to unify all important energy resource development programs.[5] Nixon's plan made little headway, however. Political considerations were partly responsible, but, most important, the public just did not believe energy shortages were more than temporary or regional. Americans could not perceive of an "energy crisis" when there was an ample supply of cheap gas for their cars, electricity and fuel for their homes, and power for their industries and businesses.[6]

The Energy Crisis of 1973 and Nixon's Energy Policies

The energy crisis of 1973 underscored the necessity of developing a coordinated national energy policy and concentrating the government's various energy programs into one agency. On April 18, 1973, six months before renewed conflict in the Middle East, President Nixon noted that the United States, with 6 percent of the world's population, consumed one-third of the world's energy. In the immediate future, the President predicted, the United States might face energy shortages and increased prices. Again, as in 1971, Nixon cautioned that America's energy "challenge" could become an energy crisis if current trends continued unchecked. Declaring that the Nation's energy demands had grown so rapidly that they now outstripped available supplies, the President amended his 1971 proposal for a cabinet department by requesting Congress to establish a department of energy and natural resources with responsibility for energy policy and management as well as research and development. Meanwhile, Nixon established the Special Energy Committee of senior White House advisors, including special assistants for domestic, foreign, and economic affairs, and the National Energy Office, headed by Charles J. DiBona, to identify issues and coordinate energy analysis between the various offices and agencies.[7]

Nixon's proposal for a department of energy and natural resources stalled in Congress. The House and Senate held subcommittee hearings, but the proposal received no further attention during 1973. Although he did not abandon hope for an energy department, the President turned to immediate, interim solutions to the organizational problem. At the urging of Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, Nixon established the Energy Policy Office, which combined and expanded the responsibilities of the Special Energy Committee and the National Energy Office. The new Energy Policy Office, established June 29, 1973, under the leadership of Governor John A. Love of Colorado, with DiBona remaining at the White House as Love's deputy, was responsible for formulating and coordinating energy policies at the presidential level. Nixon also proposed creating the Energy Research and Development Administration to develop the government's energy research programs and to work with industry in developing and fostering new energy technologies. The new administration would combine the energy research and development activities of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of the Interior. The Atomic Energy Commission's licensing and regulatory responsibilities would continue in the independent five-member Nuclear Energy Commission.[8]

By September 1973 the President, while asserting that the Nation was not yet in an energy "crisis," continued to stress America's energy "problem." Nixon especially encouraged congressional enactment of four bills to provide for the construction of the Alaskan pipeline and deepwater ports, deregulation of natural gas, and new standards for surface mining. He also expressed hope that Congress would quickly authorize the Department of Energy and Natural Resources and the Energy Research and Development Administration.[9] Unfortunately war broke out in the Middle East on October 6, 1973. America's energy challenge and problem would soon become a bona fide crisis.

The consequences of the Israeli victory in the Yom Kippur War quickly spread to North America when the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) placed an embargo on crude oil shipped to the United States. By November 1973 oil supplies were critically low, creating "the most