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MIDEAST2-APR17-USA-MIDDLE EAST MEDIA

MIDEAST2: STORY M202

MIDDLE EAST MEDIA

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

APRIL 16, 2007

TV AND WEB RESTRICTIONS~PART MUST COURTESY THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO FOR USE OF INTERIOR FOOTAGE OF THE MUSEUM. ONLY FOR NEWS PURPOSES**

AND CAN BE USED ONLY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, 2007. NO INTERNET ACCESS~**
NATURAL WITH ENGLISH AND ARABIC SPEECH

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INTRO: Media in the Middle East is the subject of an exhibition at New York's Museum of Television and Radio.

Media and the impact of new sources of information in the Middle East is the focus of a special exhibition as well as a range of panel discussions at the Museum of Television & Radio in New York. One of the aims is to dispel some of the misconceptions some specialists say the Western world has about the role of the media in the Middle East.

SHOWS:

(MER1) NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES (APRIL 16, 2007) (REUTERS

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ACCESS ALL)

1. EXTERIOR OF THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO BUILDING IN MANHATTAN

(MER1) NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES (APRIL 16, 2007) (REUTERS

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MUST COURTESY THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO. ONLY FOR NEWS PURPOSES AND

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2. VARIOUS OF A LARGE MAP OF THE MIDDLE EAST THAT IS PART OF THE "WINDOW TO THE MIDDLE EAST" MEDIA EXHIBIT

3. TWO TELEVISION SCREENS SHOWING BROADCASTS FROM NETWORKS IN THE MIDDLE

EAST

4. TELEVISION SCREEN SHOWING BROADCAST FROM MOSAIC TELEVISION

5. TELEVISION SCREEN SHOWING BROADCAST FROM AL JAZEERA ENGLISH

6. (SOUNDBITE) (English) PAT MITCHELL, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE MUSEUM OF

TELEVISION & RADIO, SAYING:

"Clearly, the footage that people will see on the monitors in this room, they don't see anywhere else. They can see it by satellite - some of it,

some of it they can't see at all. But does seeing it help them understand

other people of Iran, or Iraq, or Libya, or Syria, or many of the countries

that are represented here? I believe it does."

7. TELEVISION SCREENS SHOWING BROADCASTS FROM MIDDLE EAST NETWORKS

8. SECTION OF THE EXHIBIT WITH PROGRAMMING FROM IRAN

9. VARIOUS OF A SECTION OF THE EXHIBIT TITLED "PROGRAMMING FROM THE ARAB WORLD"

10. A POSTER TITLED "THE EXPLOSION OF SATELLITE TV IN THE ARAB WORLD," PART OF THE EXHIBIT TITLED "PROGRAMMING FROM THE ARAB WORLD"

11. SECTION OF THE EXHIBIT TITLED "MOSAIC" SHOWING FOOTAGE ON A TELEVISION SCREEN

12. A TELEVISION SCREEN SHOWING BROADCAST FROM AL JAZEERA ENGLISH WITH IMAGES OF FIGHTING

13. (SOUNDBITE) (Arabic) JAMAL DAJANI, DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EASTERN PROGRAMMING AT LINK TV, SAYING:

"The viewer in the Middle East has become accustomed to seeing images of war and images of death and life on the same level. In America, the

media covers up such images on account of the feelings of the viewers. And due

to this, the American viewer does not know what damage is caused by the war in

Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine or in any part of the Middle East. He (the American viewer) doesn't know of the pain that is born of and left behind by

war and destruction."

14. A TELEVISION SCREEN SHOWING BROADCAST FROM THE MIDDLE EAST CHANNEL MBC

15. PARTICIPANTS SITTING AT A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH SIGN BEHIND THEM READING "REPORTING ON THE IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WARS"

16. CLOSE OF MAN IN AUDIENCE LISTENING

17. CLOSE OF BROCHURE IN THE LAP OF AN AUDIENCE MEMBER READING:

"REPORTING ON THE IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WARS"

18. (SOUNDBITE) (English) LT. COL. RICHARD LONG, FORMER DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC

AFFAIRS AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, SAYING:

"I may disagree with the administration but, you know, I'm saluting smartly and I'm trying to get the information out. So you hire us,

you create marines to win, you don't create them to lose, and that's a part of

the game, information is part of the game."

