worldwide revolution against capitalism, and this obviously threatened western society and values. Americans also opposed the Bolsheviks because of Lenin's refusal to pay the Russian national debt.

Despite these differences, the outbreak of World War II and the actions of Nazi Germany served as an impetus for America and the Soviet Union to work together in order to overcome a common enemy. After the war, both countries were more aware than ever of the threat of outside nations. Previously, America had a defense policy of isolationism.¹⁹² The United States attempted to stay out of foreign affairs in the hopes that the wide expanse of the Atlantic Ocean would preclude conflict with outside powers. The events of the war, including the fall of France and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, served as clear indicators that human kind had created advanced technology and warfare that precluded the ability for any country to remain isolated from the world and the dangers of being a member of the global community.

Because of the experiences in World War II, American politicians realized that they could not allow any single power to dominate the European continent. Millions of lives had already been lost and economies devastated due to Germany's domination of Europe. Despite experiencing bitter combat and war atrocities, the Soviet Union had

¹⁹¹ John L. Gaddis, *The Long Peace* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6-7.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 22.

emerged from the Second World War as the greatest and most powerful European nation.¹⁹³ Initially, America did not fear Soviet power and attempted to continue an alliance with Josef Stalin's regime. However, it became clear at the end of the war that Stalin was running his own agenda without regard to the thoughts and concerns of his ostensible allies. His previous alliances with Hitler also made him a less than desirable partner.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union attempted to set up spheres of influence to increase their global dominance and to be able to counter one another.¹⁹⁴ Each nation strengthened its own military capabilities in case war became necessary. At the end of the war, the United States possessed nuclear weapons while the Soviets did not, but the Soviets were able to acquire nuclear technology within four years. America chose not to use the bombs because the means of using the weapons were not equal to the ends of limiting Soviet power.¹⁹⁵ The horrific events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki served as living reminders of the difficulties and consequences involved in the dropping of such a weapon. The United States and the Soviet Union both refrained from using the weapons and tacitly cooperated with each other in an attempt to avoid war.

The Cold War was a consequence of the political and diplomatic discussion of the time. At the end of World War II, there were a myriad of opinions and possibilities about the course of diplomatic actions America could take. Some hoped for isolationism while others favored a policy of full participation with foreign nations.¹⁹⁶ Many viewed the

¹⁹³ Ibid, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 49-51.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 146.

¹⁹⁶ Lynn Boyd Hinds and Theodore Otto Windt, Jr., *The Cold War As Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945-1950* (New York, NY: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1991), xvii.

United Nations as the proper vehicle through which to conduct foreign affairs. Above all else, everyone wanted to bring the troops home and to avoid future war. Due to these factors, a new political culture formed that was ardently anti-communist. Negative attitudes towards the Soviet Union were fomented further by the perceived lack of religious faith among communists.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union shared responsibility for the emergence of the Cold War. Joseph Stalin's very nature and ideology made the conflict unavoidable.¹⁹⁷ Stalin's worldview was anti-capitalism and pro-Marxist revolutionary. His fervid ideology drove his decision-making processes. This made diplomatic relations with capitalist countries extremely strained to begin with. In addition to this, Stalin had a very paranoid and ruthless personality. He made himself vulnerable militarily by purging the Red Army of those he felt he could not trust. He also had members of his own family detained and killed. In World War II, Hitler, Stalin's ally, had betrayed him. Also during the war his other ostensible allies, the United States and Great Britain kept secrets from him. For these reasons, Stalin trusted no one in his political and personal life and he chose to rid himself of or ignore his adversaries. He applied this same strategy to post-World War II diplomatic relations with the United States, which in turn, influenced the development of icy relations between the two powers.

Though the United States had attempted to guard closely all details involving the creation of the atomic bomb, Stalin's spies learned of the weapon prior to its use in Japan in 1945.¹⁹⁸ Stalin believed that the American government meant the bombings of Japan to serve as a warning to the Soviets and this created psychological fear. However, due to

¹⁹⁷ John Gaddis. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 292-293.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 96.

the success of Soviet spying in the United States, the totalitarian leader did not fear that the United States would use the bombs. He did understand that America's possession of the bomb gave his enemy a powerful advantage in negotiating, and for this reason Stalin sought to build a Soviet atomic bomb in order to counter this threat. America's possession of nuclear weapons and Stalin's assumptions about Japan caused him to distrust further America. Soviet goals of building nuclear weapons programs, in turn, strengthened concerns and fear in America of the Soviet Union.

Franklin D. Roosevelt had been a very capable and knowledgeable leader who believed he knew how to finesse Josef Stalin. However, his death on April 12, 1945 left the Presidency open to Harry Truman, a man who was not necessarily qualified for the job.¹⁹⁹ Roosevelt had not expected much from Truman and he left his Vice President uninformed about many important matters. Truman recognized his deficiencies as President and, unlike Roosevelt, was more than willing to rely on other more qualified people to inform him and help shape his policies. Because of Truman's inexperience combined with his willingness to seek the aid of other more knowledgeable people, six men were able to play a key role in creating diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, thus helping to create the Cold War.

These six men were Robert Lovett, Assistant Secretary of War; John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War; Averell Harriman, Ambassador to the USSR; Charles Bohlen, the State Department's liaison to the White House; George Kennan, embassy counselor, and Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State.²⁰⁰ These six men had bonds

¹⁹⁹ Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas. *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, Inc, 1986), 255.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 1-6.

that went back into their childhood.²⁰¹ Although they did not always necessarily get along or agree, they worked together to create the Cold War policy.²⁰² Each man was qualified in his own way and all of the men felt a sense of honor and duty that drove them to avoid a policy of isolation by the United States and to contain the communist Soviet Union from spreading its influence.²⁰³

Upon Roosevelt's death, all six men returned to Washington from their respective locations to help debrief the new President. Their advice was crucial in helping Truman make it successfully through his first thirty days in office. World shaping events such as the end of the war and initial meetings with Molotov, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, filled Truman's first thirty days.²⁰⁴ Truman's six advisors were far less sympathetic to the Soviets than Roosevelt had been and this shaped the manner in which Truman engaged Stalin and the Soviets.²⁰⁵ This was immediately clear to the Soviets in their dealings with the new United States leader. Moreover, the newly developing United States diplomatic policy toward the Soviet Union enhanced Stalin's paranoia and fear of America and this led to the Cold War. Although a genuine desire to serve the public and the presidency motivated Truman's six men, and despite the best of intentions, it is sadly ironic that they dictated policy that had very negative consequences. These actions laid the foundation for the policy of containment that led to the Cold War and its consequences.²⁰⁶ This does not mean that the Soviet Union was blameless in the matter.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 19.

