



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: [contact@chathamhouse.org](mailto:contact@chathamhouse.org)

F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 [www.chathamhouse.org](http://www.chathamhouse.org)

Charity Registration Number: 208223

## Transcript Q&A

# Al Jazeera and the Arab Spring

Wadah Khanfar

Director General, Al Jazeera network (2003-11)

Chair: Jane Kinninmont

Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

19 January 2012

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s)/ speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you. Well, thank you for that great and wide-ranging tour of the region. We now have half an hour for questions, and we'll take them one at a time. I'll take this gentleman here first, since your hand shot up first. I'll ask every questioner please to state your name and affiliation. And try to keep the questions fairly brief. Thank you.

**Question 1:**

I wanted to ask you about the principle of democracy. It seems to me that democracy is almost an ideology in the way you're using it as well. It feels as though this movement needs something better than a normal choosing of representatives, a few representatives of people into government. Do you have any sense of what might follow on, of what might come out of this and how democracy might change?

**Wadah Khanfar:**

Ok. Of course, you know democracy is a process. First of all, we have never been given the opportunity and the chance to sit down and brainstorm amongst ourselves in the region anything related to our future. Before, everything was delegated to our leaders and our regimes. But now we have the chance. Everyone is learning and discovering. What is important about the arrival of the new leaders – the representatives of the people in parliament which I agree with you, democracy is not only about electing people into parliament – what is important about them, is they are open to learn. They have not arrived with a set of values and ideas that are strictly going to be followed without any negotiations. What we need at this moment in time is a framework of consensus on the rules of the game in politics in the region, because we have never had that. So we have that, we need that dialogue. Amongst Islamists, secularists, nationalists.

We need also to start moving towards getting the ideology out of the game and putting values into it. Values, you know what I mean, common values for the society. The third one, we need to bridge the divide between the new way of thinking which I described as the networked, value-centred one of the youth, and the old way of thinking, which political groups and parties, including those who are in government at this moment in time, represent. Because when people chose Islamists in particular the message that I understood, in my opinion, was that they want a complete departure from the past. And Islamists were maybe the only group that was not in one way or

other connected to the past, because they were either in jail or they were marginalized or they were not accepted. So people punished political groups and parties that they accepted to live with the reality, within the parameters the state put. And they wanted something to assure themselves that we are away from the past, and figures and symbols of the past altogether. So, that doesn't mean that Islamic groups have been given a mandate to do whatever they want to do. That means that Islamic movements will understand that they need to establish the consensus and they need to lead the transition, but also within themselves.

So change will happen within Islamic movements, and within the discourse and rhetoric and ideology that Islamic movements have. They will open up. A party that is used to being in opposition, and 90% of their members went to jail, up and down, for the last few years, can definitely, you know, has to change the way and the perception of its thinking when they are in government. You are not in opposition anymore. And that means more openness, that means more liberal views. That means a more flexible membership policy, where you can include others into the system, not only those who are committed to your ideology or religious ideas. So the change that is happening is within our parties and within the society by and large. And this is what I understand democracy is all about. You need to create an environment that is dynamic and at the same time that is acceptable to everyone and at the same time that celebrates values, and that does not only accept a small group that was elected in the government.

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you. We'll take a question from this gentleman here. Yes, in the second row, thank you.

**Question 2:**

It seems to me that there is one huge element that seems to be quite different, and that is the army. Mr El Baradei has withdrawn from the... he wanted to be the president of Egypt, but he says the army is frustrating the revolutionary movement and there are 12,000 protesters in jail. What exactly, how do you think the army in these various countries is, is it going to be counter-revolutionary and how effective will it be?

**Wadah Khanfar:**

As you know, the army in Tunisia chose another approach. And they handed over to politicians and now we have a constitutional assembly going to work very soon on the constitution, and the army stepped back and said thank you very much, this is not my business to continue guarding the revolution, it is you politicians who should do so. Which in my opinion has sorted out a huge problem. In Egypt still we have a governing, we have the actual power is in the hands of the military council. The military council has a lot of interest in maintaining the status quo at this point in time. Unless there are guarantees given to the military council about the future. One of them; immunity against any kind of trials in the future. Second; the economic sector which is run by the army which is not, which is maybe, I don't know some people [say] 30%, 25-30%, I don't think anyone has a clear idea of to what extent the army is involved in the economy.

