

Media Monitor

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PRESS RELEASE

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STUDY FINDS CBS TOUGHEST ON BUSH

CBS has been far more critical of President Bush than ABC or NBC, according to a new study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. The study also finds President Bush has gotten good personal reviews, but his policies have been highly criticized on network TV. And Bush is getting far less TV coverage than Ronald Reagan or Jimmy Carter received.

Researchers monitored media coverage of George Bush and his Administration on the ABC, CBS and NBC nightly news during his first 100 days in office along with political humor on NBC "Tonight Show" monologues.

Major Findings:

* Evaluations of Bush were only 39% positive on CBS compared to 63% positive on NBC and 85% positive on ABC. Ratings of Bush's policies ran 4 to 1 negative on CBS. Examples:

Negative judgement

"More and more observers are giving (Bush) failing grades ... for policy drift and slowness ... too much emphasis on style, not enough on developing a coherent policy ... an administration floundering."

- Lesley Stahl, CBS, 3/6

Positive judgement

"In my view the Bush White House is working better than its critics say, working the way the President wants it to work ... He ought to have some time in office before judgment is made ... let's give the guy a break and see how he does."

- John Chancellor, NBC, 3/14

* During his first 100 days in office, the Bush administration attracted only 37% as many stories as Ronald Reagan's in 1981 and 45% of Jimmy Carter's in 1977.

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* Three out of five sources gave positive assessments of George Bush personally. But, seven out of ten criticized his policies.

* The major story of the Bush Administration was Defense Secretary-designate John Towers rejection. 35% of all stories questioning Tower's ethics contained allegations from unnamed sources, and 40% provided no rebuttal from Tower or his supporters.

According to the Center for Public and Media Affairs Co-Director, Dr. S. Robert Lichter, "Overall, Bush got good marks from the media , but his personal reviews were not matched by those of his policy proposals or his administration as a whole."

Complete results of the study appear in the current issue of Media Monitor, published by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. The Center is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that conducts scientific analysis of news and entertainment media. A complimentary copy of the study is available upon request.

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