William Simon meets with President Nixon and White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig on December 20, 1973, shortly after Nixon appoints Simon to head the Federal Energy Office.
Source: William E. Simon Papers, Lafayette College

acute shortages of energy since World War II."[10] Now the Arab oil embargo, subsequent long gas lines, and complex but fragmented energy projects and regulations demanded bolder action by the President. No longer regional, the energy shortages became nationwide and threatened virtually every sector of the economy.

In a televised address on the energy emergency on November 7, 1973, President Nixon launched "Project Independence" to achieve energy self-sufficiency by 1980. Urging Americans to lower thermostats, drive cars more slowly, and eliminate unnecessary lighting, Nixon pledged increased funding for energy research and development. Recalling the Manhattan Project, which had built the atomic bomb during World War II, and the Apollo Project, which had landed two Americans on the moon in 1969, the President expressed his faith that American science, technology, and industry could free the United States from dependence on foreign oil. Three weeks later, as winter cold began to grip the Northeast, the President reaffirmed "Project Independence" and announced plans to increase the production of home-heating oils, while reducing gasoline supplies and closing gasoline stations on Sundays. Communities across the Nation reduced holiday lighting and implemented various schemes for pumping short supplies of gasoline. As motorists scrambled for a place in line, in some states matching their license plates to the date on an odd-or-even system, the era of energy affluence ended.[11]

Organizing for the Energy Crisis

On December 4, 1973, President Nixon created the Federal Energy Office in the Executive Office of the White House. Although presidential concern over petroleum supply and pricing extended back to the 1950s and earlier, Nixon's executive