



Peak Oil in "The Diplomat"

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on September 7, 2008 - 8:11am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

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Sorry about the lack of the weekend Bullroarer but I've been offline all weekend.

I will point to this story in "The Diplomat" though - [Fighting On Empty](#) - which looks at the Australian Defence Force's response to peak oil (one which has a very low profile).

The Australian Defence Force consumes annually 125 million litres of diesel and 200 million litres of aviation fuel, according to government statistics. The strategy and capabilities of the ADF are dependent on oil and they are exposed to the same price fluctuations that are wreaking havoc on business and household budgets. Considering the extensive lead time and lifespan for Defence capability acquisitions and the poor projections for oil, it is little surprise that there is a growing chorus of concern coming from within Defence ranks.

A number of serving officers and senior public servants have formed the independent Defence and Security Working Group under the umbrella of the Australian chapter of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO). "The decline in global oil supplies will have profound consequences for the ADF and civil border protection agencies. Australia has recently embarked on several large military and civil national security projects involving the acquisition of aircraft, vessels and land transport. ...

Quite how the Australian military intends to address concerns about oil is uncertain. The Department of Defence is playing its cards close to its chest, either because they are holding no cards, or they are unsure how to play them. Neil Burgess from Defence Public Affairs had no comment except to say that, "No one wants to talk to you." There are, however, personnel within the ADF who are keen to speak frankly on this issue, but getting official approval is difficult.

The Defence Minister's office responded to questions by saying: "The ADF at this point in time has no programs to research synthetic fuels, but it does leverage off its collaborations with the USA and UK via a number of multilateral forums." These nations are "playing a significant role in promoting the uptake and commercialisation of alternative fuels and power generation, for example gas/coal/biomass to liquids for aviation fuels." Apart from these clues, the Department of Defence refuses to be drawn further on how it intends to maintain mobility until the release of the Defence White Paper due later in the year. The demise of cheap oil, in conjunction with the interrelated and inseparable issue of climate change, presents some unenviable challenges.

Based on that comment, I don't think we'll see any more articles like [this](#) for the time being...



In a similar vein, The Diplomat also has a look at the impact of high oil prices on the US Defense forces - [The New Oils Of War](#).



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