over program safety functions from Ted Dobry*. Thus continuity contributed greatly to competence, flexibility, and the ability to persist, learn, and adapt.

Seizing Opportunity. In a large-scale endeavor, it is vitally important to actively engage forces in the larger environment in order to influence change. In contrast, a component program, which has less leverage for influencing the larger environment, must be able to wait out the tides of public and political changes while avoiding being swamped by them. The public, the president, and the Congress can be ambivalent and change their attitudes. They can ignore and neglect a space program yet be caught up in the Space Age; for example, they can fear nuclear power in its "big technology" forms yet accept and support the quiet nuclear technology in its medical and healing applications—and be ready to support new "miraculous" applications that open new vistas on uncharted frontiers. A program embedded in space and nuclear developments and applications must be ready to capitalize on opportunities, especially those that arise from captivation of the human imagination.

Whither the RTG Program

Many in the space business believe that an American space program will gather momentum in this century. NASA's Soffen predicted the possibility of manned missions to Mars: "The astronauts would have to stay a year so the planets would line up properly for the return. The Soviets have stayed in orbit 211 days."[1] Mills, also of NASA, sensed a change in the climate of the space agency, reflecting a general change in the larger environment. He spoke of the start-up, in 1985, of a Mars geo-chemical observer that would begin a more methodical examination of the planet and believed that NASA was not as concerned, compared to recent years, with Earth applications. Mills felt, "there is fairly strong support for space exploration just for the value of the knowledge gained. We can't get anything as large as Viking going anymore. But a year or so ago a committee was created to look at a planetary program for the next 20 years. It is getting good support from the scientific community." Plans of the committee were for a new start in the space science program every year, with $1 billion now in NASA's science applications budget. "Anytime these missions

*Mike Dix, still a consultant to DOE, recalled that he and Ted Dobry go back to the Pied Piper days at Martin Baltimore when the then-classified nuclear work was done in the closed "boiler room" of that company's Nuclear Division.