

INTERVIEWEE: DR. THOMAS O. PAINE (Tape 2)

INTERVIEWER: T. HARRI BAKER

April 10, 1969

B: Sir, almost as soon as you became Acting Administrator, replacing Mr. Webb, you were immediately thrown into the struggle over the budget for Fiscal Year '70, were you not?

P: Yes, I certainly was. This was a very great challenge for NASA, but one which we were well prepared to meet. The financial status of NASA at the time that I became Acting Administrator was very sound indeed. The financing had been conservative throughout in our programs. We had faced up, I think, very realistically to what the total costs would be and had gone before the Congress and before the Administration to prepare the way for the situation. So although it was a very severe crisis for us and we had to take reasonably heroic measures, we could do it on the basis of a good sound knowledge as to where we stood and what it was going to take to get where we had to go. I think looking back on it now with hindsight, it proceeded in good shape.

B: If I understand you correctly, you were first given a certain level by the Bureau of the Budget which NASA regarded as too low.

P: Yes, the initial number that came over from the Bureau of the Budget was \$3.6 billion dollars which we felt was quite out of the question. In our own planning why I decided that we ought to start out from where we really wanted to be--to take a look at what NASA would regard as, first of all, an all-out budget. It would really put the nation into the pattern of moving ahead aggressively in space, utilizing the facilities that we built over the last decade but not plunging into new facilities. What would be the

programs we could carry out and what would be the level of financing required? When we looked at that, which we called our A Budget, that came out around \$4.5 to \$4.7 billion dollars. This would lead in the years to follow to a higher level somewhere up in the \$5.5 to \$6.5 [billion] level, perhaps.

B: What was Mr. Zwick's reaction to your suggestion for \$4.5 billion?

P: He was very patient. He nodded his head and he thought that that was an interesting exercise that we had been through, but how were we going to get down to the \$3.6 billion level? Really, this was not anything that he would have been empowered to discuss.

Now, we took another look at the budget--a B-level budget, which would be to try to preserve as much as we could of the things that ought to be in a really forward-looking program, but to do this in a somewhat more austere manner. An austere budget in our view would have been about \$4.2 billion dollars. This was the budget we went over to discuss with Mr. Zwick, and try to find ways to get as much as possible of our \$4.2 billion dollar program values in. The discussion, then, you might say, revolved around the \$3.6 billion dollar number which he very much would have liked to have seen to help his problems in other areas, versus our \$4.2 which we felt that in a time of tightening belts was a reasonable level for us to cut down to from our \$4.7 [billion].

B: Did you get anywhere at all with Mr. Zwick?

P: Yes, we did. I think that by a series of meetings which we had over there we were able to come out with a program that was considerably augmented over the \$3.6, although we had to back down from the \$4.2 that we were after to a level of \$3.85 or so. I took the position with Mr. Zwick that the lower level that I thought the President ought to consider was a level of holding the expenditures constant over the 1969 expenditures. So that

when President Johnson left office he would be in a position of saying that he had arrested the steady downward decline in NASA's funding.

B: While these discussions were going on, the Apollo 7 mission took place. Did that have an impact on the budget discussions?

P: I don't believe it had any direct impact. But the perfect performance certainly had an impact indirectly in the sense that it bolstered the nation's confidence in NASA, and at the same time, let's face it, it bolstered NASA's confidence in the spacecraft system that it had put together for Apollo. After all the difficulties and all of the work that had gone in after the fire where we lost the three astronauts, it was a very reassuring mission to us.

B: Do congressional committees or any individual congressmen get involved in this process of the budget debate?

P: No, they don't. This was strictly within the administration family. This was privileged information. It was not discussed or released to them. There were from time to time leaks that came out in the process, but there was no contact with the Congress during this time.

