THE BURDEN
[Transcript]

SOLDIER
- This is the lifeblood for this combat outpost out here. They use 1,200 gallons a day here.

SOLDIERS
- There it is.
- There they are.

SOLDIER
- Everything they do relies on fuel-- heat, lights, vehicles going up. Yeah, without fuel these guys should get shut down. They've come close a couple times. My job is when they get critically close do whatever I can to get fuel to them so they can stay operational down here. Last convoy that came down here was a couple years ago. So we have to drop every bit of fuel by air, but I'll do another drop next week and another drop the week after that. My goal is only to get 7,000 gallons here.

SOLDIERS
- Heavy?
- Yeah, they're pretty heavy.

SOLDIER
- These boys are absolutely relying on this down here. If fuel ran out here, they'd be sitting ducks pretty much. They're working hard down here doing a thankless job, and it's a hard lesson. Too bad more people can't experience it.

TITLE SCREEN
The Burden
A Film by Roger Sorkin

GEN. TONY ZINNI, USMC (RET.): We have an oil dependency or addiction because just the way our society operates it's fueled our economy, and it's not been a burden we couldn't tolerate and one we were willing to pay to this point.

INTERVIEWEE: Oil, gas, coal had been very, very good for the United States. They are a key part of the reason why we're such a great country.

ARCHIVAL CLIP
- The rhythm of pumping, the unceasing heartbeat of the oil fields, pumping black magic from the earth, the refinery with it technological towers, minarets of science. Oil means horsepower in a horsepower using world, and on the open road-- well, you know what makes your auto run.
INTERVIEWEE: Everything you look at-- no matter where you go, no matter what you do-- from plastics, to transportation, to lubrication, to anything, toothpaste-- I don't care what it is-- it's tied to petroleum.

ZINNI: It's why our economy is good, our quality of life is good, and our national security is good, but it's time to start changing.

NEWS CLIP
- Let's get up to speed on a developing story now. Tehran has drafted a bill that would close the crucial global shipping route to Straits of Hormuz.
- Iran's navy is currently carrying out 10 days of naval exercises in the area. It's threatened to close the nearby Strait of Hormuz if the west imposes sanctions on Iran's vital oil exports.

IRANIAN ADMIRAL
- Closing the Strait of Hormuz is such an easy job for the Islamic Public of Iran's armed forces. I mean, it's actually a basic capability of the navy.

NEWS CLIP
- Well, of course the US has claimed it won't tolerate the commercially vital route being shut down in any shape or form.

CMDR. BLAKE MCBRIDE: One of the reasons why we're in the Persian Gulf is to maintain the stability of oil. If that's a resource that we might have to get from countries that aren't necessarily friendly to the United States, that's a strategic vulnerability.

TEXT ON SCREEN
1/5 of global oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz.

ZINNI: One of my mission requirements was to ensure the free flow of energy resources from the middle east. That whole system requires protection. We have to go where the energy resources are and help support stability in the region-- things that could stabilize governments, societies, economies. Those things go hand in hand when you're dependent upon the resources that come out of these places.

TEXT ON SCREEN
Annual cost to protect il chokepoints: $85 billion.

ZINNI: No military in the world has a global reach and global requirements like we do. So it's very extensive and expensive-- what the military demands.

TEXT ON SCREEN
The U.S. military is the world’s largest institutional consumer of oil.
VICE ADM. DENNIS MCGINN, USN (RET.): When we pay $3.50 a gallon for gas at the pump, that's the price. The costs go far beyond that. If we were taking into consideration the costs of deploying forces around the world by the United States military to effectively defend the free flow of the lifeblood of the world economy, we would be paying between $7 and $8 a gallon. That's the cost. We are paying it. We're just not paying it at the pump.

TEXT ON SCREEN
The U.S. consumes 1/5 of global oil.
The Dept. of Defense consumes 20% of the federal budget.