And also, there are many other achievements that the army has achieved during the last few decades, including the fact that most of the retired generals automatically become, you know, governors of provinces and they become also CEOs and director generals of old state companies and institutions. So there are solid achievements. Now the army needs to be assured. I don't think the army in Egypt actually can continue ruling the country. It doesn't work. Because there is actually a vibrant society – what you said is true, a lot of people are in jail, a lot of trials, there is strong resentment from the army against some of these groups, but to what extent can they continue? They can't. The age where you can really establish military rule is gone. So now they have to manage the exit.

In managing the exit, political groups and parties maybe will give the army certain kinds of assurances about the future. Not amongst them what some people close to the army are demanding, which is to put the army in a level constitutionally almost equal to the presidential, to the president, like the previous Turkish model which we had a few years ago. Because also some people, if you remember the deputy prime minister, the former one, he suggested this idea in one of the most famous developments that led to all the protests in the street. But definitely they are on their way out and they should minimize the damage on their way out and they should find some kind of formula that saves their value, saves their face, but at the same time does not implicate them in terms of [inaudible].

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you. We'll take the next question from the lady over here. I've also been asked to check, we think your microphone might have fallen off. If you could re-clip it on just so everyone at the back can definitely hear. Thank you.

**Question 3:**

Would it be true to say that one of the strengths of the young protesters in Egypt in particular was that they had not really appeared on the screen of the security authorities, they weren't recognized as protesters? Even you were taken by surprise. So were they taken by surprise themselves, and that was a strength at the time, is it a weakness now because they're not organized sufficiently in a political sense? And they seem to be, they speak such good English, they appear to be professional people, and they're going to go back to being doctors and lawyers and making a lot of money – what's going to happen in that sense, do you think that there is going to be some sort of impetus to form traditional political parties? Or is it all going to happen differently?

**Wadah Khanfar:**

Thank you very much. Some of them were known. And some of them went to jail from 2006, and they were released. But of course 90% of those activists were not known. Some of the administrators of very famous websites, like 'Kulluna Khaled Said', which is the most famous Facebook page, were known – were not known, actually, until the end of the revolution.

So definitely this phenomenon, it was outside the radar. Not completely, but they couldn't estimate the extent these people could be, you know, serious. However, when the phase of bringing down regimes ends, and the new phase of building political parties and political reality starts, they started to, in one way or another, go out of the process. Why? They formed political parties. In Egypt we have many political groups now based on youth activists. They were not elected to parliament, most of them. Those who were elected to parliament are members of traditional political groups. But the new guys did not go to parliament.

Why? Because you are speaking about a country like Egypt, a country of 85 million people. And you have a huge number of these people are living in the rural areas, maybe internet itself is not a culture that everyone is subscribing to. Actually the internet connectivity in Egypt doesn't go beyond more than

20%, I'm not sure, but I don't think it goes beyond 20% from the whole society, and it is mainly centred in the cities. Including cities – they too voted for traditional groups and parties. Because maybe people thought that we needed some kind of maturity in bringing about transition. Now there's a problem. I think there's a problem. Now this is why Sharq Forum – Sharq means 'the East' the forum of the East – which we formed, it was actually one of the main targets to bridge this divide between the networked authorities of the youth and the structured political realities that emerged after that. That is very important. Because this new generation is important to inspire the old people within these political groups in the new imagination. But also, they cannot express their views unless they have ways and channels that could take them to power. And that doesn't exist right now.

So we need to find alternatives, we need to find ways of them influencing the process even if they are not in the parliament at this moment in time. So this is one of the things we are talking about. However, in the future all political groups, who in my opinion the average age of most of them is above 45 and 50, are going to open up. There's no way that any political group can think of itself after five years ruling or becoming a ruling party in Egypt or Tunisia unless youth are the backbone of their movement. This is what I was predicting, that movements would open up, will loosen this membership policy that they have, include a lot of people from various walks of life, and lead with consensus around values rather than ideology. Because ideology will divide people, and values will bring people together.

