

an effective and versatile agency, ready to follow his leadership. On this basis, the President gave his permission for me to retire on my 62d birthday, October 7. I will remain available to Dr. Paine for at least half my time as a consultant. I relate this because I want you to know that the NASA organization is worthy of your trust and confidence in the coming months and in the next administration.

Led by Dr. Paine as Acting Administrator, by Dr. Homer E. Newell as Associate Administrator, by Willis H. Shapley as Associate Deputy Administrator, by Harold B. Finger as Associate Administrator for Organization and Management, by Mr. Beggs, Dr. Mueller, Dr. Naugle, and Mr. Truszynski as Program Office Directors, and by the Assistant Administrators, who are with us here today, NASA can and will carry on all work assigned to it.

The officials here today and in other NASA offices have my full confidence, and that of the President.

#### PLAN TO HOLD TOGETHER SMALL SKILLED GROUPS

The greatest challenge which NASA faces in the next year, in my opinion, is the retention to the greatest extent possible of the capability, not only in house, but also in its industry and university partners, that will enable the agency to move ahead again when resources can be made available for missions to follow those we will be completing in the next 2 years. This is not an easy task when a heavy flight schedule must be met by a work force that has been steadily reduced for a period of 3 years. NASA will need all the support you can give in meeting this challenge.

The interim operating plan which Dr. Paine will present is designed, with very few exceptions, to support missions started in previous years. In manned space flight, in nuclear rocket engine development, in the planetary program, in the university program—throughout the areas of NASA responsibility—we are trying to carry out the best possible program to maintain our part of the Nation's aeronautics and space competence. This plan does not include keeping production lines open to meet future needs or to hold experienced teams together. Instead, in most instances, its thrust is to hold together small cadres of able men and women, engaged in important work in support of a limited number of missions, so that they will be able to form nuclei on which to build when the Nation decides to undertake more ambitious efforts.

The skill with which this plan has been devised, and the success which I believe it will have in meeting this goal, is a tribute to the ability of the NASA team I discussed earlier.

In closing, I would like to thank this committee for all it has done for NASA over the last 10 years. We have been through both happy and trying times together. Your support and your counsel have been essential to success. I thank you for that support and counsel, and for the consideration given me, as Administrator, during my more than 25 formal appearances before you, as well as the many other times as we have worked together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to present Dr. Thomas O. Paine.