²⁰² Ibid, 29.

²⁰³ Ibid, 33.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 257.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 267.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 738.

The paranoid and erratic way that Stalin governed contributed greatly to the conflict as well, but these six men played a very decisive role.

Several key factors influenced the way in which American diplomacy with and internal opinions about the Soviet Union evolved. The American government did truly perceive a threat and thus one motivation for the Cold War involved strategy for defense.²⁰⁷ After World War II, the Soviet Union was the only viable threat to United States security. Because of the Soviet's communist governmental system, economic policies, and ethical philosophy, Americans took this threat seriously. This claim of genuine concern is exemplified by the fact that American defense spending increased exorbitantly during this time and set the standard for the way American operates today militarily.

A second cause for the Cold War involved economic factors.²⁰⁸ America attempted to spread capitalism to other nations in order to ensure its own longevity and to prevent the onset of another Great Depression. The American government was in a Cold War with the USSR ostensibly because of their ideological differences, but at the same time, the United States government financially supported despotic rulers in areas such as the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia in order to counter Soviet power and influence.²⁰⁹ This behavior reveals that America's opposition to the Soviet Union could not have been solely ideological if our government would willingly support tyrannical leaders.

²⁰⁷ H.W. Brands. *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, vi.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 55.

Another mitigating factor was the psychological struggle that Americans experienced during this time. Historian H.W. Brand contends that Americans needed an enemy to which they could compare themselves in order to reaffirm their status as a good and noble nation with a unique identity.²¹⁰ America lacked this identity because it was still a relatively young nation by comparison to European countries. The fact that the population was comprised primarily of immigrants also contributed to this lack of identity. According to Brands, the United States government indoctrinated Americans with the horrors of communist ideology and portrayed it as an evil institution. Their motivation was to cause Americans to bond together and believe that their governmental system was highly superior to all others.

Rose A. Lisle asserts that another psychological factor that influenced the Cold War was simple war weariness. American sentiment changed in the 1950's to feelings of anxiousness, distrust, and disquietude.²¹¹ Part of this evolution in feelings was due to the bitter atrocities and longevity of World War II. The "lingering romance" of the war ended as the Korean War was waged.²¹² However, the harsh realities of war alone do not suffice to explain the transition from a worldview seen through rose colored glasses into one of public hysteria.

The Cold War was a very stressful time for Americans. Though the bitter atrocities of World War II had certainly discouraged hope and optimism in America, the overt acts of war were not as scary as the implications of the Cold War. The threat of nuclear war was present and it dictated the mood and actions of Americans for many

²¹⁰ Ibid, v.

²¹¹ Rose A. Lisle. *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999).

²¹² Ibid, 2-3.

years. In 1949, China became a communist nation and the Soviet Union was able to explode successfully a nuclear bomb.²¹³ In the minds of Americans of the day, communism was tantamount to pure evil. Americans feared that the possession of thermonuclear weapons by the Soviet Union could mean the end of America and of civilization as they knew it.

Another psychological motivation for American hatred of communism was the conviction that communism represented the opposite of American values.²¹⁴ Americanism celebrated individualism, materialism, and the overall pursuit of happiness as defined by the Declaration of Independence. Communism represented collectivization of all land and goods into a system of common ownership. American society also highly prized religion. Many religious people viewed communism as a war on religion.²¹⁵ The Soviet system was too vastly different from American capitalism and it threatened the very demolition of the American way.

Politics was another major cause of the Cold War.²¹⁶ Politicians played upon the fears of common American citizens and manipulated the facts to establish their political reputations and build successful careers. Politicians of the day did not intend their rhetoric to serve as an eloquent way to adorn a political speech.²¹⁷ American political leaders of the time, through their words, created a feeling of urgency in regards to the matter of the Soviet Union.²¹⁸ They caused Americans to believe that there was no choice but to respond to the perceived threat of the communists and the Soviet Union also

²¹³ Ibid, 14.

²¹⁴ John Kenneth White *Still Seeing Red: How the Cold War Shapes the New American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 4-6.

²¹⁵ Stephen J. Whitefield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 77.

²¹⁶ Brands, vii.

²¹⁷ Hinds and Windt, 5.

²¹⁸ Ibid, xviii.

felt pressured to respond to America. The Truman Doctrine, Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, and the Marshal Plan (though it was a generous effort to aid in the rebuilding of Europe) were three of the biggest contributors to the war of words.²¹⁹ This battle of ideas was at first not combative in a literal sense. However, the idea of anti-communism was so pervasive in American culture that it eventually led to actual hot wars in Korea and Vietnam. Through rhetoric of the day, the government influenced the constituency through the information that they chose to give or to withhold from the public. With their words, political leaders created and manipulated reality.

Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy exemplifies this hypothesis better than anyone else does. McCarthy propagated a school of reasoning that came to be called "McCarthyism" that spread the idea that the government, schools, and the entertainment industry had been infiltrated by communists and were rife with espionage and corruption.²²⁰ McCarthy "red baited" and accused his political adversaries of supporting or participating in communist activities in order to obtain political support. He accused dozens of individuals of being in some way affiliated with the Soviet Union or communism.²²¹ The political propaganda and rhetoric of McCarthy stirred up massive hysteria in America. McCarthy's claims were believable to an extent because there were other legitimate instances in which State Department officials actually confessed to charges of spying for the Soviet Union.²²² The public Alger Hiss trial and the execution of the Rosenbergs also lent credence to claims of communism in the government. The

²¹⁹ Ibid, 99, 240.