I might complete the actions that happened here, although they are not chronologically all together, by stating that the final resolution between Mr. Zwick and myself came about in the President's office on a final occasion when the President had in his lap--as he sat at the end of the table in the Oval Room there--the big budget book with all the items in it. Mr. Zwick was there, and I was there. We were discussing the question of just how much money NASA should get, with Mr. Zwick coming out for the lower figure and my position being to request more funds. I had requested the meeting with the President--one of the few agencies that did meet with the President to request an increase. I took the position with the President

that it was very important, I thought, for history to record that he had leveled out the decline in space expenditures. He was very thoughtful about this, and he looked at the book for some minutes as he pondered what final resolution he should make of the difference between Mr. Zwick and myself. At the end of the time he agreed to give us the additional funding level that I requested to hold the budget level level with the previous year. In fact, there was a small breakage sum as I recall of several million dollars, and I said, "Gee, if you are going to go that far, Mr. President, why don't you just round it off to actually put us in the position where we can say, 'Well, we are actually getting a little more by a very small sum.'" He laughed and didn't exactly comment on that one way or the other. So obeying the old rule that when you won your point you should shut up and leave, I rose at that point and thanked the President.

Perhaps I left before he had a chance to say everything that was on his mind because as I passed through the little corridor that leaves the Oval Room--I was still within sight of him but was part way down the hall--he turned and called out after me that he hoped that I realized that I had just extracted this large sum of money from him and that he hoped that I considered that to be a very good morning's work. I laughed and thanked him again and said I certainly did realize it and that I appreciated very much the support that he was giving to the space program by this act.

B: In this process, when Mr. Johnson was going over your recommendations, did he examine the recommendations in detail and question you about specific items?

P: No, he was primarily concerned then with overall levels. He had the detail in front of him, but the basic question I think in the final analysis, was the policy question of whether he would hold the NASA budget level or not.

B: And this in your view was the determining factor in his judgment?

P: Yes, I think it was. And, of course, from my own personal standpoint I must confess that I felt that this was the strongest argument that I could make for the space program with President Johnson. It was a highly visible level. From the standpoint of the program I felt that we could indeed go before the Congress and make a strong case for this budget level even though there were so many things that we had to leave out. I thought it was a budget we could defend strongly.

B: Did he at that time mention to you the other financial obligations of the government, such as the Vietnamese war?

P: Yes, these were very much on his mind. The poverty program, the demands for the urban programs, but I think the position that he took--and I don't recall the conversation in detail--but I believe that it was at this occasion that the point I made was that the Space Agency had taken more than its share of the cuts in light of the situation in Viet Nam and in the cities and poverty and social programs. I think he agreed with this--that we had indeed, when it was necessary to reassess national priorities and redirect the money into these other areas, taken very large sums from space to put into these other areas.

B: To get outside of the chronology of the deal, just topically with your relationship with Mr. Johnson, did you have much contact with him during this past fall when you were the Acting Administrator?

P: No, my contacts really fell into two categories--one were the contacts in connection with the budget question which we just discussed. The other was the series of contacts with the President in the post-flight activities when the astronauts would go to the White House or to the LBJ Ranch to get awards. These, of course, were--particularly on an occasion when we went

to the ranch with Wally Schirra and his crew after Apollo 7--very informal occasions and gave us all a chance to ride around with the President, see his birth place, and chase the deer. You could get to know him there a little bit on a personal basis. Also, of course, Mrs. Paine and I were thrown in with Lady Bird on these occasions, and when Lady Bird visited the Cape, as you recall. We had a delightful time with her and the women newspaper reporters from the White House that she was entertaining on a trip in her final days in the White House.

B: Did you or anyone else in your office brief Mr. Johnson before the various missions last fall?

P: No, I would simply call the White House on the telephone and tell the President what decisions the space agency had made with respect to missions where critical decisions had to be made. But these were not discussions nor were they on my part a request for approval or confirmation. My view was I should take the responsibility for these decisions and not share this with the President. He, of course, always had the veto power if he chose to exercise it, but he never chose to.

We were rather fortunate before the Apollo 8 launch. I believe that our final meeting on this was November 11. President-elect Nixon happened to be visiting President Johnson the day of our meeting in which we decided to send Apollo 8 around the moon. So by phoning that information over to the President, I was able to dodge the rather thorny question of what were my responsibilities to the President-elect who would be, if we postponed the launch, President at the time that we launched, say, in late January.

