

Below is information regarding conference calls with military bloggers, CDEs and VSOs that answers your questions.

Call format/information: The conference calls are hosted by an OSD facilitator. The facilitator will introduce your SME, who would then provide a 3-7 minute update. After the SME's opening remarks, those attending the call would ask follow-up questions. These engagements are conference calls with groups who will then in turn engage as media or with media. These conference calls normally last 30-minutes. OSD sends out the invites and coordinates for the phone bridge. Your SME would simply call into the phone number provided in a confirmation email from me. I provide a list of participants the day of the call and additional participants usually will call as well. Following are the three types of conference calls. This audience is friendly.

i. **Civilian Defense Experts:** Similar to the retired military analysis group (program which was recently dissolved). These “talking-heads” have habitual contracts with media outlets and will use the information they glean from these conference calls to shape their engagements with the outlets they have contracts with. These are “think-tank” groups/ individuals who are affiliated with specific groups/ periodicals/ and reviews. These engagements are good for those who are outside of the kinetic lines of operations, such as PRTs, economic development, and state department.

ii. **Military Bloggers:** Blogging is one of the influential forms of “non-traditional media” and is growing every day in size and influence. This particular group of bloggers is focused on things military, however, they are all also tied to the international relations community. They are interested in both kinetic and non-kinetic lines of operations. A military blogger site was actually the first to report on the more than 1,200 service member reenlistment ceremony at Camp Victory, 4 July and AFP picked up the story from the bloggers website.

iii. **Veteran Service Organizations:** These service organizations are comprised of prior military members. They generally update their websites with information that was discussed during the conference call.

Below are recent participants in military bloggers and Civilian Defense Expert conference calls and the topic they discussed.:

i. **Brig Torrens-Spence**, (UK), MNSTC-I Deputy Commanding General, shared his perspective on how MNSTC-I's efforts to build capable Iraqi Security Forces and ministries are bearing fruit in the current operations. Subjects will include:

- Purchases of equipment being used in the fight
- Iraqi Air Force operations in support of combat ops
- GOI management of three separate campaigns
- Iraqi Marines securing the port of Umm Qasr for the first time
- Reconstitution of the 52nd IA Brigade, 14th Division

ii. **MG Hertling** discussed the ongoing operations in northern Iraq – especially the operations in Mosul – and what is happening with the other provinces since kinetic operations began in December. Additionally, he addressed governance issues, economic issues, and infrastructure repair issues in the 7 northern provinces:

Mosul is slowly being reclaimed by the newly commissioned Ninewa Operation Commander, LTG Riyadh and his Iraqi security forces and coalition forces. While fighting continues in the North, CF and ISF continue to pursue the various extremist groups, while the Provincial governments are becoming more capable.

The Government of Iraq and the provincial governments are slowly spending their budgets and learning to provide services to their people. This is being executed in the form of IP hiring and training, supplies being delivered to Iraqi Security forces to resupply units, and micro-grants and micro-loans helping average Iraqis to start small businesses.

iii. **COL Jon S. Lehr**, Commander, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, discussed the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division are currently located in the Diyala province of Iraq and are based out of Ft. Lewis, Washington. They are due to redeploy and were part of the surge Brigades sent to Iraq in order to aide in the recovery and security of the country. The unit has accomplished some amazing things and has seen the province transform from the most dangerous area in Iraq to a relatively peaceful one.

iv. **CDR Joseph Coleman**, Director of MNSTC-I Health Affairs, discussed the ongoing efforts to build a healthcare system for the Iraqi Security Forces. He also shared where Health Affairs has been, where they are now, and where they are going in the areas building and expanding infrastructure, logistics, supply, policy, organizational structure, institutional processes, implementing governance and budgeting.

Information MNF-I needs from you: We need a bio of the subject matter expert, a pitch, which can be a simple paragraph of what the subject matter expert is prepared to discuss (samples above), and the date and time the SME is available. OSD is really looking to set up conference calls right now, and it is a good opportunity to get the word out on the non-kinetic events occurring.