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National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, DC 20546
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NASA OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
303 E STREET, S.W., #P
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546
(202) 358-1600

Administrator Sean O'Keefe Roundtable

MODERATED BY GLENN MAHONE,
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PRESENT:

SEAN O'KEEFE, ADMINISTRATOR OF NASA

JIM JENNINGS,
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR,
INSTITUTIONS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT, NASA

JIM WEATHERBY, ASTRONAUT

SCOTT STRICOFF, BST, Inc.

3:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time
Tuesday, April 13, 2004

[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM A TELEPHONIC RECORDING.]

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 **MR. MAHONE:** Good afternoon. We've got a rainy
3 day. I don't know if all of you had a chance and an
4 opportunity to watch the update that the Administrator did
5 a few moments ago. If you did not, the tape will be ready
6 later on this afternoon, and it will be airing on NASA
7 TV. I think the next one is at 7 o'clock, I believe, 7
8 o'clock this afternoon.

9 I would like to make a couple of introductions.
10 Of course, all of you know the Administrator.

11 For those of you who do not know, this is Jim
12 Jennings. He is the Associate Deputy Administrator for
13 Institutions and Asset Management.

14 We also have with us Astronaut Jim Weatherby who
15 has been working on this issue with Jim over the past
16 several months.

17 We have Scott Stricoff, and Scott is with BST,
18 and, of course, that is the company that we have been
19 working with on this issue.

20 Part of Jim's team is here, also.

21 The Administrator is going to have to leave
22 probably in about 40 minutes, and Jim and the rest are more
23 than willing to stay if you have additional questions.

1 With that, Mr. Administrator?

2 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Thank you all for
3 spending the time. I appreciate the chance to give you a
4 little -- let me just start with a slightly different topic
5 than the one we discussed here at the update a moment ago,
6 but I did make mention of it in the course of it. Indulge
7 me, if you would. I appreciate your willingness to do
8 that.

9 We have really been on a concerted effort in the
10 last several weeks to go out and visit each of what we call
11 the Explorer Schools. These are 50 schools that were
12 selected about a year ago based on their interest in
13 applying for a program that is really kind of a novel
14 approach to things.

15 About a year and a half ago, we had lots of
16 discussion about how to structure our education outreach
17 efforts and inspire the next generation of explorers and so
18 forth. We went about the process of defining a set of
19 approaches, and they were all kinds of ideas and various
20 teachers, associations, and so forth all had different
21 notions on how we do this.

22 We found a little one that was really kind of
23 novel which is to ask schools: What do you need? What

1 have we got? We have got all this great stuff. We are not
2 professional educators. You are. So here is all this
3 great stuff we have, and it is on the website. You can
4 access all of these things, and we made it a lot more
5 user-friendly than it had been and consciously went about
6 the process of trying to make it something that was a
7 navigatable means to do that as well as a lot of
8 educational materials.

9 We said here is the full range of all the stuff
10 we have, what could you use, rather than us swoop it in,
11 saying, "Here is what we have. Take this, and this is what
12 you can use."

13 As a consequence, different schools across the
14 country applied for this program, and it is not a lot of
15 resources. I think it amounts to over a 3-year span that
16 you are in the Explorer School program. It amounts to, in
17 total over the 3 years, \$20,000. So it is not the
18 resources. It is the access to all of the individual
19 programs and activities and materials and people and all
20 the things that we do.

21 We are saying, "This is all the neat stuff we do.
22 Is this of help to you in designing curriculums and
23 educational tools to bring math and science to life?" And

1 rather than going out and soliciting, going to a school and
2 saying you are an Explorer School, we just send out an
3 invitation saying, "Anybody would like to apply, we are
4 going to pick 50 of them." So it was based on the
5 initiative that was taken by individual teachers and
6 administrators at each of these, primarily, middle schools
7 across the country in places where we don't have any center
8 involvement geographically at all.

9 In many of these places, it just turned on the
10 initiative of these teachers in order to really access this
11 information.

12 In the course of the last several weeks, every
13 center director, every associate administrator, every
14 assistant administrator, Jim, I mean you name it, everybody
15 has been to at least one of these schools. I have
16 personally been to four now, and it is unbelievable. It is
17 the most phenomenal transformation, if you will, of
18 communities and schools and so forth that I have ever seen.

19 The whole definition and how the school kind of
20 views itself has changed. You can walk through some of
21 these schools and see the overwhelming kind of influences a
22 lot of this has had, the excitement that is generated. In
23 each of the stops we have made -- and again, these are

1 places that are way outside of any of the centers. So,
2 therefore, the association of NASA was prior to this little
3 or nil, and yet, the enthusiasm at each of these go in and
4 talk about the exploration agenda, where are we going, what
5 is it about, the next generation of explorers that we need
6 to motivate folks to think about being engaged in this.

7 The folks who show up is not just the kids that
8 are in the school there, and they are all delighted to have
9 an hour or so off from classes, but it is also their
10 parents, community leaders, folks from all around the area.

11 There are a couple of places where we actually had other
12 schools that came in because they wanted to be part of it,
13 even though they wanted to figure out ways to partner with
14 some of the schools.

15 The original idea was to really connect with how
16 are we doing with this, are we providing the right
17 information, is it of utility to the schools involved, and
18 the second part was to really advance this broader mission
19 objective we have of inspiring the next generation of
20 explorers, which was written into the very charter of this
21 agency 45 years ago. It has been a very fundamental aspect
22 of what we are supposed to do.

23 And what I didn't expect to come out of it was, I

1 think, the renewing kind of experience that all of us have
2 had in doing this of why this stuff really matters, why
3 people really care about this, and the enthusiasm has just
4 been something I never imagined. I couldn't gather the
5 depth of that enthusiasm for it.

6 This is not because they were all prompted to do
7 it. They really genuinely look at this and say this is
8 interesting, fascinating, cool stuff. It is kind of a neat
9 way, what I didn't realize and didn't anticipate quite to
10 the depth that it has occurred, a great way, I think, for
11 all senior leadership around the agency and all of the
12 colleagues who have also volunteered for doing this stuff,
13 too, to really engage with the people we serve and why it
14 really matters to them and why this is really something
15 that is of value. It kind of helps recharge batteries and
16 to remind you that this is really important stuff, and it
17 has great bearing, I think, on the conversation I had today
18 with our colleagues and the survey that was released
19 yesterday and so forth, which I think is indicative of, I
20 think, a couple of issues that are very important.

21 The way we view each other in this agency -- and
22 the survey results, I think, very clearly, when compared to
23 all the different corporations, agencies, other

1 organizations that BST has engaged, over 200 of them over
2 the many years, they are really quite a bench-mark
3 institution. Scott, I am sure can speak to the depth of
4 experience that his firm brings to this, to help
5 facilitate, not give you the answer, to help facilitate
6 what folks think of what we do.

7 In some ways, this whole experience with the
8 Explorer Schools has reminded me why we need to engage in
9 this. It has bearing not just in terms of what we do to
10 each other and how we treat each other in helping to
11 accomplish these goals, but if we are more successful at
12 it, it really has the benefit to the broader public that we
13 serve. If we are that much better at it by really coming
14 to grips with some of the things we think are good parts
15 about what we see among and between ourselves and the way
16 we do business and how we behave and how we treat each
17 other as well as how we carry out the public's business, it
18 means we will be just that much better at doing this in the
19 future.

