

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) March 2015		2. REPORT TYPE Briefing Charts		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) March 2015-March 2015	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Combined Hydrophobic/Oleophobic Membrane Separation and Extraction for Fuel Treatment				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER In-House	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Guenthner, Andrew; Reams, Josiah; Greeson, Kevin; Lamison, Kevin; Billingsley, Matthew; Vam, Albert; Kirby, Shawn; Kota, Arun; Kwon, Gibum; Tuteja, Anish; Mabry, Joseph				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER Q0BG	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC) AFRL/RQRP 10 E. Saturn Blvd. Edwards AFB, CA 93524-7680				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO.	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC) AFRL/RQR 5 Pollux Drive Edwards AFB CA 93524-7048				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) AFRL-RQ-ED-VG-2015-091	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Briefing charts presented at 249th National American Chemical Society Meeting, Denver, CO; March 24, 2015. PA#15141					
14. ABSTRACT Briefing Charts					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 20	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Joseph Mabry
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NO (include area code) 661-525-5857



COMBINED HYDROPHOBIC / OLEOPHOBIC MEMBRANE SEPARATION AND EXTRACTION FOR FUEL TREATMENT

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24 March 2015



Acknowledgements

Air Force Research Laboratory

The Applied Materials Group at Edwards Air Force Base

Ms. Yvonne Diaz
Dr. Greg Yandek
Mr. Kevin Greeson
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Dr. Tim Haddad
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CRDF Project Overview

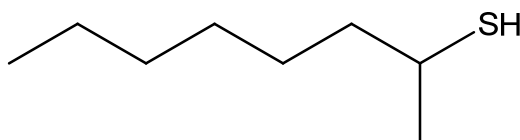


- Overall goal: Generate data to enable evaluation of portable fuel treatment technologies
- Application focus
 - Sulfur removal from diesel, primarily for ground or stationary power applications
 - Secondary focus on sulfur removal from jet fuel
- Technical components
 - Compact liquid-liquid extraction based on forced coalescence membranes
 - Reactive adsorption under mild conditions
 - Characterization of fuel products
 - Predictive tools for process performance

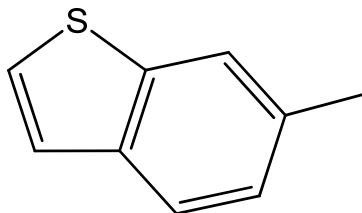


Sulfur in Fuels

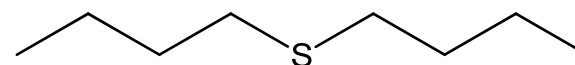
Mercaptans (Thiols)



**Thiophenes
(and benzothiophenes)**



Sulfides

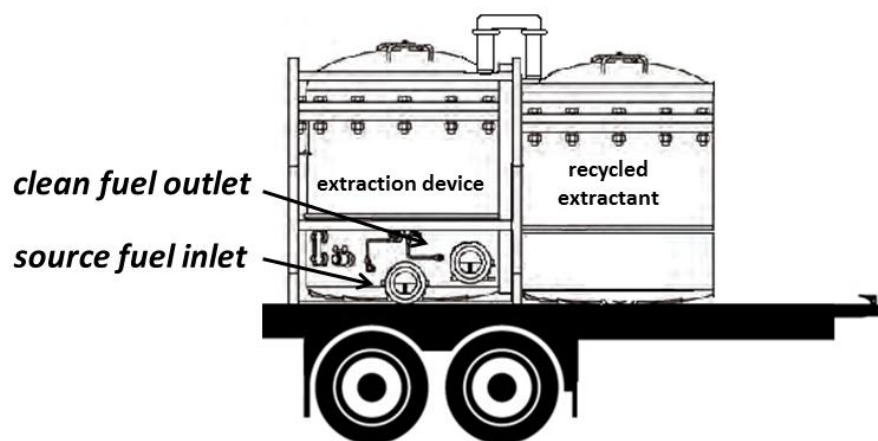
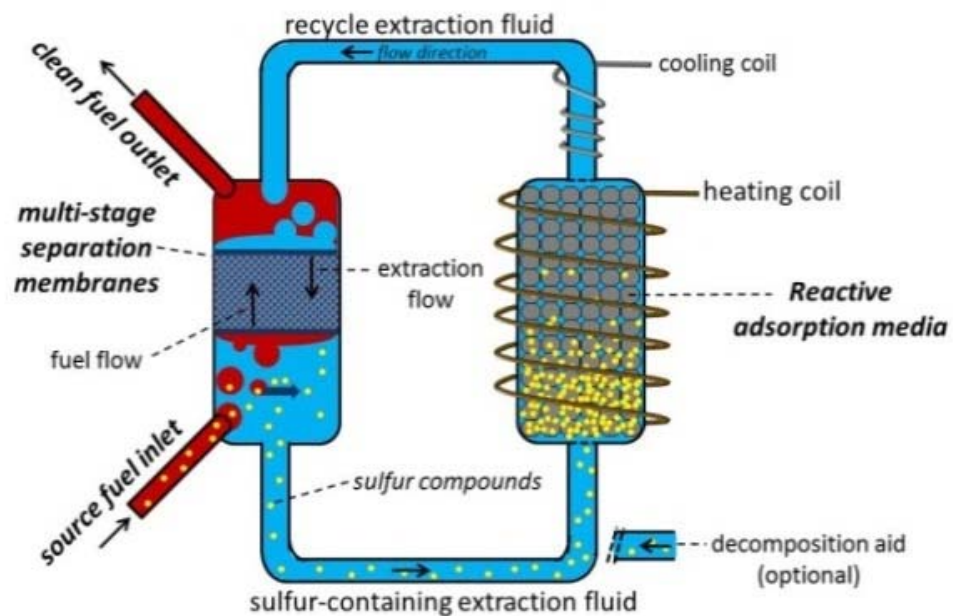


The presence of sulfur in fuels leads to many detrimental effects:

- Coking on rocket engine injector plates
- Deposit formation in hypersonic cooling channels
- Clogging of diesel engine fuel-injectors
- Fouling of automobile catalytic converters
- SO_x emissions
 - Environmental pollution
 - Corrosion issues on military equipment



Overall Process

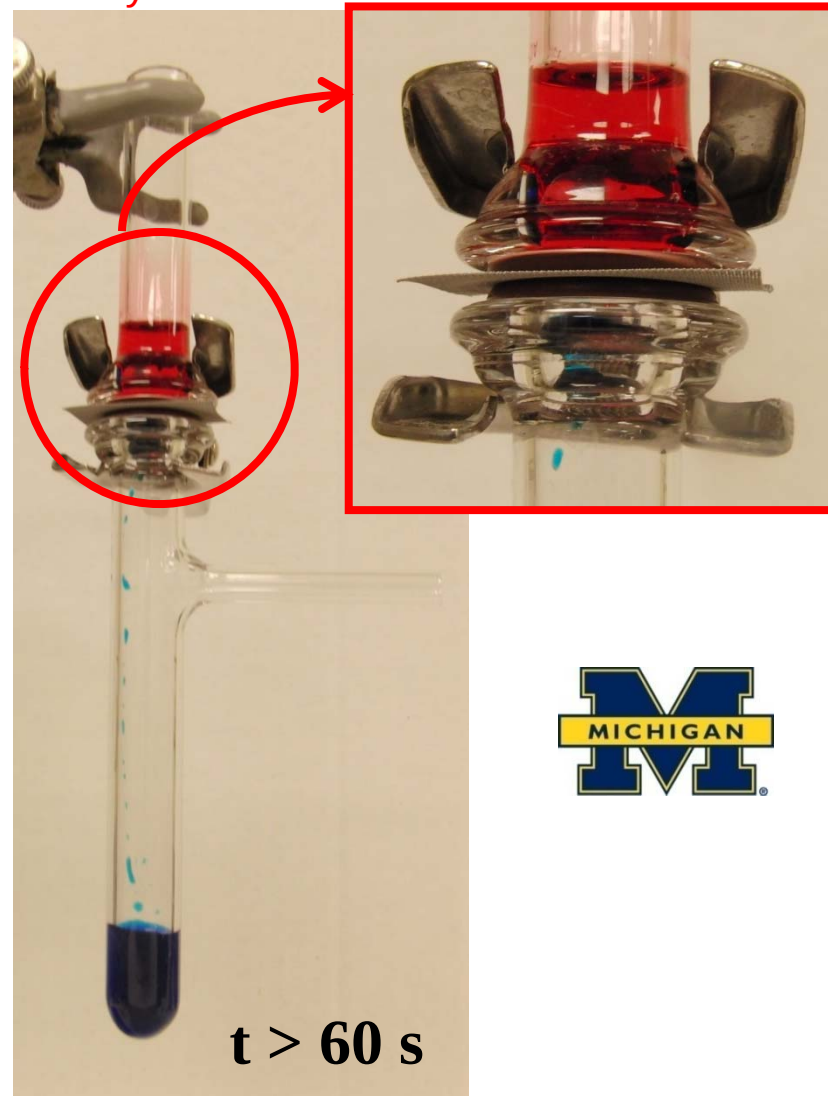




Water-Adhering Surface with Oil Repellence Separate Water from Oil



Stainless steel mesh coated with PEGDA + 20 wt% fluorodecyl POSS.



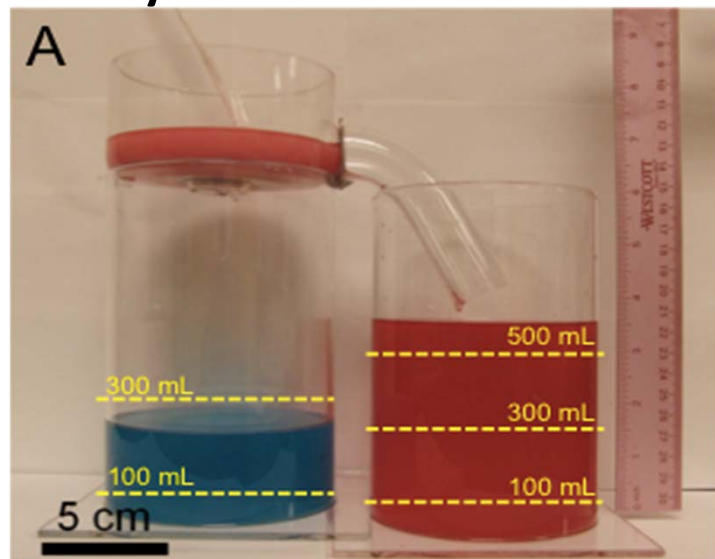


Separation via Forced Coalescence

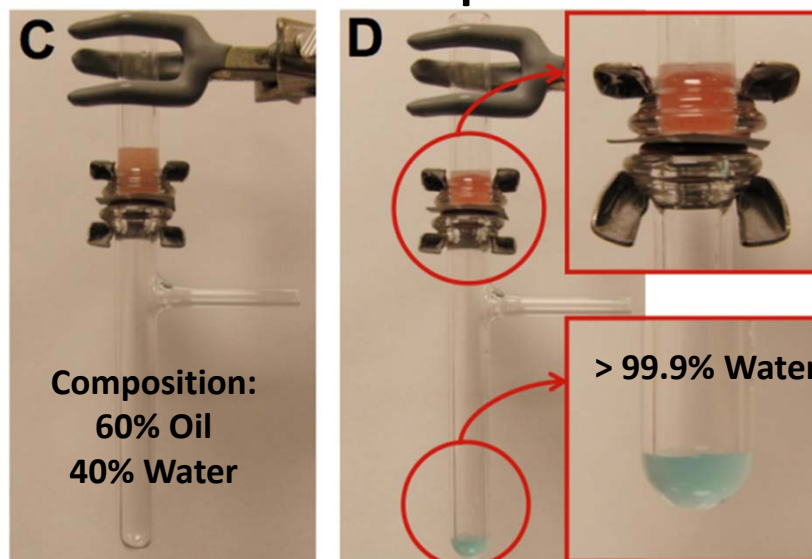


- Combine two mutually exclusive adherent / repellent surfaces; coalescence of phases caused by droplet redirection rather than merging; small droplets take longer to merge but bounce readily
- Result: a simple apparatus for the gravity driven, continuous separation of oil-water emulsions, proving that coalescence can be “short circuited”
- **1 US patent, 1 application**

