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Bary Steele
Authorizing Official
Date: 10/25/06

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U. S. ENERGY R&D: POLICY AND PRIORITIES¹

Alvin M. Weinberg

Director, Office of Energy Research and Development

I shall speak about energy R&D policy and priorities; however, to do this intelligently one must first talk about energy policy. The primary purpose of energy R&D is to help implement and advance energy policy; but the matter is somewhat complex. Energy research, hopefully, reveals new possibilities and new options that ought to influence energy policy. Thus there must be a continuing dialogue between energy policy and energy R&D because they are clearly interdependent.

Present U. S. energy policy is largely dominated by our commitment to energy self-sufficiency - that is, to Project Independence (P. I.). But this commitment does not constitute our entire energy policy: we are, even now, making decisions concerning nuclear plant siting and conservation that go much beyond any immediate commitment to self-sufficiency. These decisions will commit us over the long term to certain patterns of land use, as well as to certain life-styles that are in some degree independent of our commitment to Project Independence.

Both energy policy and energy research and development strategy are presently in transition, largely because new governmental structures for

¹Presented before the Management Briefing on Federal Energy R&D, sponsored by POWER ENGINEERING Magazine and POLLUTION ENGINEERING Magazine, Washington, D. C., June 20, 1974.