20 It is an important set of objectives and one that
21 I think is a good reminder of why we are doing this. It
22 isn't just for the yucks of it. It is really because it
23 has great benefit and great bearing, and the public

1 reaction to is really is important. That is the kind of
2 stuff that is worth doing, that great nations do great
3 things like this, and we need to be involved in it and more
4 expansive in the way we look at these questions.

5 Rather than just a psychology profile of how we
6 ought to treat each other, it really is a case where it has
7 meaning when we do better at what we do because there are
8 people out there that are really counting on it. It is a
9 renewing, uplifting kind of experience that I did not
10 anticipate, and I was just really gratified to have. So,
11 as a consequence, I am looking for more Explorer School
12 opportunities to go to because it really is kind of a neat
13 reinforcement of why it is what we are doing is so
14 significant.

15 That is it. We have got a lot of work to do.
16 The survey itself tells us a lot about the areas that we
17 have some very positive kinds of responses and reactions
18 among and between ourselves of what we think we are engaged
19 in and how we can be that much better as an organization.

20 Again, frankly, by what Scott and his BST
21 colleagues tell us, these are among the very highest
22 observations that they have seen, the most exemplary
23 observations they have seen in over 200 organizations,

1 among the highest.

2 There is also a couple of cases where we really
3 need to be mindful of, and I have talked a lot about it
4 today with my colleagues, which is the manner in which we
5 treat each other, what appears to be the survey result here
6 is that the view is as long as we are all in something
7 together and we are in a division or a branch or we can
8 relate to each other and so forth, that the esteem between
9 and among colleagues is viewed very positively.

10 Once you get beyond the scope of what your daily
11 activity is, the view is that as an institution, as an
12 agency, we are not as good at supporting professional
13 development and opportunity and so forth and value of what
14 we contribute professionally as we could be and should be,
15 and that is an area where we really need to get specific
16 and figure out exactly what is it that we need to do better
17 in terms of professional development, training
18 opportunities, advancement, clarity, whatever. There are a
19 number of different specific things we can do, I think,
20 that will enhance that as well as the broader observation.

21 We need to create a climate, I think is what the
22 BST report talks about at parallel two in which open
23 communications is not only permissible, it is actively

1 encouraged, and we have talked about this a bunch of times,
2 certainly since the Accident Investigation Board report,
3 but certainly well before that, of what the challenges of
4 human dynamics, human relationships, human communication
5 that needs to be improved. That is one that we clearly
6 keep reminding ourselves needs improvement. It needs to be
7 facilitated at lots of different levels, but the leadership
8 has got to take it on starting with me. That is something
9 that I think we are all committed to, and we are certainly
10 going to continue to work our way through.

11 The second area, too, I think is a very clear
12 indication that our colleagues all are of the mind that
13 what we say about the foundation of safety upon which we
14 are built and what we do is a good commentary, but we don't
15 actually live it as deeply as we say we do. That is
16 something we really can deal with a lot more specifically,
17 and it means we have really got to recommit ourselves to
18 really looking at specific kinds of cases in which we
19 remind ourselves that we will never eliminate the risk, but
20 we can certainly minimize it much more than we are doing
21 right now. That is everything we are engaged in, not just
22 individual programs and so forth, but every activity.

23 Again, it is those two areas in particular that

1 builds on the other nine areas where we are really quite
2 exemplary in lots of things, and it is what I think can
3 really materially alter and change the way we do business
4 and how we behave and how ultimately the culture is defined
5 in this agency.

6 So, with that, let me stop and just take time out
7 for your thoughts or questions.

8 Yes, sir.

9 **QUESTIONER:** Well, having said that, what are
10 your specific ideas to respond to these recommendations for
11 structure?

12 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, I think we need to
13 get very clear about developing what those approaches are,
14 but there are two immediate things that we have done.

15 The first one is, again, the Diaz report that
16 came out a couple of months ago. It had some very specific
17 actionable items that are agency-wide. It isn't related to
18 one center or one activity or whatever else, and there are
19 a whole range of specific policies and ways we do business
20 that are addressed in that report and there are
21 deliverables that are anticipated. That is on the website.

22 It is available. We can get you copies of it, et cetera.

23 It very clearly lays out an agenda of what we need to do

1 to address some of this.

2 I think a lot of it, what our colleagues at BST
3 have reminded us, are the kinds of things that come out of
4 this survey and say here are the kind of things you need to
5 do and respond to that.

6 In addition to that, I think we also need to, I
7 think, focus on, again, the facilitation that the firm is
8 providing for us to help open up the communication loop in
9 a much wider open array and doing things in a more
10 proactive way that really encourages folks to create a
11 climate in which this kind of constructive communication
12 and dialogue is exchanged.

13 Finally, I think the second area or point of view
14 is the range of different things we need to do, very
15 specifically, to address the observation on the part of
16 folks that as an institution we don't support our people as
17 well as we should.

18 The first things we can start with, again, is to
19 really focus on professional development, really focus on
20 training opportunities, really focus on a workforce kind of
21 environment issues and then really tease out this question
22 much more broadly of what specifically will people say that
23 is what will change my disposition of how deeply the

1 institution supports me as part of the inquiry we really
2 have to engage in at every leadership level throughout the
3 agency, to really inquire of people exactly what is it that
4 would have you believe that the institution supports you
5 better and get those ideas from each other, from all of us
6 as colleagues, as opposed to saying I have this preordained
7 answer and this is going to fix it.

8 Much of that is what the facilitation process
9 that BST is helping us work through. It will give us the
10 chance to go inventory and figure out how we proceed from
11 there.

12 Yes, ma'am.

13 **QUESTIONER:** So are you specifically embracing
14 BST's 3-year plan with 5 months start-up and all of that?

15 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, I think what they
16 have clearly delivered is, again, a wide path that
17 describes how we proceed ahead and some measurable metrics.

18 I mean as real things we can look to in 5 months time to
19 see how this process can move along.

20 Again, this is not something that started up
21 yesterday. We have been at this now for months, since the
22 Accident Investigation Board report came out. I have been
23 consulting with them and others to try to formulate what

1 the right way to do this would be and the ultimately
2 settled on, I think, the approach, the facilitation effort
3 that they can bring to bear on this.

4 So, again, it isn't what they are going to
5 deliver. It is what we are going to do ourselves. They
6 are just there to help set the framework for it. We have
7 got to adopt this ourselves.

8 **QUESTIONER:** But are you agreeing to the
9 one-on-one coaching--

10 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Oh, yes, absolutely.

11 **QUESTIONER:** --and the interviewing?

12 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Absolutely. Signed up.
13 We are there. As a matter of fact, my first one is
14 tomorrow.

15 Yes, sir.

16 **QUESTIONER:** You mentioned professional
17 development, the need for more professional development. I
18 take it, you can look to Corporate America and find
19 companies that do a better job than that, tending to
20 professional development needs in the workforce, but what
21 about when you look throughout the Federal Government? Are
22 there any agencies you are aware of that do a much better
23 job, or is there a certain standardization given that a lot

1 of things flow down from the Office of Personnel naturally?

