

(Fictional) Speech Thomas O. Paine: 1968, October 8

HISTORICAL FACTS

May,6 1968		Crash Lunar Module with Neil Armstrong
October 6, 1968		NASA Administrator James E. Webb abandons NASA
October 6, 1968 – March 21, 1969		Thomas O.Paine Acting as NASA Administrator
	Here we are	
21.12.1968		Launch Apollo 8: Frank Borman
3.3.1969		Launch Apollo-9
March 5, 1969 For March 21,1969		NominationPaine.jpg
18.5.1969		Launch Apollo-10
19.7.1969		Launch Apollo-11

(Fictional) Speech Thomas O. Paine: 1968, October 8

Dear Members of NASA Staff, dear designated Apollo-Crews,

My name is Thomas O.Paine, I am here since ten month as a Deputy NASA Administrator. As our dear supreme boss, James Webb has resigned, I was elected to be his acting successor, until the official successor is appointed by the President of the United States. This was an agreement between James (Webb) and President L.B.Johnson, regarding the urgency of the Apollo mission.

I have invited the designated Apollo crews of Apollo 8, 9, 10 and 11 for today, October 8, 1968. I am aware of the fact that many of you are feeling unsettled by the many technical problems that we are pushing forward but not solving. The time is getting shorter and the mission dates are getting closer and closer. Neil, you certainly haven't forgotten your last ride on the lunar module, during which you rescued yourself with an emergency parachute. We have also received many specific objections to this module from other quarters and it is quite clear that there must be significant improvements before we decide to use this vehicle for our lunar landing. The problem with radiation is not yet under control, I am also aware of that. From now on, I assume responsibility for all decisions made by NASA and ask that you follow strictly the decision-making processes we use at this institution. And in particular, I would like to make it clear, that any technical issues we have should only be addressed internally and must NOT be passed on to media contacts from now on.

As you may know, my predecessor was an extremely highly qualified scientist and organizer. But he didn't like the stress that comes with our unsatisfactory resource situation and the demands for money, materials and time, all of which we don't get. I can therefore understand that he went into well-deserved retirement at the age of 62 and can now enjoy the fruits of his work to date and hopefully also our future successes.

It is very clear however, there HAS to be someone who wants and is able to do the job and therefore I chose to take it, since Robert (Seamans) gave up this challenge.

I am in close contact with the White House. The challenging political situation we face in the United States today requires challenging action, courage, imagination and determination. Just as I demand all of this from myself, I also do it from all of you. The Apollo program MUST, I repeat MUST, be successful. At this time it is the best and only way to open up new perspectives to people and to make people forget what a catastrophic situation we have in Vietnam and also in our own multicultural society. Failure here would be even more catastrophic, whereas success can put us back on our feet as a great nation. We are the greatest of all! We, NASA, are responsible for all American activities in space. So it is up to us to organize these missions that give enthusiasm and confidence to the common people for the future. The importance of this project cannot be overstated!

The white house has clearly expressed that there is no question, whether the mission takes place. It will take place. There are 3 named criteria, we must comply with:

1. The pictures on the TV are available for everybody
2. The enthusiasm for the people must be achieved
3. Failure is no option

The dates for the mission are fix:

Apollo-8	Mission once round the moon and back, Dec, 21 this year (Frank, Jim and William)
Apollo-9	Mission in Moon Orbit and back March 3, next year (Russel, James and David)
Apollo-10	Mission in Moon Orbit with Lunar Module and back, May, 18 next year (Eugene, John and Thomas)
Apollo-11	Mission with Moon landing and back, July 19 next year (Neil, Buzz and Michael)

Thus, there will be no discussion, whether the mission take place. But we in the NASA is responsible, HOW we do it. The White House will not check any technical details, these are all under our responsibility. That means also, we have full coverage by the White House for any way of realization that is complying to the named criteria. Of course, the president officially doesn't know any details, but this is always the case at critical missions. But I do know, we have the coverage. The only condition is, that you astronauts all are cooperating 100%. So your loyalty is expected absolutely.

I'd rather not want to speculate or analyse what happens, if this premise would be violated. You know yourself, how important the mission is for the nation and how the government reacts to such situations. It would be called "treason"!

Back to the goals: We also have our goals at NASA. And now the good news: they are pretty similar! Failure is not an option for us either! We don't want to lose a life, your life. Therefore, you have a say with each team as to whether or not you board the rocket on the dates mentioned. Of course you get in, but the question is whether you stay there or come out again when the camera has turned away...

I plan to create some alternative scenarios. If we fly unmanned (scenario "C"), we have all video and image material for the mission ready at the time of deployment. All necessary preparations are made in advance. The training sessions we plan with you at specific locations provide a realistic impression of a lunar landscape. In this case we use exactly this material. The capsule landing scene is live. It's the easiest part because you only see the last part on TV anyway. A small Air Force group is responsible for the landing process and lets you fall out of a plane on parachutes in the Apollo capsule. The military aircraft will not be visible, we will certainly find a cloudy region somewhere within 1000 square miles of the said landing site for the television stations. The television channels ABC, CBS and NBC are also cooperating. They are coordinated by Walter Cronkite. He is our confidant. They will only create positive scenes for the public. The Mission Control Center is headed by Christopher C. Kraft. He and a small team will make all the preparations to broadcast the relevant video material to the TV channels at the right time.

Another alternative is scenario "B", flying manned, but only in Earth orbit. This is what we are used to and have experienced several times. However, this time we would take a higher orbit to avoid being seen, but still below the Van Allen Belt. We have no experience with crossing the Van Allen Belt and the theoretical calculations of the extent of radiation do not inspire much confidence. In case "B" we use the real landing scenery, of course. Frank, you should really study the papers and form an opinion. Remember: "Failure is not an option." If Frank's group chose "B" or "C," the others will follow the same decision. The Apollo gadget sequence 8-9-10-11 only makes sense if we choose "A" anyway.

The only thing for sure now is, the rocket will take off.

In case we DO fly, i.e. "A", we proceed as planned, of course. This is the case only, when we are sure, all parts are working flawlessly and if our understanding of the VAB is

problem-free. I don't want to exclude this possibility at this moment already yet. You will be part of the decision, whether this is the case or not.

The decision, which of the scenarios will take place, will be taken and communicated with Frank, 48 hours before mission time Apollo-8. But at that point, you have made up your mind and we will make a short phone call with the message: "Thumb A ok", "Thumb B ok" or "Thumb C ok".

Remember, you are the heroes of the nation, in all cases. The only thing you have to do, is to behave as such, i.e. you won't destroy the Apollo-Myth that is so important for the nation. Life long! But don't worry too much about your mental hygiene. After some years, when the myth is established, it is really hard to destroy it again. People won't want to know any more. Mark Twain said once: "It's easier to fool people than to convince them that they are fooled!" There will be questions from the Press of course. Remember then, you are only soldiers doing their duty. Be Careful: Don't invent details, which you cannot know! Just stay formal and repeat the goals we officially have achieved.

Remember also the Classification Orders that you must comply for all documents and other information you know, concerning the Apollo Mission. The compliance will be a crucial part of your life pension that you enjoy from your responsible work.

The future of the NASA Space activities may become more realistic and even more challenging. You have chosen the right job here and you will have a good and pleasant life and meet interesting people in all the World! Therefore don't do any short-sighted or thoughtless decisions!

So I am glad to cooperate with you from now on and I wish you a pleasant day!