

CASE STUDY: NATO, HEADQUARTERS ALLIED RAPID REACTION CORPS



ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an alliance of 26 countries from North America and Europe committed to fulfilling the goals of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in 1949. The fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.

NATO's Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC) has gained a reputation for delivering success in difficult, complex political and military situations. It is an organization with committed, confident and experienced staff working together as a cohesive and structured team, using well-developed doctrine and cutting-edge technology in order to deliver successful combined and joint operations across the mission spectrum. The ARRC is a well-founded, fully digital HQ that has recently returned from demanding operations in Afghanistan.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to its deployment to Afghanistan as Headquarters International Security Assistance Force IX (ISAF IX), HQ ARRC set itself the goal of transforming ISAF into a digitized Command and Control environment fully able to support the anticipated increase in operational tempo. HQ ARRC needed to ensure that it could simultaneously command the Afghan theatre of operations whilst remaining capable of delivering focused and desired effects at a time and place of its choosing.

It was important to be able to minimize network overheads and at the same time ensure that the passage of critical information was both unimpeded and rapid. The biggest challenge was to change established working practises and norms, and adapt them for a field environment where network and communication capabilities were not to the same high standards enjoyed in Europe and elsewhere in the developed world.

Typically the reporting and briefings that are used in modern digital military HQs include many pictures, maps and graphics that result in file sizes easily exceeding several megabytes. Large files such as these have inherent bandwidth overheads which were unachievable across the military networks available in Afghanistan.

Therefore software was sourced that would allow staff to continue to work unimpeded but at the same time ensured network overheads in Afghanistan were minimized. HQ ARRC chose NXPowerLite to deliver this capability.

*"Afghanistan is **the most important mission that NATO has ever undertaken.**"*

Gen. James Jones, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe



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THE STRATEGY

Training took place to ensure that the 'new message' and its underlying business processes were firmly established in the staff's ethos and daily working practices. A series of simple web-based Electronic Working Practises were produced so that staff could refer back to the original training and business process requirements.

HQ ARRC deployed NXPowerLite with Outlook integration enabled. This ensured that email attachments would be optimized with NXPowerLite prior to transmission. Additionally, an email size limit was set at 2MB to encourage staff to 'think small'.

Further in-house procedures were put in place to ensure that all attachments within the HQ domain were first optimized using NXPowerLite and then sent as either shortcuts or hyperlinks.

THE RESULT

NXPowerLite has proven itself to be a very effective and simple to use tool; able to contribute to the reduction of pressure on network overheads; ensuring optimal and rapid passage of information; reducing data backup overheads and as a result, provided a major contribution to increased staff tempo during a very demanding military campaign.

Due to the success of using NXPowerLite in Afghanistan, NATO accreditation for the usage of the software on all NATO systems has been gained - thus ensuring its continued use on ARRC's return to its peacetime location.

Additionally, 37 partner Nations participated in the operations in Afghanistan and, in light of their very positive experiences using the software, many may well become future NXPowerLite customers.

CONCLUSIONS

The usage of NXPowerLite during the nine months of deployment in Kabul was a huge success, to the extent that all staff now routinely accept the requirement to optimize their files using the software before delivery. Moreover NXPowerLite has been thoroughly tested under the most rigorous of operational circumstances and was never once found wanting.

*"As an Operational HQ deployed in the field, ARRC continually pushes its networks to the limit, and sometimes over the limit, in order to maintain tempo and to ensure that the mission is achieved in as timely and effective a manner as possible. At the same time staffs want to produce materials to the **highest standard** and **do not wish to compromise on the quality** of work produced. **NXPowerLite has provided for us the bridge between the art of the possible and the ultimate user requirement.**"*

Paul Jochimsen, Wing Commander RAF, SO1 Information Knowledge Management, HQ ARRC

