

As Delivered

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus
Italy Biofuels Statement of Cooperation between the Department of the Navy and the Italian
Navy
2 April 2014

To the head of the Italian navy, Admiral De Giorgi; to ENI and the entire team here at this great repurpose refinery, thank you for having me here today to sign this most important document.

The intersection of energy and military policy is critical today. Global agreements and global cooperation like this are going to be key to developing the innovation we need to face the energy challenges of the 21st century.

Italy, as a nation with a long maritime history, recognizes the critical importance of sea power.

The Italian armed forces, as part of the NATO alliance, have been alongside us fighting two wars, combating pirates, and helping keep peace around the world. But, while other services return home after conflicts, naval forces continue to deploy day after day, year after year. They stand watch far from home, far from their families. They do it to provide presence and to protect the global economic system.

Energy is a security issue and can be, and is, used as a weapon. Oil is the ultimate global commodity, often traded on speculation and rumor. Whenever there is a crisis, oil traders add what is known as a security premium to their prices. This same scenario plays out over and over again when each crisis develops. The bills from that “security premium” can mean that our Navy and every navy has fewer ships, fewer planes, operates less, and trains less.

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For the United States Navy and Marine Corps I have established five energy goals, the most important of which is that by no later than 2020, we will get at least half of our energy, both afloat and ashore, from non-fossil fuel sources. And we have made great progress in meeting these goals, including demonstrating a carrier strike group – with all the types of aircraft and ships – fueled on biofuels.

Under a directive from President Obama, the Navy, along with the U.S. Departments of Energy and Agriculture, has teamed with four companies in the United States to produce biofuel that by 2016 will equal about 25 percent of all our energy needs afloat.

We cannot do it alone. And that is one reason I'm so happy to be here today with the head of your navy, to recognize the Italian navy, and this Italian refinery. Italy is leading in this most important issue in the 21st Century. This is a very significant and very important step that we take. It is a step toward energy independence and energy security. It is a step that the head of the Italian navy and our Navy take towards being better navies, and better at protecting our nations.

Our partnership with Italy goes almost as far back as our history as a Navy. Italian sailors fought alongside American Sailors against pirates more than two centuries ago. They continue to fight against pirates alongside each other today. Today the work between our two navies is vital to European and world security. Your fleet and your Marines play a vital role, not just in the Mediterranean but beyond.

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For 238 years the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps have been the most responsive option for any eventuality, to meet any crisis. So what we do today will ensure that it will continue to be so far into the future.

And in the ancient language of Italy,

From our Navy, Semper Fortis, Forever Courageous.

From the Marines, Semper Fidelis, Forever Faithful.

Thank you.