2 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, that is a tough one
3 because, frankly, there is a break-up here downstairs at
4 the [inaudible] Clay Johnson and Kay Coles James. We are
5 here to recognize that we are the best agency in the
6 Federal Government on human capital strategic planning and
7 how we treat, how we look to move ahead on the workforce.
8 We have got the highest rating of the entire Federal
9 Government on this.

10 The surveys that came out, conducted by others
11 than us, suggest this is the most desirable agency to work
12 for in the Federal Government. That is the American
13 University survey that was released last fall or whatever.

14 There is a lot to build on here. There is a lot
15 of good best practices to look at across the Federal
16 agencies, but many of them are calling us to figure out how
17 did you all do this, how did you get your way forward in
18 this. So, while we may not be there in our judgment as
19 colleagues among and between each other, we obviously are
20 heading down a pretty good path and it is one that, again,
21 all the measurable metrics that are out there would tell
22 you that there are some things we need to emphasize and
23 things we need to do differently, but we have got a pretty

1 solid foundation in terms of enthusiasm and interest on the
2 part of colleagues around the agencies as well as best
3 practices we have adopted.

4 Final point. In the Workforce Flexibility Act
5 that the Congress just enacted 6 weeks ago that we have
6 been working for over a year to have enacted, and the
7 President signed it, incorporates the best practices of
8 every agency out there.

9 I am eternally grateful to Kay Coles James
10 because she worked with us to develop a piece of
11 legislation that would take every pilot program, every test
12 program, every approach that has been done at every other
13 agency and look at the full range of all of them and which
14 ones that would have greatest likelihood, suitability, and
15 advantage to this agency. We package them all up based on
16 that Federal-wide bench mark, best practices experience,
17 put it altogether, and put it together as the NASA
18 Workforce Flexibilities Act, and the Congress finally
19 enacted it.

20 So we have been looking to one of the best
21 practices out there, how do we incorporate and how do we
22 get motion, and we have from the date of enactment
23 something like -- we had to wait until June to begin to

1 implement it. It is a report requirement. That report has
2 been delivered. We have laid it all out, "Here is how we
3 intend to implement all of these provisions that take these
4 best practices from across the agencies of the Federal
5 Government and implement them." So we are anxious to get
6 started come June when we are permitted to do so by law.

7 Yes, sir.

8 **QUESTIONER:** A lot of the stuff that is in this
9 report, I read it and I said no kidding. You look back at
10 some of the studies that go back to '96 and '97 and it
11 seems to be that NASA is just getting better at the old
12 things. People say, "Well, I am afraid to speak out."
13 Well, now they will say publicly that "I am afraid to speak
14 out," but they won't speak out. Yet, I have gotten five or
15 six responses before I left the house this morning from
16 NASA Watch saying, "Yeah, this is great, but don't quote
17 me."

18 It always comes back that there seems to be some
19 sort of force field that middle management, not the
20 individual, not the higher-ups -- there seems to be some
21 pervasive block. Has this process been given any guidance
22 to go find these blocks? They seem to be individual or
23 certain ways of management. If you don't get that from the

1 responses, then people are like walking around thinking how
2 can I keep somebody from talking. It is more like they
3 want to, but something stops them somewhere, and it is an
4 amorphous something.

5 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Let me ask my colleagues
6 to speak to this one, particularly Jim. He has really
7 spent a lot of time working on this earlier on. It was
8 before the Accident Investigation Board report had come
9 out. Jim had really done a comprehensive look at some of
10 the stuff. So I will ask him to speak to this for a
11 second.

12 It strikes me as two things going on, just
13 generally. The first one is a natural human propensity to
14 really not want to get too far out in front on something
15 like this in a big group of people. It is a natural
16 characteristic on the part of -- not all, but most --

17 **QUESTIONER:** With attribution?

18 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** With attribution, that is
19 right. It is a general view.

20 I mean, I know this is going to come as a big
21 shock to all of you here in the room, but there is a lot of
22 people that don't like talking to you all. They are afraid
23 to talk to you, and that is not true just at NASA. That is

1 true with any Federal agency, any corporation. You all
2 know this. So the issue of being identified is something
3 that is kind of against human nature in a lot of ways. So
4 there is a little bit of that going on, I think, that has
5 to always be present. You have to constantly figure out a
6 way to conquer that because there is a bit of that kind of
7 view.

8 The second one, though, I think is there really
9 obviously has been -- and the Accident Investigation Board
10 laid this out. I mean, it was powerful commentary, among
11 the most powerful commentaries that I heard from Al Gehman
12 was he said, "Everything that has been written in this
13 report are also observations about the way people behave.
14 It is not only things that we have heard about or could
15 document, but we saw ourselves." Now, that really is
16 enough to kind of stand you up and say the Accident
17 Investigation Board clearly witnessed folks who basically
18 were in a mode of saying, "Wait a minute. Don't listen to
19 that guy. He doesn't know what he is talking about,"
20 things like this. That is just indicative of, I think, the
21 kinds of challenges that we have ran across during the
22 accident itself, what would cause it.

23 It is kind a mind-check that says we have got

1 things to do, we have got to get on with this, and we don't
2 have time to listen to everybody moan and groan about every
3 issue out there. That is part of the mind-set, and it is
4 not something that is malicious or sinister, generally, but
5 more so, I think it is dispositional. And we have got to
6 shift that.

7 **QUESTIONER:** Well, my observation is that it
8 seems to be that people are at about 10,000 feet on this.
9 They know there is a problem just below, but they just
10 won't go all the way into either pointing at a level of
11 management or a type of manager or a place or an
12 organization. It is kind of like you know it when you
13 smell it, but you don't know exactly where it is coming
14 from, but you smell it.

15 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** I am conflicted with that
16 one because I get a lot of e-mails, and they are
17 identified.

18 **QUESTIONER:** [Inaudible.]

19 [Laughter.]

20 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** There is certainly a view
21 that is out there that there is a real reticence to want to
22 wind up in an open setting and that there is not a climate
23 that encourages that, which is the second major problem I

1 think that was identified in the survey.

2 It is a challenge of communications. An academic
3 colleague of mine at Syracuse used to always define this, a
4 profound observation. He said this is indicative of the
5 fact that people are hard. This is really tough.

6 Jim?

7 **MR. WEATHERBY:** The first thing that I think we
8 should do is to find out why people are reluctant to speak
9 up, and there are various reasons. There are about 12 that
10 I can come up with.

11 In large part, it is not because they are afraid
12 of being fired. In very large part, they are afraid of
13 becoming rendered ineffective and being moved to a
14 different job, which to somebody at NASA, it is the
15 equivalent of being fired. There is something always
16 falling down the process, always speaking up, "I don't get
17 listened to anymore." So that is a great fear that people
18 have to render it ineffective.

19 It stems from the can-do spirit, the culture.
20 Our pervasive culture for the last 45 years has been one of
21 mission accomplishment, and we really get things done. If
22 there is someone who is slowing down the process, it is
23 only the managers that are feeling pressure to not speak

1 up, but sometimes it is even the peers. So you really have
2 to understand all the various different reasons why people
3 are reluctant to speak up, and I acknowledge that there are
4 very many people that will not speak up.

