WORLDWIDE SPEAKERS GROUP

Octavia Nasr

Octavia Nasr is a multiple award-winning journalist who specializes in Middle East affairs and Islamic fundamentalism. She began her career as a war correspondent in Lebanon before moving to CNN where she rose through the ranks and became the networks ultimate authority on the Middle East affairs.

She currently speaks and writes about the rise of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) as well as the Arab uprisings, the fall of Arab dictatorships, the strengths and shortcomings of the U.S.' foreign policy in the Middle East and their reverberation/repercussions on the region and the world. Her deep knowledge coupled with her years of journalism experience covering the history and evolution of the region give her an edge and provide her audiences a unique perspective rarely heard in western media.

During her 20-year tenure at CNN, she held several leadership roles coordinating the Arab Desk coverage of all major news stories and providing guidance across the network. At CNN, Nasr also served as an on-air and off-air analyst across all platforms of CNN Worldwide. She covered Middle East politics, global terrorism and militant Islam. Her weekly Mideast Voices segment and her blogs offered a glimpse into the region rarely discussed on U.S. television.

In her role as Senior Editor of Mideast Affairs for CNN Worldwide, Nasr's reporting on the 2009 Iranian elections and their fallout served as a backdrop to showcase her expertise in both traditional as well as social-media-driven content. She was the first to combine social media into newsgathering as well as reporting. She later was among a handful of early adopters to co-author the network's international newsgathering social media strategy.

Since joining CNN, Nasr covered every major Middle East story. During the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, she traveled to the region and contributed to CNN's award-winning coverage of the conflict. In 2005 she reported from Lebanon and Syria on The Cedar revolution and its regional repercussions. In 2003 she managed the 15-member Arab desk which coordinated coverage of the Iraq war, and provided CNN domestic and international audiences an inside look into Arab media and culture and how they viewed the conflict.

Nasr's experience and deep knowledge of the Middle East put her in the spotlight during CNN's coverage of September 11th and its aftermath. Shortly after the attacks, she spent months traveling in the Middle East region coordinating on-air appearances and forging exclusive newsgathering deals with media partners. Her personal tact and charisma put her at the center of CNN's exclusive relationship with Al-Jazeera. This brought the network many exclusives and a unique perspective on Osama bin Laden and his terror network's rise and fall. She translated and analyzed hundreds of hours of tapes from bin Laden's personal library as well as hours of his speeches that he sent directly or indirectly to Al-Jazeera or online.

Her work has also brought her many prestigious awards including: Edward R. Murrow for Continuing Coverage of the 2006 war in Lebanon; Golden Cable ACE Award in 1993 for CNN's coverage of the Gulf War; and Overseas Press Club Award in 2002 for CNN's post 9-11 coverage.

Nasr joined CNN in 1990 and was the only Arabic-speaking editor on the international assignment desk coordinating coverage of the first Gulf War. Before joining CNN, she was a war correspondent for the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation. She reported from the front lines of the civil war during Lebanon's most dangerous times for journalists. Her journalism career began in 1985 as an assistant news director at LBC before becoming executive producer of news.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication arts. She is fluent in Arabic, English and French.

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