

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Green Hornet
Patuxent River Naval Air Station, MD
Thursday, 22 April, 2010

Captain Huff, thank you so much. Admiral Venlet, I appreciate you all having us down here today. I'm going to recognize only a couple people even though we have a lot of distinguished visitors who came with me down here. Congressman Mike McIntyre, a stand up congressman from the Armed Services Committee. Congressman McIntyre has been working on alternative fuels for a long time – he is not a Johnny Come-lately to this. I really want to thank him for his leadership in this. And brand new Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment, Jackalyne Pfannenstiel. And the two people who were at the center of today, “Pi” [LCDR Tom Weaver] and “Abu” [CDR Beau Duarte], the pilots.

Today's flight, that we got to watch inside the center where the engineers do their work, successfully completed another part of the test for the Green Hornet. Maximum velocity got up to about Mach 1.2 and according to them it worked fine – the airplane didn't know the difference between that and regular av gas. It was flying on a 50-50 mixture of camelina-based biofuel and aviation jet fuel. For those of you like me who are wondering what camelina is, it is a member of the mustard family. It can be grown in rotation with crops like wheat. It can be grown in every single state in the United States. This is the future of naval aviation and of naval fuel.

I know that you already have call signs, but today I really think you should have been Britt Reid and Kato. The only people who laughed about that are people of a certain

age who remember the *Green Hornet* comic strip or comic book. And if you don't remember, you just need to read more comic books.

This is the most visible demonstration we've had to date of our commitment to change the way we produce and use energy in the Navy and the Marine Corps. Last October, I set out five goals for the Navy and the Marine Corps in terms of our fuel and energy usage. One of them was to sail a Great Green Fleet, a Strike Group that uses no fossil fuels, by 2016.

This Green Hornet leads that effort. It's an off-the-shelf airplane, if you can have an off-the-shelf F/A-18. There was nothing special done to it besides instrumentation to measure what it was doing. Biofuel has been engineered to meet Navy standards. It can be from camelina or it can be from almost any source.

The case for action is clear in terms of changing the way we use fuels. The President said, a couple weeks ago at Andrews [Air Force Base] with the Green Hornet as his backdrop, "Moving toward clean energy is about our security. It's about our economy. And it's about the future of our planet."¹

Right now in our ships, our aircraft, and our tactical vehicles – turning on the lights, turning on the power sources running the engines, we're using fossil-based fuels. The Department of the Navy consumes almost a third of all the fossil-based energy used by the federal government. And the federal government uses 2 percent of all the energy used in the United States. And not much of the fuel that we are using in the fleet today or using on our bases today comes from the United States. We are sending money abroad to

¹ From speech on March 31 at Joint Base Andrews.

power our own defense. We are dependent, too dependent, on potentially volatile places on earth for that energy.

We cannot be beholden to a resource controlled by others. We would never accept that our aircraft or our ships be built overseas, and yet we accept today that they be powered from resources from overseas.

So we are changing. We are moving toward that energy future. We are moving toward increased efficiency – doing the same job with less fuel. And we are also moving toward sustainable alternative fuels to replace those fossil fuels.

In January, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tom Vilsack, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture. And I know we have representatives here today from Agriculture. We are working with them and with other partners - with DARPA, with the Department of Energy and with the State of Hawaii - in terms of not only producing these biofuels, but addressing the issues of scalability and economy, addressing some of the needs of our farmers, and addressing the need for America to move into the next economy. It's an economy we cannot afford not to be in the lead on.

The Navy has always been in the leadership when we've changed energy sources. In the 1850s we went from sail to coal. In the early part of the 20th century we went from coal to oil. And in the 1950s we became nuclear with our carriers and our submarines. And every single time the Navy has done that, there have been doubters. There have been people who have said, you are abandoning one proven and certain technology for an unproven, more expensive, less sure one. And every time, they have been wrong. And I

am absolutely confident, that they're going to be wrong, the ones that are doubting these tests and this direction, are going to be wrong again.

We stretched our imagination a little bit further today – in fact our imagination flew today. It flew because of biofuels developed through American innovation and American science. I want to thank the energy staff here, the scientists and engineers here and elsewhere, the companies who have worked on this and the Defense Energy Support Center who got the biofuel and made this day possible. That's American Engineering. That's American leadership.

I congratulate you on a job well done, but remind you that this is one of the first steps on a long, long road that's going to lead us to energy independence and energy security.

Thank you all so much.