COL. BOB CHARETTE, USM: For the last 10 years, we've been at combat. We've had 250% increase in our communications technologies on the battlefield, over a 300% increase in our surveillance equipment on the battlefield. Force protection raised the vehicle weight up a couple hundred percent, and our fuel economy has gone down by 30% percent. So as we've increased all this combat capability, the unintended consequence of all that is we added to the energy burden.

SHARON BURKE: In some ways we're a business like any other business, and energy is part of our operating budget. And most businesses in this country-- they take action to control their costs where they can, and energy as a cost is a huge problem for a lot of companies, particularly because it is so volatile and it can spike.

NEWS CLIPS
- Oil prices have been fluctuating for weeks.
- 12% to 15% price increases in a week.
- We're seeing an alarming spike.
- A fierce military action in the country.
- Traders are worried the unrest will spread.
- Gas average well above $4.
- All the major stock averages tumble.
- Pirates have seized a supertanker off the coast of Oman.
- 67 ships have been seized off the Somali coast.
- Commander in Chief directed the defense logistics agency to buy up to 12 million gallons of unleaded fuel to distribute to areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.
- Two and a half year high.

BURKE: The volatility is really what's tough on us. Every time the price goes up so sharply it does economic damage.

NEWS CLIPS
- The shutdown could lead to supply shortages.
- The Americans were taken off the coast of Nigeria, through with some 30% of the US oil supply moves.
TEXT ON SCREEN
Every $1 increase in the price per barrel of oil costs the military $130 million.

NEWS CLIPS
- Meanwhile the oil giants Shell and BP reported making record profits in the first three months of the year.
- The US Navy maintains a number of warships in that region at all times.
- Worries about skyrocketing oil prices.
- Could eventually hit $200 about.
- When is this going to end? I mean, it seems at the moment bordering on out of control.

TEXT ON SCREEN
Military operational energy costs
2007: $11 billion
2010: $13 billion
2012: $16 billion

SEN. MARY LANDRIEU
- There's a tremendous amount of money, mister chairman, being invested by companies. There's oil and gas in the ground. We need to find a way as soon as possible to get it out.

MICHAEL STEELE
- Do you want to put your country first? Drill, baby, drill, and drill now.

MARK BEGICH
- I'll fight in the senate not just for ANWR, the gas pipeline, and renewable energy, but also to expand Alaska's refining capacity.

ZINNI: We would love to have the ability to say we're energy independent, that within our own great borders we can provide for our needs, but that's not the case. Even if we were to tap into all the fossil fuel resources that we have and our offshore capability in Alaska and elsewhere, we would still not meet our needs.

MCGINN: We can say to ourselves, well, this oil comes from Texas, or Oklahoma, or Colorado, or North Dakota, or wherever. The fact of the matter is oil is a global commodity. Its price is established by the global market. So in the United States, we use 20% of this globally priced commodity every single year. That creates a demand that makes the price of oil go up.

BOB INGLIS: The best news that you could deliver to the Saudi Arabian oil minister is you're going to drill all you've got in the US of A, because when you finish sucking on that straw and have taken out the last drop, they've still got lots.
Oil reserves
U.S.: 2%
Iraq, Libya, Qatar, Kuwait, Nigeria, Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia & United Arab Emirates: 73%

INTERVIEWEE: The petrodollars go into the hands of nations that have state owned oil companies that have a direct benefit.

BURKE: That's inherently a security problem. No matter how much oil we use or where we buy it from it puts money in the hands of some countries that are problems for us.

Oil export value, 2012
Russia: $180 billion (9% of GDP)
Iran: $101 billion (19% of GDP)
Venezuela: $94 billion (25% of GDP)

BURKE: So any dependence on oil is going to feed into that larger geostrategic challenge, but also there's a need for the department to change how it uses energy for operational and tactical reasons. Our first priority is to do everything we can to make sure that our men and women in uniform always have the energy they need to conduct their missions.

