



Less Oil or More Caskets

The National Security Argument for
Moving Away from Oil

Speaking Topics



After a twenty-three year career in the Marine Corps and retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, Greg Ballard returned home to Indianapolis in 2001. In 2007, he ran a successful campaign to become the 48th Mayor of Indianapolis, subsequently serving two terms. While Mayor, he became a Trustee for the US Conference of Mayors and was known for his boldness and innovation by his fellow mayors. He is a graduate of Indiana University, holds a Masters in Military Science, and has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from both Butler University and Marian University. A Persian Gulf War veteran, he continues to be active in veteran causes. He is a member of the Indiana Veteran Affairs Commission and board member of the Indiana War Memorial Foundation. He is currently a Visiting Fellow for Civic Leadership and Mayoral Archives at the University of Indianapolis. Greg and his wife, Winnie, have been married for 35 years and have two children, Erica and Greg Jr.

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TITLE: Less Oil or More Caskets: The National Security Argument for Moving Away from Oil

DESCRIPTION:

Why are we still in the Middle East? The average person doesn't actually know why we are there. Instead, it's now just widely accepted that we routinely deploy troops to that part of the world without asking a lot of questions.

In reality, troops are in the Middle East to ensure the flow of oil for the entire world. With costs in both lives and dollars beyond what most Americans ever realize, the decision to stay in and maintain the Middle East flow of oil comes with an incredible price tag for our country.

Even worse, for decades people believed the situation was getting better. But it wasn't. Despite the oil embargoes in the 1970s, the airline hijackings and dozens of terrorist incidents in the 1980s and beyond, the Gulf War of 1990-1991 and 9/11, our dependence on foreign oil dramatically increased from 28% in the 1970s to 60% in 2006. We still actually protect the sale and flow of oil that funds terrorism against the United States.

In this thought-provoking talk, Former Indianapolis Mayor and retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marines, Greg Ballard, engages audiences with a blend of past, present and the future of both the US and the world's dependence on oil. With plenty of political buzz around energy independence and conservation, this session will clearly outline where we've been and where our country needs to go to truly address the crisis surrounding oil.

TITLE: The Long Term Outlook: Why Cities Need to Shift to a Post-Oil Technology Mindset

DESCRIPTION:

When retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marines, Greg Ballard became Mayor of Indianapolis in 2008, he knew he would need to make strategically savvy long-term decisions to ensure the growth of the city well into the future.

Mayor Ballard also knew that he would be faced with the same issues that keep many mayors up at night—fuel, parking, traffic, jobs, happy constituents.

In this compelling presentation, Mayor Ballard shares why and how his approach to leading the city of Indianapolis through two terms took a different direction. Using his military expertise and years of research, Mayor Ballard designed a platform to create mobility options in the city and reduce its dependence on oil.

What if you could encourage companies to convert their vehicle fleet to electric? Are the talent and companies that you are seeking to attract looking at the forward movement of your city/state? What if you embraced the benefits of post-oil technology and allowed them to serve you and your constituents in new and creative ways?

As a Visiting Fellow for Civic Leadership and Mayoral Archives at the University of Indianapolis, Mayor Ballard is well-versed in strategies for mayors, city leaders and university campus officials. Let him engage your audience in this important conversation.

College/University Students, Faculty & Staff

TITLE: Post-Oil Technology: What You Can Do Right Now to Reduce Our Need for Oil

DESCRIPTION:

What if you could be part of a movement to defund terrorism and save American lives through the use of technology solutions in the United States? This may sound like a tall order, but Former Indianapolis Mayor and retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marines, Greg Ballard, believes our nation's college campuses are where the solution to reducing our dependence on oil truly begins.

The data doesn't lie—producing more oil locally won't work. Because Asia buys more than two-thirds of Middle Eastern oil, terrorism will continue to be funded, Russia and OPEC will continue to have enormous strategic leverage, and our troops won't be able to come home, no matter how much oil we produce in the USA.

In this engaging conversation, Mayor Ballard will share a new path forward focused on post-oil technology. 70% of the world's oil is used for transportation. What if we shifted our reliance on oil by focusing on transportation options instead?

If you're ready for a discussion about what you, your peers and your campus can do to make a real impact in our world right now, this talk is for you. Join the movement to create a world of post-oil technology solutions today!



