

Florida Atlantic University

Final Assessment

An Assignment Submitted To

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## Final Assessment

1. Identify, describe, and justify at least three of the most accurate, candid, complete and ethical sources of national and international news among daily media in any language or format.
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Getting accurate, candid, complete, and ethical news is very hard to find on television and newspapers today because they often compete to get the juiciest piece of news to bring in the greatest number of readers. This “gossip” news that is portrayed on television is not always accurate, is usually not complete, and often tries to manipulate the viewer to take the point of view of the news station. News should be unbiased to let the reader or watcher decide for him or herself. Instead, many times, one is left trying to decipher the news from a newscast that is overshadowed by opinions.

One of the few media outlets that portray news in an unbiased manner is CNN. They will first present the news to the viewer and then they will comment only after the news has been presented. Editorializing is important in news casting, but only as a guide and should be presented only after the viewer is informed about the news that is being presented. This is unlike CNN’s cable news rival Fox News Channel, which editorializes and tries to feed its point of view to the watcher, instead of letting them decide for themselves. CNN’s coverage of the 2004 presidential election is an example of CNN’s unbiased nature. CNN waited until either Bush or Kerry could not conceivably win a state before claiming that one of the candidates had won the election in the state. On the contrary, Fox News Channel, a very partisan Republican channel, awarded states to Bush that were really too close to call.



Another source for getting complete, accurate, and ethical news is the *USA Today* newspaper. Since this newspaper's target audience is the entire nation, it tends to be non-partisan. It is a part sponsor of the Gallup polls that are used to help predict which candidate will be elected to the presidency. This year, these polls were very close and showed that there was going to be a tight race. These polls are non-partisan and have been used for a long time to help predict presidential elections. As a whole, though, the *USA Today* presents in depth coverage of national and international news. This type of thorough coverage of events is usually missing from local newspapers, such as the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. This type of local newspaper generally presents more local news than anything else and skims over national and international events, which are much more important than finding out who won the Miami Heat's basketball game last night. For anyone interested, that score can also be found in the *USA Today*, since it is a more thorough, accurate, and ethical newspaper.

## The New York Times ON THE WEB

For a real, in depth, and usually accurate and ethical newspaper, one needs to read the *New York Times*. In recent years, the newspaper has been the unfortunate victim of a couple of scandals that has soiled its name a bit. However, scandals happen to many newspapers. Just a couple of years ago, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* fired a journalist who doctored two photos and combined them into one for space reasons. Some may say that having fired the journalist for his actions was harsh, but it is an example of a staff

member breaking the rules of its organization. So, *The New York Times* should not be frowned on for a couple of scandals that could happen to any newspaper. They have an extensive archive that dates back to the mid-1800s that has consistently been found to present news in an unbiased manner. Their usually top-notch reporters are expertly trained by the best journalism schools and the newspaper, as a whole, is respected the world over. The *Times* covers world events and national events in a scholarly manner aimed at educating those who generally know what is going on in the world. It has reporters in Washington, around the country, and all over the globe to cover news in the making. The *Times* newspaper is also uplifting, unlike the *Sun-Sentinel*, which oversimplifies the news so that the general public can understand it, and then, mainly covers local events, figuring that its audience is not interested in international events.

Finding good news sources can be very hard these days, especially when many newspaper and television outlets force-feed you opinions, instead of news. It is also hard to find news sources that tell you the information out right instead of trying to sugar coat it. It is very important that news be presented in an unbiased and accurate manner and that cannot be done when newspapers try to cover-up the news by over simplifying it.

2. What exactly explains the US Congressional rejection of the White House endorsed legislation to implement major portions of the 9/11 Commission intelligence bureaucracy recommendations, especially during President George W. Bush's travel to Chile to participate in the APEC meetings? Or were events and timing of the rejection orchestrated to some unannounced end favored by Mr. Bush, Mr. Rumsfeld, and selected House and Senate leaders? Congressmen?
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On November 20, 2004, House Republican leaders blocked the passage of a bill that would have created a new post to “to oversee the CIA and several other nonmilitary spy agencies” ([www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com)). This reprehensible action of blocking essential legislation from passing has threatened America's national security. The idea of creating an oversight agency came from the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, whose job it was to study and explain why the terrorist act on September 11, 2001 was not prevented and, also, how another attack could be prevented in the future. President Bush endorsed the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, but his party failed to come through for him and the nation. However, it seems very convenient that Bush was away at the APEC conference in Chile when this legislation that he claimed to support fell apart.

For the record, it made Bush sound good to accept the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. It sounded patriotic for him to support the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, which was looking out for the well being of the nation. It was also smart to support their recommendations as part of his election propaganda because his rival, John Kerry, supported them. Accepting the Commission's recommendations before the election made Bush seem like a team player who truly cared about the nation. However, while he preached his acceptance of their recommendations, he knew that Congress is responsible for passing the laws. So, it made sense for him to support them because then, if the bill were not signed, he would still be on record as supporting the

9/11 Commission's recommendations, while privately being against them. After all, why would Bush want a new oversight agency for intelligence when the Patriot Act already grants him the extraconstitutional powers for dealing with terrorism? The Patriot Act allows Bush to tap phones, along with the power to declare anyone whom he suspects (or does not like) to be an enemy combatant, and subsequently strip him of his citizenship. The passage of an oversight agency over the CIA and other spy outfits would have just created an unnecessary bureaucracy for Bush in his attempt to rule without any objections to his actions.