Gravity Driven - Continuous Flow



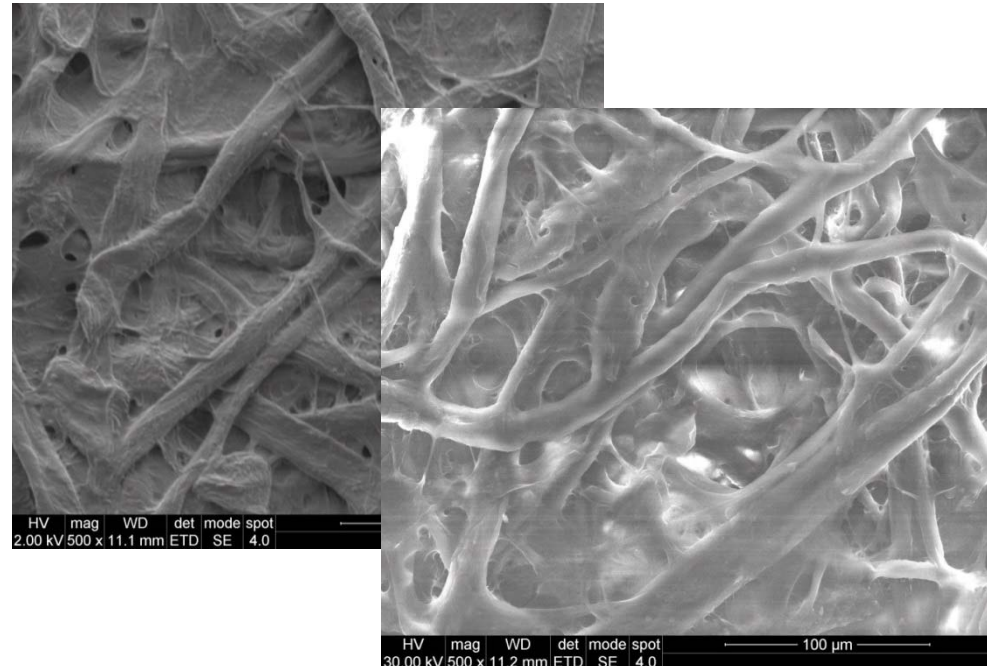
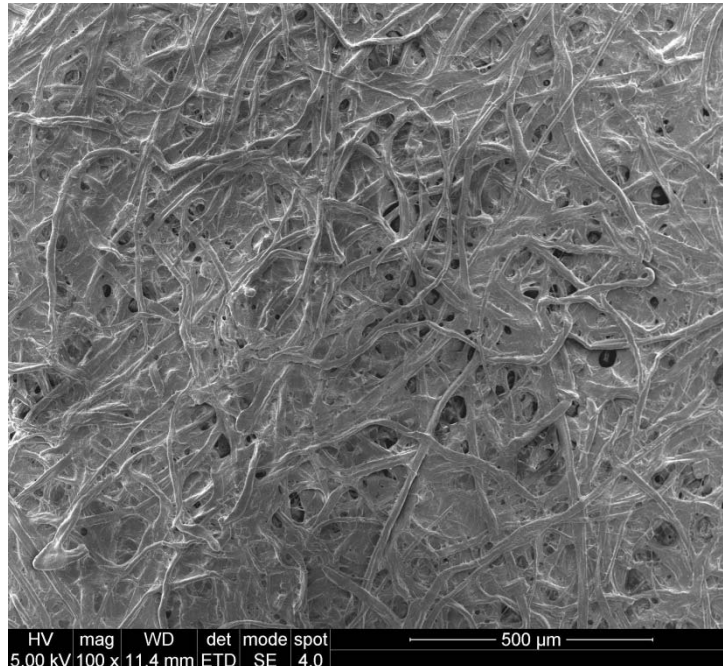
Emulsion Separation



In collaboration with Prof. Anish Tuteja at the University of Michigan.
Nature Communications, **2012**, 3, Article number: 1025 DOI: doi:10.1038/ncomms2027