²²⁰ Ibid, 34-35.

²²¹ L. Brent Bozell and W.M. F. Buckley, *McCarthy and His Enemies: The Record and Its Meaning* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, INC., 1995, 1954), 364-382.

²²² Mueller, 87. *****

anxiety also arose from reminders of the Post-World War I “Red Scare” of the 1920’s that followed the Bolshevik Revolution.

Americans believed that communism was rampant within the country and the government. They believed that they could not trust their neighbors or the politicians who were ostensibly in power to serve the best interests of the people. Many, including President Truman spoke out against McCarthy, but his claims were so highly publicized that they were hard to counter.²²³ Although McCarthy was the most vocal and most famous red-baiter and basher of liberalism, many other Republicans were also all too willing to participate in anti-communist rhetoric and finger pointing among their democratic colleagues.

Politicians were able to play upon fears of the polity and engender support that resulted in multiple victories in congressional and presidential elections.²²⁴ The cause of anticommunism gave Republicans a rallying point with which they could draw voters. By portraying Democrats as being incapable of defending America against communism, the Republican Party was able to win elections and advance its own political agenda.²²⁵ In addition, they were able to weaken the New Deal policies favored by the Democrats. Democrats such as Lyndon Johnson and John F. Kennedy also relied on Cold War rhetoric to gain political support. Both parties somewhat comfortably identified with and manipulated issues of the Cold War for the next nearly fifty years. Decades later when the Cold War finally ended, many American politicians were actually upset and disgusted

²²³ Unknown, 1950. “Hoping Against Hope.” Available from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,856554,00.html>. Internet; accessed 1 March 2007

²²⁴ White, 5-6.

²²⁵ Ibid, 5.

rather than relieved. This was because they no longer had an enemy to which they could divert the attention of the people and accomplish their political goals.²²⁶

At the time of the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed to the United States that his country was “going to do something terrible to you: we’re going to deprive you of an enemy!”²²⁷ Later, in 1993, Bill Clinton said, “Gosh, I miss the Cold War.”²²⁸ What Gorbachev knew and what Clinton meant is that it is difficult to engender feelings of urgency in accomplishing policy unless the people feel an immediate threat that they can easily identify. Ultimately, Americans, or any major political entity needs an enemy. As Americans have witnessed in the past five years, citizens are often willing to sacrifice their own rights and interests, ostensibly for the public good, when faced with such a threat. The modern day “War on Terror” is the most salient example of the Cold War legacy. This popular euphemism for the hostilities with fundamentalist Muslim aggressors is only one example of the way in which policy makers attempt to veil reality behind sheaves of scary words and daunting propositions. Though there are obvious contrasts between the conflicts with the Soviet Union and the present problems in the Middle East, the “War on Terror” is a continuation of the Cold War in this sense: as with its predecessor this conflict is manipulated as a means to generate fear in order to accomplish policy amenable to politicians and their lobbyists.

²²⁶ Ibid, 6.

²²⁷ Anthony Stevens, *The Roots of War and Terror* (New York, NY: Continuum Books, 2004), 200.

²²⁸ Ibid, 256.

CHAPTER 5

ENTER THE WAR ON TERROR

On September 11, 2001, the fundamentalist Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda perpetrated the most devastating attack ever on the contiguous United States. On this day, over three thousand innocent people lost their lives. President George W. Bush rallied to the scene of “Ground Zero” and presented the face of a strong leader who was ready and willing to guide America through the troubled time. During this time, the upsurge in American patriotism was unprecedented. The nation seemed more united than since the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This was a time when neighbor helped neighbor. This was also a time of great fear. Using hijacked civilian airliners, the terrorists successfully demolished the World Trade Center, damaged the Pentagon, but due to the bravery of heroic Americans on a fourth plane, a plan to crash into the White House was thwarted. The terrorists apparently planned additional attacks, but American authorities, who immediately grounded all flights, successfully prevented them.

Because this event was so unprecedented and so terrifying, it created feelings of unease and fear among average American citizens. Americans demanded answers and retribution which requires strong leadership. Not surprisingly, fervent opposition to fundamentalist Islamic terrorism became a political rallying point for the American people, as anticommunism had been previously. President Bush and the Republican Party portrayed themselves as being the most capable of protecting America from any further terrorists attacks. The Republican-led Congress, with the support of Democrats, also was able to use American’s fears to pass controversial legislation, The Patriot Act,

which would not have succeeded in the absence of this fear.²²⁹ In the wake of September 11, 2001, Americans put a blind faith in their leaders to protect them from future harm. Politicians used this faith as a license to commence achieving their own political gains.

Thus far, September 11, 2001 has been the culmination of hostilities between American and Islamic terrorists, but the roots of this clash are almost as old as the Christian and Islamic traditions themselves. For hundreds of years, Christian and Muslim civilizations engaged in multiple struggles to claim and reclaim land for their respective empires. Though Muslims, particularly the Ottoman Turks, did achieve many victories including the destruction of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Western civilization was most often and ultimately victorious in dominating their Islamic counterparts. The Ottoman Empire dwindled and eventually met its demise in the early twentieth century.

This constant dominion by the West over the non-West bred resentment and a desire to counter Western civilization in a decisive way. The advent of automobile technology coupled with the Middle Eastern oil reserves created a modern period in which non-Western civilizations had access to great wealth and also had power over something much sought after by the West. Newfound prosperity provided these oil-rich nations with the means to seek equality with peoples who had traditionally held them in a much lower regard. Despite this, racist animosities persisted on both sides and this has generated further problems.

