

Terrorism and the Politics of Fear

By David L. Altheide

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In this powerful new book, sociologist David L. Altheide demonstrates how the mass media constructs a politics of fear in America. He argues that politicians and decision-makers bear much of the blame for the promotion of fear among citizens, resulting in the loss of civil liberties in return for greater protection. From a social interactionist perspective, Altheide presents his thesis that fear-as-entertainment informs the production of popular culture and news, generates profits, enables political decision-makers to cynically manipulate citizens, and can lead to major institutional changes, even war. The author dissects in turn: a modern propaganda campaign in the justification of the invasion of Iraq to the American people; the expansion of control and surveillance on the Internet; and the construction of a 'hero fighting terrorism' to promote patriotism, in the story of a promising young Arizona sports hero, Pat Tillman, who joined the Army and was killed by his fellow Rangers in Afghanistan. This thoughtful treatment of a timely subject will be indispensable to teachers and students of sociology, media, politics, and criminology studies.

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Editorial Review

Review
Terrorism and the Politics of Fear is a response to the political use of "fear symbols" that has reached unmatched levels in the twenty-first century. In this highly recommended book, David Altheide explores the military-media complex and continues his study of the social construction of 'fear' and its use to steer public and foreign policy. In this exploration, he compellingly argues that crime prevention projects and anti-terrorism efforts pushed through on a wave of manipulated social fear have become broad social control systems that don't necessarily make us safer but invariable make us less free. His detailing of how surveillance systems of varied ilk monitor citizens more but prevent crime less, demonstrates the danger of crime prevention morphing into citizen micro-management and social regulation that is divorced from real security concerns. He deftly tracks how inordinate fear in a society translates into a glib surrendering of civil liberties and privacy. This book should be read by anyone who is concerned for both their security and their liberty. (Professor Raymond Surrette, University of Central Florida, Author of Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice)

Terrorism and the Politics of Fear is the most important study of this issue written so far. David Altheide takes apart the rhetoric to show us how the politics of fear is constructed. If you want to understand the construction of fear- this is the place to start. (Professor Frank Furedi, University of Kent at Canterbury, School of Social Policy and Research)

Be afraid. Be very afraid...of our own leaders and media. David Altheide presents a chilling account of ways in which fear has been used to change the American political landscape. This book brings new meaning to the idea that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. (Lance Bennett, University of Washington)

This important book demonstrates how politicians and other decision-makers are using fear of terrorism to extend and intensify social control well beyond the threat of terrorism. It shows brilliantly that mass media formats and logics of fear fundamentally shape how people think about security, and lead them to engage in new forms of self-regulation. We are all now governed through fear. (Richard V. Ericson, Director, Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto)

About the Author
David L. Altheide is Regents' Professor in the School of Justice and Social Inquiry at Arizona State University, where has taught for 31 years. A sociologist, who uses qualitative methods, his work has focused on the role of mass media and information technology for social control. His theoretical and methodological statements on the relevance of the mass media for sociological analysis include An Ecology of Communication: Cultural Formats of Control (Aldine de Gruyter, 1995) and Qualitative Media Analysis (Sage, 1996). Another recent book, Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis (Aldine de Gruyter, 2002), focuses on the news media's constructions of a discourse of fear and the social consequences of this. This book received the 2004 Cooley Award, as the best book for the year in the tradition of symbolic interaction, from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. Dr. Altheide also won this award in 1986 for his book, Media Power. He has also applied qualitative research designs to investigate the nature and process of educational reform, with particular emphasis on school context and culture.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shelly Rodriguez:

This Terrorism and the Politics of Fear book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book is information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This Terrorism and the Politics of Fear without we realize teach the one who reading through it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't be worry Terrorism and the Politics of Fear can bring once you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Terrorism and the Politics of Fear having fine arrangement in word and also layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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Rita Hackett:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book Terrorism and the Politics of Fear it is quite good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book offers high quality.

Jesse Mansell:

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