

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
House Appropriations Committee Briefing  
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Chairman Dicks, Representative Young, members of the committee, I am honored to be here today to talk about energy reform and the Department of the Navy. It is one of the three issues, along with acquisition excellence and unmanned system development, that I have made a special area of focus during my tenure as Secretary.

For me, the necessity for energy reform is very clear. Changing the way we use and produce energy in the military is a strategic and tactical necessity. Strategically, way too much of our power as a military and as a nation comes from fossil fuels obtained from potentially volatile places around the world. We would never allow those places to have a say in how we build our ships or our aircrafts, but by allowing our dependence on fossil fuels to continue, we are tacitly giving these very same places a say in order that our ships can sail or those airplanes can fly.

It's no less of an issue at the tactical level. At this very moment in Afghanistan – and I'm speaking just for the Department of the Navy now – 20,000 Marines and thousands of Sailors are supporting the war effort and furthering the objectives of our country. They are, by and large, mostly located in southwest Afghanistan, in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

Gasoline is the single thing we import the most into Afghanistan. Getting a gallon of gas to our Marines located in a Forward Operating Base like Camp Leatherneck or Musacala – both places I was in in June – was one of the most difficult things we did because that Forward Operating Base, that FOB, sits at the end of a supply chain that starts in the U.S. and then continues to the coast of Pakistan or to an airfield in Central Asia. In either case, that gallon of gasoline has to be put in a truck, transported over the Hindu Kush or south from Central Asia across the Amu Darya into Afghanistan.

At every step of the way, we add cost and it's a dangerous trip. All along the route, our convoys are at risk of ambush and are vulnerable to IEDs. And the cost in people is significant. The Army did a study and found that for every 24 convoys, we lose one American – killed or wounded. That's too high a price to pay for fuel.

Those are the reasons we have to change. Those are the reasons why the military has to become more efficient in our use of power and change the way we use and the way we produce energy.

We won't only save lives in Afghanistan, we'll also free up those Marines, those Soldiers, those Sailors, those Airmen, to do what they were sent there to do; to fight, to build, to engage with the local population.

Because our dependence on fossil fuel degrades our national security and it degrades our warfighting capability, last October, I issued five energy goals for the department, the most important of which is that by 2020, half of all the energy we use, both afloat and ashore, will come from alternative sources.

Since I announced these goals, the Department of the Navy has continually assessed itself against them to ensure that we remain on track to meet them because you don't just get there in the 10<sup>th</sup> year. You have to get there year-by-year.

I want to stress that I am keenly aware of my responsibilities to both this committee and the American public to be a good custodian of the funds entrusted to the Department of the Navy, as well as my statutory obligation to meet, or more appropriately exceed, the requirements of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

We're not doing energy reform for its own sake. Every project that we start, every investment that we make, has to either improve the tactical or operational capability of our forces or create a return on investment that saves the taxpayer money.

As you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Tom Hicks will discuss the specific investments that we've made in specific projects we're going to take in both alone and in partnership with other federal agencies, industry and academia.

But I want to close by thanking the subcommittee once again for allowing me to be here today, but more importantly, for your efforts as individual members and as a committee to keep this issue at the forefront of our national security discussion. Thank you.