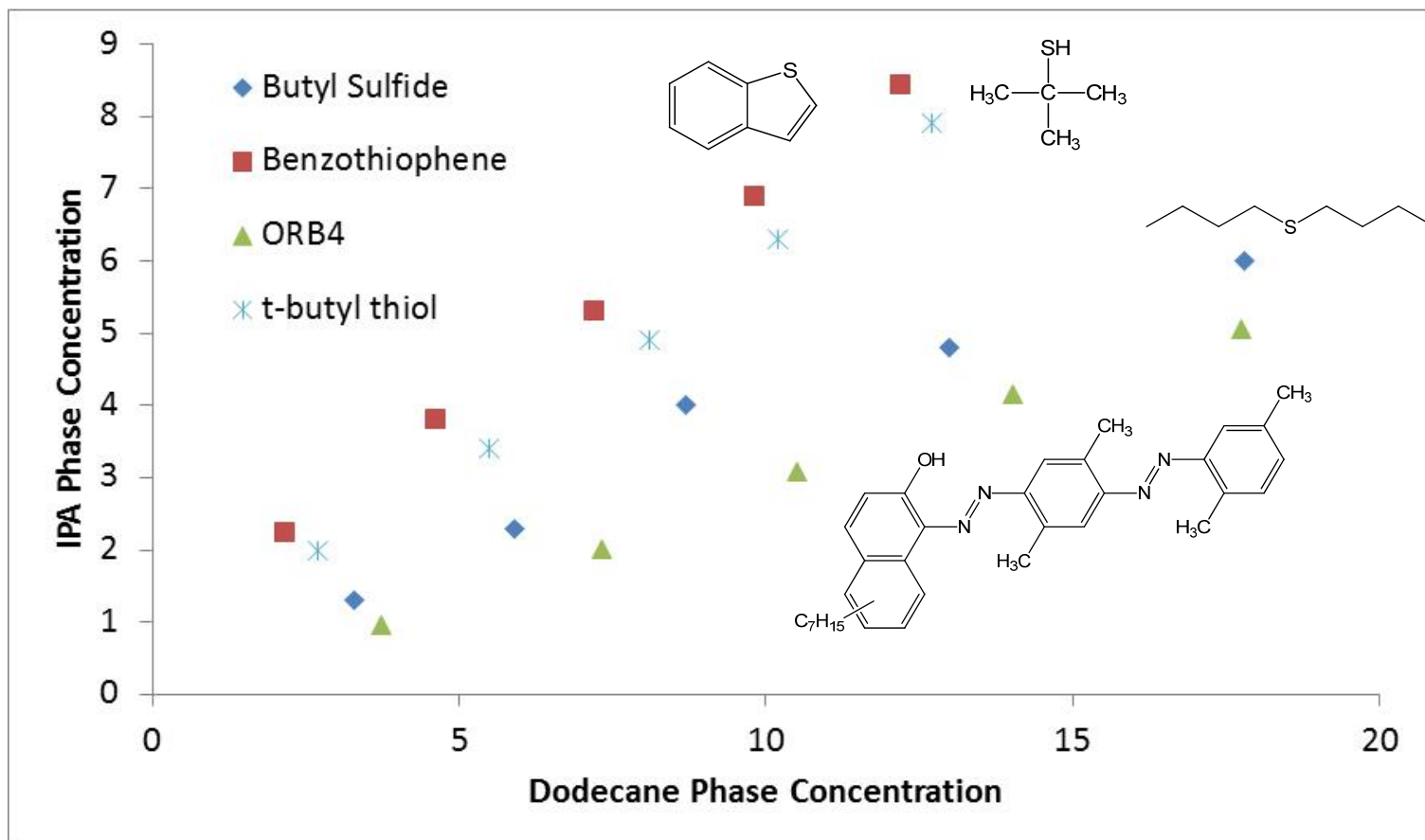
Example Membrane (Hydrophobic): Whatman Phase Separator



- These surfaces have $\sim 10 \mu\text{m}$ roughness, $\sim 10 \mu\text{m}$ fibers, and $\sim 15 \mu\text{m}$ pores, with a wide range of pore sizes and re-entrant features. The surface energy appears to be around 26 mJ/m^2 .
- Testing of hydrophilic membranes showed that pore sizes below $\sim 5 \mu\text{m}$ result in high operating pressure drops and mechanical failure at $> \sim 2 \text{ gal / min / ft}^2$.
- Current hydrophilic membranes from Hygratech have $\sim 25 \mu\text{m}$ pores, can withstand at least $\sim 5 \text{ gal / min / ft}^2$, and have been 100% effective at separation.



Equilibrium Curves for Extraction

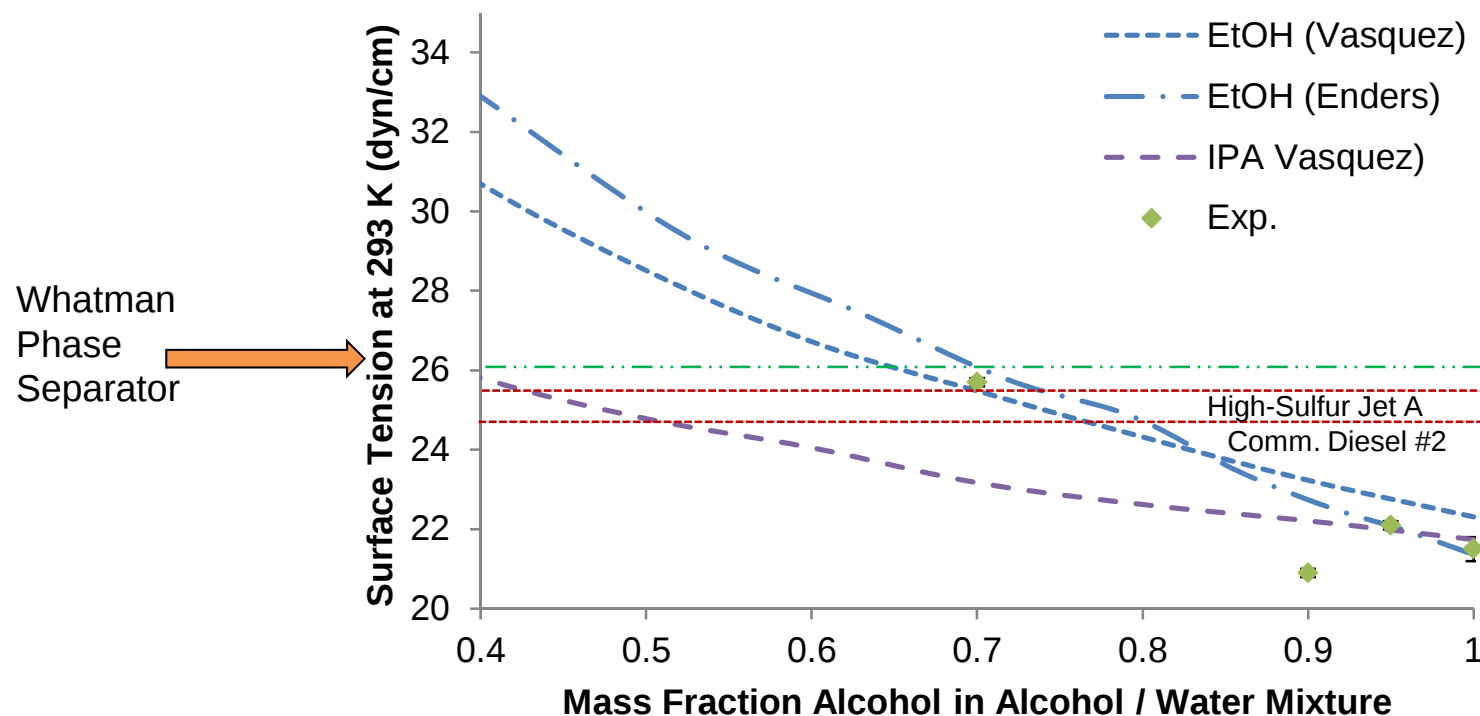


The slope of these lines is the partition coefficient (K). $K > \sim 0.1$ for a feasible extraction process.