The modern day story begins with the emergence of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. These two groups were able to consolidate power due to the proxy war fought between

²²⁹ The aftermath of September 11, 2001 was not the first instance of politicians passing controversial legislation after the occurrence of a crisis and this phenomenon is not limited to Republicans. Similar events took place with Lyndon B. Johnson and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Franklin D. Roosevelt's declaration after Pearl Harbor, and Harry Truman and Korea.

the United States and the USSR in Afghanistan during the Cold War. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.²³⁰ Ronald Reagan's administration authorized hundreds of millions of dollars to help the Afghans expel the Soviets from their country.²³¹ The American government relied heavily upon Pakistani intelligence to organize Soviet expulsion efforts in Afghanistan.²³² The Reagan administration also allowed Arab states to recruit their own soldiers with little or no American involvement. Saudi Arabia relied upon one Osama Bin Laden to recruit and train Arabs, many who had previous ties with fundamentalist groups, to act as Afghan soldiers. Once the Soviets were defeated, the United States quickly abandoned their efforts in Afghanistan.²³³ Pakistan aided a religious faction called the Taliban in taking control in war-torn Afghanistan. The Arab veterans of the war aided the Taliban in their endeavors to take power. Osama Bin Laden used his influence to turn the Arab soldiers into the fundamentalist group Al Qaeda.

In addition to these consequences of United States involvement in the proxy war in Afghanistan, there were additional repercussions of the engagement. In order to combat Soviet aggressors, America created or strengthened military bases throughout the Middle East.²³⁴ The United States stationed forces in Saudi Arabia, specifically at Mecca and Medina, two of the holiest Muslim spots in the world. A militant minority of Muslims saw the introduction of Americans, even close to holy sites, as sacrilegious.²³⁵ Another perceived grievous offense against Muslim nations came with America's policy of supporting Israel. This alliance angered Muslim militants and served as fodder for

²³⁰ Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 48.

²³¹ Ibid, 50.

²³² Ibid, 52.

²³³ Ibid, 53.

²³⁴ Ibid, 39

²³⁵ Ibid, 39.

recruitment. These radical fundamentalists also hate America because they despise modernization, which they view as promoting secularism and corrupting religion.²³⁶

Osama Bin Laden created Al Qaeda as a means to organize a jihad against the Western influence that he felt was penetrating Muslim nations.²³⁷ Former presidential advisor Richard Clarke contends that the fundamentalist groups were emboldened by the lack of American response to previous offenses of the Iran Contra affair and the attack on Pan Am 103.²³⁸ In 1993, Bin Laden's group was able to bomb the World Trade Center in New York City. In 2000, his forces bombed the USS Cole in Yemen. Also during the Clinton Administration, Bin Laden and his faction bombed U.S. several embassies.²³⁹

Prior to the Clinton Administration, Al Qaeda was an unidentified entity.²⁴⁰ Even after the first World Trade Center bombing, it took some time for the government to determine the source of the threat. The administration identified Osama Bin Laden as a financier of terrorism who operated under the guise of the Afghan Services Bureau.²⁴¹ They later uncovered the vast network of Al Qaeda and connected the organization with Bin Laden. Though Clinton's administration was slow to connect a name with the terrorist activity, the former President claims that he aggressively pursued counterterrorism measures.²⁴² Between 1995 and 2000, the terrorism budget almost

²³⁶ Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*. (New York, NY: Random House, 1995), 209-210.

²³⁷ Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, *Captain America and the Crusade Against Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 153.

²³⁸ Clarke, 40.

²³⁹ Bill Clinton, *My Life*. (New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, 2004), 797.

²⁴⁰ Clarke, 90.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 79.

²⁴² Critics of Clinton contend that he did not do enough to thwart the threat of Al Qaeda and thus the 9/11 terrorists attacks are the responsibility of the Clinton administration.

doubled in amount from 5.7 billion to 11.1 billion dollars.²⁴³ The Clinton administration also expanded the FBI's capabilities to fight terrorism.

By 1996, the Clinton administration had connected Bin Laden with Al Qaeda and publicly announced the threat the group posed.²⁴⁴ Clinton issued several Memoranda of Notification that authorized the killing of Bin Laden.²⁴⁵ Bill Clinton and his advisors claim they took the threat of terrorism seriously.²⁴⁶ They believed that the Republican-led Congress inhibited the ability to fight terrorism when they blocked certain aspects of anti-terror legislation.²⁴⁷ President Clinton's own personal struggles also had a negative impact on fighting Islamic fundamentalists. He wanted to bomb Afghanistan in order to eliminate training camps there, but he feared that public scrutiny would dictate these measures as a "Wag the Dog" scenario in which he sought to divert attention from his own problems engendered by the Monica Lewinsky scandal and his impeachment.²⁴⁸

When George W. Bush became President in January of 2001, Bill Clinton emphatically warned his successor of the dangers of Al Qaeda.²⁴⁹ In addition to the attacks that had already occurred, Clinton had evidence of Al Qaeda plots planned to take place in America.²⁵⁰ Bush told his predecessor that his administration believed Iraq posed the biggest threat to American national interests. Clinton informed Bush that of a

²⁴³ Ibid, 97.

²⁴⁴ Bill Clinton, 797.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 804.

²⁴⁶ A scholarly debate exists over where responsibility for the 9/11 terrorists lie. Richard Minter has written two books that debunk popular notions on the War on Terror and indicate that Bill Clinton is largely responsible for the attacks and subsequent War on Terror due to his inaction. *Disinformation: 22 Media Myths That Undermine the War on Terror*. Washington, D.C. Regnery Publishing, 2005.

Losing Bin Laden: How Bill Clinton's Failures Unleashed Global Terror. Washington, D.C. Regnery Publishing, 2004

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 99.

²⁴⁸ Hillary Clinton, *Living History*. (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 469.