5 Then, as Mr. O'Keefe says, we need to create an
6 environment that encourages people to speak up. One of the
7 most powerful things I have ever heard, Tony Tarelli [ph]
8 out of postgraduate school said, "For people to speak up at
9 NASA, they have to believe that the leaders are willing to
10 accept the setbacks when they elevate concerns," and that
11 is a very difficult thing to do if we want to get on with
12 it.

13 One of the things we can do is create an
14 environment where a launch hold is viewed as a successful
15 manifestation of a good safety culture, not a bad
16 manifestation. It isn't that we failed because we held a
17 launch; it is because we succeeded at stopping a launch
18 when we shouldn't have launched. We have to be bold enough
19 to not read the newspapers and see any of the editorials
20 about how NASA failed again. We have to do what is right.

21 It is a very easy thing to say, to do what is right. It
22 is a very difficult thing to explain. The issues are so
23 complicated and so demanding, but we must create an

1 environment that allows people to speak up without fear of
2 retribution.

3 Again, as Mr. O'Keefe says, you don't have to do
4 what the person is voicing dissent or a minority opinion.
5 You don't have to do what [inaudible] says, but you must
6 engage that person and find out what is going on behind
7 what they are saying and then really have it open and air
8 the concern before you make a decision.

9 If you do that, there are two things that are
10 great that happen. You engage the collective IQ of the
11 whole group of people, not just the leaders or the
12 supervisors, but the workers who are close and cognizant of
13 the data. When we engage the collective IQ, you come up
14 with a better decision.

15 The second thing is you get people to buy into
16 this decision, whatever it is. If they feel like they are
17 part of this decision going into the input and they are
18 being listened to, then they are going to buy into the
19 ultimate answer.

20 Just a couple of quick things we can do, right
21 off the top is to, again, as Mr. O'Keefe says, create an
22 environment of respect, where people feel respected, create
23 an environment of trust where the worker can come and the

1 supervisor or upper-level people trust that what they are
2 saying is valid because they are the experts and they know
3 what they are talking about. They are working the issues.

4 We need to create an environment of openness, candor, and
5 honesty where people can say things and not feel like they
6 are going to be pushed aside or rendered ineffective, and
7 then, fourthly, an environment of mindfulness where we are
8 thinking about all the factors that go into it, not just
9 the one concern, but all the different factors. It isn't
10 just budget. It isn't just cost. It isn't just technical.
11 It is all of them properly balanced.

12 I could go on forever.

13 **MR. MAHONE:** For all of you that is on the line,
14 that was Jim Weatherby, and he will be available
15 afterwards, but just since it wasn't identified, that was
16 Jim Weatherby. I'm sorry.

17 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** There is one real
18 specific manifestation in what Jim has talked about that is
19 pretty powerful. It is one we really thrashed around with
20 and are looking to make as a kind of standard way of doing
21 business that is an element of the way the Naval reactors
22 community does business, which is to always, always, always
23 solicit minority opinion.

1 If everybody sits there and says, "Yep, we are
2 all in agreement on this," you have got to worry. If there
3 isn't a minority view that is expressed, then go out and
4 find one. What is the opposition position to what it is
5 you are proceeding with? So at least you can reconcile it
6 and understand what it is. It is the very best the way
7 that the peer review system works, and it has the effect in
8 the Naval reactors community, interestingly, of then
9 prompting others to look at that opposing position and say,
10 "You know, there is something to that. Maybe I am not as
11 solid about my position as I thought I was because I am
12 just now hearing something different." So, as a
13 consequence, it helps moderate stridency, if you will, of
14 those who believe with great conviction of where they are
15 going.

16 If they start here in the opposing view, it kind
17 of motivates you to think about either reinforcing why you
18 believe what you believe and understanding why you do
19 better or you moderate that view.

20 Yes, ma'am.

21 **QUESTIONER:** I have two questions, actually, one
22 for you and then a follow-up for Mr. Stricoff. Given what
23 this report says about contractors feeling like they are

1 being treated as second-class citizens, what do you intend
2 to do to fold them into this perfection survey and get them
3 to buy into the things that you are talking about today?

4 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, the first major
5 step on this is to really try to size what the universe is
6 we are talking about.

7 The contracting community is very, very vast in
8 terms of what we are doing here, and there are some folks
9 in the contracting community that work side by side with
10 public servants. There are others where they are removed
11 geographically, physically, from direct interaction as a
12 consequence of a deliverable they are asked to do. So we
13 really got to look at what is the most effective way to be
14 inclusive in that process because there is a lot of cases.

15 My bias up front is to say for those areas where
16 we have performance contracts and services contracts for
17 which we are working together side by side, they ought to
18 be included in the process. At the same time, it is a
19 difficult task to really just get the size of what the
20 universe is here we are dealing with. To organize this in
21 a way that is effective is one of the tasks that Scott and
22 his colleagues are working on is thinking through exactly
23 how do we do this. I suspect that will be part of that at

1 the end of the 5-month period, exactly how we will enjoin
2 that particular question.

3 **QUESTIONER:** The follow-up that I have is you
4 have heard Mr. O'Keefe's summary of your report and his
5 explanation of this situation as it seems. Did he miss
6 anything? Is he correct?

7 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Would you like me to
8 leave?

9 [Laughter.]

10 **QUESTIONER:** No. I would like you to hear it.

11 **MR. STRICOFF:** Yes, I think it was a good
12 summary. I think, as he said, there are a number of
13 elements of culture as we measured it that are very strong,
14 and that is not a surprise. It is consistent with other
15 surveys that have been done by other people recently at
16 NASA, but there are some elements that need improvement,
17 and they particularly need improvement given the complexity
18 of the mission that NASA undertakes, which we are not
19 making washing machines here. This is complicated stuff,
20 and it has a high level of risk associated with it. If you
21 are going to be an organization that functions in that kind
22 of an environment, our view would be that you really can't
23 settle for being anything other than the best when it comes

1 to these kinds of organizational characteristics.

2 From what I have heard, I think the leadership of
3 NASA has bought into that and agreed with that.

4 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** If I could just pile on
5 one point, Scott's observation of how we really have to set
6 a different standard is best manifested by the reaction
7 across the agency to the safety issue.

8 We rank and score higher than the average of most
9 of the organizations they have interviewed, and folks sit
10 back and say on a scale of 1 to 5, we think we are about a
11 3. I think it is roughly in that area, 3-point, a percent,
12 but in that neighborhood. Well, you sit back and say,
13 "Well, that's [inaudible]." No. The answer is that is
14 unacceptable.

15 If there is anybody that believes that we are
16 saying one thing and doing another, it, therefore,
17 diminishes that from a solid 5, that this is the most
18 important thing. We say it is at the foundation of what we
19 do. It is a fundamental aspect. It is a price of
20 admission. It is what Gehman refers to as the equivalent
21 of a Faustian oath or a pledge that we have bought into for
22 exploration. It is an understanding that this has risk
23 attended to it and safety is paramount in order to

1 understand that risk and to be able to mitigate it as much
2 as possible.

