

# International Programs Office

Serving Marines through security cooperation

by Stacy N. Marshall

The primary mission of the International Programs Office (IP) at Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) is to advise on all international acquisition efforts while seeking to meet foreign and domestic warfighter requirements. This exemplifies MCSC's mission to "equip and sustain Marine forces with full-spectrum, current and future expeditionary and crisis-response capabilities." We connect foreign with domestic by aligning with the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which states, "Enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, underpinned by our bedrock alliances and reinforced by our allies' own webs of security relationships, remain a priority." This is the catalyst in benefiting the Marine Corps. IP helps to bring Marine Corps capabilities to the table in concert with the Marine forces' (MARFORs) mission of building enduring partnerships, bolstering military capacity, and promoting stability. We accomplish this through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Cooperative Engagement (CE), with support from the financial management division.

## FMS

If a foreign partner has an interest in an asset for which the Marine Corps is the primary inventory control agent, it is IP's mission to negotiate the agreement to facilitate the sale through FMS. The FMS team is organized to align with geographic combatant commanders (COCOMs) in order to maximize support to our partners. While we were previously commodity-driven, it became clear we could provide better support when the focus is on the customer as a whole and not just a specific require-

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ment for that customer. Along with the U.S. Central Command, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command/U.S. Northern Command/U.S. Southern Command, and the U.S. Africa Command/U.S. European Command team, we also have a policy and support team that focuses on case reconciliation and closure, training, and staying current on FMS policy.

The FMS process is more complex than our partner nation simply getting good "stuff;" namely, we are to deep the interoperability and improve readiness with our foreign partners. Additionally, by enabling our foreign partners

with capabilities, we are lightening our Marines' operational tempo.

Selling items from our inventory enables the possible reinvestment of funding back into the Marine Corps for new or upgraded equipment in addition to generating a cost savings or cost avoidance because of differed demilitarization or disposal cost. When the Marine Corps decided to upgrade the M16 to the M4, profits from the FMS sales of the M16s to trusted partners were reinvested into the program office for the procurement of the M4 for the Marines. Likewise, sales of five-ton trucks yielded proceeds for the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement program. To that end, Marine Corps FMS cases have generated over \$135 million in return on investment. In the event that an in-kind replacement for the item being sold does not exist, the funding is forwarded to the U.S. Treasury and



**Exercise IRON FIST is conducted each year at Camp Pendleton, CA, and other areas of southern California. (Photo by PO2 Devin Langer.)**

can be used to support other critical shortfalls, supporting our national security interests.

FMS sales can also allow the program office to realize a price break if a customer partners on a contract, increasing the buy and reducing the cost because of the economy of scale. While contracting the technology refresh for the Marine Corps' AN/TPQ-49 Lightweight Counter Mortar Radar, there was simultaneous interest from partner nations in procuring the radar and refreshing their existing radars. The FMS team worked diligently with the partners to get letters of offer and acceptance implemented in time for the contract award on behalf of the Marine Corps. As a result, price breaks were given for the Marine Corps refresh.

We even manage a wholesale-style program that allows foreign customers to buy into our existing supply system, this augments the supply on the shelves and allows for increased inventory from which everyone can benefit. In those situations, the customer has two Cooperative Logistics Supply Support Agreement cases: one that pays into the inventory and a second that purchases the required material.

In addition to equipment, FMS affords partner nations the ability to participate in bilateral and multilateral exercises with Marines or conduct unilateral exercises using Marine Corps facilities. From Camp Lejeune, NC, to Twentynine Palms, CA, exercises are conducted across the United States and partner nations from all over the world come to take part. Although expenses can be paid on a cash basis by the participant, the FMS process is an option for countries to manage their funding. The exercises are a force enabler in that they allow for a greater understanding of commonalities in assets and the force application and mutual understanding of capabilities when operating in a theater.

**Building Partner Capacity**

Included with our U.S. Africa Command/U.S. European Command team is the building partner capacity (BPC). BPC programs represent a broad set of authorities and missions that support improving the ability of partner



**Members of FMS and foreign military taking a ride on the off-road course in an AAVP-7A1. (Photo by James Eustace.)**

nations to achieve common security-oriented goals shared with the United States. Although BPC cases appear to be FMS cases, FMS is merely the vehicle used to execute BPC funding. FMS differs from BPC because FMS funding is provided by the foreign customer and does not expire. While BPC utilizes

the FMS process, BPC requires U.S. government appropriations and the associated limitations. This presents a number of challenges in interpreting laws and policies to ensure the money is spent appropriately and in a timely fashion while allowing for reconciliation and closure to comply with fiscal responsibility. It is an extremely important program that assists the DOD and other agencies, such as the Department of State, to collaborate efforts toward achieving national security objectives.