JON GENSLER: Growing up in southern West Virginia, I was taught that service to my fellow man is among the highest callings that you can have. I went to West Point, and that was the best school that anyone that I knew had never gone to from my high school. We didn’t send people to the Ivy Leagues. Maybe one guy one year went to Army, and maybe two years later a guy would go to the Naval Academy, and those were the folks that got away.

SOLDIER
- Pay the hell attention.

GENSLER: I studied a lot of really highly skilled technical knowledge. It's some advanced training. And we got to Iraq. I was appalled at how little of it we actually employed and just how much time was wasted on getting and protecting fuel.

LT. COL. GREG BALLARD (RET.): I spent 23 years in the Marine Corps. I served in the first Gulf War. I did a lot of logistics because that was my primary specialty. Anybody who has ever had to move that amount of material on that amount of troops knows what a big undertaking that is. We obviously use a lot of fuel doing that so it can be very difficult, very time consuming, and we spent a lot of resources just moving fuel throughout the battlefield.

SOLDIER:
- We're going to make a right out of the gate.
STEVEN MENTOR: First five years I was in the military police corps and the last six years I was a truck driver, 88 Mike. Yeah, I was trained in military police, but we're not just military police out there. We're infantry. We're scouts. We are whatever you need us to be we'll be. The convoy was always one of those jobs you always have to fall back to. Everybody needs fuel. Everybody needs supply.

TEXT ON SCREEN
From 2002-2008 the military used nearly 2 billion gallons of fuel in Iraq & Afghanistan.
Tanker truck: 5 mpg.
Armored personnel carrier: 3 mpg.

MENTOR: If we go about 70 miles, we're going to have to refuel, but we always top off anywhere we go to if we have a fueling station.

TEXT ON SCREEN
50% of all convoy loads is fuel.

ROBIN ECKSTEIN: My job in the army was I was an 88 Mike, a truck driver, and while I was in Baghdad, my main mission was to deliver supplies, and water, and fuel. Basically it's a roll of the dice, and you just hope for the best.

SOLDIER
- I'm security element leader on convoys, and my primary objective is to make sure the safety of the Marines and everything that we escort on these missions.

SOLDIER
- Oil's good. Everything is good to go.

MENTOR: We take the same route all the time. They say change it up, but there's only so many routes in Iraq you can go.

SOLDIERS
- There's a white sedan with four passengers about 500 meters past that.
- There's a car. Just watch them. We'll try to get a look at them when we go by.

ECKSTEIN: As a truck driver, my biggest threat was IEDs.

SOLDIERS
- Truck one's hit. Truck one's hit.
- Our truck is down.
NEWS CLIP
- The gunmen attacked a convoy, and a driver was killed and more than two dozen tankers were destroyed.

SOLDIERS
- I've never felt or seen anything like that in my life.
- God damn.

BURKE: Military supply lines have been a target in times of war since people have gone to war, since human beings have been at war. The Russians defeated Napoleon by going after his supply lines, and in World War II, energy was very much oil-fueled, very much a factor in that war.

ARCHIVAL CLIP
- One of the greatest battles of the European war has been the battle for oil, that lifeblood of an army, without which the invasion of Europe would never have been possible.

SOLDIER
- We'll be traveling today with two vehicles and a total of 13 personnel. The TCs are myself and Sergeant Cunningham.

GENSLER: The mission of our entire scout platoon was escorting fuel convoys.

SOLDIERS
- There are two new vehicles on the BOLO list, both to be known suicide bombers.
- Are there any questions?
- No questions.
- No questions. Make sure you remain seat belted at all times. Could be a bumpy ride.

GENSLER: They were scouts, some of the most elite soldiers in an Army battalion. This is what they did. They guarded fuel convoys instead of going out and doing a scout's job.

BURKE: These efforts create opportunity costs, which mean that those forces are not available to perform other combat missions that are vital to the success of the overall mission.

SOLDIERS
- Hello. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]
- He's the only one here.