²⁴⁹ Bill Clinton, 935.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 865.

list of threats to American security, Al Qaeda was at the top and Iraq was last. Clinton's aid, Sandy Berger also briefed Bush's incoming staff, including National Security Chief Condoleezza Rice, about the threats of Al Qaeda.²⁵¹

Richard Clarke was a counterterrorism adviser to the George W. Bush administration.²⁵² He had served as an adviser to George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton as well as in various other governmental positions since the late-seventies.²⁵³ Clarke contends that he unequivocally expressed the urgency to deal with Al Qaeda to the Bush administration. Clarke spoke to Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and Paul Wolfowitz about the threat at various times, but he contends that all parties chose to focus on Iraq even prior to September 11, 2001.²⁵⁴ In spite of recommendations made by the previous administration and the many examples of Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks, the Bush administration decreased funding to fight the terrorist organization.²⁵⁵ Despite Clinton's efforts to fight Al Qaeda and Bush's decision to cut terrorism spending, after 9/11 Bush claimed that Bill Clinton responded to the threat of Al Qaeda weakly and this weakness provoked an invitation to attack the United States.²⁵⁶

The 9/11 Commission Report states that counterterrorism officials had reported a voluminous amount of information about possible threats to the United States and its foreign interests in the months before September 11, 2001.²⁵⁷ George Tenet, the Director of the CIA, was aware of these reports and met with President Bush daily to

²⁵¹ Clarke, 225-226.

²⁵² Ibid, 1.

²⁵³ Ibid, 36, 73.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 227-228.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 196.

²⁵⁶ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 38.

²⁵⁷ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. (New York, NY: W.W Norton and Company, 2004), 254.

brief him. Many of these conversations involved Al Qaeda. Each day the President receives a document called the President's Daily Brief or The PDB. More than forty of the briefs that President Bush received prior to the attack referred to the threat of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Various titles of these reports include "Bin Laden Attacks May be Imminent," "Bin Laden and Associates Making Near-Term Threats," and "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US."²⁵⁸ The President acknowledged his awareness of the Al Qaeda threat, but claimed that the reports were historical in nature.²⁵⁹ In the summer of 2001, though many who worked in intelligence recognized that Al Qaeda posed a serious and imminent threat, there was no presidential discussion of the terrorist group after August 6, 2001.²⁶⁰ George W. Bush retreated to Crawford, Texas for a month long vacation in August 2001.²⁶¹

In September of 2001, the combined forces of Al Qaeda and the Taliban carried out the most devastating attack that has thus far taken place on American soil. Clearly, this attack was unexpected, at least by the average American citizen, and utterly devastating. Thus far, there is no objective way to determine if Bill Clinton or George W. Bush could have done more to prevent the attacks from occurring. What is clear is that after the attacks the Bush administration increased their pursuit of Al Qaeda exponentially. What is also clear is that the Bush administration and the Republican Party benefited from this new policy of defeating terrorism because Americans were willing to support their policies in the aftermath of such a tragedy.

²⁵⁸ Clarke, 259-260.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 260.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 262.

²⁶¹ Baker, Peter and Jim VandeHei, "Vacationing Bush Poised to Set a Record: With Long Sojourn at Ranch, President on His Way to Surpassing Reagan's Total"; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/02/AR2005080201703_pf.html; Internet; accessed 25 February 2007.

Richard Clarke was quite familiar with the Al Qaeda network and immediately felt certain of their responsibility for the attacks.²⁶² The attacks did not surprise him completely because he had attempted to warn the Bush administration about the threat of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. He contended that while serving the administration in 2001, he repeatedly and emphatically warned of the dangers that the terrorist group posed to the national security of the United States. The 9/11 Commission Report affirms this. It mentions a number of times when Clarke attempted to warn Condoleezza Rice and other officials of the dangers posed by Al Qaeda. Bin Laden and his contemporaries were active and posed an increasingly dangerous threat to the life, liberty, and property of American citizens before 2001.

In the wake of the fear that the World Trade Center attacks generated, it became extremely important for the government to be able to obtain information quickly about individuals in case they posed a terrorist threat. The Bush administration blamed a breakdown of communication between government departments and a lack of information for the tragedy. In the rush reaction to September 11, 2001, Congress passed the Patriot Act with only a handful of dissenting votes.²⁶³ The USA PATRIOT ACT was an acronym that stood for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.”²⁶⁴ Bush critics assert that this act greatly compromised the civil liberties of Americans. This piece of legislation gave the government enhanced powers to wiretap cell phones, detain non-citizens, and to monitor e-mail and other internet activity without seeking the typical court mandated permission

²⁶² Clarke, 33.

²⁶³ William Crotty, *The Politics of Terror: The U.S. Response to 9/11*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 198.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 38.

that once was required. Since its inception, the United States government has detained more than a thousand people without releasing their identities.²⁶⁵ In 2006, a scandal erupted at the White House over news that the National Security Agency was electronically monitoring Americans without obtaining court authorization. The administration refused to divulge whom they were monitoring, claiming that President Bush's war powers allowed him this authority.

The expansion of power by the executive branch is not entirely uncommon or unprecedented because the government's power expands in times of war and individual freedoms are often limited.²⁶⁶ It is difficult to deny that Bush's administration benefited from this situation. In 2002, the Congress, which had increased in the number of Republicans in the 2002 midterm election, supported Bush's measures that the administration labeled as being necessary for the war effort.²⁶⁷ This included decreasing environmental standards, lowering taxes for the wealthy, and oil exploration in environmentally protected areas. Americans fearlessly followed their leader into a post-9/11 World. As Bill Clinton stated, "When people feel insecure, they'd rather have someone who is strong and wrong than someone who is weak and right."²⁶⁸

In the months before September 11, 2001, George W. Bush experienced a great deal of criticism and low approval ratings. On September 10, 2001, Bush's approval rating was fifty-one percent, the lowest up to that point.²⁶⁹ Three weeks after the terrorists attacks, Bush's rating had exploded to an astonishing ninety percent. The

²⁶⁵ Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells. *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), xv.

²⁶⁶ Crotty, 95.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 282.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 298.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 46.

President had entered the White House under a cloud of controversy due to his inability to win the popular vote in the 2000 election and the recount controversy.²⁷⁰ The terrorist act and Bush's response to it overshadowed questions about his legitimacy as President.²⁷¹ This allowed the President to gain more political capital than he had previously and thus he was able to pass legislation that he supported such as The Patriot Act and No Child Left Behind. It also helped him in his 2004 reelection campaign.

The Bush administration was quick to embrace the fight against terrorism and they made it the centerpiece of their policymaking and the 2004 reelection attempt. The terrorist attacks in New York changed Americans in a way that made them trust the government and increased their interest in politics.²⁷² During this time, the Bush administration portrayed dissenters as unpatriotic. September 11, 2001 became a rubber stamp that legitimized any governmental act as being for the public good and not subject to scrutiny.