It seems that House leaders in Congress were waiting for Bush to be out of the country so that they would absolve him from any blame for the failure of the bill's passage. However, based on other underhanded things that Bush has done, including invading Iraq with the knowingly false premise that they had weapons of mass destruction, it would not be surprising if Mr. Bush did not make a phone call to House Speaker Dennis Hastert and strongly "urge" him to end the session of Congress before the 9/11 Commission's recommendations would be put into law. President Bush and the Republican Party should be ashamed of themselves for not passing this bill. There are always problems with bills, but they could always have been resolved at a later time. Now, all we can do is hope that America will remain safe instead of being falsely assured of it.

3. What are the strategic advantages enjoyed by the USA government and private contractors when sole source contracts are authorized and implemented during the operation of a major military engagement, for example in Afghanistan and Iraq?
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As the leader of the invasion coalition into Iraq, the United States has the largest voice and it seems like it has the only say on matters dealing with Iraq. Therefore the stance and the decisions of the Bush administration in dealing with Iraq seem to be final. The only thing potentially standing in Bush's way of declaring himself the emperor of Iraq is that a lot of Iraqis have a problem with that. They proclaim their objection to that idea by shooting at and beheading any American in sight in Iraq. But there are many people in America that do not mind taking that gamble and going to work in Iraq, especially since it can ensure a big pay day. Energy firms, such as energy giant, Haliburton, which has ties to Vice President Dick Cheney, do not mind sending individuals to Iraq. They are even willing to take a contract from the federal government without going through the usual bidding war for a contract.

Not only did Haliburton get a contract it did not win, but they have also proven themselves to be corrupt. They have overcharged the US government, which means they have overcharged the American taxpayer, for jobs that cost much less to do. In a sense, it could then be charged that the Vice President of the United States should be forced to resign since it has been proven that Cheney is still receiving money from Haliburton. In any event, the act of putting an American company into a place where it is not wanted is an infringement on Iraqi sovereignty. This is why they continue to shoot at Americans. Some may say that it is only a small percentage of Iraqis that are shooting at Americans for invading their territory. But it should also be remembered that it was only a small

percentage of Americans that gathered together to drive an irreparable wedge between Great Britain and their American colonies. The American colonies then fought a guerilla war for independence against the highly trained British Army that was trying to fight a conventional war that it could not win against a more desperate enemy. This is the same thing that America is trying to do now by fighting Iraqis in their own war, a guerilla war. Americans have become so civilized that they no longer know how to fight a guerilla war, especially one that is being fought because one side believes that their territory is being invaded.

In addition, giving contracts to American companies creates a strong impression to any watchful observer and foreign government that the main reason for the Iraqi invasion was to force Iraqis to buy American goods. The United States has already been embarrassed since no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq. Therefore, the United States should not worsen the situation by continuing the tyranny in Iraq, especially if the main goal as it appears is solely to establish commercial relations that they do not want.



5. Describe the merits of the best and the deficiencies of the worst oral presentations by fellow scholars in their presentations of the highlights of their research findings to the class as a whole. Include at least one best and one worst example.
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Most of the presentations in class have been very interesting. The best presentations were those where the speaker did not try to rush through his or her presentation just to get it over with. There were a couple of people who did this and it made it hard to follow their speech. By far, Michael Jean had the best presentation in the class when he discussed the contents of the Patriot Act. He presented his topic at a moderate pace that made his communication more effective. His topic, the Patriot Act, is perhaps the biggest scandal today. It concerns the first amendment rights that have been taken away from citizens. It also allows the government to search a house just based upon suspicion of terrorist activity. This terrorist activity is defined as “anybody who frightens the government,” as Michael Jean explained in class. He explained that by the government’s current broad definition of terrorism that the late Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been considered a terrorist because he was stirring up controversy and disrupting the status quo, which frightens the government.

The presentation that I liked the least was the one that discussed media bias. This presenter claimed that Dan Rather has had an agenda against the Bushes for over a decade and that he was trying to purposely inflict harm to President Bush. This was absolutely ridiculous. She has taken this news from an unreliable, pro-Republican internet web site that was trying to spin the damage done by Rather’s report. It also shows that she does not know how a newscast is put together. The documents that were used for Rather’s exposé on Bush’s National Guard record were collected by lower-end journalists who then passed them up to Rather to use as a story for television. However,

just because the documents that Rather cited were fake does not mean that the information on them was not true. It still has not been proven definitely that Bush did not cut out on his National Guard service.

Everybody these days seems to believe that there is a media bias against Republicans. However, a large part of the news stations on Election Day rushed to award many states to Bush when they were still too close to call. This is why CNN is the best station to watch for unbiased news. They waited until one candidate or another had no possibility to win a state before they called a state for a particular candidate. The idea of a media bias against Republicans is just another Republican ploy to make unassuming viewers believe that any truth that the media presents, intimating that the media is Democratic, is politically motivated and, therefore, that the news presented is untrue.