GENSLER: We lost a tremendous asset that we otherwise would have had--gathering intelligence, engaging the local population, building up our awareness of our area of operations, rooting out the insurgency which we were getting to see at the time, and the mission that we needed to be working on. No, they were guarding convoys, driving up and down the road. These are soldiers, and these are guys who know the risks that they're taking, but we were not prepared to have so
much of our time consumed by fuel resupply. That supply mission came to dominate everything that we did.

TEXT ON SCREEN
1 casualty per 24 convoys.

GENSLER: And when I squeeze the gas pump, I think about it.

CAPT. WAYNE PORTER, USN: There are a lot of concerns that are interconnected for American security, for national security, but that have to be seen in the context of global security. There's compelling science that demonstrates that the over dependence on carbon based fuels is resulting in changes to our atmosphere that are indeed affecting our environment, and the changes are profound.

VICE ADM. PHILIP CULLOM, USN: As we look at changes that we are seeing in the Arctic, absolute clear changes, the Arctic is going to be an ocean again, at least for some parts of the year.

ZINNI: Now it becomes a navigable sea. The resources up there could result in competition from several nations, and that is going to have a national security implication in some way.

NEWS CLIPS
- A Russian mini-sub planted a Russian flag on the ocean floor at the North Pole.
- Russia's navy has a particular importance in resources, which regions such as the Arctic--
- A military source claims that Russia is trying to station troops in the Arctic.

MCBRIDE: As the sea ice declines, we as an Arctic nation-- if we don't act, the Russians will, and they'll be operating off our coast. So we decided that we needed to study the implications of Naval operations in the Arctic. We can see the changes happening.

MCGINN: You don't want to believe in science? Great. But let's recognize the risk. Let's do something about the risk.

NEWS CLIP
- The National Guard's response to flash flood victims is transitioning from emergency and rescue operations to recovery missions.

SOLDIER
- A powerful storm will begin impacting the New England offshore Monday, the 29th of October into Thursday, the first of November.

NEWS CLIPS
- The US Army Corps of Engineers deployed 800 experts to assist in recovery. Dewatering 475 million gallons of salt water from New York City, removing 300,000 cubic yards of debris, and installing more than 200 generators.
After the Philippine government requested aid following typhoon Haiyan, the initial US response was led by Marine Corps Forces Pacific.

ZINNI: We debated the science long enough. Fossil fuels tend to exacerbate environmental issues that we have, and you can see the effects of climate change as they impact our national security. The burden on the military will increase as they're forced to respond because they are the best first responders in the world.

TEXT ON SCREEN
The U.S. military receives a foreign disaster relief request every 2 weeks.

BURKE: Our job is to defend the country, and we do what we need to make that possible. We anticipate the challenges, and threats, and the missions that the American people are going to expect us to go on. And looking forward, the department has come to the conclusion that we need to use energy differently in order to do our mission.

CULLOM: Americans by nature-- it's in our DNA to look for the next frontier. We have a frontier that's staring us in the face right now on energy. If we have to look at where is the United States Navy going to be 50 or 100 years from today, we'd better be thinking about how are we going to do this in perpetuity.

BURKE: When we say we have a military challenge we need to solve and we want science, and technology, and innovation to solve that problem for us, there's a long history of military innovation. The internet or GPS-- they were to solve a military challenge, and it crossed over into the civilian sector.

ARCHIVAL CLIP
- It's the world's first electronic computer. Right now it's solving mathematical problems for the US Army, but who knows. Somebody a machine like this may check up on your income tax.

BURKE: There's a huge potential for the armed forces to be an innovation pull in energy.

CULLOM: We are going to be wedded to an energy dense liquid fuel for some time to come, so therefore it's either petroleum or it's something else, and if you want an off ramp from petroleum, you have to investigate alternatives.

CHARETTE: The mission that we have today is to deploy a Marine Corps that goes ashore in 2025, and the only thing we need to bring with us is mobility fuels. So all these fossil fuel generators, all these air conditioners, environmental control stuff that's on the battlefield today-- we hope we will find alternatives to that.