B: I must ask this question because some cynical future scholar is bound to ask it. Was there ever any hint from Mr. Johnson or from the White House that Mr. Johnson would very much like to have a space spectacular to end his Administration?

P: No, absolutely not. The suprising thing to me was that not only was there no hint of this from the White House--that didn't surprise me at all, I didn't expect any and there wasn't--but the truly surprising thing to me was that there was no hint of this in the press, and at this time President Johnson had many detractors. It was very popular and was the fad at that time to knock President Johnson, so I was very surprised that this wasn't mentioned. I was fully prepared when I made that decision to have to face some angry editorials that this was an obvious move on the part of the Space Agency to present the outgoing President with a spectacular or something. I saw no hint of this anywhere. Maybe they recognized that the risk of a fiasco or tragedy balanced the potential favorably results.

B: Was there any tinge of that in your mind in making the decision?

P: None at all. The decision was strictly made on whether it was the right thing to do at that time for the lunar landing program.

B: I vaguely understand the technicalities of the existence of the window in the previous flights and so on, that I assume would dictate--

P: Yes, so history will record that I think anybody would have done what we did. It was the sensible and right thing to do, and of course the success of the mission vindicated it. But it was in the back of my mind that there would be people who might allege politics here although really I think you could look at it in two ways. I think it would have been very tough for President Nixon to have had a flight like this come in the first few days of his presidency where there was, of course, always the hazard and possibility of something going wrong and the criticism that might be made if he said, "Gee, I want to re-examine this and postpone it until I am satisfied," or the criticism that might come if he simply said, "Well, I assume that Johnson knew what he was doing so I'm not going to change this." It would have been a very difficult thing to pose him relief to him, too, I would imagine, to have this flight occur before he took hold of the reins.

B: I suppose there is a converse side to this. We all know how successful that mission was. But far from being a space spectacular, I suppose that could have been a disaster.

P: It certainly could have. Of course, it would have come at the end of a disastrous year. If you look back at the day I was appointed with the Viet Cong inside the Embassy garden there in the TET offensive, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, the urban riots and convention battles, and all of the things that happened that year--up to and including Jackie [Kennedy] running off and marrying the Greek during our Apollo 7 mission--it certainly would have been a fitting cap to the year to have had a spectacular fiasco in the Apollo program perhaps leaving the astronauts stranded in lunar orbit or something. The fact that instead of this we got a great lift for the nation at Christmas is wonderful. But there was always the hazard it would turn out the other way and in making the decisions this was also very much in my mind. One of the things that I had to be sure of was that we were sufficiently prepared for a lunar mission, so that in spite of the fact that there was an undeniable hazard, that it was the proper decision to make then.

B: Did Mr. Johnson express an interest in the technical details of the space flight?

P: Yes, he had been of course, associated with the space program for many years. His grasp of the technical side of it was quite impressive. He also understood the legal aspects and the institutional relations with Congress. There was no question he was very knowledgeable about space. The surprising thing, I think, in view of the many allegations of meddling in details on the part of the President that I saw in the press was that at no time in my relationship with President Johnson was there ever any pressure from the White House to take any particular action or move the program in any specific way. I certainly didn't have the kind of experience that some of the allegations

that he was running the war in Viet Nam by talking directly to destroyer skippers from the White House--there was none of this whatsoever in his relations with the Space Agency while I was in charge.

E: Both the Johnsons did make a practice of visiting the Space Agency [Dr. Eugene Emme, NASA historian, speaking]

P: Yes. When they visited the installations, they were obviously well up on the things that they saw. The level of conversation with them could be at quite a high level of sophistication.

B: Did Mr. Johnson ever express an interest in attending any one of the launches, particularly that last one of his Administration?

