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RAY SUAREZ TO HOST *WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?* ON LINK TV

New series reveals results of Gallup World Poll and explores global attitudes of Anti-Americanism and Islamophobia; tracks evolving portrayals of Muslims in Hollywood

**Series premieres on Sunday, October 25 at 10 p.m. ET/7 p.m. PT
and will be streamed in its entirety at LinkTV.org**

New York, NY, September 2, 2009 — Since the events of September 11th, has one Muslim voice – that of Osama Bin Laden – hijacked the message of Islam? If so, how can the world's 1.4 billion Muslims reclaim their majority voice? In exploration of this pressing question, **Link TV** presents the U.S. broadcast premiere of the new television series ***WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?***, hosted by **Ray Suarez**, on Sunday October 25 at 10 p.m. ET/7 p.m. PT 2009. The series will also be broadcast on cable in New York City on CUNY TV and in Los Angeles on LA36. The goal of the series is to explore what mainstream Muslims in America and throughout the world really think about a multitude of topics including democracy, women's rights and the militants amongst them. The series reveals major findings of Gallup's World Poll*, the largest study of its kind, which began in 2001 and currently totals hundreds of thousands of interviews with residents around the globe including citizens of more than 35 nations that are predominantly Muslim or have substantial Muslim populations. This unprecedented poll represents the views of more than 90% of the world's Muslim population making it the largest, most comprehensive on-going study of contemporary Muslims ever to be conducted. The results are fascinating, and often counterintuitive. As Suarez interviews an elite panel of researchers, scholars, Hollywood producers and actors, they debate — and often debunk — preconceived notions about Islamic law, the status of women in predominantly Muslim countries, attitudes about free speech, democracy, male and female modesty and portrayals of Muslims in film and television.

Coinciding with the television premiere of the series, ***WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?*** will be streamed in its entirety for free online at LinkTV.org/WhoSpeaksForIslam.

In the first episode, ***What a Billion Muslims Really Think***, host Ray Suarez interviews **Dalia Mogahed**, a member of President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, co-author of the book [Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think](#) and Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies; and, **Reza Aslan**, author of [How to Win a Cosmic War](#) and former Middle East Analyst for CBS News. They probe glaring questions, including whether or not Jihad is a "Sixth Pillar of Islam," whether majorities in the largest Muslim countries feel

attacks on civilians are justified, whether socioeconomics determine extremism, and how much of a role devotion to Islam plays in predisposing individuals to conduct violent acts. As they lay out the factors that drive anti-U.S. sentiment in the Muslim world, and those that drive Islamophobia in the West, the guests put some of the most pressing yet elusive issues of our times into cultural, political and ideological context. The guests also respond to viewer video questions submitted via the online community, Seesmic.com. This episode airs nationally on **Link TV on Sunday, October 25th at 10:00 pm ET/7:00 pm PT, repeating Tuesday, October 27th at 11:30 pm ET/8:30 pm PT**. This episode will also air locally in New York City on CUNY TV (cable channel 75) on Monday, October 26th at 9:00 am, 3:00 pm and 9:00 pm ET, and in Los Angeles on LA36 on Monday, October 26 at 7:00 pm PT.

In the second episode, ***Muslims on Screen***, Suarez and his guests explore the evolving depictions of Muslims in Hollywood. Dating back long before September 11th, Muslims and Arabs have been portrayed as stereotypical characters in pop culture entertainment. In recent years, Muslims have joined their ethnic counterparts, such as African and Italian-Americans, in protesting such depictions to film and television producers. Some American Muslims say they take offense at films like Disney's *Aladdin*, which features an opening musical number with the lyrics, "*Oh I come from a land from a far away place where the caravan camels roam. Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face, it's barbaric, but hey it's home.*" Noting a 2006 Gallup poll finding that 39% of Americans say they have at least some sort of prejudice against Muslims, Suarez and his guests ask how these opinions are shaped, probing the potential role of Hollywood depictions of Muslims in cultivating fear and distrust. **Howard Gordon**, Executive Producer of the hit Fox series *24*, shares with Suarez his own post-9/11 evolution as the producer of a television program about counter terrorism. Gordon states, "In the wake of 9/11, a lot of Muslim-Americans felt concerned about their image in America, and we realized that we couldn't just hide behind this idea that we were just a TV show...obviously people read meaning into it." Suarez and Gordon are joined by Iranian-American actor and comedian **Maz Jobrani** (*The Interpreter, Axis of Evil Comedy Tour*), **Zarqa Nawaz**, creator of the hit Canadian television series *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, and writer-producer **Kamran Pasha** (*Kings, Sleeper Cell*), who all share deeply personal experiences from their Hollywood careers as American Muslims. This episode airs nationally on Link TV on **Sunday, November 1st at 10:00 pm ET/7:00 pm PT, repeating Tuesday, November 3rd at 11:30 pm ET/8:30 pm PT**. This episode will also air locally in New York City on CUNY TV on Monday, November 2 at 9:00 am, 3:00 pm and 9:00 pm ET, and in Los Angeles on LA36 on Monday, November 2 at 7:00 pm PT.

The series ***WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?*** is generously funded by **One Nation, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art** and the **Deans Beans Foundation**.

* The information presented in the series focuses primarily on Muslim World results, a sub-set of the results of the larger Gallup World Poll.

ABOUT LINK TV

Link TV is the nation's largest independent television broadcaster, devoted to providing diverse global perspectives on news, current events and world culture not typically available on other U.S. networks. **Link TV** regularly airs a robust selection of award-winning films and documentaries that explore the human condition from different multi-cultural perspectives.

A pioneer in news and current affairs programming, **Link TV** has been recognized domestically and internationally for its original news programs including the Peabody Award-winning daily broadcast *Mosaic: World News from the Middle East*, which monitors and airs unedited selections of news reports from more than 36 Middle-Eastern broadcasters. The channel also regularly produces *Global Pulse*, a comparative media report which contrasts broadcast news reports from around the world on critical issues. **Link** also offers its viewers original, innovative participatory programs promoting national and global citizen action. Most of **Link's** programs are available nowhere else on American television.

Link TV is a nationwide television network available in more than 31 million U.S. homes as a basic service on DIRECTV channel 375 and DISH Network channel 9410. Select programs are shown on more than 50 urban cable systems, including New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. For complete background information, program schedule, and internet streaming of **Link TV's** original programs, music videos, documentary clips and artist interviews, visit LinkTV.org.

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