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BY JACK DOYLE | JANUARY 1, 2005

Al-Jazeera scoops usually require a "disturbing images" warning up front: the execution of a hostage in Iraq, the carnage from an explosion in Afghanistan, a chilling message from Osama bin Laden. The station is unapologetic about its coverage: "War is war. It produces carnage and death," says Wadah Khanfar, its Managing Director.

The channel's news judgements are borne out of its viewers' needs. Across the Arab world, tens of millions of people watch, and respect Al-Jazeera, and the story of the channel - which has become the CNN of the Middle East in less than a decade - is no less riveting than its string of exclusives from Iraq, Afghanistan and across the region.

Until Al-Jazeera came along, understanding the Middle East didn't require a lot of media analysis. As Miles's pioneering work shows, with Al-Jazeera in play this is clearly no longer the case.