P: No, as a matter of routine, he was always of course welcome to attend any of the launches, but he never did. I think for two reasons perhaps. One was that he, of course, was a master at the use of television to watch things. He would get the three networks on, and they do such a superb job that, in a sense, he can almost watch the launch better than if he had been down there on the ground. And he could see what the people were seeing and hearing. Secondly, from our standpoint, we never encouraged him very strongly to do this because of the hazards involved. There are, of course, the possibilities of distraction from having the President there. If he goes in the control room, why the control room crew is going to be conscious of the fact that they are carrying out these missions under the eye of President Johnson. And if there had been an accident, it really would not have been the best thing in the world to have had the President of the United States on the spot, either from the standpoint of associating him with it or from the standpoint of reporting to him what we were doing to take the proper measures. So for one reason or another, he didn't do this. But I'm rather hoping that now that he's a retired private citizen that he may choose to come down.

B: Would he receive invitations as a private citizen?

P: Yes, we would like very much to see him come down for perhaps the Apollo 11 launch. (He did.) [note added later]

B: Was he also aware of, and interested in, the other aspects of NASA's work? For example, last fall you also sent up the orbiting astronomical laboratory. Did this kind of thing interest him?

P: Yes, he was interested broadly in the space program. I think that it's fair to say also that he was interested in the military space programs. It wasn't just the manned program, although of course with half of NASA's work going into this area and with the national prestige association with the manned launches, obviously this would claim more of his attention.

B: Did you ever discuss with him some of the aspects of the space program that attracted public attention? For example, the controversy over the race to the Moon aspects of the space program.

P: I didn't discuss these with him personally, no. I did have considerable conversations with Mrs. Johnson on her visit to the Cape when she expressed interest in the earth resource area and the direct benefits to the man in the streets of the space program. She felt, as many people do, that this has not received the public attention it should have received. She went out of her way, actually, one evening--I guess it was her last evening down there--to get a group of foreign correspondents to come down to the cottage where she was staying at Patrick Air Force Base on the beach--and have Mrs. Paine and me join them for a cocktail before dinner. I gave them, at her request, an impromptu thirty to thirty-five minute lecture on the benefits of the space program to the man in the street. She was very pleased with this. It was based on a conversation I had had with her earlier in the day and she said, "Dr. Paine, I want more people

to hear this story. Could you and Mrs. Paine come down this evening if I can arrange to have some correspondents in?" So it really wasn't a very good cocktail party. She just dragged them in and sat them down in chairs and said, "Dr. Paine, would you tell them some of the fascinating things you've told me today." And we sat there drinking drinks while I gave a lecture. But she was very interested in this aspect, and it was an enjoyable experience for all of us present.

B: There are those that say that that's the real politician in the family.

P: Well, I would not, I think, go quite that far. But I would say that all of my relations with Mrs. Johnson were very heartwarming and Mrs. Paine and I certainly enjoyed her. She's really a wonderful person--very bright and very human; just the kind of person you love to deal with.

B: For the record, this is the visit in late November 1968 to the space center.

P: Yes, I don't recall the exact date.

B: November 23.

P: Yes, and she flew from Kennedy to New Orleans and on out to the West Coast to the Redwoods with the White House women correspondents.

B: Did you ever discuss with Mr. Johnson the risk to human life involved in the space program?

P: No, I didn't.

B: Either generally or specifically in answer to Sir Bernard Lovell's comments.?

P: No.

B: Who did you generally deal with on the White House staff?

P: My normal procedure when I wanted to deal with the President was to call Jim Jones. I had gotten to know him when we flew down to the ranch together from Washington. Jim could always say, "Just a minute," and go right into the next office and talk to the President so it was very smooth and very effective.

On matters dealing with official balls for the astronauts and so forth, well, that would get into Bess Abell's area. I dealt with Mrs. Abell on a party we gave for the astronauts which turned out to be a very happy affair, I think. I would deal with other people such as George Christian, for example, usually through Julian Scheer on a press matter. But Jim Jones was my principal direct contact with the President.

B: What was your relationship to Mr. Humphrey who was chairman of the National Aeronautics and Space Council?