#### **Jane Kinninmont:**

Ok we'll take more questions. This gentleman here please. In fact let's go to this gentleman here, since the microphone is here, and then we'll come back to you afterwards.

#### **Question 4:**

So Jane introduced Al Jazeera as being the first non-Western media outlet to present a competitive challenge to the established international media order. Now tomorrow Chatham House will host Jim O'Neill, who no doubt will describe the sort of global economic power shift, the rise of the BRICs and beyond, driven largely by those regions' preferable demographics. My question aims to look at Al Jazeera beyond the Middle East, and ask, what do you see as the key growth markets for Al Jazeera? And what do you view the obstacles being in those growth markets? And what role does Al Jazeera

have as a mechanism of soft power for the Middle East in shaping the impressions of the continent among sort of the new global economic elite?

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you, and if you can hold that thought, we'll just take the question from the gentleman here please.

**Question 5:**

Well I thank you very much for your dissertation about the Middle East situation. You mentioned about the new reality in the Middle East, but do not forget Israel is also part of the Middle East. Now after the Arab Spring, which is already sprung already, it's getting late now, what is the attitude of the Arab countries towards Israel in the new situation?

And another question that I would like to ask you is about Syria. There are a lot of manipulations and manoeuvrings inside Syria and outside Syria such as CIA, MI6, MI5, or whatever you name it. So how do you think that this Syrian situation is going to be resolved without the participation of the Arab League which has come back, they're now actually not taking any part. So my main question is, your attitude in the Arab countries towards Israel. And I also read a blog that Egypt and Jordan are going to de-recognize Israel –

**Wadah Khanfar:**

De-legitimize?

**Question 6:**

Egypt and Jordan are going to de-recognize Israel. So can you tell me about this? Thank you very much.

**Wadah Khanfar:**

Ok. Al Jazeera was launched in a vacuum in 1996. There was nothing to compete with Al Jazeera. The trend of free and independent news did not exist. So Al Jazeera got great acceptance and impact on the masses and on the people in the Arab world and the elite, actually, because there was no other outlet that could do the same. Second, it came at a moment when the world was starting to open, 1996, where the internet started to make some

kind of impact. The world started a trend of openness rather than a trend of going towards a more closed environment. So that also historically came to coincide with that particular trend. Third, the Arab world by that time was searching for a model for the future. You know, we have authoritarian regimes that are not offering any proper solution, they are not even offering any ideology or any virtue, they are not offering but certain sectors of interest.

So, 2001 interrupted our natural growth towards the Arab Spring. And the last few years, after 2001 up to 2007, in my opinion were the worst because they interrupted that kind of dynamics – organic dialogue and debate – taking place within the Arab world about how the future should look like. So the Arab Spring was delayed for this period. Al Jazeera during that era was the only platform debating, discussing, provoking sometimes, and breaking taboos in the Arab reality; political, cultural, and even sometimes religious.

So what happened is, the people thought that the only platform that they could really resort to in order to find out what's going to happen is Al Jazeera. To an extent. I'll tell you a story, that wherever I go during the last eight years, wherever I go in the Arab world or the Islamic world or in the region, people will come to you to complain about everything. Everything! And our bureau chief in Ramallah told me that people phone him to complain against their wives sometimes! The only authority that exists in the society that people could resort to is Al Jazeera. So Al Jazeera was seen not only as a TV station, which we prefer to be seen as, I mean, always we used to love to be seen only as a TV station. Not as a political group, or a lobby, or a reform movement, or anything like that. But because of the vacuum, Al Jazeera became the centre of attention of everyone.

So whenever there is a problem, Arab governments accuse Al Jazeera. You remember the last government to close down the embassy in Qatar was Tunis in 2009, the end of 2009, when we hosted someone by the name of Moncef Marzouki, who by the way is the president of Tunisia today, and someone who's name is Mustapha Ben Jaafar, who is also a spokesperson of the parliament of today, and Rachid Ghannouchi, the third leader of the opposition, and he is today leading the major political group called Al-Nahda in Tunisia which won in the elections. These people, because we hosted them – and why did we host them? Because there was presidential elections! – so we hosted all parties, including opposition leaders. The government decided to close down the embassy and they waged a propaganda war against Al Jazeera and against Qatar at that time, accusing them of trying to destabilize the country.