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for Moving Away from Oil



GREGORY A. BALLARD

Lt. Col., US Marines (Ret.) | Mayor of Indianapolis, 2008–2015

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Moving Away from Oil: Why Now?

Today, when we send our young men and women off to war, we pat them on the back and thank them for their service. We throw parades and homecomings upon their successful return. We sadly salute the caskets as they go by. Then we drive down to the neighborhood gas station and fill up. And nobody makes the connection. No one sees the irony.

The simple question must be asked: Why are we in the Middle East? Why do we continue to pour enormous resources into an area of the world that has cost us so dearly, in both human and financial terms, over the last 40 years?

We do this to maintain the global oil market. Historically, that market has been crucial to the Western standard of living, because the world relied on oil for its numerous energy requirements. But that has changed. Today, the use of oil most relevant to our quality of life is for transportation energy—how we move people and goods.

Transportation is the last industry dominated by the use of oil. Electric power generated by oil is virtually nonexistent, and residential and commercial heating uses for oil continue to fall. Only transportation and industrial uses consume significant quantities of oil in the United States, and transportation is by far the dominant user—over 70 percent, according to the Energy Information Administration. Worldwide, the percentage of oil consumption for transportation has risen from 45 percent in 1973 to 64 percent in 2012, according to the International Energy Agency. Oil still is used for over 90 percent of transportation needs in our country and the world, and it will remain so unless the new technology is understood and embraced.

Transportation energy technology is on the cusp of great change that will allow the international economy to be free of oil's chokehold upon the world. The technology of the past mandated that the United States devote enormous resources to preserve the flow of oil, not just to the United States, but to all markets, so as to maintain global demand for goods and services, preserving the international economy. But emerging technologies allow us to change that dynamic. This technology will not cause us to lose our standard of living; indeed, it may enhance it. It will, however, change the strategic dynamic wherein the United States must defend—at enormous cost—the flow of oil, which allows the world to send money to people who want to kill us. Today, we are funding both sides of the War on Terror.

In a teaser for Roger Sorkin's 2015 documentary *The Burden* (I appear in the film), a former soldier says, "In a three-month span, I buried two guys. When I squeeze the gas pump, you know, I think about it...Why should their families have to bear that burden?" SAFE (Securing America's Future Energy), a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to ending our dependence on oil, has more than a dozen retired four-star generals and admirals on its board. The military understands this issue. The Pentagon knows the importance of moving away from oil.

Talk of “supporting the troops” seems to fall on deaf ears, politically, whenever reducing our dependence on oil is mentioned. Supporting the troops can take on many dimensions, but sending them into conflict only when necessary should be a primary tenet. Improving conditions for the future, so that troops would not be needed, would seem to follow. Foreseeing the future is critical.

When I went to the Gulf War in 1990-91, maintaining the global flow of oil was critical to our quality of life. At that point, our level of technology could not overcome our need for the resources in the Middle East. There is no question that a disruption to the flow of oil at that time would have severely, if not catastrophically, affected the global economy.

The following remarks confirm this:

Former Secretary of State James Baker told PBS’s Frontline that the vital national interest was to “secure access to the energy resources of the Persian Gulf.”

On March 17, 2005, Senator Richard Lugar put into the Congressional Record: “The underlying goal of the U.N. force, which included 500,000 American troops, was to ensure continued and unfettered access to petroleum.”

Since then, our actions as a nation have been largely to address the supply side of the economic equation. Fracking, the Keystone Pipeline, and other efforts are caught up in politics but don’t actually address reality. That reality is that, according to a 2017 cnn.com report, OPEC has 81 percent of the known oil reserves and the United States is not in the top 10 countries for reserves; that China, India, and other growing nations will continue to buy that OPEC oil unless the new technology is adopted; and that, as a result, terrorism will continue to be funded. It is a fool’s errand to continuously address supply when reducing demand is the real key to minimizing the influence of the Middle East and bringing our troops home. And we can dramatically reduce demand over the next 10 to 20 years.

It’s time to move away from oil as the primary transportation fuel. Because of our current transportation model, the world continues to fight wars, manage conflicts, lose thousands of lives, and spend enormous financial resources. We have been doing so for over 40 years.

All of that cost has been simply to maintain the flow of oil throughout the world. It’s time to admit that. It’s also time to change.

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