

it's back in fifties technology," the Secretary-designate lamented. "If you look at our organization chart, you'll be aghast at the lack of attention to implementing policy. We are great on policy documents, but very poor on following up to see if they are implemented properly." The situation, Watkins added, "is a mess." But part of the managerial problem was also attributable to what Watkins described as the DOE and, more specifically, the defense program, "culture"—the set of values permeating the work atmosphere within which operations take place. "There is an urgent need to effect a significant change in its deeply imbedded thirty-five-year culture," he asserted, which has "evolved from such heavy emphasis on achieving production goals, made within an atmosphere of collegial secrecy, that problems relating to safety, health, and the environment have not only been backlogged to intolerable levels but, in effect, hidden from public view until recently." The

sympathetic chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, J. Bennett Johnston, responded that it was "the most daunting management task I think we've ever given anybody in government since I've been here."¹⁵⁷

Watkins, nonetheless, did not intend to limit his activities to the defense side of the Department. He told the Senate Energy Committee that he would be extremely active in all parts of departmental management and policy development. The day before his unanimous Senate confirmation, Watkins met with the Department's senior staff and targeted his "near term priorities." These included: 1) developing a new national energy plan, 2) funding the superconducting super collider, 3) issuing a third solicitation for the clean coal technology program, 4) completing safety upgrades at the Savannah River plant so that tritium production could be resumed, 5) lifting remaining



Admiral Watkins sworn in as Secretary of Energy (1989-1993) on March 9, 1989. (L to R) Watkins, Mrs. Watkins, President Bush, and Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy