



## **Intellectual Freedom in the Middle East April 16 and 17**

### **Speakers and Panelists**

#### **Keynote Speakers:**

##### **Josh Rushing**

Josh Rushing is a correspondent and military analyst for Al Jazeera International. In anticipation of the network's launch, Mr. Rushing has shot a number of thought-provoking long-form documentaries and stand-alone specials.

A former U.S. Marine captain with 15 years of service, Mr. Rushing was a spokesperson at Central Command in Doha, Qatar during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Unbeknownst to Mr. Rushing, the independent film *Control Room* captured his efforts to communicate the American message on Al Jazeera and became a critical hit after it was released at the Sundance Film Festival.

Since resigning his commission, Mr. Rushing has become the face of Al Jazeera in America and the change of career has come with a price. His loyalty to his nation, once unquestioned as a Marine officer, has been assaulted on Internet blogs, including death threats and hate mail. Yet Mr. Rushing's mission remains unchanged. He unflinchingly believes the United States is in a protracted world war partially fueled by misperception and misunderstanding on both sides of the cultural divide—and Al Jazeera bridges this informational fracture.

Mr. Rushing is known for expressing ideas important for America without fear of criticism, engaging live audiences at universities and civic groups. He is highly praised for his ability to connect with audience members and inspire the kind of thought and debate that lasts long after the auditorium has emptied out. While challenging Pentagon assumptions and policies, Mr. Rushing continues to remain passionately engaged with the military. He has recently spoken to conferences of generals and admirals and is a regular speaker at the United States Military Academy at West Point, the National Defense University and the Defense Information School. Mr. Rushing has appeared on every major news network. He has recently been featured on the cover of *Fast Company* magazine, inside the pages of *GQ* magazine, and on *The Today Show*, *Anderson Cooper 360* and *The O'Reilly Factor*, among many others.

His work with Al Jazeera International is groundbreaking. As the first international news network in English to broadcast from outside the West, Al Jazeera has broadcast centers circling the globe—Washington, London, Doha and Kuala Lumpur— where news will follow the day around the earth. Mr. Rushing's first book, "*Mission Al Jazeera: Build a Bridge, Seek the Truth, Change the World*," was recently published and traces his personal story.

##### **Zafar Siddiqi**

Zafar Siddiqi is the chairman of CNBC Arabiya and CNBC Africa and is the president of CNBC Pakistan. CNBC Arabiya is the Arab world's first and only 24-hour Arabic language financial and

business information channel, presenting in-depth and up-to-the-minute coverage of regional and international affairs from an Arab economic perspective. Founded by Mr. Siddiqi, CNBC Arabiya is responsible for a 19-country operation in the Middle East, with its main studio in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Siddiqi is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and was with KPMG for 18 years, initially as a partner and later as the managing director of one of its consultancy practices. Having extensive experience in the Middle East and South Asia, he left the profession in 1996 and established a television production company. Mr. Siddiqi established Middle East Business News in 2001. The company owns CNBC Arabiya of which he is the chairman.

He is a director on the board of the Academy of Science and Arts of New York and has attended the KPMG partner development program at Stanford University. Mr. Siddiqi is married and has four children.

### **Panelists:**

#### **Qussay Al-Attabi**

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Qussay Al-Attabi grew up in a city under the suffocating control of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'th Party. His father, a linguistics professor who studied in the United Kingdom, passed on a love for English literature to Mr. Al-Attabi, and he earned a bachelor's degree in English language and literature from Al-Mustansiriya University. When U.S. forces invaded Baghdad in 2003 and deposed the Saddam Hussein regime, Mr. Al-Attabi joined forces with the soldiers and served as an interpreter at a local police station. While studying for a master's degree and serving as a part-time English instructor in 2005, Mr. Al-Attabi was selected to be part of a delegation of six Iraqi students to visit the United States. On that trip, he visited Harvard University and Roger Williams University and emerged as the natural spokesperson for the group.

Upon his return to Iraq after the two-week trip, Mr. Al-Attabi found that conditions had deteriorated. Mr. Al-Attabi resumed work as an interpreter, patrolling the turbulent Sadr City with teams of U.S. soldiers, firefights a regular part of the mission. After the battalion's exit from Iraq, Mr. Al-Attabi took a post as a university lecturer but was quickly targeted by the Mahdi militia as an American aide. A death threat greeted him at his office one day—less than 48 hours later, Mr. Al-Attabi was on a plane to Amman, Jordan. There, he reached out to friends he'd made at Roger Williams University. After nine months of delays in Amman, Mr. Al-Attabi was finally granted entry into the United States on a student visa. Today, the 26-year-old is a graduate student in comparative literature at Brown University.

#### **Fred Cohen**

Fred Cohen is the chairman of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Until his retirement in February 2002, Mr. Cohen served as president of King World International Productions and executive vice president of CBS Broadcast International. Mr. Cohen joined King World in 1989 as president of King World International, where he was responsible for the sale and production of TV programming outside the United States, as well as the production and sale of TV formats including Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy!, Hollywood Squares and numerous other game shows, talk shows and reality programs.

Mr. Cohen currently serves as a strategic consultant to NBC Universal for its international TV distribution, production and co-productions. From 1987 through 1989, Mr. Cohen was executive vice president of Sunbow Productions International and executive vice president of Sunbow

Productions, Inc., a children's animation and worldwide TV distribution company closely associated with Hasbro Toys.

He is the principal liaison with UNICEF and the International Television Academy for the International Children's Day of Broadcasting. Mr. Cohen is also a member of the US Friends Committee of the National Film and Television School (UK), a member of the President's Advisory Committee of Rogers Williams University in Bristol, R.I. and serves at the University as a resident executive.

### **Roger Davidson**

Roger Davidson was born in 1952 in Paris and grew up in New York and Connecticut. Having learned to read and write music at age 6, he proceeded to compose music, an activity that became his main interest as a musician. In addition to music, he began studying religious texts around the age of 12, an interest that later blossomed into a profound concern for the spiritual health of humanity.

During his undergraduate years, he majored in German and Asian studies and traveled to Southeast Asia to study the teachings of Buddha. While at graduate school studying music at Boston University, Mr. Davidson had a pivotal experience while composing a piece titled "Mandala"— he became aware of a higher power inspiring his music and helping the creative process. Shortly thereafter, he discovered many books about religion and spirituality, which he read with a free and open mind and an intention of seeking the truth.

Much of the resulting inspiration went into songs, chants and choral anthems, many of which he published in 2001 in a book titled "One God, One World." Mr. Davidson also founded the Foundation of University Sacred Music, a non-profit organization for the purpose of fostering the creation of a new body of sacred music that transcends the borders of existing traditions. To date, the non-profit (soon to be renamed the Society for Universal Sacred Music) has presented three concerts and two festivals.

### **Kamille Gentles Peart, Ph.D.**

Kamille Gentles Peart is an assistant professor of communication at Roger Williams University where she teaches international communication. She is a first-generation immigrant, born and raised in Jamaica, Wis. She received a B.A. in mass communication, with a focus on multicultural journalism, from Lehman College: City University of New York. She holds a Ph.D. in communication from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Dr. Gentles Peart's general research interests include the symbiotic relationship between media and the cultural settings in which they are produced. More precisely, her scholarship addresses how the cultural identities of media audiences inform how they interpret media messages, and how media in turn shape the identities of their audiences. Her current research explores how West Indian immigrant women in the U.S. interpret mainstream U.S. media content and use it to formulate their identities.

### **Allan E Goodman, Ph.D.**

Allan E. Goodman is the president and CEO of the Institute for International Education, the leading not-for-profit organization in the field of international educational exchange and development training. IIE administers the Fulbright program, sponsored by the United States Department of State, and 200 other corporate, government and privately-sponsored programs.

Previously, he was executive dean of the School of Foreign Service and professor at Georgetown University. He is the author of books on international affairs published by Harvard, Princeton and Yale University Presses and *Diversity in Governance*, published by the American Council on Education. Dr. Goodman also served as presidential briefing coordinator for the director of Central Intelligence and as special assistant to the director of the National Foreign Assessment Center in the Carter administration. He was the first American professor to lecture at the Foreign Affairs College in Beijing.

Dr. Goodman also helped create the first U.S. academic exchange program with the Moscow Diplomatic Academy for the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs and developed the diplomatic training program of the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam. Dr. Goodman has also served as a consultant to Ford Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the United States Information Agency, and IBM. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Goodman has a Ph.D. in government from Harvard, an M.P.A. from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a B.S. from Northwestern University.

### **Marcia A. Grant, Ph.D.**

Marcia A. Grant is the academic planning head of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) of the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan. Dr. Grant received her B.A. in political science, economics and Spanish literature from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. She did post-graduate work at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of the Tufts University and wrote her Ph.D. thesis on "The Nigerian Newspaper Press and Politics" for the London School of Economics and Political Science. She has taught in areas of comparative and international politics at Oberlin College, the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and El Colegio de Mexico.

As a member of the diplomatic service, she served as head of the Fulbright Program in Mexico and was a Cultural Attache in Paris. She returned to academe as the director of the Edward S. Mason Program for Mid-Career Fellows at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She has been a non-profit organization administrator in Barcelona, Spain and at the IIE in New York City. In 1999 she established a university for women, Effat College in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where she was founding dean. Prior to joining Aga Khan University, she was based in Paris, where she was dean of the American Graduate School of International Relations and Diplomacy and a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow.

### **Anders Jerichow**

Anders Jerichow is the president of Danish PEN and an editor, editorialist and columnist for the Copenhagen daily, "Politiken." He is also a commentator on Middle East/European relations on radio and television. He is the chief editor of "Udenrigs," a Danish foreign affairs magazine.

In addition, he is a member of the board of Danish Foreign Policy Society, the International Press Center in Copenhagen, as well as Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism in Amman, Jordan, among others. He has been a member of the Danish Foreign Ministry Council for International Development Cooperation since 2002.

Mr. Jerichow has published a number of books on the Middle East, Islam and human rights—among these "Arabiske stemmer" (Arab Voices on Democratizations), "Mellemøsten i 90erne" (The Middle East in the 90s), "The Saudi File - People, Power, Politics," "Saudi Arabia, Outside Global Law and Order" and "Arabien – Palads eller parlament" (Arabia—Palace or Parliament).

### **Owen Kirby**

Owen Kirby is currently the political program manager of the Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in the Bureau of Near East Affairs in the U.S. Department of State. This DC-based position is responsible for the development of all MEPI political programs from Morocco to the Gulf. Current MEPI political programs include parliamentary strengthening, political party building and candidate training, election monitoring and technical elections assistance, judicial strengthening and legal reform and civil society support.

Prior to joining the Department of State in 2004, Mr. Kirby was regional director for the Middle East and North Africa at the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Washington, DC, implementing United States Agency for International Development (USAID), State and NED funded democracy support programs in the region.

### **Larry Siems**

Larry Siems is the director of the Freedom to Write and International Programs at PEN American Center, where he leads PEN's ongoing efforts to defend writers facing persecution around the world and PEN's Campaign for Core Freedoms, a comprehensive initiative to turn back new threats to freedom of expression in the United States.

As a poet and a nonfiction writer, he has written extensively on immigration and cross-cultural issues; his book "Between the Lines: Letters between Undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans and their Families and Friends" was a finalist for the PEN West award for nonfiction in 1993. Mr. Siems researched and reported on human rights abuses along the U.S./Mexico border for Human Rights Watch, and studied and wrote on immigrant politics in Orange County, California under a fellowship from the Open Society Institute. His poems have also appeared in leading literary journals.

### **Hala Taweel, Ph.D.**

Hala Taweel is the president and founder of the University of the Middle East (UME) Project, an independent, non-governmental organization based in Cambridge, Mass. that promotes peace and education between Palestinians, Israelis and people from 14 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Born in Jerusalem, Dr. Taweel is a Palestinian who grew up under Israeli occupation. She saw friends killed and her mother arrested for speaking out. Her brother-in-law was the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. While attending Harvard University, she got to know and like Israelis. Along with others, they launched the UME Project to create a system of connected educational centers in the Middle East promoting academic excellence, human dignity, open inquiry and peace in the region.

She holds a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Boston College and an M.P.A. from Harvard University. Dr. Taweel's interest is in international higher education with special focus on the Middle East. She is also a member of the board at Roger Williams University.

### **Robert Whitcomb**

Robert Whitcomb is vice president and editorial-page editor of The Providence Journal. Before joining The Providence Journal, he was the financial editor of the International Herald Tribune, based in Paris; an editor and writer for The Wall Street Journal in New York; and a writer for The Boston Herald Traveler and the News Journal, in Wilmington, Del. He has also contributed to Newsweek, The Washington Post, The Weekly Standard, the New York Times, and Cape Business Magazine, among many other publications. Mr. Whitcomb has twice won the first prize

from the Associated Press in the AP's annual press awards for New England for editorial writing. He is also the co-author of "Cape Wind: Celebrity, Energy, Class, Politics, and a Valiant Battle for Unobstructed Ocean Views on Nantucket Sound."

Mr. Whitcomb is a longtime observer of the Middle East. Currently, he is member secretary of the Aga Khan University's Media Thinking Group, charged with finding ways to improve quality of journalism in the Developing World, especially Africa and South Asia.