

# Pentagon going green, because it has to: officials

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A hybrid solar-wind generator by Solar Stik, a company that makes portable renewable energy systems, on display at the Pentagon. The US military's heavy dependence on fossil fuels is a dangerous vulnerability, officials said Wednesday as they made a fresh push to develop renewable energy solutions.

The US military's heavy dependence on fossil fuels is a dangerous vulnerability, officials said Wednesday as they made a fresh push to develop renewable energy solutions for the battlefield.

While an [energy](#) bill has stalled in Congress and statewide alternative energy initiatives have been put on ice in the midst of a bruising [economic recession](#), senior military leaders are now warning that the armed forces' continued reliance on petroleum harms national security.

In the wake of a spate of deadly attacks on tankers carrying fuel to foreign troops in Afghanistan, Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke of a "strategic imperative" for the US military to become more efficient and find new sources of energy.

The Department of Defense is burning through 300,000 barrels of oil a day, using more energy per soldier every year and its top import to Afghanistan is [fossil fuels](#), the highest ranking US military officer said as he kicked off a Pentagon discussion on energy security.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, has set a goal of having renewable energy account for 50 percent of power for the Navy and Marines by 2020.



General Peter Chiarelli, vice chief of staff, US army participates, seen speaking about renewable energy at the Pentagon. The Department of Defense is burning through 300,000 barrels of oil a day, using more energy per soldier every year and its top import to Afghanistan is fossil fuels, the highest ranking US military officer said as he kicked off a Pentagon discussion on energy security.

"We're not going green just for green's sake. Energy reform and the new energy future aren't about politics or slogans," he said.

"It's about protecting the lives of our troops. It's about making our military better and more capable fighters. It's about making our country more secure and more independent. That's why we are doing this, that's why we have to change."

Officials speaking at Energy Awareness Month events launched by the federal government -- the nation's biggest energy consumer -- said getting access to more sources of [renewable energy](#) improved national security because too much oil consumed by the United States comes from volatile regions.

The cost of relying too heavily on fossil fuels, both in blood and treasure, is also a top concern for military planners.

A September 2009 Army study found that for every 24 convoys carrying fuel to bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, one soldier or civilian is killed.

Estimates vary on the cost of fuel.

While the US military sets a standard price for fuel at about three dollars, the Marine Corps once found the price of delivering that gallon to troops in the Afghan province of Helmand could reach up to 30 dollars. A 2001 Defense Science Board report said it could cost a whopping 400 dollars.

Earlier this month, attackers in Pakistan targeted fuel convoys headed for foreign military bases in Afghanistan, highlighting the vulnerability of the main land route for NATO supplies across the Torkham border through the Khyber Pass.

Scores of NATO vehicles were destroyed in gun and arson attacks as thousands of oil tankers and supply vehicles became stranded during an 11-day closure.

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