19. WOMAN IN AUDIENCE LISTENING AND TAKING NOTES

20. WIDE OF PANEL DISCUSSION ON STAGE

STORY: Images from Middle East-based networks such as al-Jazeera, al-Arabiya and MBC flashed across screens in an exhibition hall in a gallery in upper Manhattan on Monday (April 16).

There was footage from news broadcasts as well as from soap operas and slapstick comedies. But regardless of the actual footage displayed, most of it had one thing in common: it had not been widely seen in the U.S., and the aim of broadcasting it in New York was to dispel what some specialists say are misconceptions that Americans have about media in the Middle East.

The screens displaying scenes from the Middle East are part of "Window to the Middle East", an exhibition that was launched on Tuesday (April 17) at the Museum of Television & Radio in New York.

The aim of the exhibit is to showcase programming from the Middle East as a window into the region's culture, beliefs and entertainment traditions. The exhibit organizers say they want to show the American public what people in the Arab World and other parts of the region watch on a daily basis, not what Americans imagine they watch.

The exhibition includes programming from some of the over 300 networks present in the Middle East, including Link TV and the Dubai Satellite Channel, Mosaic and Israeli channels.

Pat Mitchell, President and CEO of the Museum of Television & Radio, explained the motivation behind the exhibition.

"The footage that people will see on the monitors in this room, they don't see anywhere else. They can see it by satellite - some of it, some of it they can't see at all. But does seeing it help them understand other people of Iran, or Iraq, or Libya, or Syria, or many of the countries that are represented here? I believe it does," Mitchell said.

One of the exhibit's sections titled "Programming from the Arab World" was largely arranged by Jamal Dajani, Director of Middle Eastern Programming at Link TV. Dajani said one of the factors he had in mind when choosing the footage to be screened was to show images that would counter what he believes is the one-sided image that Americans have of people in the Arab world.

Dajani explained that people in the U.S. have become used to thinking of the Arab world as a place of conflict, peopled by orthodox Islamists. But the fact is people in the Middle East often have the same interests as Americans, and don't just watch religious channels or images of war,

but

programming that includes a healthy dose of soap operas, comedies, music

videos and reality shows, Dajani said.

Dajani also said he felt the American perception that images of death

and conflict must not be broadcast was not be entirely correct. He explained

that in the Middle East, images of conflict were not sanitized, but that the

motivation to do that was not incitement to violence but being true to reality. He said that Americans must rethink the criticism that they usually

have for channels in the Middle East that they feel uses too gritty images of war and conflict.

"The viewer in the Middle East has become accustomed to seeing images of war and images of death and life on the same level. In America, the

media covers up such images on account of the feelings of the viewers. And due

to this, the American viewer does not know what damage is caused by the war in

Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine or in any part of the Middle East. He (the American viewer) doesn't know of the pain that is born of and left behind by

war and destruction," said Dajani.

Also on Monday, the first panel discussion in a series that will take place at the museum through the week was held. Titled "Reporting on the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars", the panel discussion tried to examine the relationship between the American government and the press in covering the two

wars. The panelists included reporters, former U.S. army soldiers and former

U.S. Marine Corps public personnel.

One of the panelists was Colby Buzzell, who was deployed in Iraq as an infantry soldier in 2003 and 2004, posted internet articles about his experiences there, and then converted those articles into a book titled "My War: Killing Time in Iraq". Buzzell said he believed some media reports on the war in Iraq and were sometimes inaccurate.

Lt. Col. Richard Long, former director of public affairs for the Marine

Corps Combat Development Command, responded to a question from the moderator

on a statement that he had earlier made about the U.S. use of information as a

tool to win the war.

Long defended his earlier statement and said, "I may disagree with the administration but I'm saluting smartly and I'm trying to get the information out, so you hire us, you create marines to win, you don't create

them to lose, and that's a part of the game, information is part of the game,

and if I wasn't doing that, you ought to fire me."

As part of its focus on the Middle East, other upcoming panel

discussions will include taking a closer look at the role of Arab and Israeli media in war and peace, the impact of al-Jazeera as a global news organization and women leaders in the Middle East media.