

PROTECTING AMERICA

Using Technology To Save Lives And Dollars

(NAPS)—The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has come up with a surprising way to help keep this country safe—and improve the economy and protect the environment at the same time.

Fueling this effort is, well, fuel; specifically, biofuel.

The Problem

The military is a significant consumer of fuel, which at present comes from oil. U.S. troops, their trucks, ships and airplanes use close to 2 percent of the nation's energy on an annual basis. The military is therefore as much at the mercy of high oil and gasoline prices as are consumers.

In recent years, the DoD spent about \$16 billion on fuel annually. Every dollar increase in the price of a barrel of oil costs the government about \$130 million over the course of a year.

A Solution

To reduce vulnerability to oil prices, the DoD intends to acquire half its energy supplies from renewable sources that meet U.S. greenhouse gas emission initiatives.

This can not only save taxpayer dollars and reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but can also help make this technology less expensive and more widely available, just as the DoD did by being an early adopter of other technologies, from the Internet to GPS.

What The Experts Say

Explains Sharon E. Burke, assistant secretary of defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs at the Department of



America's military can save money and the environment while protecting the nation.

Defense, "As we improve the energy security of our armed forces, the Department hopes to make an important contribution to energy security for the whole nation."

As Elizabeth King, assistant secretary of defense for Legislative Affairs, put it, "Our dependence on [fossil] fuels degrades our national security, negatively impacts our economy and harms the environment. Significant developments in America's advanced biofuel industry hold promise for meeting military needs."

Adds Brent Erickson, executive vice president, Biotechnology Industry Organization, "Fuel efficiency and access to fuel supplies are important 'force multipliers' because they increase the military's ability to operate where needed and can reduce the number of combat forces necessary to protect energy supply lines."

Biofuels produced at small, strategically located biorefineries, many at the DoD believe, can best meet America's future needs.

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