



Green, Leafy Fighter Jets? (US Navy image)

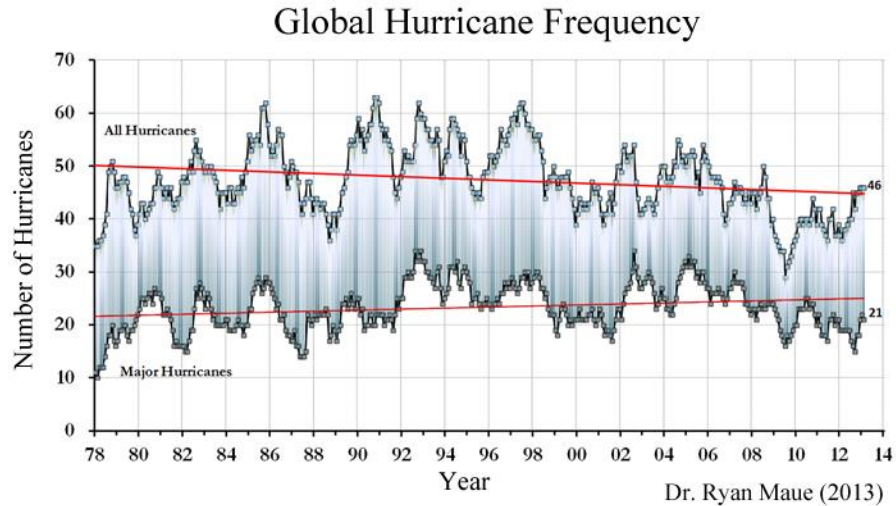
Climate Change: Key Mission for the US Navy?

By Steve Goreham

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The United States Navy has embraced climate change ideology. In an [interview](#) with the *Boston Globe* on March 9, Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, the Navy's top officer in the Pacific, stated that climate change was the biggest long-term threat in the Pacific region and "probably the most likely thing that is going to happen...that will cripple the security environment, probably more likely than the other scenarios we all often talk about." It's troubling that the top officers of our Navy have accepted the misguided theory of man-made climate change.

Admiral Locklear continued, "Certainly weather patterns are more severe than they have been in the past. We are on super typhoon 27 or 28 this year in the Western Pacific. The average is about 17." Unfortunately, the admiral is only looking at part of the tropical storm picture. While 2012 was an active year for typhoons in the Pacific, global tropical storm [activity](#) continued to be at a low level for the seventh year in a row, according to storm expert Dr. Ryan Maue. Further, satellite data shows no increase in tropical storm frequency or strength over the last 30 years.



Not only is the Navy concerned about climate change, they are attempting to do something about it. Both the Navy and the Air Force have established [goals](#) to use a 50/50 blend of biofuel and petroleum-based fuel for planes and ships. Navy plans call for establishment of a “Green Strike Group” task force by 2016, fueled by the biofuel blend, and for alternative fuels to power half of all energy consumption by 2020.

In 2011, the Navy and the Departments of Energy and Agriculture publically committed to [invest](#) \$510 million to create an “advanced biofuel industry” based on algae. Algae-based biofuel will be [purchased](#) for the “bargain price” of \$26 per gallon, or more than six times the price of current petroleum-based fuel. But, according to a 2011 [study](#) by the Rand Corporation, “...the use of alternative, rather than petroleum derived, fuels offers no direct military benefits.”

So why does the Navy want to fly fighter jets on algae-based fuels? If domestic sourcing was the reason, fuel could be produced from US coal at much lower cost than from algae. It’s to reduce emissions of those nasty greenhouse gases, of course. US Navy Secretary Ray Mabus [makes](#) this clear: “We’re gonna be using American produced, American energy that...will make us better environmental stewards because we will be contributing less to climate change and burning much cleaner fuel.”

Admiral Locklear is also concerned about sea level change, stating in the interview: “You have real potential here in the not-too-distant future of nations displaced by rising sea level...If it goes bad, you could have hundreds of thousands or millions of people displaced and then security will start to crumble pretty quickly.”

It is true that sea levels are rising. According to NASA, ocean levels have [risen](#) about 390 feet since that last ice age 20,000 years ago. Levels [rose](#) about 7–8 inches during the last hundred years. But no scientist can tell when natural sea level rise ended and

man-made sea level rise began. Nor is there any empirical evidence that sea level rise is accelerating. The 20-foot sea level rise predicted by some for the year 2100 is highly unlikely.

On March 5, Admiral Locklear [told](#) Congress that the automatic budget cuts from the sequester that went into effect on March 1 are already impacting his operations. He warned of cuts to aircraft flight hours, pay levels, and civilian jobs. He told the committee that the sequester cuts limit the ability of the Pacific Command to deter, assure, operate, and maintain its forces.

But the admiral did not mention impacts to the Navy's algae-based biofuel program during his testimony. Could it be that futile efforts to stop climate change are a higher priority than the readiness of the United States Navy?

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