

FACT SHEET: Biofuels for National Security

1 March 2012
Harper Dorsk

The United States Department of Defense is the world's largest single consumer of energy, and about 75% of its energy use comes from petroleum-based fuels.

Dependence on petroleum, without other options, presents significant energy-security issues because of concerns about availability and the strategic need to secure fuel sources in unstable regions.

Current Fuel Use

- The U.S. Department of Defense uses approximately 325,000 barrels of petroleum-based fuel a day
- The Air Force burns about 163,000 barrels of jet fuel a day, over its 5,200 aircraft inventory
- The Navy consumes 47,000 barrels of jet fuel per day for its approximately 3,700 aircraft

Costs & Budget

- The Defense Department spent \$14.9 Billion on fuel in FY10
- In the current fiscal year, the price per barrel of oil has been \$38 more than budgeted. This has increased the Navy's fuel bill by more than \$1 billion so far this year.

Biofuels As A Drop-In Replacement For Jet Fuel

- Developing technology means that biofuels can be equivalent to regular petroleum based fuel – unlike current-generation ethanol.
- Possible sources of stocks:
 - Corn
 - Sugar cane/beat
 - Switchgrass
 - Palm oil
 - Algae



Policy Options For Promoting Biofuels

- The Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) – enacted in 2007 energy bill
 - The RFS has created a domestic biofuel industry by requiring refiners to blend biofuels into national gasoline supplies
- Defense Production Act (DPA) of 1950
 - The DPA allows the government to invest funds in private industries deemed critical to national defense
 - Navy, USDA, DOE have proposed using \$510 million in DPA funds to directly invest in biofuels
- US Navy: Goal of 50% of fuel from biofuels by 2020
- USAF: Goal of 100% capable of being fueled by biofuels by 2016



Key Take-Aways

- Biofuels are good for US Navy and Air Force because they can provide competition for oil and act as a hedge against rising oil costs.
- Biofuels also act against the threat of energy insecurity, with American farmers ensuring that the U.S. is able to grow fuel for the military.
- However, biofuels are not simply a panacea. Important land-use and water-use concerns must be addressed to ensure that we do not trade one problem for another.

Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a non-partisan initiative to educate the American public about the changing nature of national security in the 21st century.

Gone are the days when a nation's strength could be measured by bombers and battleships. Security in this new era requires a New American Arsenal harnessing all of America's strengths: the force of our diplomacy; the might of our military; the vigor of our economy; and the power of our ideals.

We believe that America must lead other nations in the pursuit of our common goals and shared security. We must confront international challenges with all the tools at our disposal. We must address emerging problems before they become security crises. And to do this, we must forge a new bipartisan consensus at home.

ASP brings together prominent American leaders, current and former members of Congress, retired military officers, and former government officials. Staff direct research on a broad range of issues and engages and empowers the American public by taking its findings directly to them.

We live in a time when the threats to our security are as complex and diverse as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, failed and failing states, disease, and pandemics. The same-old solutions and partisan bickering won't do. America needs an honest dialogue about security that is as robust as it is realistic.

ASP exists to promote that dialogue, to forge consensus, and to spur constructive action so that America meets the challenges to its security while seizing the opportunities the new century offers.



www.americansecurityproject.org