This is the attitude of Arab governments – an attitude of rejection and conspiracy and rumours. People did not accept that anymore. So they resorted to something much more solid, much more [inaudible] much more objective. And they found that in Al Jazeera. So this is why the role of Al Jazeera became, one way or another, much bigger than any network or TV could do in an environment, in an ordinary environment.

Now, regarding – that's enough for that question, are there any...

**Jane Kinninmont:**

That's enough because I think we have many more.

**Wadah Khanfar:**

Regarding the issue of Syria – is it Syria?

**Jane Kinninmont:**

You have Syria and Israel to discuss.

[Laughter]

**Wadah Khanfar:**

These are the most difficult questions. I hoped that no one would ask me these questions. [Laughter]

But anyway... Reality has changed, definitely, for Israel. No doubt about it. Israel has to acknowledge that things in the Middle East are not anymore as it used to be during the last four to five decades. You don't have the kind of Hosni Mubarak and Zine al Abidine and others who will suppress any public opinion from now on. So the public opinion will take action. And this action is wise and well-calculated, not, you know, not something crazy. I believe that what happened in the revolution, during the Egyptian revolution, of 18 days with people in Tahrir Square not raising slogans against Israel, as usually what Arab crowds do when they meet together, that is a sign of maturity. A sign of priorities that they have in mind. And a sign as well that they would like to start something that could create new dynamics within the Arab world.

But it doesn't mean at the same time that they are going to be friendly to Israel. That's also something important. Because when the Israelis shot

across the border, a few soldiers if you remember, it was the masses actually who occupied the embassy of Israel in Cairo. Not the government. And it is not true that political groups sent their activists, as the official propaganda is not true – not at all. What happened that day, is the people, the same networks that were protesting against Hosni Mubarak, protested against Israel and they went to the embassy. So the Israelis have to realize that there's a new reality, they have to deal with it. We lack imagination about the future, about the Palestinian issue. No one has proper understanding of how this so-called peace process – because there is no peace process at this point in time – there is a process which is wanted for its own, and I think all parties are happy with having a process rather than peace. So now, from now on they need to rethink exactly what is the endgame of this whole march. They cannot continue just talking about process. The two-state solution is something that we need to discuss. Will it work, or will it not work? And if it will work, how? Because also this imagination about the two-state solution is complicated. It has a lot of faults in it.

We in Al Jazeera covered the negotiations in over the papers, what we call the Palestine Papers, the complete file of minutes from ten years of negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. And when we read it, thousands of pages, we decided to put it online. It is available on the internet in English and in Arabic. You go and read to what extent these negotiations did not do anything, to what extent it is really, you know, outside any kind of expectation. It is repeating itself. It is degenerating into very small little kind of process that is not acceptable, cannot, it does not have the feeling of this historic responsibility; of creating a proper solution for the future. Politicians are trying to find, just, solutions for themselves so they can survive the next elections. Rather than finding solutions for nations that could live for centuries to come. So that is a responsibility that until now leadership does not have, unfortunately. So definitely that file is going to take place.

But on the immediate level, there is no threat, no immediate threat to Israel. It means that I don't expect the Egyptian government, even if it is run by the Muslim Brotherhood tomorrow, to wage war against Israel. And I don't expect that they will de-recognize Israel, neither in Jordan, nor in Egypt. Because all of them have announced that although we respect all values related to the Palestinian issue, but also we will respect treaties and agreements signed by the state with all parties, including Israel. So in my opinion that will continue as it is for now.

Syria is also a very important issue. As I said, it is the cornerstone of a new strategic landscape in the region. Think of it as, if we had two blocs in the

region, one led by Egypt, the so-called 'moderate' bloc, which means pro-Western bloc, and the other bloc was led by Syria, which is called the bloc of resistance or whatever, and it was in fact the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah and of course Iraqi, later on – in my opinion, these two blocs now, this classification is gone. So now we are looking for a new model in the region. What that model will look like, still we have to see. The rise of Turkey is a very important element. The rise of Turkey is very important. And it is seen, Turkey is seen by a wide range of Sunni Muslims in the Arab world as something that could balance the influence of Iran. But also, the Turks don't want to see a cold war taking place in the region. And worse, they also don't want also to see even worse which is a proxy war taking place in Syria between Iran and Turkey. So everyone is calculating carefully not to fall in the trap of a long process of cold war between the two powers and then after that everyone is going to polarize the region again.