A major advantage of BPC is that it provides developing nations with resources and material to become self-sustaining in various capabilities. The Marine Corps maintained a presence in the Republic of Georgia, helping the Georgians train and equip their military for operational readiness in theater. Because of the material and sustainment provided through multiple Coalition Readiness Support Program BPC efforts, the Georgian military readiness was realized, and the supporting Marine unit was able to return home. By equipping partners with goods and services through this process, the benefit to the Marine Corps is recognized by allowing our own resources to be reallocated to other priorities.



**PME allows the IP team to stay abreast of the programs it manages. (Photo by Stacy Marshall.)**



In the thick of warfighting in the early 2000s, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles were being fielded and saving lives. Through FMS, many of our allies invested in purchasing hundreds of the vehicles from various manufacturers, which reduced costs for the Marine Corps production line and increased interoperability with the nations in theater. As previously stated, providing these vehicles through BPC efforts allowed our Marines to fight our own fight and ensure that those fighting alongside them were able to carry out the same mission while using the same equipment.

There exists a sense of accomplishment when witnessing the tangible effects of strengthening an ally's capability. The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force is actively building an amphibious capability, primarily through the purchase of the AAVP-7A1, which has been facilitated by the FMS process. As the Marine Corps has upgraded its

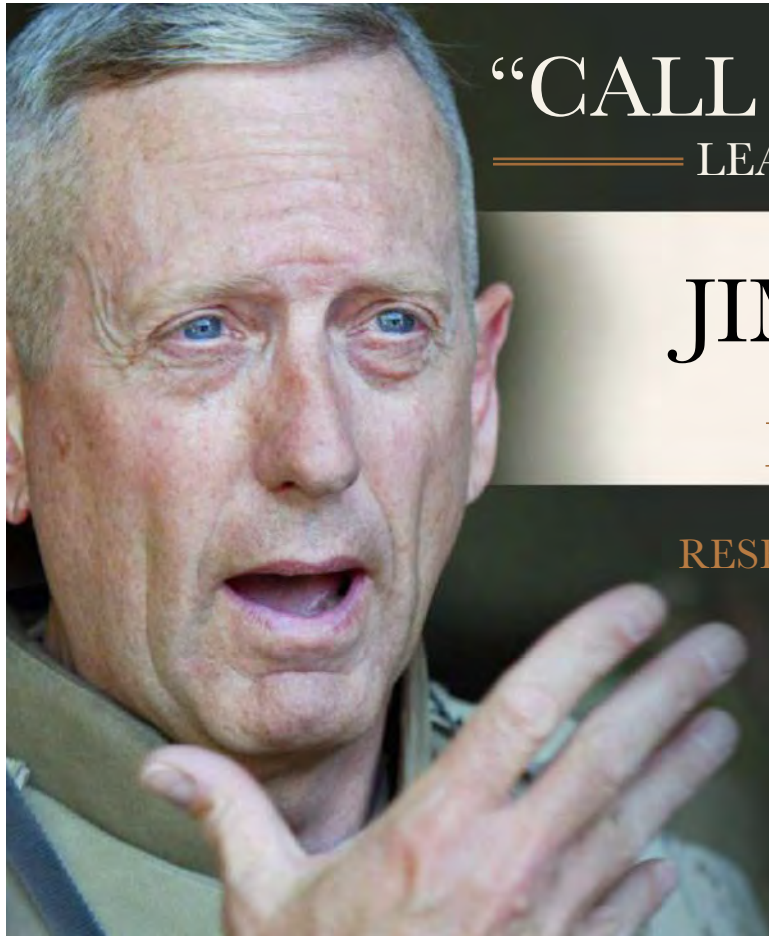
fleet from the straight leg to the reliability, availability, and maintainability to standard, allies have been alongside by investing in the production and refurbishment process. Other partners have witnessed the value of this effort and have bought into the reproduction as well.

