

OUTLINE FOR TV SHOW ON "AL-JAZEERA"

1. As indicated in my Introduction, high American officials, such as Donald Rumsfeld, have lambasted al-Jazeera (the network, not the book) as being anti-American, partisan, dishonest, and irresponsible. What is your view of this matter?
2. It is your view, is it not, that the American military has deliberately attempted to kill al-Jazeera personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has in fact killed and wounded a few of them?
3. Al-Jazeera has also been blamed for fomenting the Second Intifada in the Middle East, has it not? What is your view of this claim, and why do you hold that view?
4. Dennis Ross is a longstanding American diplomat who, for about 12 years or so, was the point man for the first George Bush and for Bill Clinton in trying to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In a review of your book, Ross has made some very critical comments, and I would like to get your responses to them.
 - A. Ross has said that you believe al-Jazeera can do little wrong, and that you share its "basic predisposition against the United States, believing that both the war in Iraq and U.S. support for Israel are wrong. Anti-American fury in the Arab and Islamic worlds is justified, Miles says, so don't blame al-Jazeera for it." Ross also points out that "al-Jazeera served as the microphone" for a Hamas leader who blessed Palestinian suicide bombers. I think it is also fair to add that you seem to be almost unrelievedly anti-Israel. What is your response to these points?
 - B. Ross says that al-Jazeera plays to the rage, betrayal and helplessness that "pervades the Arab world," and "provides an ongoing platform for jihadists to exploit these feelings" -- jihadists such as bin Laden. As part of this, Ross notes, al-Jazeera broadcasts "strikingly gory images from Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza." Those images include beheadings. What is your response to all this?
 - C. Ross says that, contrary to its professed ethos of showing all sides of a problem, al-Jazeera does not in fact do this. He says that, while it puts some Israelis on the air, it does not even interview the settlers in the West Bank, nor acknowledge their physical and political threat to the Israeli Prime Minister,

Ariel Sharon. What is your response to this?

- D. Please comment on the fact that al-Jazeera is sometimes accused of having ties with al-Qaeda and of following the al-Qaeda line, a major al-Jazeera reporter has been arrested in Spain as allegedly being a member of al-Qaeda and a leading Al-Jazeera figure named Yvonne Ridley (who has now been fired?) was known to be anti-American.
 - E. Doesn't al-Jazeera sometimes present complete baloney like initial claims by bin Laden that he had nothing to do with 9/11, or the claim that Jews knew in advance of 9/11 and so didn't go to work that day? (On the other side of it, al-Jazeera uncovered and interviewed the two guys who planned 9/11, didn't it?)
- 5(a). What is your view of the coverage by the western press -- especially television and, even more especially, American television -- of the war in Afghanistan; of the continuous combat in and over Iraq from the end of the first Gulf War to the beginning of the second Gulf War; of the Second Gulf War (include your view of the jingoism of American networks, their failure to show the true results of battle -- the deaths and maimings, and especially the deaths and maiming tens or scores of thousands of civilians); of their failure to present historical context either during or before wars; of their knuckling under to demands of the Pentagon and the rest of the American government; and of the effects of their being embedded with our military forces.
- (b). How do you think the performance of the American media compares with the performance of al-Jazeera?
- 6(a). Please explain how, why and when al-Jazeera came into existence.
- (b). What is Al-Jazeera's relationship with the government and the Emir of Qatar?
 - (c). Describe Qatar -- its government, people, economy, foreign workers, police state aspects, per capita income, etc.
 - (d). What is the relationship of Qatar and the United States?
- 7(a). What is al-Jazeera's relationship with middle eastern countries? Discuss, among other things, the attempts of such countries to shut it down, to kick it out, to starve it of advertising (as Saudi Arabia has tried to do).
- (b). Explain why middle eastern countries have done these things, e.g., al-Jazeera is presenting views and information the rulers don't want to come out, is showing the

corruption and bad conduct of governments, etc. when these things were never spoken of in public by the media previously.

- A. It is a fact, is it not, that Arab Middle Easterners get almost all of their news from TV, especially since huge percentages of the population of several Muslim countries -- up to 50 and 60 percent? -- are illiterate and thus cannot read?
- (c). Describe al-Jazeera's coverage of and relationship with the PLO, and explain why the PLO has wanted to expel it at times.
- (d). Describe al-Jazeera's relationship with western countries (France, Britain, the U.S., Canada), the efforts to shut it down or ban or censor it in the west, and its increasing viewership there among, for example, Britons or Americans of Middle Eastern descent.
 - A. Will there in fact be an English language al-Jazeera channel?
 - i. If there is, who and what will it enable Americans to see that they are not seeing now? (Chomsky? Kucinich? Casualties of war?)
- 8(a). Describe al-Jazeera's style, especially its talk shows where people of widely differing views discuss -- viciously argue and shout? -- about issues, and sometimes walk off.
- (b). Its style on talk shows is to encourage highly intemperate so-called "discussions," isn't it? Doesn't this just make people angry as much as it enlightens them?
- (c). How have the Arab populations of the Middle East reacted to al-Jazeera?
- (d). How have they reacted to other new channels, e.g., al-Arabiya?
- (e). How have they reacted to channels set up by western or western influenced governments, e.g., by the U.S. or by the Coalition Provisional Authority?
- (f). How have they reacted to channels controlled by Middle Eastern governments themselves?
- 9(a). What has been the attitude of western TV media towards Al-Jazeera and what it says and does?
- (b). What use of al-Jazeera pictures and feeds?

10. Compare the degree of radicalness of Arab populations and governments, and what effect al-Jazeera has on this. What would happen in regard to radicalness if the Middle Eastern countries became democracies?
- 11(a). Compare the different words used by al-Jazeera and western media to describe the same events or people, and how this reflects differing world views. E.g., insurgents versus gunmen, guerrillas versus resistance fighters, martyrs versus suicide bombers, invasion versus liberation.
 - (b). Where did you learn that the Pentagon calls body bags “human remains pouches,” and coffins “transfer tubes.” Where can people find such uses of language?
- 12(a). What effects, if any, do you think al-Jazeera already has had, or will have in future, on the following:
 - A. The flow of information in the Arab world.
 - B. The range of opinion in the Arab world.
 - C. Democratization in the Arab world.
- (b). What did you mean by your comment that Arab societies are calcified? By your comment that Arabs live in a fantasy world?
- (c). You say that the Arabs see everything through the prism of Israel. But there are those who say that peace with the Palestinians is impossible because neither they (and Arafat in particular when he was alive) nor the Arab states have given up the dream of destroying Israel and, as it is said, driving the Jews into the sea (if they're lucky and aren't massacred). What is your response to this?