



Written by [James Heiser](#) on February 1, 2010

U.S. Navy Announces Plan to “Go Green”

From Woodrow Wilson’s dream of “Making the World Safe for Democracy” to George Bush’s “Coalition of the Willing,” the United States military has often been required to serve presidential agendas that fall outside the rather narrowly defined parameters of Article 2, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution: The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; Now the armed forces of the United States are apparently expected to save the entire planet — without firing a single shot. How? By “going green.”



According to an article at the website for *Popular Science* — [“Navy Pledges Green Strike Group by 2012”](#):

Militaries have a tough, often messy job to do, and as such taking steps to polish their green credentials generally isn’t a high priority. But the potential cost savings — not to mention the tactical advantages — of going green are not lost on U.S. Armed Forces’ top brass. The Army has pursued “zero footprint” base camps, and the Air Force is looking into a variety of alternative propellants that could be turned into jet fuel. Now the Navy is going green, signing a memorandum of understanding with the USDA to demo a Green Strike Group of biofuel- and nuclear-powered vessels by 2012.

Although environmentalists will certainly object to the idea that the use of nuclear-powered vessels constitutes “going green,” from the standpoint of proven reliability and efficiency, expanding the use of nuclear power is perhaps the one aspect of the entire plan that is most easily defensible from the standpoint of operational readiness.

However, the Navy’s goals are apparently not aimed primarily at expanding the role of nuclear power, but eliminating the use of petroleum. Again, according to *Popular Science*:

On its face, the Navy’s plan is fairly ambitious. Though there are already plenty of nuclear-powered submarines and other naval vessels in the fleet, the Navy also possesses a pretty big carbon footprint; it has some 50,000 non-tactical vehicles burning petroleum, and naval bases aren’t exactly models of efficiency and prudent power usage. Over the next decade, that’s going to change.

The Navy will demo the green-powered tactical group, known as the Green Strike Group, by 2012, and will officially take to the seas for regular operations with a Great Green Fleet by 2016. That’s not just green ships; Naval airplanes and any surface combat equipment will run on biofuels as well.

By 2015, that 50,000 strong fleet of non-tactical vehicles will cut its petroleum use by half,



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phasing in flex-fuel and hybrid vehicles in the place of petro-burners. By 2020, at least half of shore-based installations' power will be derived from alternative sources, and half of all installations will be net zero consumers of energy.

However, the accomplishment of these goals faces certain substantial difficulties. First, most biofuels are not as efficient as petroleum; they simply deliver less energy per gallon than petroleum, and thus pose potential logistical problems, since vessels relying on less efficient biofuels will have to address such inefficiencies through more frequent resupply of fuel or through increased mass devoted to fuel storage. Second, the cost of converting so many vehicles and installations at a time when President Obama is proposing a budget with a record \$1.56 trillion deficit seems almost impossible to justify.

Given the record of recent administrations of using the armed forces for social reengineering — including, for example, President Obama's express intention to end the "don't ask, don't tell" policy — it was virtually inevitable that the ideology of the environmentalists would also have its role in this process of reshaping the United States military according to agendas that have little, or nothing, to do with preparing to fight and win wars. After all, with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) already pushing for declaring environmental damage incurred during a time of war to be a "[war crime](#)" it was a very small logical jump to the idea that the "greening" of our armed forces would be the way in which they would be retooled to save the planet. Whether a bankrupt nation will be able to purchase weapons for the politically correct, green soldiers and sailors of the future remains to be seen. If "going green" will contribute to the continued bankrupting of our nation, and could hamper the operational readiness of our armed forces, then the only "green" Americans want for our armed forces is of the "olive drab" variety.



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