Some critics contend that the media bares some responsibility for their lack of questioning and criticism. After Al Qaeda became a highly publicized entity, the media failed to focus on the historic reasons why Islamic fundamentalists hated Americans and instead played into the "us vs. them" model of polarity.²⁷³ News broadcasters apparently feared that viewers would label any instances of dissent as unpatriotic. One instance of this occurred when Walter Isaacson, president of CNN in late 2001, issued a memo that instructed reporters to avoid reporting civilian deaths in Afghanistan because viewers

²⁷⁰ George W. Bush was the first President since 1888 to win an election in the Electoral College, but not the popular vote. Ibid, 254.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 252.

²⁷² Ibid, 65.

²⁷³ Danny Schechter. *Media Wars: News at a Time of Terror*. (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2003), xiv, xix.

could perceive this as support of the Taliban and question the network's patriotism.²⁷⁴

The media was hesitant to criticize the government and tried to reflect public opinion.²⁷⁵

Under these circumstances the United States, led by President George W. Bush, joined the "War on Terror" in late 2001. The engagement began with the invasion of Afghanistan in October of 2001. No one questioned this assault, as it was common knowledge that the Taliban had its headquarters there. However, the administration's attention shifted from known terrorist activity in Afghanistan to alleged connections of Al Qaeda and Iraq. In 2003, the United States began its second war with Iraq. This action was a preemptive strike against a sovereign nation who had committed no recent offense against the United States. Some critics asserted that President Bush had an opportunity to encourage Americans to embrace Islamic countries and to understand the motivating factors that caused a minority of Muslims to despise American culture.²⁷⁶ Instead of trying to form a coalition of Islamic allies, the President chose to denounce the terrorists and declare war upon two Islamic countries. The war with Iraq has served as recruitment material for Al Qaeda and has weakened America's foreign relations.²⁷⁷ The policies of the Bush administration seem to lend credence to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory that says the international conflicts of the post-Cold War era will revolve around cultural differences such as religion, history, and language.²⁷⁸

Richard Clarke contends that immediately after the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, George W. Bush went to him and asked that a special project be put together to

²⁷⁴ Ibid, xii.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, xiii.

²⁷⁶ Clarke, 247.

²⁷⁷ Clarke, 273.

²⁷⁸ Huntington, Samuel P. , *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

determine if Saddam Hussein had any links to the terrorist act.²⁷⁹ Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, had supported developing a “military option” for Iraq prior to the World Trade Center attacks.²⁸⁰ Clarke and his aids found no connections existed between Hussein and the specific act of September 11, 2001 or between Iraq and Osama Bin Laden in general.²⁸¹ The President received a memo that detailed these findings.

Despite the lack of connection, Hussein had committed unforgivable acts in the past. In addition to various deplorable crimes against his own subjects, in 1993, Hussein had ordered the assassination of George H. W. Bush to take place while the former President visited Kuwait.²⁸² This attempt failed and President Bill Clinton quickly ordered the bombing of Baghdad to serve as retaliation and a deterrent of further actions.²⁸³ After that time, there was no evidence to indicate Iraqi support for terrorism until the allegations of such activity that preceded the 2003 invasion of Iraq.²⁸⁴ Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden shared a similar hatred of America and its values, but in other ways were opposites.²⁸⁵ Hussein supported a secular authoritarian state based on repression and military power. Bin Laden hated secularism and wanted a society based upon extreme religious fundamentalism. These two worldviews do not seem to be highly compatible, except in their mutual opposition to the United States.

²⁷⁹ Clarke, 32-33.

²⁸⁰ Woodward, 49.

²⁸¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 334.

²⁸² Clarke, 80-81.

²⁸³ Ibid, 82.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 84.

²⁸⁵ Crotty, 289.

Despite the lack of evidence to suggest a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, the President began exploring the option of a war with Iraq in November 2001.²⁸⁶ He privately consulted with Donald Rumsfeld until word of his intentions leaked to the public. His Vice President, Dick Cheney, probably heavily influenced Bush's concern with Iraq. Cheney had served as Secretary of Defense for George H. W. Bush during the 1991 Gulf War.²⁸⁷ The Vice President believed that there were leftover problems from the first Iraqi war and he wanted to reconcile these unfinished matters. Though Bush considered war with Iraq shortly after 9/11, he spent time building his case and publicly denied his aids were drafting war plans.²⁸⁸

The administration, including the President and Vice President, implied Iraqi connections with Al Qaeda to generate support for the Iraq war. President Bush told a group of members of the House of Representatives, "Saddam Hussein is a terrible guy who is teaming up with Al Qaeda."²⁸⁹ On *Meet the Press*, Cheney claimed that it was "pretty well confirmed" that a lead 9/11 hijacker named Mohammad Atta had connections with Iraqi intelligence forces.²⁹⁰ The President also gave speeches mentioning 9/11 and Saddam Hussein in the same sentences.²⁹¹ In 2001, only three percent of Americans believed Saddam Hussein aided the 9/11 terrorists, but by 2003 polls taken by the *New York Times* and CBS News indicated that forty-five percent of Americans made this association.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ Bob Woodward. *Plan of Attack* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 1.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 129.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 188.

²⁹⁰ Al Franken. *The Truth: With Jokes* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2005), 47.

²⁹¹ Linda Feldman. 2004. "The Impact of Bush Linking 9/11 and Iraq." Available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0314/p02s01-woiq.html>. Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

²⁹² Franken, 47.

