

As the Department's new mission statement declared, the Department contributed to the welfare of the Nation by providing "technical information" and a "scientific and educational foundation."

Finally, for O'Leary and her strategic planners, the way business was conducted was as crucial as the nature of the business. Embracing "continuous quality improvement," the strategic plan identified four critical "success factors" for the operation of the Department's businesses: 1) communicating information and building trust both within the organization and with stakeholders and customers, 2) focusing on people as the Department's most important resource by providing employee training, rewarding performance, and promoting workforce diversity, 3) ensuring the safety and health of workers and the public, and protecting and restoring the environment, and 4) managing materials and operations more cost-effectively to give the Department greater flexibility. Above all, the Department needed to be customer oriented. The Department needed, O'Leary asserted, the "advice and thinking" of the broad array of stakeholders and customers.³⁰⁰

WHITHER THE DEPARTMENT?

For the Department of Energy, the first year-and-a-half with a new administration and a new secretary had been an active one. Change was clearly the watchword. As the chart at Secretary O'Leary's initial budget briefing in April 1993 declared in big, bold letters: "We Changed our Priorities." Decades-old functions and activities descended through both of the Department's traditions underwent intense scrutiny to determine if they were still needed and helpful in the new post-Cold War world. Some were found wanting. Others emerged reformed and revitalized. According to many observers, a greater sense of departmental unity and purpose began to appear.

The strategic planning process was a major step in this direction. The strategic plan envisioned a "new" Department of Energy with "new priorities and a sense of purpose, a new vigilance, and a culture and values that will bear no resemblance to the previous organization that grew out of the Cold War."³⁰¹ If the long-term shape and scope of the Department remained as yet uncertain and still evolving, there was obviously no lacking of vision and a sense of the future. While the Department of Energy neither could nor should forget its history and where it came from, there was little doubt that the Department could never return to what it was.