

production would not resume until a culture was established that made "safety the coequal of production." Three weeks later Watkins announced a reorganization under which the manager of Savannah River Operations, who had previously reported directly to the secretary, would now report to the assistant secretary for defense programs. As part of a "new management concept" emphasizing navy-style "line management accountability," Watkins removed responsibility for environmental and safety issues at Savannah River from the Department's Office of Environment, Safety and Health and placed it under the jurisdiction of the assistant secretary for defense programs. Defense programs would thus be "fully responsible" for its own activities. This caused consternation among environmental groups and within Congress, but Watkins reiterated that accountability and responsibility needed to be "clearly fixed in the DOE line management at all levels." He also offered reassurance that activities would continue to be subject to both internal and external oversight.¹⁶¹

In late June, Watkins announced his Ten-Point Plan to strengthen environmental protection and waste management activities at the Department's production, research, and testing facilities. The goal of the plan, the secretary declared, was to "restore credibility" to the Department by creating "a new culture of accountability." The plan's initiatives included establishing independent "tiger teams" to conduct environmental compliance assessments, forming a new management team within defense programs to emphasize safety over production, establishing a comprehensive epidemiological data repository containing information on past and present departmental workers, and accelerating the cleanup of the Department's facilities. One month later, Watkins announced the completion of the five-year cleanup plan. Through fiscal year 1995 the plan called for spending \$16.5 billion at the highest priority sites with total costs for the same period set at \$19.5 billion. In the fall, Watkins established the Office of Environmental Restoration and Waste Management, consolidating environmental

cleanup, compliance, and waste management activities identified in the five-year plan.¹⁶²

Despite Watkins' initiatives and efforts, however, environmental and safety problems continued to plague the Department. On June 6, the Justice Department announced that it was conducting a broad criminal investigation into possible violations of federal environmental laws at the Rocky Flats Plant. Simultaneously, agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, together with investigators from the Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, began seizing records and obtaining air, water, and soil samples at the site. Three weeks later an exasperated Watkins declared that he was "not proud nor pleased" with what he had seen during his first months in office. "The chickens have finally come home to roost," he stated, "and years of inattention to changing standards and demands regarding to the environment, safety and health are vividly exposed to public examination, in fact, almost daily."¹⁶³

Watkins's efforts were further hampered by delays in filling key environmental and defense positions within the Department. Nonetheless, after a year in office the secretary stated his conviction that the Department had begun to resolve its difficulties now that clear directives were firmly in place. "Our attempt to get a grip on our Savannah River and Rocky Flats facilities has already proved successful," he declared. "They are both, in my opinion, now under what I call management control. This does not mean that we have achieved all of our objectives, but that we are aware of the problems we face and we know how to deal with them."¹⁶⁴

COLD FUSION, CONFUSION, FUSION

In March 1989, two scientists from the University of Utah made the startling claim of having discovered a sustainable room-temperature nuclear fusion reaction. The process, known popularly as cold fusion, drew immediate worldwide attention. If proven and if subject to industrial-scale application, cold fusion provided promise of a virtually limitless source of clean, inexpensive energy. Scientists across