

caused the gas lines and artificial shortages. . . . We are out of the regulatory functions and we are doing the things an agency like this should be doing—administering R&D funds, national laboratories and the weapons facilities.”¹⁵²

As the 1988 election suggested, and in stark contrast to the partisan disputes of the 1970s, the controversy over energy policy had receded largely into the background during the Reagan Administration. But as the political discourse had evolved, so had the Department of Energy. Since its inception in 1977, the Department had witnessed significant organizational, policy, and budgetary changes. Not the least of these was the increasing proportion of the Department’s budget dedicated to defense activities and the decreasing proportion allocated to energy research and development. In the Department’s 1980 budget, defense activities accounted for 36 percent and energy research and development for over 45 percent of the total budget. In the final Reagan budget for 1990, these figures were 60 percent (including 7 percent for defense waste management) and 16 percent, respectively.¹⁵³