

and the emphasis, according to a recollection by Carpenter, shifted to the question of "how many barrels of oil did you save today." Carpenter resigned his post in the program after two years, to take a position in private industry.⁹ Dix stepped away from his safety role in both the program and on the INSRPs to become DOE's Director of Safety and Environmental Operations.¹⁰

The joint AEC-NASA office had been disbanded several years earlier. Under ERDA, a new Division of Nuclear Research and Applications (NRA) was established to "carry out a program of advanced nuclear R&D in the areas of terrestrial and space applications. . . ."¹¹ In June 1976, Rock became the Assistant Director for Space Applications.¹² With the loss of a strong advocacy voice at the top of the organization, key program administrators such as Rock became responsible for publicity of the program. At appropriations hearings, defenders of nuclear research and applications took the position that while development of the RTGs for the space program would continue to receive primary emphasis, emphasis on the terrestrial program would increase.¹³

Uncertainty pervaded the space front. One champion of the space program said of the years following the Apollo triumphs and the Watergate scandals, "For young Americans, in particular. . . the exploration of space came to be seen as just another gaudy sideshow in a carnival run by scoundrels."¹⁴ Space advocates saw the shuttle program absorbing much of the NASA budget and hoped that this manned orbital transportation system would eventually lead to a new era in the nation's space program. In the meantime, momentum was lost in the space program. The major surviving manned space activity was the joint American-Soviet Apollo-Soyuz Test Project which used the Saturn launch vehicle and the Apollo spacecraft. The liftoff for the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project in July 1975 marked the break-up of the Saturn launch team at the Kennedy Space Center and the loss of a team that, according to NASA Administrator James Fletcher, had made a "fantastic contribution to our country."¹⁵

After assuming office, President Carter made it clear that no new major space efforts were planned and that exploiting the potentials of the shuttle would be the focus of America's space program. At a White House press conference in May 1977, the president spoke of expanded use of spacecraft in foreign policy and expressed interest in Landsat and communications spacecraft.¹⁶ Early in 1978, the journal *Astronautics and Aeronautics* decried "NASA's Loss of Thrust," and sought Webb's comments. Webb, who had set NASA on