3 Anything less than an over-the-top superlative
4 No. 5, highest ranking on the chart of anybody you have
5 ever talked to, belies what it is we say we do. So the bar
6 we have got to set has got to be exceedingly high on this,
7 and it really has to be an attitude that we instill
8 throughout the agency that says, "Wait a minute. If there
9 is a disconnect between what it is we are saying and what
10 we are doing, we need to fix that."

11 **QUESTIONER:** Two questions. First of all, sort
12 of a follow-up of what was said about the recommendations
13 in this. Are there any that you are not planning to
14 implement that you just rejected as not being said?

15 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, I am not familiar
16 with any.

17 **PARTICIPANT:** No, I'm [inaudible] how we go about
18 implementing some of them, we may [inaudible].

19 **QUESTIONER:** And the second question is the
20 report talks about these are some of the issues in terms of
21 safety culture that came up with the challenge. What makes
22 you in implementing this still certain that you can solve
23 this problem for the long term and not for the short term?

1 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Gosh, only fools have no
2 doubts. Okay?

3 You know, I am not certain of anything in this
4 life. We sure are going to give it our best effort all the
5 way through. We are committed to doing that, and
6 independent of the history, we really have got to resolve
7 to work this through, and it starts with the Columbia
8 Accident Investigation Board report implementing every one
9 of those recommendations to the best of our ability,
10 complying with those recommendations, not parsing through
11 the arguments. No. Do it. Okay? And that is everybody
12 up and down the process has resolved to do that. We have
13 embraced that before. That was a big step on our part.

14 We have been through this in being diligent about
15 not cutting the corners on this and absolutely serious
16 about having this implemented correctly. We have brought
17 in an external bunch of reviewers to make sure that we are
18 doing it right, and if we are kidding ourselves, they point
19 it out. And none of them have demonstrated themselves to
20 be [inaudible]. They are meeting at Johnson right now, as
21 a matter of fact. I suspect I will hear from lots of our
22 NASA colleagues who will say, "Boy, we just took another
23 shellacking today on Issue X or Y," because they are not

1 sitting back and saying, "Sure, talk yourself into this
2 one."

3 It really is a case where we want to avoid really
4 talking ourselves into some answer that is more convenient.

5 We can employ exactly the same diligence in working
6 through the Diaz report as well as the observations, I
7 think, that will be coming forward that we are making of
8 ourselves that is being facilitated by this particular
9 review. So I think that this is all part of that process.

10 Warren, I'm sorry.

11 **QUESTIONER:** I am actually going to ask a
12 different question.

13 **QUESTIONER:** I had one.

14 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Oh, I'm sorry.

15 **QUESTIONER:** You mentioned how you personally are
16 going to deal with this. You are having your first session
17 tomorrow. You said kind of a one-on-one. Are you going to
18 have to essentially go back to management school, or what
19 kind of ideas? What can you personally do to kind of
20 implement the recommendations here, and how will it affect
21 -- I mean, how do you reach out to, I guess, the people
22 that work for you, your immediate staff and all of that?
23 What do you see as some changes that you might have to

1 personally deal with?

2 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** I think the manifestation
3 of the old adage is that you have to lead by example, and
4 what I say is kind of, you know, okay, that is interesting,
5 but if you are not really doing it, if you are not really
6 walking the walk and demonstrating to folks that you are
7 serious about doing this, you can't expect others to sit
8 back and say one thing and do something else. We have got
9 to be really serious about complying with this, and again,
10 there is a whole range of things that I think we have to do
11 as to the leadership, and it starts with me, that really
12 have to indicate that yes, indeed, we are going to follow
13 through on every one of these approaches to it and behave
14 in a manner in which we want to see others do the same
15 thing and encourage that kind of view.

16 So, look, I have just got to be diligent about
17 it. There is no doubt about it.

18 **QUESTIONER:** I have a quick follow-up. How deep
19 do you go up? I mean, you deal with high-level people
20 here, staff people here. You deal with center directors.
21 How far down are you willing to go or will you go to deal
22 with, let's say, the lower echelon and set up
23 communications with people below that level?

1 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, with this first
2 effort in the next 5 months -- and, Scott, correct me if I
3 am over- or understating this -- there are some very
4 specific places we are going to begin, again, facilitating
5 a broader discussion and dialogue and so forth and
6 different best practices, et cetera, that we can
7 incorporate at the International Space Station -- oh, I'm
8 sorry. That is, originally we thought about that. It is
9 on the Shuttle program?

10 **PARTICIPANT:** Yes. That is an area that it will
11 be.

12 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** That is an area where it
13 will be. That is a place we are starting. So it is going
14 to begin at certain places, and we will see how we modify
15 that, how deep you drill and all that kind of stuff, as we
16 work our way through this.

17 **QUESTIONER:** Could you list that list again?
18 Shuttle?

19 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Oh, I'm sorry. I
20 misstated it. At one point, we were kind of thrashing
21 through the approaches we take and where we begin, and it
22 turns on engineering directorate at Johnson, mission
23 operations directorate at Johnson, all of Glenn, all of

1 Stennis -- those are two very different kinds of locations
2 in that respect -- and the safety and mission assurance
3 organization at Kennedy and at Goddard.

4 **QUESTIONER:** There was one line in the report I
5 was hoping you could respond to. It said there is a clear
6 perception that budget constraints compromise engineering a
7 mission of safety. That struck me as a serious concern,
8 starting with there is very little money. Do you think
9 there is a problem with budget constraints here that could
10 hamper mission safety, or is it just a perception problem?
11 Do you have any idea what would cause that kind of
12 perception?

13 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Well, this one, we really
14 need to work at hard because I have never been part of any
15 organization anywhere, public, private -- it doesn't matter
16 what -- in any of my professional experiences in which I
17 ever met anybody who stepped up and said, "I got plenty
18 enough money. No, thank you. I don't need any more. I am
19 all set. It looks find." These are among the things I
20 have never heard, and I fully expect I will never hear them
21 as long as I live in any professional experience.

22 There is always an opportunity. There is always
23 a circumstance where resources are required. So what you

1 have got to do is start with the premise that it is a
2 constant competition among and between priorities, and so
3 trying to get the appropriate measurement, the appropriate
4 metric, the appropriate means to actually evaluate what is
5 resource-necessary to proceed with different directions on
6 this and to assure this is the most important part of your
7 problem rather than the view that is expressed because
8 there is a lot of competing views about this one.

9 It is one we really have to come to closure on
10 and understand very clearly what it is we think we will
11 gain or lose by varying levels of resource dedication, and
12 there are some folks, this is still a debate. It has been
13 going on for 10 years that I am told or at least aware of,
14 which is we move from a quality-control approach, which
15 every single thing is stamped and inspected, to one that is
16 more of a quality-assurance mind-set, which is a very
17 modern, contemporary approach that is a best-practice bench
18 mark of the very best, highest standard, most safe
19 corporations in America.

20 There are still folks who believe we should go
21 back to the quality-control approach. Now, is that because
22 it is a lack of resources, or is it a different
23 methodology? I think it is the latter.