P: Very minimal, actually. I believe that every time I attended a meeting, Mr. Humphrey wasn't there, or if Mr. Humphrey was there I didn't happen to be there for some reason. For example at the final meeting of the Marine Council which he headed and on which I was an observer he couldn't be present so I actually chaired it--although there was an observer. So he and I just by pure chance did not have a great deal of contact.

B: Of course, we are talking of a time in which Mr. Humphrey was campaigning.

P: Exactly. He was campaigning and I was trying to fly [Apollo] 7 and 8. For these reasons our paths really didn't cross.

B: Did you also serve as an advisor in other--

P: I, perhaps, should add to that that I did have relationships with the Space Council. These would be directly with Ed Welsh and just didn't happen to involve the Vice President personally.

B: Did you also serve as an advisor in other areas? I know that prior to your government service, you had been, prior to your appointment to NASA, you had been interested in the problem of the cities and that kind of thing.

P: Well, I had served as a consultant to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I headed a special task force for Secretary [Robert] Weaver and Under Secretary [Robert] Wood to look at the total housing problem in the United

and to see what the role of rehabilitation, and new construction, and R&D should be, and what sort of federal programs would be required to really make a dent in the worst 10 percent or so of the nation's slum housing.

I also worked in various other areas having to do with urban problems. I had gone to the Woods Hole Conference on Urban Problems. In fact, [I] helped organize the Woods Hole Conference on Urban Matters that was held a couple of years before, and had been, I would say, somewhat on the fringe of urban problems, but still in direct contact in a number of areas.

This had proved to be somewhat of a frustrating experience. It was very difficult to see how this new department which had been put together from many different components could effectively organize itself to take meaningful actions. So I had put this on the back burner as something that I would like to return to when the national sense of urgency about the urban problem had coalesced a little farther, and action was desired. But in the meantime, why I kept my interest and activity there at a somewhat minimal level.

B: What was Mr. Johnson's reaction to the success of the Apollo 8 mission?

P: Well, I think his reaction was heightened because he was the President of the United States, but in another sense it was the reaction of all the citizens of the United States. I think that he felt that this had come at the end of a very disastrous year and that it had shown that the support that he had given the Space Agency was vindicated. We did know what we were doing; we were able to carry out the commitments we had made to the American people.

Beyond that there was a feeling that took us back to an earlier era in the nation almost, that indeed the exploration of space was something that had grabbed the minds of men and the hearts of men around the world.

It was, indeed, something that humans could participate in and that the feeling--the great lift--people around the world got from the Apollo 8 mission took us back to the earlier days of the space program when there was that same feeling that this was something that was very important to the human race that we should be forging ahead.

In the cynicism and disarray that had followed the assassinations, the riots in the cities, student unrest, Viet Nam, the conventions, and all the rest, I think that the country had lost sight of the fact that meanwhile out in Houston and down at Cape Kennedy and in Southern California the Space Agency was steadily moving ahead. It came almost as a surprise to people that all of a sudden after not flying men for a long time, we were suddenly able to carry out this very advanced mission. It wasn't a surprise to us. We had been working on it, but people's attention had been distracted by all these disasters. The contrast between the Apollo 8 mission and many other events of the year was heartwarming to the President as it was to all of us.

B: Did he express this kind of sentiment to you privately?

P: Just informally--primarily after the mission at the White House--when we were in the awards ceremony. I chatted very briefly with him there. I was behind Dean Rusk as we walked into the East Room, and Rusk said dazedly to his companion: "My God, I never thought we'd see this day."

E: The Space Act, he was real proud of the Space Act having brought this off.

P: Yes, he was. I think as he got to the end of his presidency, he looked back over the many different things that he had been involved in, and one of the things that tended to come to the fore was his activity when he had helped to draft the Space Act to get it through the Congress, organize a strong space committee structure, and had played such an important role in getting NASA off to the good start it got off to. I think again partly because of the many vicissitudes of the last year of

his presidency this stood out as one of the things that was standing the test of time. Mrs. Johnson also mentioned that as she looked back, the activity that the Johnsons both had with the space program stood out as one of the things that had an enduring value.

