

# The White House War on FOX

✘ The White House war against FOX News has just escalated.

Now it's not simply the president's relatively unknown director of communications going on CNN to denounce FOX as some kind of phony news organization. Now, the president has rolled out the big guns.

On ABC's "This Week," White House senior advisor David Axelrod told George Stephanopoulos that FOX is "not really a news station" and that much of what they put on the air at FOX News is "not really news." FOX News, he said, "represents a point of view."

Meanwhile, over at CNN, the president's chief-of-staff, Rahm Emanuel, told John King that Fox "is not a news organization so much as it has a perspective."

"I suppose the way to look at it and the way ... the president looks at it, we look at it is: It's not a news organization so much as it has a perspective. And that's a different take. And more importantly, is not have the CNNs and the others in the world basically be led in following Fox, as if what they're trying to do is a legitimate news organization ..."

And there it is – the White House strategy clearly articulated. What the president and his team are trying to do by going to war with FOX is convince the so-called mainstream media to think long and hard before running a story that FOX ran with – or run the risk of being tarnished as a FOX lackey and not a real news organization either.

Remember that it was FOX – not the big, supposedly objective, unbiased "mainstream media" that ran with the Van Jones story. It was FOX that kept the ACORN story alive. Both legitimate news stories. And remember that it was only after FOX wouldn't let go of those stories that Van Jones (who wanted an investigation to learn if President Bush was somehow

behind the 9/11 attacks on the United States) resigned in the middle of the night. And only then did most of the so-called mainstream media discover that this was actually news. The New York Times didn't run a single word about Van Jones – until after he resigned. And since most other news outfits take their cues from the Times, most of them didn't go with the story either, until very late in the day.

And if FOX hadn't run those videos showing ACORN employes in several cities giving advice to a "pimp" and his "ho" on how to set up a brothel in this country *featuring* young (very young) girls from Central America ... there's a good chance that none of those so-called unbiased "mainstream" news operations would have run the videos or covered the story.

That's why the White House has gone to war with FOX: to discourage other news organizations, friendly news organizations that have been slobbering over the president since he started running, that they should not lower themselves and "legitimize" a story that pretty much only FOX cared about.

And, let's be honest: If the White House were really concerned about fair play, about calling out news operations with biased "perspectives," Axelrod and Emmanuel would have said something about MSNBC. That operation is one great big biased "perspective." But they didn't. Why? Because they have no problem with "perspective" as long as it's their perspective that's being peddled.

But I don't believe that this is simply a strategy aimed at the media. This isn't only about trying to convince ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC and the print press to shy away from "FOX stories." No, I think the strategy goes way beyond that. This is, I believe, a long term game plan aimed at influencing not just their journalistic pals, but also the bigger American culture in general.

If the White House can get the word out that FOX is not legitimate, that FOX is a political outfit not a news organization, if they can repeat the mantra long enough, perhaps, over time, it just might become an idea that is widely and uncritically accepted – mainly by Americans who are not especially political, and more than likely don't even watch FOX News.

Yes, there's enough on FOX to detest if you're in the White House. One or two people on the network suffer from ODS – Obama Derangement Syndrome. And I was a critic of those who didn't simply cover the Tea Parties but were cheerleading them on. But that's not the entirety of FOX News. Chris Wallace is a serious journalist. So is Brit Hume and Brett Baier and many others. The White House, it seems, paints with a broad brush in condemning the entire network. And besides, it's one thing for run-of-the-bill liberals, both in and out of the media, to portray FOX as nothing more than an arm of the Republican National Party, a phony news organization that should not be taken seriously. But there's something unseemly when the President of the United States is leading the crusade. Is this man so vain that he needs every news organization to slobber over him?

But beware: Once an idea is implanted in the culture, once it is seen as "THE TRUTH," it's hard to un-do the damage. In other words, the White House strategy just might work.