1 This is a real tough one, and it is one we really
2 have to be extremely diligent in making sure that folks
3 understand that this is what we are going to do to improve
4 safety. This is what is necessary financially
5 resource-wise to really do it right and have folks sit back
6 and say, "Yep, that is what is going to be necessary in
7 order to achieve this," rather than I think it ought to be
8 bigger, better, this, that, whatever, more, and you really
9 have got to evaluate those carefully.

10 **MR. MAHONE:** The Administrator has another event
11 that he really has to get to, but Jim and the rest of the
12 team will stay around for a few minutes to answer any
13 follow-ups for you.

14 **ADMINISTRATOR O'KEEFE:** Thank you all very much.
15 I'm sorry to hold you up.

16 **QUESTIONER:** Jim, can you follow up on what you
17 were talking about how it starts at the different places
18 that you mentioned and what exactly will start there and
19 how that process will begin?

20 **MR. JENNINGS:** We knew that we couldn't take the
21 whole agency as one. So what we wanted to do was take some
22 areas that would give us a measure of what we are doing
23 that says it is successful, to make sure it is successful,

1 before we distribute it to the whole area.

2 Frankly, we have looked at some of the scores
3 that we got coming in, and Stennis scored lower on the
4 survey than our other NASA centers. So we decided that
5 that would be a good place to start. So we are going to go
6 into those organizations and develop a [inaudible] plan for
7 how we intervene with those organizations to improve what
8 we have seen.

9 We are going to start with the leadership, do
10 some assessments of leadership behaviors, things like
11 [inaudible], to get an idea of how the leader is behaving,
12 and then we will develop an individual action plan for
13 those leaders, the sort of things that will lead to change
14 to improve the organization.

15 We will also do some feedback for those leaders,
16 actually of their [inaudible], to see if they are actually
17 doing what they say they are doing, and we will do some
18 behavior-based team training for other parts of the
19 organization to start moving those organizations forward.

20 So, in those organizations that we have
21 identified, those are the kinds of things we will start
22 doing to try to change those organizations.

23 **QUESTIONER:** Why did you pick Kennedy and the

1 others? You mentioned why you picked Glenn and Stennis.

2 **MR. JENNINGS:** That is an area that we are really
3 interested in. Kennedy, we are doing a reorganization of
4 that organization to improve it. We had gathered some
5 comments about some of the upward mobilities, some of the
6 same things that we saw need improving in those
7 organizations. So we want to look at that.

8 Goddard, on the other hand, was, I guess, an
9 organization that was pretty stable and in general got a
10 good report.

11 So we wanted to do two different organizations,
12 one that was changing --

13 **QUESTIONER:** Goddard or Johnson?

14 **MR. JENNINGS:** Goddard. Goddard, yes.

15 So we have got a good baseline. Because Kennedy
16 is changing, we wanted to do one that -- there was also
17 data on that, primarily the reason we picked to do Goddard.

18 **QUESTIONER:** And what about JSC? Is it just
19 because it is held like a Shuttle program?

20 **MR. JENNINGS:** We decided that the mission ops
21 and engineering are organizations that we are looking to
22 start working more closely together and it is a cursor that
23 we want them to start working better as an organization.

1 So we thought it would be a good time to intervene in those
2 organizations since we are really trying to change the way
3 they do business. We need to communicate more with each
4 other, work closer together. So that is one of the primary
5 reasons.

6 **QUESTIONER:** Mr. Jennings, what did you mean by
7 [inaudible] needs changing?

8 **MR. JENNINGS:** They are reorganizing their SMNA
9 organizations.

10 **QUESTIONER:** SMNA?

11 **MR. JENNINGS:** Right. In 2000, we decentralized
12 and now we are centralizing the organization.

13 **QUESTIONER:** Two questions. One, does this mean
14 that Mr. O'Keefe has a lesson plan that he has to follow in
15 terms of -- you know, he probably gets into it. He is
16 [inaudible].

17 Second of all, looking at some of the responses,
18 headquarters responses sucked in many ways. Wouldn't you
19 think that, you know, the fish and the head rotting and all
20 of that sort of stuff, that you want to start at
21 headquarters to set examples for the agency?

22 **MR. JENNINGS:** Yes. We are starting with some of
23 the leadership at headquarters. That wasn't brought up,

1 but we have taken, I guess, 10 or 15 of the key leaders at
2 headquarters and start working with those individuals, and
3 we will use the same methods that we are using with the
4 others. So we are starting at headquarters.

5 But, you know, Sean's mentoring, he would get
6 feedback from Tom Krause who is president of BST on what he
7 has observed in the organization, also what he has observed
8 about Sean. So it would be a real candid feedback of what
9 is going on in the organization.

10 **QUESTIONER:** Is that tomorrow's session?

11 **MR. JENNINGS:** Yes.

12 **QUESTIONER:** So how is that set up, like an hour,
13 just the two of them sitting down?

14 **MR. JENNINGS:** It is a one-on-one session. I
15 don't know how long they have.

16 **PARTICIPANT:** Management therapy.

17 [Laughter.]

18 **MR. JENNINGS:** Do you want to describe it a
19 little bit, Scott?

20 **MR. STRICOFF:** One of the things, a
21 characteristic in any organization, especially large
22 organizations, is the higher up the organization you go,
23 the less feedback individual executives get. More and

1 more, they find themselves in a vacuum. What we find is
2 that it is very helpful to be able to get them and outside
3 resources and speak candidly with them and give them advice
4 about ways that they can have the kind of facts that you
5 want them to have on their organization because it is hard
6 for anybody to see how they are affecting an organization
7 themselves. Somebody in Mr. O'Keefe's position doesn't get
8 a lot of feedback about that from subordinates or anybody
9 else. So that is basically what it is about.

10 **QUESTIONER:** So how is this different than the
11 fad, [inaudible] and TQM, all this other nonsense where I
12 would go to this training and my bosses would go? How is
13 this different than every darn management fad that the
14 agency has been through in the last 15 years? What is
15 different?

16 **MR. STRICOFF:** The premise is that if you want
17 individual contributors to behave differently, whether it
18 is communicating better or upward or something else, what
19 individuals do is based primarily on the consequences that
20 they expect to receive from the organization.

21 So, if I want individuals to be more open in
22 their communication upward, I can't get that by training
23 them, and I can't get that by telling them or putting

1 posters on the wall.

2 The way I have to get that is by modifying the
3 kind of behavior that we see in their immediate superiors.

4 Their supervisors have to be looking for that feedback,
5 have to be reacting to it in a way that is positive. It
6 has to be closing loops when they get issues raised to
7 them, and for that to happen, their superiors have to be
8 behaving in a way that might [inaudible].

9 So, for that reason, what we are doing is
10 starting at the top, Mr. O'Keefe and other people at
11 headquarters, coming down through the center directors at
12 the individual targeted locations we were talking about and
13 down through those organizations to create in a cascaded
14 sort of way leadership practices, leadership behaviors that
15 encourage and create the right atmosphere to encourage the
16 kind of behavior that you want [inaudible].

17 **QUESTIONER:** What do you do when the least level
18 where the guy says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, this is what I am
19 supposed to do," and they don't change? But you can't fire
20 anybody at NASA. If the person doesn't become more open,
21 it is like almost using the process of [inaudible]. How do
22 you get beyond that? How do you change some people that
23 are the problem?