Equilibrium curve for compounds extracted from dodecane with IPA:water 10:1 v:v ratio



Extraction Media Selection



Limiting factor in extraction fluid selection is surface tension (must exceed that of all potential fuels to be utilized) when operating at flow rates high enough that phases do not coalesce within a single stage.

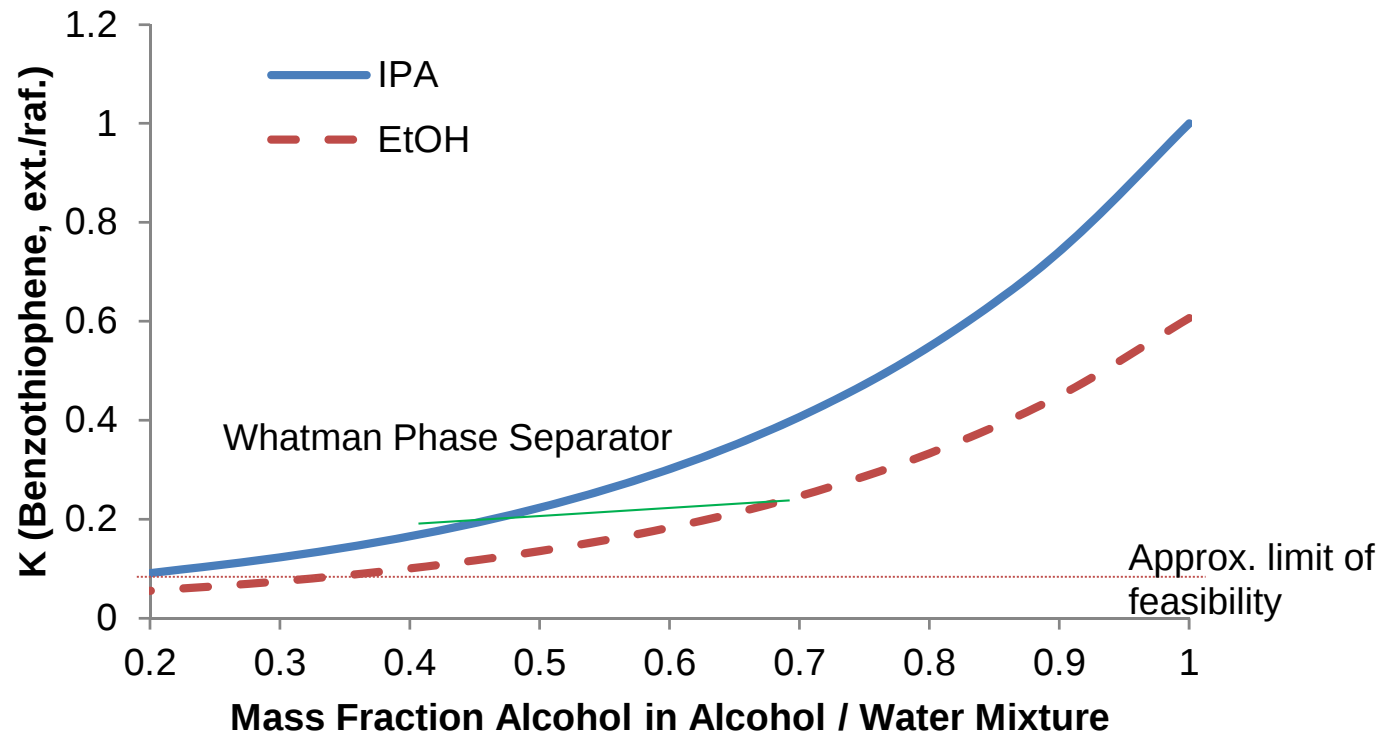
Membrane surface energy must lie between the surface tension of the extraction fluid and that of the fuel to be treated.

Sources: S. Enders, H. Kahl / Fluid Phase Equilibria 263 (2008) 160–167; Vasquez et al. J. Chem. Eng. Data (1995), 40, 611.

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Extraction Media Selection



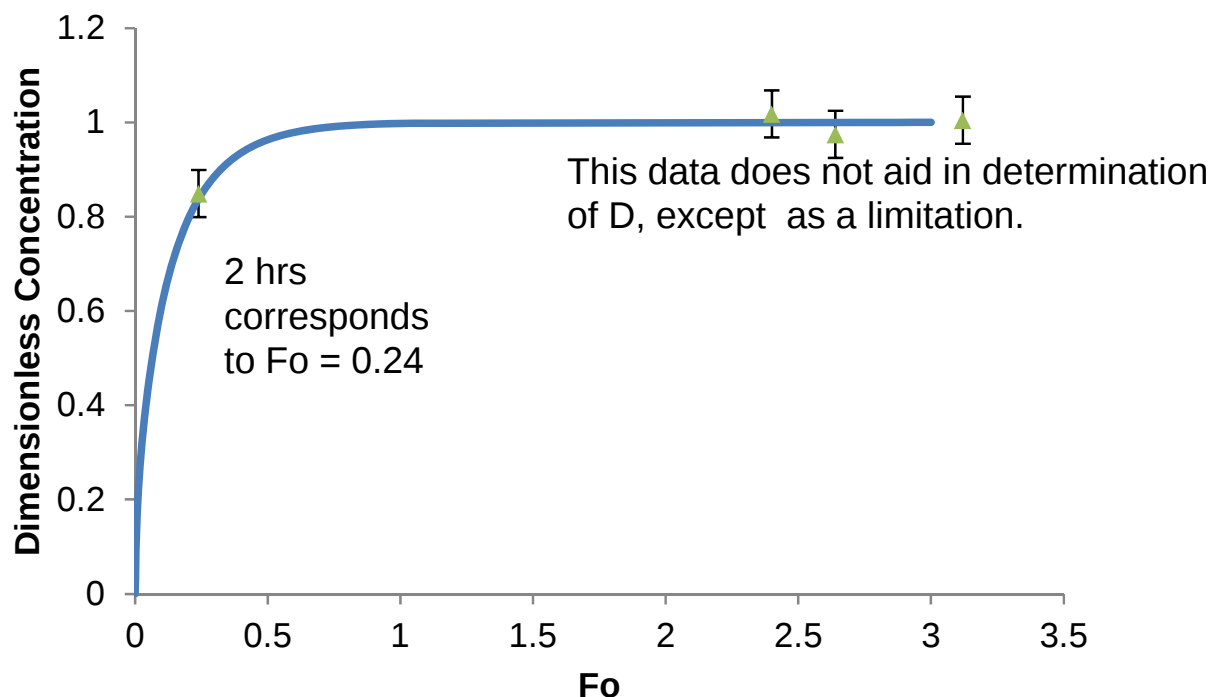
Increased water content results in less efficient extraction (lower K)

Because of surface tension constraints, the design choice falls along the thin lines indicated, not along the horizontal axis

Actual design trade is relatively insensitive to alcohol choice

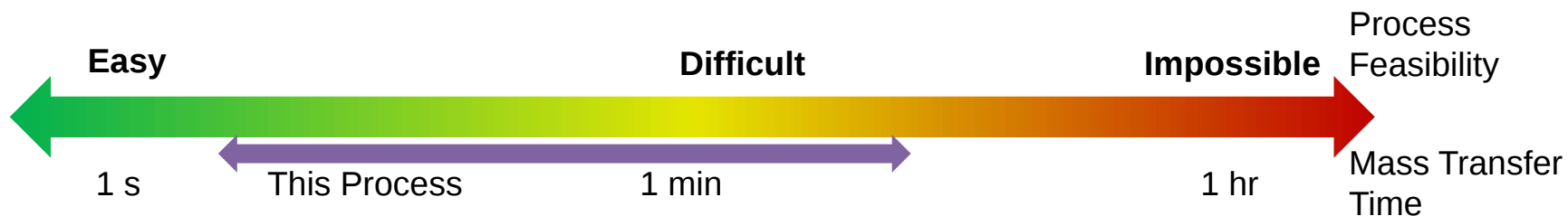


Diffusion Coefficient Calculations



$Fo = D t / L^2$; in this case $L = 0.97\text{cm}$, solving for D yields $3 (\pm 1) \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2 / \text{s}$

This value implies that for ~1 mm droplets, mass transfer will take ~30 s.





Laboratory Demonstration Extraction Apparatus



Extraction
Fluid Inlet
Spray

Fuel Outlet

Hydrophobic / Oleophilic
Membrane
(passes oil, not water)

Fuel Phase

Fuel Inlet
Spray

Dispersed Phase

Oleophobic / Hydrophilic
Membrane
(passes water, not oil)

Extraction Fluid
Outlet

Alcohol / Water
Phase



Extraction of Sulfur from RP-1



Sulfur Compounds by GC-SCD (Sulfur Speciation)	Concentration (ppm)
C2 Thiophenes	<0.1
C3-C4 Thiophenes	1.6
C5 Thiophenes	6.3
C6 Thiophenes	6.1
C7 Thiophenes	5.8
C8-C9 Thiophenes	4.9
C10 Thiophenes	1.3
C11 Thiophenes	0.9
C12+ Thiophenes	2.0



Sulfur Compounds by GC-SCD (Sulfur Speciation)	Concentration (ppm)
C2 Thiophenes	0.3
C3-C4 Thiophenes	1.4
C5 Thiophenes	3.7
C6 Thiophenes	3.5
C7 Thiophenes	4.1
C8-C9 Thiophenes	2.9
C10 Thiophenes	0.6
C11 Thiophenes	0.6
C12+ Thiophenes	<0.1

Standard Grade RP-1
(Errors are ± 0.3 ppm)



Standard Grade RP-1 after extraction with 10:1 IPA water in extraction apparatus



Extraction of RP-1: Effects on Composition



	POSF 11820 BG1121GP04 (untreated baseline)	POSF 11859 (treated w/ 10- 15% IPA)	POSF 11860 (treated + salt water wash)	POSF 11861 (treated + salt water wash)
Alkylbenzenes (wt%)	0.49	0.39	0.47	0.47
Alkyl naphthalenes (wt%)	0.73	0.20	0.23	0.23
Cycloaromatics (wt%)	1.14	0.32	0.39	0.39
Total Aromatics (wt%)	2.36	0.91	1.09	1.08
Isoparaffins (wt%)	34.96	30.10	33.84	33.84
Normal Paraffins (wt%)	8.93	5.70	6.39	6.40
Monocycloparaffins (wt%)	33.45	32.02	35.15	35.73
Dicycloparaffins (wt%)	18.24	18.26	21.13	20.42
Tricycloparaffins (wt%)	2.06	2.10	2.36	2.50