In September of 2002, Bush went to the United Nations to encourage resolutions to deal with the Iraq problem.²⁹³ If the UN failed to respond to the President's satisfaction, he considered the war plan. George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was one of the only dissenting opinions regarding an Iraqi invasion. Powell was a highly respected and highly visible member of the Bush administration. Powell's approval of Bush's Iraq policy was crucial. He favored working with the United Nations to enforce the preexisting sanctions and to continue inspections for nuclear weapons.²⁹⁴ Powell did not trust the intelligence that was limited in addition to being "murky," that suggested war with Iraq was justified.²⁹⁵

Over time, Saddam Hussein's past actions of using weapons of mass destruction did influence Powell's reasoning. The Secretary of State also questioned why Hussein would subject himself to sanctions that cost his country around a hundred billion dollars if he had nothing to hide. In early 2003, Powell gave a presentation to the United Nations that depicted the Iraqi threat. Despite clear evidence, he suggested connections between Iraq and Al Qaeda.²⁹⁶ Several days after Powell's presentation, UN weapon inspector Hans Blix declared that through his many extensive searches conducted with no prior notice to Iraqis, he found no weapons.²⁹⁷ Blix criticized Powell's claim that Hussein's regime had hidden weapons from inspectors. Powell's declaration of an Iraqi threat probably swayed many who might have otherwise opposed the war because he questioned the war and because the public knew he was less a part of Bush's inner circle than others.

²⁹³ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 184.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 149-153.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 298.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 311.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 316-317.

The President decided to invade Iraq in 2003. This unprovoked invasion of a sovereign nation occurred with the existence of only outdated and unsubstantiated evidence that Iraq was pursuing nuclear weapons programs.²⁹⁸ Bob Woodward's book claims several of the government officials he interviewed believed the evidence for the war was circumstantial and "very thin."²⁹⁹ The decision to go to war stirred controversy at home and abroad. Prior to the war, hundreds of thousands of Europeans protested in large cities such as London, Paris, and Brussels.³⁰⁰ Pope John Paul II sent representatives to dissuade Bush from engaging in a war that the Pope felt would cause civilian deaths and further the rift between the Christian and Muslim worlds.³⁰¹

The aftermath of the Iraqi invasion witnessed an array of explanations for why the engagement occurred. The initial explanation was that Iraq had "weapons of mass destruction" and could potentially supply terrorists groups with these nuclear weapons. American soldiers were unable to find any up-to-date or viable chemical or biological weapons. Further explanations for the war in Iraq ranged from the desire to free the Iraqi people from a brutal dictatorship to the reasoning that a democracy in the Middle East would serve as a means to suppress terrorism. The years after the initial invasion of Iraq witnessed an increasing amount of criticism of the war.

The Cold War and the "War on Terror" originated and evolved in different ways. Nevertheless, the Cold War greatly influenced the "War on Terror" and in many ways, the latter serves as a continuation of former. Politicians used the Cold War as a means to accuse their competition of practicing communism. Republicans portrayed themselves as

²⁹⁸ Ibid, 201-202.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 354-355.

³⁰⁰ J.F.O. McAllister, 2003, "'War or Peace'"; Available from <http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/2003/0224/cover/demo.html>; Internet; accessed 1 March 2007.

³⁰¹ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 332.

being the best suited to defend America against the Soviet Union, garnering political support and election success. The Bush administration used the “War on Terror” as a means to divert attention from a controversial election and to generate support for their policies including a questionable war with Iraq. Contemporary Republicans painted their Democratic opponents as weak on terrorism in order to win political positions and influence. Both conflicts evolved from legitimate security concerns, but politicians used each war in different ways for political reasons.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION:

THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The previous chapters serve as a historical roadmap to the final destination of the 2004 election. “The Marketing of the Presidency” depicts the campaign strategies of some of the major presidential elections from the first contested election until the highly controversial 2000 election to illustrate that packaging a candidate is not a new phenomenon. “The Rise of the Christian Right” traces the evolution of the Second Great Awakening into a modern day religious / political movement aimed at engendering moral changes on a national level through collective political action. Finally, the chapters on the “Cold War” and “War on Terror” illustrate that the American concept of using fear tactics to manipulate the polity evolved throughout the forty years of the Cold War and continue today. The strategies of the Bush campaign in the 2004 election brought these themes together in a highly successful strategy that ended with a campaign victory.

The 2004 presidential election was an important turning point in history. Political maps separating red states from blue geographically revealed that the country was more divided than it had been in many years. Candidates on both sides emulated strategies of their predecessors and developed new strategies in order to package themselves as desirable products that voters would enthusiastically consume on Election Day. The election was extremely important for the incumbent, George W. Bush. Four years prior, Bush had assumed the role as commander in chief under highly controversial circumstances. His victory or loss in the 2004 race would either validate his tenure or leave him to the annals of history as a one-term president like his father. Bush set out to

defend his policies and portray his opposition as incompetent and unqualified to run the country. Like many politicians before them, George W. Bush and the Republican Party used fear and religion in their campaign to win the election. They emphasized terrorist activity and waved the banner for moral issues that would preclude homosexual marriage and limit abortions. Bush's political strategist, Karl Rove, was largely responsible for this strategy.

In the 2000 election, George W. Bush had narrowly defeated his Democratic opponent, Vice President Al Gore. Gore had won the popular vote, but he and his lawyers contested the results of the election because of questionable voting practices in Florida that left doubt as to the winner of the state and the winner of the Electoral College vote. The media, the polity, and the court systems hotly debated the results of the election for weeks after the polling centers closed. George W. Bush finally won the election when the United States Supreme Court ruled that the recount was unconstitutional and labeled him the winner by five electoral votes.³⁰²

Because Bush had failed to win a majority of the popular vote and because ultimately the Supreme Court, rather than the American voters, declared him the winner, he was met with a great deal of criticism. Despite the controversy, the President set forth enacting his policies and did not appear to allow critics to discourage him. Early in his tenure, Bush emphasized improving education with his No Child Left Behind Act. He also lowered taxes, claiming, that this action would help small businesses and improve the economy through trickle down economics.

³⁰² William Crotty, *A Defining Moment: The Presidential Election of 2004* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 137.

When the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 occurred, criticism of the President and the way in which he received the job halted. Americans were terrified because such a blatantly hateful and unprovoked act had never occurred before on American soil. Americans remembered Pearl Harbor, but that event had happened during a war, not in a time of peace. The Japanese had also perpetrated that attack upon a naval base, not innocent civilians. As is often the case in times of national crisis, President Bush benefited politically from the attacks. His approval ratings soared. He had a much easier time passing legislation through Congress.