1 **MR. STRICOFF:** You know, I am not an expert in
2 Government personnel policies, but even though you can't
3 fire anybody in the Federal Government, I assume there are
4 ways to deal with that issue, given different environments.

5 **MR. JENNINGS:** Yes.

6 **QUESTIONER:** [Inaudible] has been doing that for
7 years. How is this different than all of that?

8 **PARTICIPANT:** [Inaudible.]

9 **QUESTIONER:** Yeah. I have worked at Reston, and
10 we have a dozen GS-15's that were put in the corner because
11 they didn't -- you know, let's just put them out of the
12 way. They still draw a paycheck. They are an impediment
13 of the agency's ability to perform, and people see that as
14 a fate that they might end up at if they don't, as Jim
15 said, go through the hole. What is different about this
16 that gets people out of that hole that makes them want to
17 participate?

18 **MR. JENNINGS:** What we need to do, we need to
19 start from the top and start creating an environment, and
20 leadership has to start being accountable. So, when we
21 find people that are not willing to go along with the
22 behaviors and traits that we want in the agency, that we
23 actually put that in our performance plan and judge them

1 accordingly and eventually move them out of the system, and
2 that is part of being accountable as leaders. And that is
3 one of the things that have been missing.

4 Almost any survey you do with employees, they are
5 asked how good a job does management do with dealing with
6 incompetence or nonperformance, and it is very low because
7 they see the exact thing you saw at Reston. What you do,
8 you take them and put them aside, but we as managers have
9 to start being accountable and rate folks based on their
10 performance and go through the process of getting them out
11 of the system.

12 **QUESTIONER:** I guess the question is perhaps for
13 Scott. You mentioned O'Keefe is going to have his session
14 tomorrow, his first session.

15 BST has not been involved in this for more than a
16 couple of months. You don't know these guys. So how can
17 you walk in and assess someone and say this is what you
18 should be doing as a manager when they really haven't been
19 observed for a period of time, you don't know just what
20 their style is? It just seems kind of premature in a
21 sense.

22 **MR. STRICOFF:** The session tomorrow is really
23 just a preliminary introductory one. The plan for the

1 senior-level people is that we will be doing some data
2 collection. We will be talking to their subordinates. We
3 will be talking [inaudible]. In general, as we go down the
4 organization, we are doing 360 data collection, talking to
5 peers, talking to subordinates, talking to superiors to
6 understand in very specific ways what their leadership
7 style is, what their leadership practices are, and so we
8 will be getting the kind of information that we need to be
9 able to get some substantive feedback.

10 **QUESTIONER:** So, at some point, a month or two
11 later, you go back to them and say that is what your guys
12 think about you --

13 **MR. STRICOFF:** That is right.

14 **QUESTIONER:** -- and what are you doing to do
15 about that.

16 **MR. STRICOFF:** What you are going to do about
17 that and strategize about it, how to take advantage of the
18 strengths and how to deal with the other things.

19 **QUESTIONER:** You talked about being objective,
20 though. How can you be objective with Administrator
21 O'Keefe if he is the one deciding whether to extend your
22 contract?

23 [Laughter.]

1 **MR. STRICOFF:** You give him tough love.

2 [Laughter.]

3 **MR. STRICOFF:** That is our job, and we are
4 ultimately -- we are going to be successful based on
5 whether or not we can help this organization change, and if
6 we soft-soap and don't say the things that need to be said
7 and as a result if the organization isn't going to change,
8 this isn't going to be successful. And in the long run,
9 that doesn't do us any good.

10 **QUESTIONER:** Do you have a communications problem
11 in the astronaut office?

12 **PARTICIPANT:** I think there are communications
13 problems all throughout NASA, and again, what we need to do
14 is identify those areas and find out why there are
15 communications problems and take appropriate measures and
16 create the conditions that allow people to speak up without
17 fear of retribution.

18 I do want to add something. We were talking
19 about what makes this program different than some of the
20 other ones, ISO and TQM and those kinds of things. This
21 plan is not a checklist or something that NASA historically
22 has desired or valued to show as a procedure or method.
23 This is a new way of thinking. This is about human

1 mastering interpersonal relationships and getting the best
2 out of subordinates.

3 The way to do that is not with a plan or a
4 checklist or a cook book, "Here is How You Do It." It is
5 to teach and learn good leadership skills, again, create an
6 environment that allows the workforce to achieve the best,
7 and when it doesn't work, take appropriate action and be
8 committed to doing that. So that is the answer as I see it
9 on how this is going to work.

10 If we have behaviors that are not conducive to
11 the new kind of culture we are trying to establish, those
12 people have to be moved.

13 The final thing I wanted to say is that this
14 plan, again, isn't -- and we have said it already -- this
15 plan is not the BST plan. It isn't even really -- I don't
16 like to think of it as the NASA plan. It is the plan that
17 the workforce needs. That is why we do surveys and talk to
18 the workforce and find out what do they need because they
19 have the answers. They are working with the data. They
20 have cognizances. They are closest to the hardware. They
21 understand the risks, and these are the things that they
22 say they need through the survey and through the
23 question-and-answer sessions, which frankly I find more

1 valuable than the numerical survey.

2 Some of us already knew the answers to the survey
3 before it came in because we understand the workforce and
4 talk to them, and if you show any desire to try to improve
5 the workforce situation, they will tell you what they need.

6 They have the answer. That is why this plan is going to
7 work because it is for people at NASA and the contractors
8 all around the country.

9 **QUESTIONER:** I have a follow-up. I guess this is
10 perhaps for Mr. Jennings.

11 Isn't there a danger here of a program like this
12 essentially killing kind of the personality diversification
13 of this agency?

14 We all know that at universities that sometimes
15 the best people doing certain jobs are absolutely the worst
16 when it comes to the person dealing with people, and in
17 order to kind of homogenize this kind of feeling, some of
18 these people might have to go. It might be the best in
19 some engineering areas, some other areas that you have.

20 Is there a certain blandness of NASA coming
21 because of this type of agency, this type of effort?

22 **MR. JENNINGS:** I think the reason we are kind of
23 here and a lot of those things is because we are a

1 technical agency, and we worry more about technical things
2 than we do about people.

3 But what we have to do is we are going to
4 maximize the capability of the agency. We have to get
5 those technical folks where they are doing technical work
6 and not managing people.

7 I mean, we have some mechanism within the agency
8 where you can reward folks for their technical capabilities
9 without making them supervise a lot of folks. So what we
10 need to do is let the technical folks that don't want to
11 learn or can't manage people to go up the technical track
12 and become scientific technical, you know, senior folks
13 versus SES's which is designed to manage people.

14 So I think we have to be careful that we don't
15 destroy the things that have made us technically excellent
16 over the years, but we have to be able to manage people, so
17 that we can get the best out of people.

18 I mean, just imagine the brain power that we
19 could unleash when we create an environment where everybody
20 is open, everybody can come and discuss issues, technical
21 issues, any kind of issues with their management. We could
22 meet a lot of challenges that we have now if we have a set
23 of managers at each level that has to know more than the

1 folks below them. So you are really minimizing the total
2 capability of the organization by not getting the best from
3 everybody, and that is the kind of environment we want to
4 create.

