

Department within the Office of the Secretary. The other two mission teams reported to the under secretary. Legislation that would have provided the Department with three under secretaries to oversee the three mission areas failed to clear Congress in 1993.²⁵¹

O'Leary consolidated "crosscutting" functions serving all offices of the department under the Office of the Secretary. These included general counsel; public and consumer affairs; congressional, intergovernmental, and international affairs; and policy, planning, and program evaluation. Assistant secretaries headed the latter two offices. O'Leary placed within the Office of the Secretary the assistant secretary for environment, safety, and health to "emphasize the importance placed on safety and health," and the newly elevated assistant secretary for human resources and administration to "emphasize the importance of efficient and cost-effective management." She also created an office for field management to "track" overall operations and performance of the Department's laboratories and other facilities. Her intention, she noted, was to delegate more authority to the Department's field operations.²⁵²

The Secretary described the new arrangement as a "much flatter organization" that would be more rational and easier to understand. The old organization, O'Leary noted, was "a mess" and not much changed since the Carter Administration. "When I left the department in 1981," she observed, "it pretty much looked like that—layers and layers of people sort of split evenly between the deputy and the under secretary. In my experience . . . it set up open warfare between the two units because there was no attempt to rationalize who was in what pod." The old organization, as well, reflected the Department's "major function" of producing nuclear weapons. "We have been successful in that endeavor," O'Leary concluded. "Now we must rationalize the structure of the department to enable ourselves to achieve as much success in new missions that mirror the priorities of a changed world."²⁵³

As for her own role as secretary, O'Leary stated that she would be "responsible for vision, for mission, for leadership in dealing with our

outside constituencies, certainly for dealing with the Congress, and most importantly for dealing with major program areas." She added that she had long understood that "you cannot lead and manage day to day." The secretary was not unaware of the difficulties ahead in bringing her vision for the Department to fruition. "We are underway," she told departmental employees at a town meeting, but she cautioned that it would require some time to complete. "I'm in this for the long haul," she declared. "Think of this process as a marathon, not a sprint."²⁵⁴

THE ENERGY TAX

During his first six months in office, President Clinton focused his administration on pushing through Congress the budget and deficit reduction package embodying his economic plan. The energy tax proved to be a major issue of contention. Under Clinton's initial BTU tax proposal, all forms of energy—except for solar, geothermal, and wind—would pay a base rate of 25.7 cents per million BTUs. A supplemental rate of 34.2 cents per million BTUs would apply to gasoline and other refined petroleum products. Opposition from interest groups and both congressional Republicans and Democrats, however, forced the administration to issue a revised proposal on April 1. In response to senators and representatives from the northeast, the administration exempted home heating oil from the higher oil tax rate. Midwestern members of Congress obtained a tax exemption for ethanol and methanol. Over a dozen additional exemptions appeared in the revised proposal. The administration perceived that the exemptions were necessary to win support for the economic package, but critics feared that the changes would only encourage other special interests to seek exemptions. "The proposal is riddled with special interest exemptions," noted Edwin S. Rothschild, an energy analyst at Citizen Action, a consumer advocacy group. "It's going to create an incentive to other special interests to seek further exemptions or reductions as this tax moves through the legislative process."²⁵⁵

Opposition to the BTU tax from energy-intensive industries such as aluminum and