Americans remembered 9/11 during the 2004 presidential campaign and on Election Day. George W. Bush and Republican spin-doctors made sure that no one could forget. After the inception of Homeland Security, the government created a threat-level system that attributed certain colors with particular levels of threat. In the months prior to the election, the Bush administration raised the threat-level to orange or high alert, several times.³⁰³ Tom Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security at the time, later revealed that he saw no legitimate reason for the government to raise the threat-level. He said he had challenged the threat-level raisings and that others “aggressively defended” them even though they were based on “flimsy” evidence. Since the election, the Bush administration has not raised the threat-level to orange.

As Eisenhower and many of his successors had used the Cold War to portray their opponents as weak, Bush used the War on Terror. On the campaign trail, Bush repeatedly referred to the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq War, and the broader war on terror. He portrayed himself as most capable of defending America from outside attacks. At a

³⁰³ Mimi Hall. 2005. “Ridge Reveals Clash on Alerts.” Available from http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-05-10-ridge-alerts_x.htm. Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

campaign speech in Florida, Bush asserted that the terrorists were still dangerous and ready to strike.³⁰⁴ He claimed that if America sent mixed messages or showed uncertainty or weakness that tragedy would occur again. Dick Cheney more bluntly contended that if Americans made the wrong choice on Election Day, there was a danger that America would fall back into a pre-9/11 mindset and terrorists would attack America again. The Bush administration incessantly tried to convince the American people that if John Kerry were elected, American lives would be lost to terrorism. The administration arguably exaggerated the threat of terrorism and caused even citizens who resided in small towns and sparse rural areas to fear that terrorists would attack them.³⁰⁵

In addition to appealing to those voters who were terrified of future attacks to the American homeland, the Bush administration and Republicans also sought religious voters. In the 2000 election, Bush's political strategist, Karl Rove, believed that millions of evangelical voters had refrained from going to the polls.³⁰⁶ Bush sought to change this in 2004. During his first four years as President, Bush attempted to mobilize evangelical voters and gain their favor. Bush vocally supported a Constitutional amendment that would ban homosexual marriage. He supported government-funded vouchers that would allow children to attend religious schools subsidized by the government. He supported a ban on partial-birth abortions that passed through Congress. Bush also heavily emphasized faith-based initiatives. In the 2004 election, the Republican National Convention went so far as to send out mailings in at least two states that claimed a Democratic presidential victory would lead to the legalization of gay marriage and the

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 27.

³⁰⁵ John Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*. (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006), 1.

³⁰⁶ Crotty, 23.

banning of the Bible.³⁰⁷ Many voters throughout the nation believed that John Kerry would legalize gay marriage, although the candidate himself only professed to support civil unions.

In addition to invoking fear and religion, Bush and the Republicans resorted to typical election tactics and challenged Kerry's competence and reputation. The Bush strategists sought to define Kerry as an inconsistent liberal. They questioned his ability to fight the war on terrorism. In one advertisement, comparable to the Daisy advertisement used against Barry Goldwater, a pack of wolves ran through a deep, dark forest.³⁰⁸ An announcer claimed that John Kerry and liberals in Congress had slashed the intelligence budget and thus weakened America's defenses. The implications of the advertisement were clear; Kerry would be weak on defense and thus would open America up like an unprepared Red Riding Hood to the big bad terrorists.

The Bush administration wanted voters to believe that John Kerry was weak on terrorism and would allow terrorists to attack America. In contrast to their claims of embracing morality, Bush's team repeatedly impugned Kerry's integrity and his patriotism. They portrayed him as weak and indecisive. Both Bush and Cheney also blatantly misrepresented quotes made by Kerry, though John Kerry also stretched the truth as well.

The introduction of 527 groups³⁰⁹ during this time also challenged Kerry's record. These independently financed political groups were not as restricted in their advertising as the candidates themselves. One such group called themselves Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. This group challenged Kerry's depiction of his involvement in the Vietnam War

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 27.

³⁰⁸ Al Franken, *The Truth: With Jokes* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2005), 25.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 16.

and his receipt of Purple Hearts. Kerry categorically denied the claims and several media outlets debunked them. The press linked the group to Karl Rove and the Bush family.³¹⁰ Other groups such as the National Rifle Association also actively campaigned against Kerry because of his numerous votes in favor of gun control.³¹¹ Because Bush's key issues were religion and national security, it was difficult for Kerry to counter Bush's strategy without seeming unpatriotic. Kerry attempted to attack the failed Iraq policy, but Kerry had voted for the war. He also emphasized the weak economy, but other key issues highlighted by the Bush administration overshadowed this.

George W. Bush effectively appealed to voters most consistently in the categories of white men, evangelical Protestants, regular churchgoers, veterans, gun owners, affluent voters, and rural dwellers.³¹² Bush benefited because eighty-percent of voters were white and eighty-five percent of voters were Christian. Bush garnered the most support in his campaign from voters who feared the wrath of terrorists. He was able to do this because he positioned himself as the strongest candidate and he could claim that the stagnant economy and loss of jobs under his administration were consequences of 9/11. Those who opposed the War in Iraq were willing to overlook the negativity there because of Bush's stances on religious issues and terrorism.

The 2004 election exemplifies the presidential marketing process more than any other election. George W. Bush packaged himself as tough on terrorism and concerned with moral and religious issues. He portrayed his opponent as weak and incompetent

³¹⁰ Kate Zernike and Jim Rutenberg, 2004. "Friendly Fire: The Birth of an Attack on Kerry." Available from <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F50914FE3D5A0C738EDDA10894DC404482>. Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

³¹¹ Crotty, 31.

³¹² Ibid, 22.

despite Kerry's status as a war veteran and Bush's own lack of participation in a war. Kerry also claimed to have a deep religious conviction that motivated his every day life, but he believed his relationship with God was a private matter. The strategy of Bush and the Republicans of using fear and religion in the election proved to be a successful approach.

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