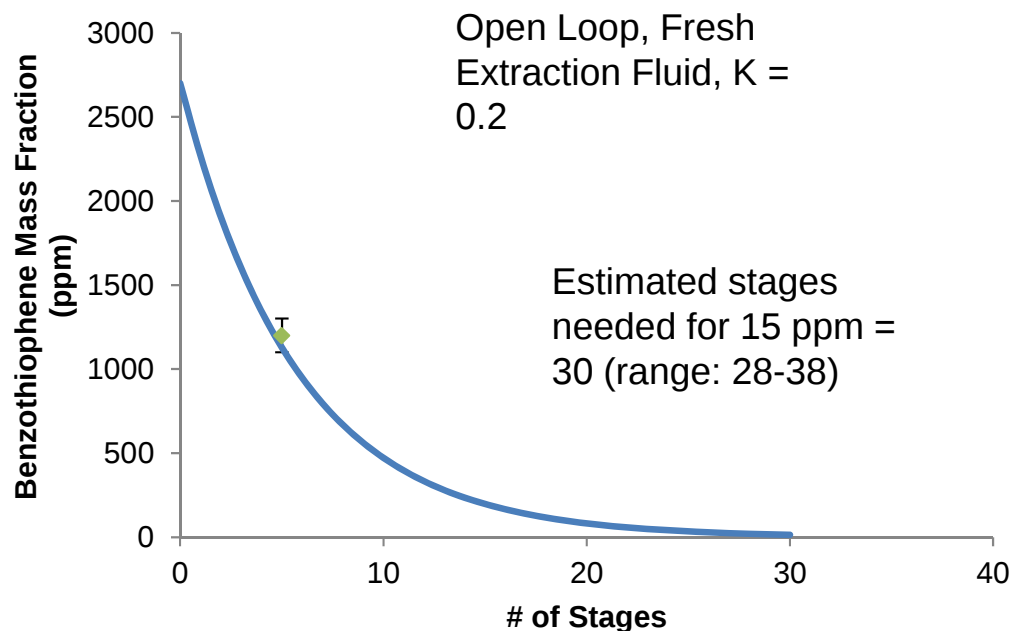
Data provided by AFRL/RQTF



Extraction of Sulfur from Diesel #2



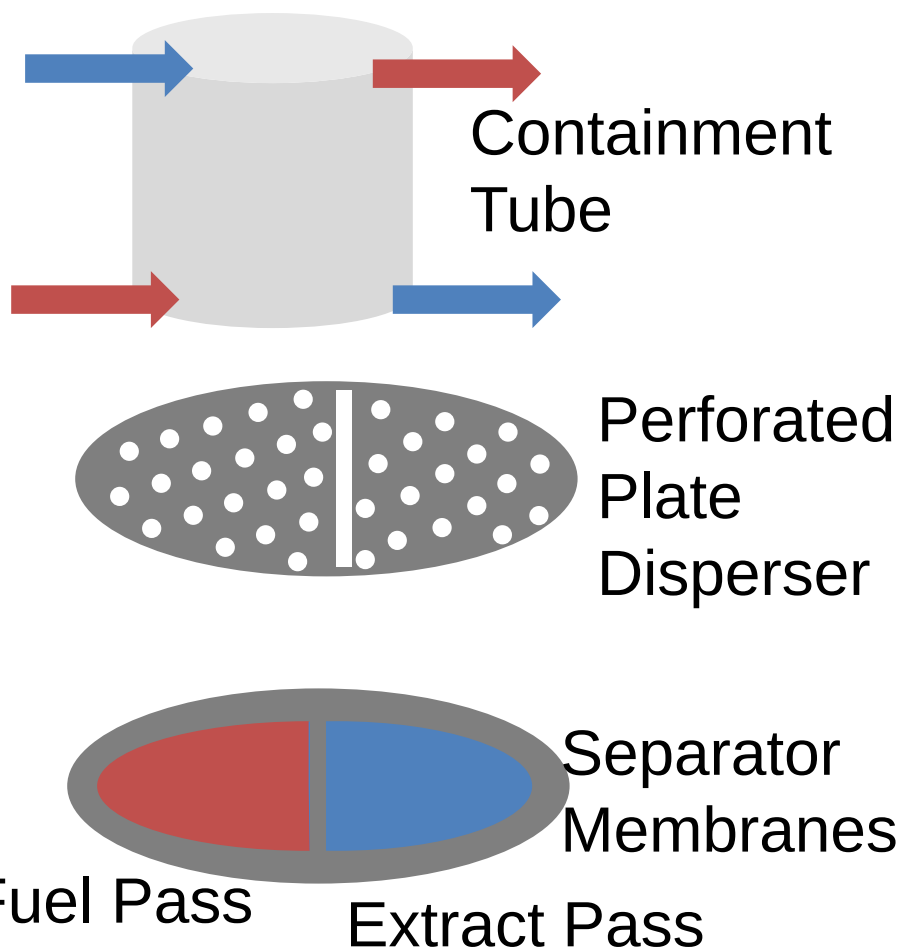
Parameter	Value
Input Fuel Source	Diesel #2 procured at Kramer's Junction, CA
Contaminant	Benzothiophene
Initial Contaminant Level	2700 ± 100 ppm
Final Contamination Level	1200 ± 100 ppm
# Passes	5
Expected Extraction Efficiency per Pass	K = 0.2