NEWS CLIPS
- In the next 10 years, the Air Force Academy plans to generate all of their own electricity through renewable sources.
- Secretary of the Air Force, Michael Wynne has made it a priority for the Air Force to find alternatives to fossil fuels.

SOLDIER
- We can run an operation center off of this system as far as radios, computers, printers, lights.

GEN. JAMES AMOS: We need to be able to lighten our load. This is about us. This is about what's best for the Marine Corps.

CHARETTE: That's going to take a committed research and development effort. That's going to take committed entrepreneurs to help us solve that problem.

NEWS CLIP
- A small Spokane valley company will produce energy efficient combat outposts.

ANNOUNCER
- Two, one, let's open G-SPELL.

ZINNI: The government spends a lot of money, and if that money is geared towards innovation, technological development, then obviously that's where industry is going to go. They want the contract. That's where they're going to have to go.

NEWS CLIP
- Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus took part in signing a contract for the largest biofuel purchasing government history.

POLITICIAN
- Those sailors understand this energy imperative and the operational benefits that they're going to receive from alternative fuels and efficient systems.

INTERVIWEE: But remember there are many of those in the government that are fighting it, and some are very powerful.

NEWS CLIP
- Green defense over military defense? There are some new questions about that this morning.

REP. RANDY FORBES
- So I pulled up your website, and since August, you've given four major policy speeches. Three of those four speeches have been about alternative energy. It's a matter of priorities. Third top priority you have is to have the Navy lead the nation in sustainable energy. You're not the Secretary of Energy. You're the Secretary of the Navy.
RAY MABUS: This helps us address a military vulnerability. It's helping our farmers. It's helping entrepreneurs. It's helping our industrial base, but the main reason we're doing it is to make us better war fighters-- is to make us a better military force.

CITIZENS
- As a veteran, and as a conservative, and as a Republican, I find that I'm here to support the military in any way we can and gear it towards becoming less dependable on fossil fuels.
- I think the generals know much better than the congressmen. They know what they need. I say give them what they need.
- I mean, if there's that much casualty from the way we're doing it, plus the price of fuel, seems like an easy fix.
- But I think what you find is, when most politicians get to Washington DC, they're a little bit more concerned about staying in Washington DC than doing what's right.

POLITICIANS
- The senate will come to order please.
- The house will be in order.
- I urge my colleagues to support the troops.
- We owe it to our nation's troops.
- To support the troops.
- We owe it to our young men and women in uniform.
- You say you support the troops out of a level of pandering to the-- let me say the mission of patriotism.
- Listen to our commanders on the ground, not the ever changing political winds.

GENSLER: We don't elect members of Congress to listen to the American Petroleum Institute. We elect members of Congress to listen to the people.

TEXT ON SCREEN
Federal subsidies, 2002-2008
Renewables: $12 billion
Ethanol: $17 billion
Fossil fuel: $70 billion

INGLIS: I'd say to elected officials: lead, don't follow.

INGLIS
- Find a solution that breaks our addiction to oil, that creates new energy jobs, and that cleans up the air.

NEWS CLIP
- Congressman Bob Inglis ran into a buzz saw. Inglis lost every county in the district.

INGLIS: So maybe you have to lose your seat for the sake of the country.
ECKSTEIN: As a congressperson or a senator, come get some veterans and we will gladly go out there and support you. And then when people say, oh, that's wishy-washy, that's Al Gore, I say no. That's the Pentagon. That's who I'm listening to.

SEN. JAMES INHOFE
- Yes, I'm talking about Al Gore. Even though this world is crumbling--

BALLARD: So many people are bashing the left. They're missing the bigger point. That's your sons and daughters and the sons and daughters of your friends are going over to defend something that we had to defend 20 or 30 years ago, but we don't have to do it anymore. It's time to move away from it because we can. American innovation has allowed us to move away from it. I don't expect Congress to do anything. This has to be more grassroots. I'm just trying to do the right thing. That's why I'm doing what I'm doing.

