

“energy triad,” would have to be fully developed to achieve energy strength in the twenty-first century.

THE “CLEAN COAL” INITIATIVE

Secretary Herrington contended that much of America’s energy strength rested on its abundant coal reserves, which were 80 percent of the Nation’s known fossil fuel resources. The Secretary, in an interview with the Associated Press, said that he was “going to make some changes” in the National Energy Policy Plan. “I don’t think the current one addresses itself to some of our problems in specific enough terms,” he observed. “I think coal is probably where our future is.”¹¹⁵

The challenge was to develop and deploy “clean coal” technologies to increase the use of coal while reducing environmental problems such as acid rain. Following the administration’s avowed energy policy, Herrington supported federal research and development but was not enthusiastic about funding applied science projects. Congress, on the other hand, supported many commercial demonstration projects that Herrington, a “budget balancer first,” feared could become budget busters. Nonetheless, Herrington expressed his enthusiasm for the program once Congress established “clean coal” priorities.¹¹⁶

The Reagan Administration’s support of new coal technology was outlined in the Department of Energy’s report, *America’s Clean Coal Commitment*. The Department calculated that since passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970 electric utilities had spent approximately \$62 billion to control sulfur pollutants, including \$11 billion for coal cleaning, \$34 billion in premiums for low sulfur coal, and \$17 billion to install stack scrubbers. The Department reported that such measures had already reduced sulfur emissions by 19 percent from 1977 to 1985. New technologies, such as fluidized bed combustion, limestone injection, advanced coal cleaning, and coal gasification, promised not only further to reduce sulfur emissions but also to reduce nitrogen pollutants thought to contribute significantly to acid rain. Following March 1987 discussions

on acid rain with the Canadian government, President Reagan pledged to seek \$2.5 billion over the next five years to demonstrate innovative pollution control technologies. Herrington subsequently announced that the Department of Energy would kick off Reagan’s acid rain initiative with an \$850 million solicitation to match industry proposals for pollution control devices that could be installed on existing coal-fired power plants.¹¹⁷

NUCLEAR POWER

Secretary Herrington had to fend off accusations that his support for coal suggested the Reagan Administration had backed away from its support of nuclear power. “We have no change in nuclear policy,” the Secretary stated. “We continue to support strong nuclear power for our energy future.”¹¹⁸

In November 1985, Herrington assured the Atomic Industrial Forum and the American Nuclear Society that both the President and the secretary of energy were “irrevocably committed to nuclear energy as an option for our future.” The Reagan Administration was committed to “being partners” in bringing “the full dream of nuclear energy to fruition,” he noted, but the nuclear industry itself would have to take the initiative in confronting both the real and the perceptual problems besetting the industry. Herrington admitted that it was “tempting” to blame “government regulators, overzealous environmentalists, and an overly fearful public” for the industry’s problems. He suggested, however, that there was “enough random evidence of problems in planning, management, construction and operator training that industry must accept its share of responsibility and become part of the solution.” The Department of Energy, for its part, would continue to advocate nuclear power, seek licensing and regulatory reform, promote international agreements to secure markets for the American nuclear industry, and press on with research and development. As long-term research and development goals, Herrington targeted more advanced reactors, such as high temperature gas cooled reactors and the preservation of the breeder option,