So, will Turkey for example, in a good relationship with the new Egypt, and new Syria, and Iraq which is more democratic, if it becomes more democratic, could start something different, a new environment? Not necessarily based on polarization amongst the Arabs and classification of two blocs? One middle, balanced bloc that could lead the future forward through economic integration, which is most needed in the revolutions of today? People, their top priority today in Egypt and Tunisia is the economic problem. It is the worst thing that they are facing, more than anything else. So maybe if we think of something different, far from the ideological classification and the immediate political gain, maybe we can establish a stable political system within the region that is different from what we had for, until now.

### **Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you, we'll take two last questions from you two in the front row.

### **Question 7:**

My question is about revolutions. In the beginning of the talk you simplified, as you should do, what's happened in the Middle East, and it seemed that it boiled down to three ingredients. The first was a reason to revolt, and obviously we all know what those reasons are. And the second was a government that is sort of indolent, or arrogant to say it colloquially, to not sort of cover up the corruption, et cetera, through propaganda and things. The third was obviously the will of the people and the kind of creativity and genius, et cetera.

And my question really is about Iran, because obviously two years before the Arab Spring following the June [2009] elections there was very much a popular movement, and there was very much sort of the impression that there might be a revolution there, and it's certainly a long time coming. And I'm just wondering, in your opinion, what ingredients were missing there, and kind of, what does the future hold, not in terms of what external powers might do to Iran, but just what's going to happen internally.

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you. Did you also want to...? Very quickly.

**Question 8:**

Two whys. First why: why did you leave Al Jazeera? And the second why: despite, you know I definitely think that the Arab Spring, the whole thing, wouldn't happen without Al Jazeera being there, because you know it revealed facts and many things. But I have one take on your leadership for Al Jazeera – the uprising in Bahrain was definitely under-covered. So I would be very grateful if you could answer these two questions.

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you. I think that relates to the question I also wanted to ask you, which was, did you experience some tensions between on the one hand being on the forefront of covering the Arab revolutions, and on the other hand being hosted and funded by a monarchy?

**Wadah Khanfar:**

Thank you very much. That's correct. Good question. Let me first answer the issue of Iran. You know, there is a simple fact in the region: Iran is part of the region, and it is going to continue to be part of the region. So any attitude towards Iran should also be well-calculated from all Arab leaders, including the new and the old. Iran has been there for thousands of years, and it will continue. But what kind of Iran? This is the question. Iran that respects the dynamics within the region in a way that does not use any proxies or use any kind of influence that goes beyond what it should have – I think an Iran like that will survive very well with the neighbours, and it will be, you know, something that is accepted by the public. But unfortunately since the war of

Iraq started, in 2006 in particular and after that, the tension, there is a new polarization in the Arab world, unfortunately, whereby it is based on, you know, rejection of certain Iranian policies, but also it has started to take some kind of sectarian flavour in it, which is very dangerous. And it is deepened now in the Syrian, by the arrival of the Syrian revolution as well. So that is a serious matter, it should be dealt with with a lot of wisdom, otherwise we don't want to see again, another polarization that might lead to civil wars and so on.

The Iranian interior, the domestic politics of Iran – what you said was correct. When the, three years ago, when the whole matter started, people started tweeting the news, I think a lot of clues were given to the Arab youth. Definitely this sphere, this connected sphere, is learning quickly from each other. So we cannot isolate what happened in Iran from what happened in the Arab Spring. Not direct impact, but definitely this kind of experience of people marching in the street, has led to something in our mind, in the youth in the Arab world, definitely.

But, the uprising in Iran did not reach a full-scale revolution for one major reason – it was elitist by nature. You have the people marching in the northern parts of Iran, the connected people, the people who have access to Internet, and the youth who are coming from wealthy families; and you have the rural areas, most of the country is not in fact sharing the same views and ideas. The reality of course is different today in Iran than before. And the Arab Spring has also added more accumulated knowledge and techniques and ideas and thoughts, and images on TV. I mean, it's as if TVs in the Arab world have become like training shops. You are sitting in front of the TV, ten hours a day, watching things on the ground and also learning – terminology, discussion, dialogue, confrontational maybe discourse sometimes, but also sometimes great solutions. So there is something happening in the minds of the people including the Iranian society, so definitely Iran is going to be affected by the Arab Spring, especially after the Syrian – if the Syrian revolution – reaches its, you know, success.