NEWS CLIPS
- Calling it a vital national security issue, today Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard announced a plan to phase out city cars and trucks that run on gas and diesel.
- It's an emotional issue for this Marine, who served in the Gulf War.
- I'm getting tired of seeing those folks over there, those young men and women over there getting injured and come back dead. So I'm just tired of that. We don't have to do it anymore.
- There are currently 200 recharging stations in the city, and more stations will come in phases.
- Mayor Ballard hopes other cities will follow.
- You got a good seat for the race, I hope.
- The mayor of the great city of Indianapolis, Mayor Greg Ballard.
- Mayor, thank you for being with us.
- We really have to start looking at energy as a national security issue.
- Technology now allows us to move away from that, so let's move away from it and without changing our quality of life.

BALLARD: I believe we are starting to change the world of from here in the city of Indianapolis, and I got mega cities that want to help us.

NEWS CLIP
- One of the most sustainable and livable cities in the Midwest.

BALLARD: What's holding us back is that so many of the conservatives, of which I am clearly one, do not see the consumption of oil as a national security issues. Well, if you've been in war in the Middle East as I have, I suggest you might see that differently.

TEXT ON SCREEN
Veterans serving in Congress
1973: 65%
2013: 19%
BALLARD: Change is going to come. You can either manage it and shape it the way you want it, or it's just going to happen to you.

NEWS CLIP
- The Navy is helping to generate civilian jobs through green innovative technology. It has been a prime customer of algae based fuel.

INTERVIEWEE: As a conservative, I see incredible opportunity. If we applied it in energy, we win the triple play in this American century. We improve the national security of the United States. We create jobs, and we clean up the air.

MCGINN: If we get more oil-- and we will-- from the United States sources, we're still going to be sending billions of dollars every year overseas. What could this country do with an extra billion dollars a day that would stay inside the economy? What don't you like about the fact that we can prevent future generations of men and women in uniform from having to be deployed for fossil fuel?

CHARETTE: Our focus is on making a more combat effective Marine Corps. That's been the beginning of our conversation, and it will be the end of our conversation for us as Marines. We want to give the American people the best force for a reasonable amount of dollars, and using these technologies is not only is it providing great value to the taxpayers, but it's making us more combat effective. Good war fighters worry about their logistics.

INTERVIEWEE: I don't want to send troops over to the Middle East anymore. I don't want to spend that $85 billion a year protecting the oil chokepoints around the world.

MENTOR: If it saves lives-- I don't know—it should be good, right? It should help out if it saves lives.

BURKE: It's important that we apply the lessons learned in more than a decade of war. The burdens and vulnerabilities that we've seen with supply lines in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to be a problem in future scenarios.

SOLDIER
- We are in awe of their dedication, courage, and commitment. In keeping in your care, we humbly pray all those who have answered the call to service and who do so in harm's way this day.

INTERVIEWEE: It's never going to be risk free environment. We're soldiers. We know what we signed up for.

SOLDIER
- Let duty, honor, and country be the values that shape their service to the nation.
INTERVIEWEE: We're tools in the tool kit for America. When you put us out there, you've got to use us wisely and respectfully.

CULLOM: We've already lost too many far away from home because we didn't think about energy enough.

GENSLER: How many more of my friends am I going to bury? Why should I have to? Why should their families have to bear that burden? It's not a cost. It's an investment so that future communities don't have to lose their sons and daughters unnecessarily.

INTERVIEWEE: We are going to see our backs against the wall as Americans if we don't change the way we get transport, the way we use energy.

PORTER: How much more powerful would be if we had sources of energy that weren't geographically dependent?

INGLIS: We'd break free of oil. We'd say to the Middle East, see if you can drink that stuff.

TEXT ON SCREEN
Learn more & take action
theburdenfilm.com
operationfree.net

[END]