5 **PARTICIPANT:** If I could add, if you think about
6 the technical complexity and the challenge of the physics
7 of getting 100 tons to orbital velocity, it is a very
8 difficult thing to intellectually manage. The workforce
9 knows how to do this very well. They are so excited to
10 come to work every day. They show their badge at the gate,
11 and they come in and work on the Space program. Why do
12 they do it? It isn't because of the salaries they get. It
13 isn't because we are taking care of them. So it is not the
14 care and feeding of the workforce. It is because they love
15 working in the Space program where, again, Mr. O'Keefe said
16 we are rated the highest Government agency to work for. It
17 isn't because we are taking care of the people. It is
18 because they love working for the Space program.

19 So blandness will never enter into NASA because
20 of the mission that we have. We will always be an exciting
21 place to work, and if we can take care of the people and
22 unleash what Jim Jennings is talking about, brain power
23 across this agency, it will be far better than we were, all

1 those successful years between accidents where we had
2 successful flights.

3 It is a very exciting place to work, and it will
4 never be bland.

5 **QUESTIONER:** For you, Jim. [Inaudible] George
6 Abby [ph] [inaudible] the stuff of legends, and I am
7 wondering if [inaudible] soul-searching now. Do you find
8 yourself bumping up against kind of the tenor that he had
9 set, this idea that there could be serious repercussions on
10 your career, that you might never fly if he steps out of
11 line?

12 **PARTICIPANT:** Don't play baseball.

13 **QUESTIONER:** I am sure you know better than I do
14 because you are probably getting all the e-mails, but is
15 that a path that NASA is dealing with now down at Johnson?

16 **MR. JENNINGS:** No. I don't think so at all, and
17 I think George Abby was widely misunderstood by external
18 folks outside the organization. He is a man who very much
19 cared about the people. He especially cared about people
20 who were doing the job correctly and doing it right and
21 doing it with interest of the mission and NASA and the
22 agency and safety and on and on.

23 So the only people that should be worried about

1 it are those who are not doing it correctly, and they
2 should be worried if they are not doing the job correctly.

3 Then I hope they worry enough that they change what they
4 are doing to figure out how to achieve the best possible
5 solutions to elevate concerns. If they are a manager, they
6 really have to sense when the workforce is worried about
7 something and draw it out of them if they are too shy to
8 speak up, and there are some people who are that way. So
9 it is the manager's responsibility to solicit, as Mr.
10 O'Keefe says, the dissenting and minority opinion.

11 Then, to become a great organization, you have to
12 go one step further. You don't just solicit the minority
13 and dissenting opinion. You have to actively understand
14 what they are trying to tell you. You don't spend all of
15 your energy discounting their opinion or supporting your
16 own opinion. You really have to understand what they are
17 trying to tell you because, again, it is the workforce that
18 understands the answers, that the astronauts who are flying
19 the vehicle understand the risk that they are flying in,
20 and they should be listened to. And it is the leader's
21 responsibility to elicit those opinions and then do
22 something with those opinions, to balance them correctly.

23 People who aren't doing that correctly should be

1 worried about their jobs.

2 **QUESTIONER:** But at the same time that you have
3 people who are saying communication is an issue at NASA,
4 you had less than half the workforce, the civil servant
5 workforce respond. Where do you get in touch with the
6 people who are bound to say that culture stuff is a bunch
7 of hoey, I don't have time for that touchy-feely crap, it
8 doesn't belong here?

9 **PARTICIPANT:** Nobody is saying that. The only
10 people that are saying that are those at the -- if there
11 are people who are saying that, the ones who don't want to
12 deal with it. The workforce unanimously wants us to solve
13 the problem and change the culture and allow them to speak
14 up without fear of repercussion.

15 **QUESTIONER:** Where is the data? Like she said,
16 half of the folks only responded. Why are they so afraid
17 of answering a form that nobody will ever know who they
18 are, they don't care?

19 **MR. JENNINGS:** Actually, there were folks that
20 didn't trust the system enough to fill out the survey. We
21 actually had folks that believed that if they filled out
22 the computer online that somehow they could be identified.

23 I have sent out a reminder to folks, and they

1 misread the statement. I said, "If you have not filled out
2 the survey, please take this opportunity to do it," and
3 they read that sentence to think that I knew that they
4 didn't fill out the survey.

5 I had to go and actually read it to a person, and
6 some people said, "Okay. Give me a hard copy, and I will
7 fill it out and send it in."

8 **PARTICIPANT:** You know how much e-mail I get from
9 Hotmail because they are afraid there is somebody at NASA
10 that just waits for stuff to come to me?

11 **MR. JENNINGS:** There are folks who don't want to
12 speak up. On the survey, we didn't let the survey stay out
13 typically long as you usually do.

14 **QUESTIONER:** You did or did not?

15 **MR. JENNINGS:** We did not. We left it out for a
16 week or 10 days. About 10 days or so. Usually, you have
17 more time because folks are on vacations or weekends, but
18 we needed to get on with this. So we thought that the 45
19 percent was pretty good for the time we had it out, and
20 there was significantly enough data for BST to draw the
21 conclusion that they did.

22 They followed up by testing it, by having focus
23 groups and talking to individuals to see if it looked the

1 same as the results of the survey and it was. So we think
2 the data is significant.

3 **QUESTIONER:** Can I interrupt there?

4 **MR. JENNINGS:** Yes.

5 **QUESTIONER:** Were the focus groups comprised of
6 people who responded or not, either/or, or you don't know?

7 **MR. JENNINGS:** They were just randomly picked
8 from places.

9 **QUESTIONER:** I have a question, and I just want
10 to give both of you guys a chance on what I am going to
11 write on NASA Watch. And I think I know where you are
12 coming from.

13 If people don't respond to this lead time, you
14 say people have already responded to this latest fad.
15 "Hooey" is one of the words, actual words I have gotten
16 today -- that they will be moved aside. Now, if you hear
17 this -- you just said "moved aside." You know NASA civil
18 servants. You just gave me a perfect example of somebody
19 probably that I can give 300, and yet they read that line
20 and they think that you are after them with some electronic
21 gestapo.

22 There are people who will see the fact that if I
23 don't change, I am going to be moved aside. I am a civil

1 servant. I do not want to lose my job. How do you guys --
2 do you got a better word, a better way to say that, that
3 moved aside, in the sense of --

4 **MR. JENNINGS:** At the level -- we are really
5 looking at the leadership of this agency, and those are the
6 folks that have really got to embrace the new culture that
7 we want of foster.

8 We are not talking about the worker down at the
9 bottom. We are talking about the leadership. We are
10 essentially talking about that level that you mentioned
11 where communication seems to stop. Things go down. Things
12 happen. So we have to work with that mid-management level
13 to get them to embrace the changes that we want to make,
14 and at the end of the day, if we can't change the people,
15 then we have to change the people.

16 **MR. MAHONE:** Any final questions? We will wrap
17 up a little bit.

18 **QUESTIONER:** Change the people.

19 **PARTICIPANT:** Change out the people.

20 **MR. JENNINGS:** That is the [inaudible].

21 [Laughter.]

22 **QUESTIONER:** No, no. I want it so it reads
23 properly for the people -- it will change out the people