About Al Jazeera: I left Al Jazeera because I wanted to speak to you. Simple, I mean really, you know for eight years I was representing Al Jazeera, and you know, I thought I had developed through Al Jazeera my vision about what media should be. And Al Jazeera has grown during the last eight years from a TV station, a news channel, into a network of more than 20 channels in various languages. And I think, you know, that vision has been accomplished. It's not fair that... in my opinion, eight years is enough. Very tense, very condensed, and very dynamic and vibrant eight years. In my opinion I have finished a chapter in my life that was very rich. And therefore I needed to be

part as well after that of the Arab Spring, I would like to be part of this debate and discussion. And I think I would like to be part of talking to the youth, and bridging the divide between the youth and the old generation. And this is what I started. The Sharq Forum [has been] in my mind for a long time now, for about three years actually. So I launched it. I could have never done, I could have never spoken frankly about politics to you if I was representing an institution that I needed to calculate every single statement because otherwise our regimes would close down some of our bureaus if they get upset at my speech. So... also I was representing an institution, it's not fair that my political opinion becomes part of my speeches. So that, there was nothing really extraordinary. And I would also like now to continue writing my experience and to move on to the second thing. That's it.

The second issue, about Bahrain: Definitely the coverage of Bahrain was less than the coverage of Egypt and Tunisia and Libya and Yemen. But was that intentional, meant in order to, you know, belittle the situation in Bahrain? Or was it motivated by a sectarian viewpoint? Or was it because of the pressure of the funders as you asked me about the Qatari, you know, the Qatari support of Al Jazeera? I was leading the editorial line of Al Jazeera and I used to lead the editorial board of Al Jazeera, and I think we have never had any kind of thinking like that. The issue, in my opinion, was much more simple than that. At the moment when the Bahraini uprising started, we had a revolution taking place in Egypt and the aftermath of revolution in Tunisia and another one, an international conflict taking place in Libya. And Yemen. And these countries, their uprisings were really, they reached full revolutions and consensus of the public [on] bringing down regimes and moving towards a completely different future.

In Bahrain the uprising did not develop into full-scale revolution. It stopped in a certain limit, and this limit was because of the sectarian division of society. So you have the Shi'a and the Sunni, and that is a reality. And, you know, I don't like it. I hate to say that, but this is what exactly happened. The sectarian division of the Bahraini society led into 40-60 or 50-50 [split], as you wish, because both parties have their own figures about what Bahrain looks like, and the Sunnis supported the regime, and the Shi'a supported the uprising. And therefore there was a paralysis. You know, we covered what we could, and we did continue covering, during the uprising and the aftermath of the uprising. And our relationship with the government of Bahrain is not good. Actually, they closed down our bureau, they kicked out our correspondents, and they protested against us. And many, I mean if you see how the

propaganda of the Bahraini government is against Al Jazeera, it is not really at all favouring Al Jazeera in any way or shape.

But also at the same time, we fall in the trap, in the following cognitive trap: some people thought that Al Jazeera is making the revolution successful or not. So therefore, because we did not cover the Bahraini revolution, it didn't fulfil its target. It is not true! When we started covering the Egyptian [uprisings], we started as I said, in a very reluctant way. I mean the first two-three days, we did not go full speed or full force on coverage. The same in Syria. The same in Libya. Once events on the ground proved themselves, you move your coverage forward. But you don't go before the event in order to provide enthusiasm or provide courage to the public. That is not the role of a TV station. So my simple answer is, we did what we could based on our professional standards but we could not do and we should not do actually anything beyond that to be more political or to be instigators of certain kinds of events. Thank you.

**Jane Kinninmont:**

Thank you very much. That's going to be all that we have time for, but I'd like to invite all of you to join us for a drinks reception upstairs afterwards. And please join me in thanking again Wadah Khanfar. Thank you so much.