
DIPEC Supports Foreign Military Sales (FMS)

By

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Nestled against the bank of the mighty Mississippi River in Memphis, Tennessee, lies a unique and, unfortunately, little known DOD activity that has a direct or indirect impact on practically everything that flies, floats, rolls, or crawls in the U.S. and many foreign arsenals. In recent months, however, this activity is surfacing more and more as a significant entity in FMS and security assistance. We refer, of course, to the Defense Industrial Plant Equipment Center (DIPEC), DOD's center of excellence for support of industrial plant equipment (IPE). This category of equipment consists primarily of metal cutting and metal forming machine tools but also include some general plant and measuring and testing equipment.

This relatively small activity came into being in 1963 with the responsibility of providing care, control, and cognizance of DOD owned IPE as well as providing technical, acquisition, and maintenance support to the uniformed services as required and requested to meet their IPE related needs.

The varied organizations and activities inherited by DIPEC from the Army, Navy, and Air Force in 1963 have been consolidated into five basic activities and locations, i.e., central command and control headquarters at Memphis, Tennessee; three depot maintenance and storage activities at Stockton, California, Columbus, Ohio, and Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; and a government-owned, contractor-operated storage facility in a limestone cave near Atchison, Kansas. DIPEC's basic four-fold basic mission remains unchanged from that of 1963: to keep the inventory record; to maintain a balanced equipment reserve; to redistribute from that reserve when feasible; and to provide technical, acquisition, and maintenance support to other DOD components. However, a wide array of specialized DIPEC services has evolved under the umbrella of the initial change in the ensuing 27 years. Technical, acquisition, and maintenance support is probably the most viable of the DIPEC services offered today. These services take on a myriad of forms and may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following representative examples:

- Technical Services
 - Parts source and availability data
 - Technical data, i.e., drawings, manuals, and prints on specific items
 - On-site condition assessment of IPE
 - Rebuild/repair evaluation and cost estimating
- Acquisition Services
 - Development of new procurement specifications
 - Development of internal and commercial rebuild specifications
 - Procurement of rebuild/other related services
 - Procurement of repair parts, accessories, and tooling
 - Procurement of new items in special circumstances
 - Quality assurance during any and all procurement phases
- Maintenance Services
 - In-house rebuild of General Reserve or customer-owned item
 - Commercial rebuild of General Reserve or customer-owned item
 - On-site repair of customer-owned item
 - Warranty on all repair/rebuild work performed/contracted by DIPEC

DIPEC support of tooling up efforts for specific weapon systems such as the B-1 Bomber and the M-1 Abrams Tank is legendary, as is the current IPE support of Navy Afloat and Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activities. DIPEC has also provided significant support to Foreign Military Sales and security assistance efforts during the past quarter century. Such support is usually rendered through the Service Case Manager with DIPEC seldom if ever dealing directly with the foreign government. Some prior efforts have included providing IPE to the Turkish Air Force through the Air Force case manager and assisting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in resolution of technical problems on IPE installed in a Jordanian tank rebuild facility.

In recent months, however, DIPEC participation in and support of FMS and security assistance projects has increased dramatically. Two specific cases in which DIPEC has been very significantly involved are the refitting and refurbishment of the former USS HECTOR, a naval repair vessel, for transfer to the Pakistan Navy, and the upgrade of industrial production capabilities in the Philippine Naval Shipyard at Cavite.

When the former USS HECTOR was being refitted/refurbished for transfer to Pakistan, DIPEC was brought on line to activate 114 pieces of equipment on board this repair vessel. Some of the items required only inspection and testing, while others needed minor repair, and some required major repair, including replacement/refurbishment of major integral components. All required testing and repairs were accomplished on board by DIPEC employees over a period of about 14 weeks involving approximately 4,000 manhours. The former USS HECTOR is now the PNS MOAWIN, and was commissioned by the Pakistan Navy on 20 January 1990.

The ongoing effort at the Cavite Philippine Naval Shipyard involves upgrading that activity's metal cutting and metal forming machine tool capability. DIPEC was initially funded with \$2.2 million to provide assistance to the shipyard. At this writing, condition assessment has been performed on 228 shipyard items. Seventeen items have been repaired onsite, and 39 are scheduled for future onsite repair. In addition, 28 rebuilt items are being supplied from the DLA-owned General Reserve to replace/augment existing equipment, and 55 new items are being procured for the same purpose.

In addition to its onsite maintenance capability, DIPEC's depot rebuild capability and the DLA-owned General Reserve of IPE represent two other valuable and viable sources of support for FMS and security assistance. The General Reserve contains approximately 6,700 items of IPE, most of which are metal cutting and metal forming machine tools. Many of these items have been rebuilt to like-new appearance and capability and can be obtained immediately for 40 to 60 percent of the cost of a new item of like capacity. In addition, repairable items in the reserve can be rebuilt to like-new performance capability in less than half the time required to procure a comparable new machine, and again, for 40 to 60 percent of the cost.

For too long DIPEC and its services have been well kept secrets obscured from the view of many DOD activities and especially from the view of the international logistics and security assistance communities. In an era of shrinking defense budgets, both at home and abroad, foreign and domestic managers and planners owe it to their constituents to seriously consider utilization of the top quality and low-cost machine tools and IPE support available from DIPEC.

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