

# CASE STUDY

## TOWARDS FREEDOM – BROADCAST PROGRAMMING

### OBJECTIVES

The UK Government needed a daily Arabic language television service for Iraq following the end of hostilities. It's objective was to allow the coalition to deliver a balanced news and information service direct to the people of Iraq.

The opening broadcast carried specifically recorded messages from UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush, and was very well received.

### SOLUTION

The service, entitled 'Towards Freedom', was produced and presented by Iraqi journalists and included international and local news bulletins plus feature segments covering art, health, business, computer training, music, poetry and sports. The programme's content was agreed in close consultation with Iraqis both inside and outside the country, across coalition governments and other stakeholders.

The programme initially used cutting edge technology for delivery into Iraq - using a US aircraft called 'Commando Solo' - a highly modified C-130 aircraft that has flying television transmission capability. Eventually the programmes were distributed via satellite to Iraq and broadcast on the Iraq Media Network.

### THE OUTCOME

World Television worked around the clock to establish the initiative, and the service was up and running within a few days of being given the go-ahead by the coalition partners. The opening broadcast carried specially recorded messages from UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush, and was very well received.

The service ran from April 2003 until February 2004. We averaged at least 5 to 6 emails on a daily basis from Iraqis watching the programme, providing feedback and asking for further information on the items they have viewed. An independent survey, carried out in November 2003, found that 86.8% of people in Iraq tuned into Towards Freedom Television (TFTV). 53% of those interviewed felt the TFTV daily programme was more objective and honest compared to other stations available in Iraq. 94.6% also wanted the programme to last longer than one hour.