B: Who made plans for the ceremony and party after the Apollo 8 mission?

P: It was primarily something that Julian Scheer cooked up with my blessing. We talked about this at various times during the mission. At the end of the mission, during the debriefing, we said, "Well, we ought to start out at the White House, and go up Pennsylvania Avenue to a joint session of Congress." The question came up of ticker tape parades and I said, "Gee, I'm not much of a ticker tape man, Julian. Is this the thing we really ought to do?" "Yep," he said, "we'll go up to New York and Chicago and San Francisco and Houston." I said, "Gee, that's an awful lot."

I guess finally San Francisco dropped out, but we planned it very boldly. There was really no discussion to speak of. We just said, by God, this is going to have to be presented to a Joint Session of the Congress. In looking at the debriefing period and the time that we could release the astronauts, why, it came out very nicely with the start of Congress. So the plans went together very smoothly, the ticker tape parade in New York City, and we were able to schedule this on fairly short notice, and it all went very well. But it was an awfully cold day in New York.

B: Does the White House participate in that kind of planning?

P: They participated in it, but more or less after the fact. We worked out with George Christian and Jim Jones and the others there just how it should go, but they fell right in with the suggestions we made.

B: I have one question that is really personal. Who had the brilliant idea of inviting Charles Lindbergh and Jacqueline Cochran and Alexander [P.] de Seversky to that party?

P: You are speaking of the party before the mission at the White House now, and I was speaking of the post-Apollo activities. Now, to go back to the party, Julian and I, I guess--just the two of us were going over the guest list as to who should be invited. There was considerable question just who were the right people to bring. I believe it was my suggestion that I would like to see Charles Lindbergh there. I believe he suggest Jacqueline Cochran. My memory may not be right on that. We talked these things over; I believe that was the way it was.

There was some question whether the widows of the Apollo 204 astronauts, Ed White and [Roger] Chaffee and Gus Grissom, should be invited. There was a little bit of a feeling that this might dampen the party and I discussed this with one of the very top people in NASA. His feeling was that this was a party, this was a celebration, that the White House was very anxious to have this go well from the social standpoint, and that having the widows there might not be the right tone--that President Johnson, in particular, was most anxious to have this a very positive thing.

I discussed this for several days with Julian as to what was the right thing to do here. Then Mrs. Paine got into this act. She told me, when I said we were discussing this, "Well, you can decide this any way you like, but I won't go to the party if those widows aren't invited." It was as simple as that. Well, actually, I agreed with her, and Julian did, too. So we discussed this with Bess Abell very frankly and said, "Bess, there might be two schools of thought on this, but we feel very strongly. You ask who you like, in general, but we feel very strongly on this one." She did ask the girls, and it worked out very well, and everyone agreed afterward that it had been the right thing to do.

The general feeling that Julian and I had about this party and the way that our conversation opened, to go back to the beginning of it, was we hoped very much we could get a World War fighter pilot type like Eddie Rickenbacker. Then we hoped we could add to this some prominent World War II flying people. We had hoped we could get some of the real early barnstorming aviators--the Wing Walkers and stunt men and so forth. We wanted to tie in some of the past aviation history that had led to this great flight and some of the past great flyers. This was the sort of policy by which we worked on the guest list. At the same time we were sharply circumscribed in the number of people we could have--so we had to be very selective.

B: Did the transition cause any particular difficulties to the new administration?

P: No. I think the transition proceeded remarkably smoothly. The President was determined that it should proceed smoothly. We in the Space Agency with our Apollo 9 and 10 and 11 missions scheduled right behind Apollo 8--of all parts of the government probably had the clearest mandate as to what we should do--so that in a sense the transition for us was quite easy. The principal activity here, I guess, has been the question of the budget, and the question of who the new Administrator would be. That, of course, is another story.