#### Command Element

There are times when a Marine Corps Security Cooperation (SC) requirement requires additional partnership beyond what the United States Government is producing. We accomplish this with our CE division as they work with other nations, Services, and the MARFORs to support the *National Security Strategy* and theater support requirements. To effectively manage these efforts, CE is separated into two teams: Strategic Engagement (SE) and Technology Transfer (TT). SE provides routine interface with the SC Community of Interest and, in particular, focuses on alignment with

the Marine Corps' strategic goals and support to regional MARFOR efforts, while TT ensures that we are executing SC within the letter of the law.

There are times when the Marine Corps can benefit from working with international partners on fulfilling requirements or meeting challenges that are identified by our Marines. Within SE, the Comparative Test Program team manages the Marine Corps' interest in the Office of the Secretary of Defense-sponsored Foreign Comparative Test (FCT) program, which allows us to tap into those external resources. FCT allows us to procure and test equipment developed by other nations in order to meet our Marines' needs and, as a result of the existing process, has the potential to be fielded quicker than through the standard acquisition process. In support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, we needed to increase the combat efficacy, lethality, and survivability of—while significantly reducing



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the logistical footprint of—the M1A1 Abrams Tank. Through the FCT program, we were able to replace the four different types of ammunition needed to support combat operations to a single “smart” round, resulting in a cost avoidance of \$169 million and a reduction of the traditional fielding timeline by three years. Since its inception in fiscal year 1998, the FCT program has saved the Marine Corps close to \$600 million through cost avoidance.

Agreements & Cooperation (A&C), which also falls under SE, executes international agreements, the Coalition Warfare Program, and the Engineer and Scientists Exchange Program. A&C manages international agreements, to include the Information/Data Exchange Agreements and Acquisition Cross Servicing Agreements (ACSA) for Marine Corps equities. ACSA is beneficial in providing foreign governments and organizations an additional path for logistics support and services if FMS is not an option. A&C also works to provide guidance and support on other SC matters. For instance, A&C will be attending the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office’s Bilateral Technical Support Working Group for the purpose of discussing current efforts, identifying new threats, and proposing new potential solutions to aid in the coalition warfare efforts to combat terrorism.

**Laws and Policies**

As with any acquisition program, we are bound by laws and policies that dictate what we can and cannot procure for or sell to an international partner. The governing document for FMS is the Arms Export Control Act and the Financial Management Regulation, which dictates pricing and all financial authorities. In FMS, especially with BPC, new policy is published regularly by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the governing agency that provides financial and program management for FMS. As requirements change and processes are improved, policy changes are inevitable. Within the FMS division, the Policy and Support Team works diligently to stay abreast of all policy and law changes to maintain adherence



**M1A1 firing the 120mm round.** (Photo provided the Aberdeen Test Center.)

to the law and policy in the execution of our cases.

In CE, the TT team is responsible for release and disclosure in accordance with the United States’ *National Disclosure Policy, NDP-1* (Washington, DC: 2017). When a vendor wants to sell or work directly with a foreign partner, he submits for an export license. When the material being sold is Marine Corps related, the request comes through the Export Control (EC) section. The EC team gives export control guidance and is also the focal point for Marine Corps end user certificates. The Foreign Disclosure section at MCSC IP provides the Marine Corps’ position on the disclosure of information to foreign governments and interests for three specific categories of the *NDP-1*: Category 2,

3, and 4. The Foreign Disclosure section works with the respective program office and other Services, as necessary, to make a determination. Before any FMS case is completed, a thorough review is conducted by the TT team to ensure that we are not providing anything that cannot or should not be provided.

**Supporting the Warfighter**

MCSC IP provides a strategic SC advantage for the entire Marine Corps. Compared to other systems commands throughout the DOD, MCSC IP is relatively small. However, because FMS is co-located with logistics, financial management, and CE, it is a one-stop-shop for security assistance and security cooperation. IP works directly with Plans, Policies, and Operations at HQMC and other supporting agencies, to include Marine Corps Logistics Command, DSCA, Navy International Programs Office, Naval Supply Systems Command, and Defense Logistics Agency. Having those resources at our fingertips positions us to provide support to our partners and, ultimately, to accomplish SC objectives on behalf of the Marine Corps. As stated in the National Defense Strategy,

By working together with allies and partners we amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression and support the stability that generates economic growth.

That is exactly what we are here to do for the Marine Corps. Although our programs are international in nature, the ultimate benefit is for our warfighters.

