

WASHINGTON REPORT

On Middle East Affairs

"Mosaic" Brings Arabic News to English-Speaking Audiences

San Francisco businessman Jamal Dajani is filling a much-needed void in the dissemination of news from the Middle East to the American public. As director of Arabic programming and producer of WorldLink TV's informative new television program, "Mosaic," he told the *Washington Report* that he wants Americans to be able to "see the news that 280 million people watch."

That figure is roughly the combined population of the Arab League's 22 member countries. Dajani further explained that scenes of American-made Israeli bulldozers and tanks destroying Palestinian homes and killing innocent unarmed children outrages viewers in the Middle East. Americans would be outraged, too, he emphasized, if they received more accurate and unbiased reporting from the Middle East.

Dajani was born in Arab East Jerusalem's Wadi Joz district in 1957 and came to the U.S. when he was 18 years old. His prominent Jerusalem family became refugees within their own hometown after the 1948 war erupted. As the fighting raged in and around Jerusalem's Old City, his family fled their home outside the Old City's Bab Nabi Daoud (Gate of the Prophet David—called Zion Gate by the Israelis)



"Mosaic's" Jamal Dajani.

and eventually re-settled in the eastern part of Jerusalem. Jordan controlled Arab East Jerusalem until the 1967 war, when Israel illegally occupied the entire city of Jerusalem.

"Mosaic," which first aired in December 2001, is a half-hour daily news show featuring unedited newscasts from Middle Eastern broadcasters translated into English. It reaches viewers through San Francisco-based WorldLink TV, a nonprofit satellite channel that focuses on world events and culture.

Viewers can watch news reports from some 15 Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, the Palestine Broadcast Authority and, most recently, Yemen, which is broadcast via Cairo. Dajani hopes to include Israeli stations among "Mosaic" offerings. "We don't want to be one-sided," he explained, noting that Israeli stations sometimes run controversial programs, such as on the "refuseniks," the courageous soldiers who oppose Israel's illegal occupation and refuse to serve in the occupied territories.

Another WorldLink TV program focusing on the Middle East is "Viewpoint," which is co-produced with Abu Dhabi Television. The live call-in program airs Fridays at noon EDT and is hosted by Arab American Institute president James Zogby.

Created in December 1999, WorldLink TV now reaches nearly 17 million homes in all 50 states through DirecTV and the Dish Network. Funded by grants from major foundations and viewer contributions, "Mosaic" is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which supports journalism initiatives worldwide.

Although other foreign, English-language news shows air in the United States—such as "Journal," which has a European and German perspective—"Mosaic" is the only one focusing specifically on Middle East news.

For complete program scheduling visit <www.worldlinktv.org> or call (800) 565-7495. Dish Network may be reached at <www.dishnetwork.com> or (800) 333-3474, and DirecTV at <www.directv.com> or (800) 531-5000. □