B: Yes, I'm somewhat at a loss here because your story is a continuing one. I suspect someone is going to be bothering you like this again later on. I think it would be inappropriate to say any more than you were, of course confirmed or named as permanent Administrator by the Nixon Administration.

P: I think there is a Johnson Administration story here that I might put into the record on that point. That is that when Mr. Webb left the Agency, I believe that he was very strongly convinced that he would like to see the continuity and the transition process carried out very smoothly. He hoped

very much that I would stay on as either Deputy or Administrator to accomplish this transition smoothly and to maintain this continuity, so we would have the best chance for NASA to get to the moon safely on time.

When he went to the President to discuss his own resignation which I mentioned, I believe, in the last tape, the question was very much in his mind as to what would be the best way to get the transition in NASA, as apolitical, and as smooth as possible. Therefore he and the President, in their discussion, must have decided that the easiest way to do this was to appoint me Acting Administrator. Well, now, actually they didn't have to do that. If they had taken no action whatsoever, I, as Deputy, by law would have been Acting Administrator, once Mr. Webb resigned. But the decision that he and the President made--and really it was the President's decision, although it was the recommendation which Mr. Webb made, I believe--was to name me Acting Administrator, which could put me in line for promotion to the job as Administrator by the new administration, but at the same time wouldn't do this in such a powerful way that the new President would have to feel that in order to get a change from the Johnson Administration he ought to replace that fellow out that the President had named as Administrator.

Now, the President did this differently in different agencies, of course. He appointed Bob Wood, I believe, to be the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for a few weeks right at the end for only a few days, whatever it was. He did this differently in different agencies. I think it is interesting what the President did, looking at the various possibilities he had from not doing anything to appointing me administrator, he decided to take the Acting Administrator path as being the smoothest way to a good transition. And, of course, as events turned out, I think President Johnson did the thing which, in the final analysis, resulted in my being appointed Administrator eventually by President Nixon.

B: Do you know if Mr. Johnson specifically recommended continuing you to Mr. Nixon?

P: No, I don't know if they discussed it or not, but President Johnson did go out of his way on numerous occasions to make extremely flattering remarks about me publicly which obviously got to President Nixon. So whether they had a private conversation or not I can't say, but certainly publicly President Johnson did endorse me.

B: Had you known Mr. Nixon prior to his election?

P: No, I first met him after the election.

B: Sir, we're about at the time limit. Is there anything else you think should be added to this kind of record?

P: No, I think we've talked about some of the things that, in spite of Eugene Emme's strong influence on me, just tend not to get into written history for one reason or another.

B: That's what we are trying to do, and I was trying to avoid duplicating what Mr. Emme has already done so well.

P: I think there is one thing I might mention that perhaps we could go into later, which I think would be in other histories of the Johnson Administration. This was the role in all of these matters that was played by Bob Seamans, because Bob, of course, was appointed Secretary of the Air Force by President Nixon. Bob had been a very strong Deputy Administrator of NASA and had been a consultant to me when I became Deputy. In fact, one of my first moves when I came to Washington was to go out and spend an evening with Bob Seamans.

B: Yes, actually you replaced him as Deputy, did you not?

P: Yes, although there was a long interval between the time Bob left and the time that I came in. Bob, of course, was a tower of strength in NASA in his day, and I think probably played some role in my being appointed

Administrator because Bob and I were very good friends by then. So that's one final thing I might put on that part of the tape.

B: Did he continue to help advise NASA during this last fall?

P: Yes, and in fact Bob and I had an informal agreement that he always flew down with me to the Apollo launches at Cape Kennedy. He flew down to [Apollo] 7 and 8, keeping up his interest and seeing how programs were turning out that he had devoted so much of his life to. I was always very glad to have Bob there with me for these launches.

B: Anything else you would like to add?

P: No, I believe that's it.

B: Thank you very much.

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Thomas O. Paine

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, T. O. Paine, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.
4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed

T. O. Paine

Date

24 June 1970

Accepted

Ann J. Hirschman - for
Archivist of the United States

Date

March 11, 1975