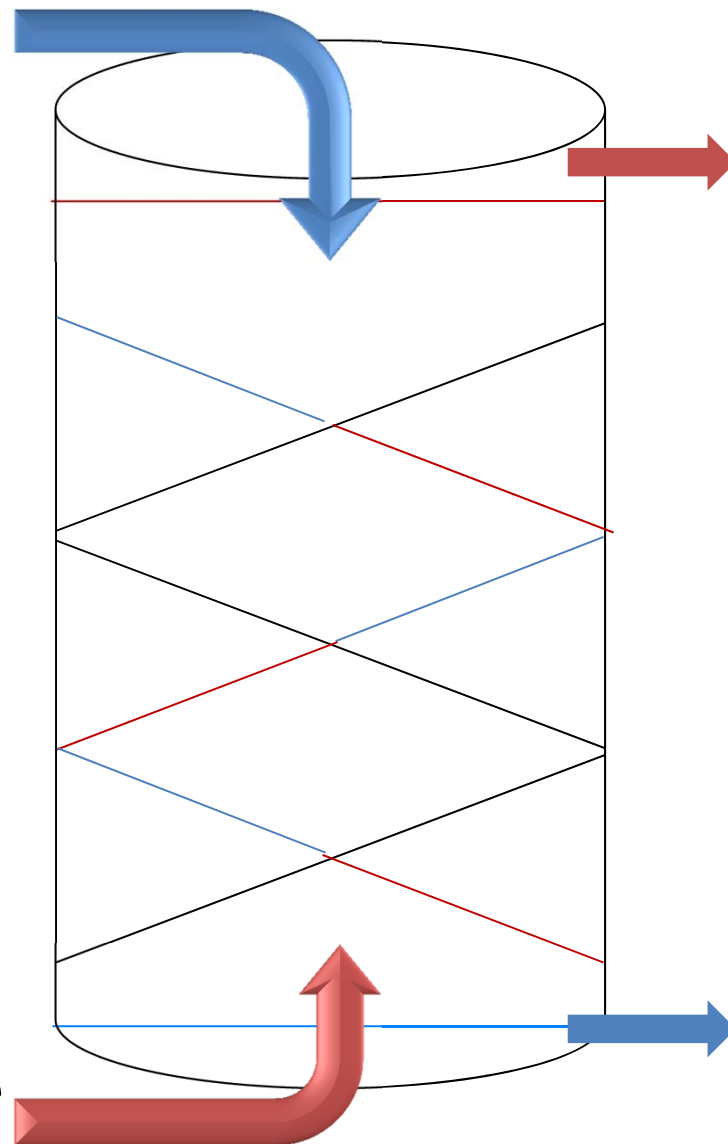
- Key question = how does extraction curve for other components compare to that of benzothiophene?



Scale-Up of Liquid/Liquid Extraction



~42" high x 6" dia., 50 GPH each phase





Summary

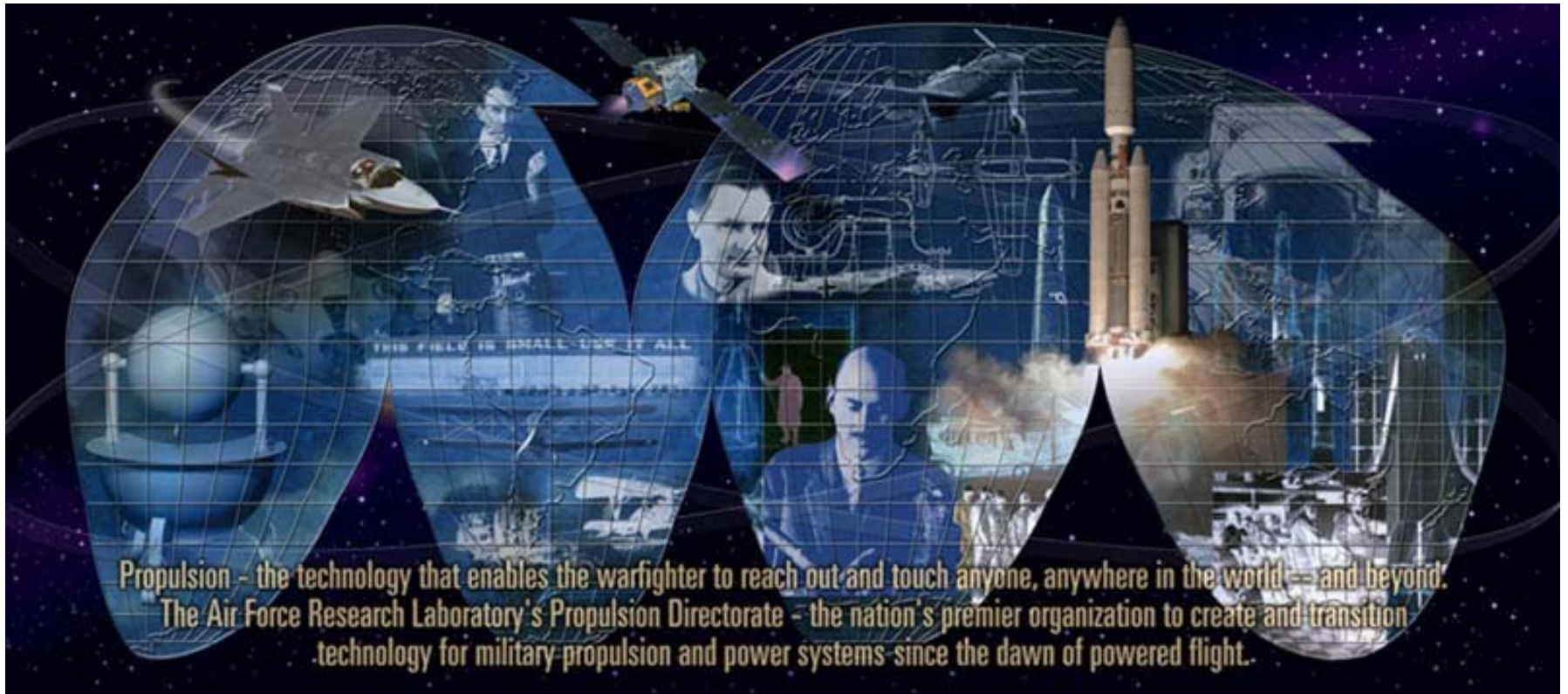
Liquid-liquid extraction processes that combine hydrophobic and oleophobic membranes offer a new route to fuel treatment

The required surface energies of the hydrophobic membranes (25 – 30 mJ / m²) are the limiting factor in selection of alcohol : water extraction fluids. The attainable partition coefficients for typical sulfur contaminants are marginal for operation of a portable fuel treatment apparatus

Sulfur speciation data to date show no major differences in partition coefficient among the most common sulfur contaminants found in kerosene fractions

The process has so far been demonstrated with rocket fuel (RP), jet fuel (Jet-A) and diesel fuel (Commercial Diesel #2)

Key parameter to be determined: cost / feasibility estimates for process that supplies acceptable quality fuel from a given range of input sources, as a function of process scale



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