Jupiter, the Viking Mars Lander, and the Navy's Transit satellite were all to use RTGs. Deliveries for the Transit satellite were scheduled to occur later that year. Flights of the Pioneer spacecraft to Jupiter were scheduled for 1972 and 1973.

Retrenchment from the decentralization that had been fostered by Finger began to take effect. Sandia started to phase out its major technical role and AEC planned to continue only a "quality assurance" role for the corporation through 1971.[7] There were concerns in the program when Seaborg left the AEC in mid-1971, because he had been very much involved technically in the RTG program and had given it stature.[8] The program, however, continued to follow through on its mission commitments while it sought other commitments.

Klein was replaced as director of the Space Nuclear Systems Division by his former deputy director, David Gabriel late in 1971. Gabriel's efforts to maintain the stature of the RTG program were actually aided in early 1973 by the decision to make major cutbacks in space nuclear propulsion and space reactor power. The radioisotope effort survived, while other more highly funded efforts to develop nuclear propulsion and reactor power for space uses did not. In surviving, the RTG program had the field of nuclear applications in space to itself. An AEC announcement in January 1973 made clear that the focus on the near-term was a major factor in the economy moves:

> Following a determination by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that its research and technology programs should focus on near-term developments, the AEC has taken parallel action in related programs.
>
> Programs to be terminated include nuclear rocket propulsion work at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory and at the Nuclear Rocket Development Station in Nevada....
>
> The cutbacks will also affect the space reactor thermoelectric programs of Atomics International...and the space reactor thermionic programs of General Atomic...[9]

As a counterpart of this reduction in the overall space nuclear effort, the joint AEC-NASA Space Nuclear Systems Office was dissolved.

The AEC announcement went on to publicize the extensive programs in RTGs which would continue at the agency. Cited specifically was the work on RTGs "...for NASA's Viking Mars Landing Program, NASA's Mariner Jupiter-