

Dr. MUELLER. It was an error in real-time operations. The pressure gage on the stage was not operating, the test conductor continued to pressurize the stage without an operating pressure gage, and the result was destruction of the stage.

Mr. FULTON. Why wasn't the pressure gage operating? That looks like an equipment failure of a small routine nature.

Dr. MUELLER. The pressure gage was inoperable because it had been, as I understand it, disconnected.

Mr. RUMSFELD. You said that the Accident Review Board looked into this. What accident review board? A board created just to look at this accident?

Dr. MUELLER. Yes, headed by Dr. Kurt Debus with membership from other centers who reviewed in some detail the complete sequence of events.

Mr. RUMSFELD. There is no way this board could be described as an independent review board? They were NASA people or contractor people?

Mr. MUELLER. There were NASA people on the board, although they were from different centers, and were not associated with the actual test or the carrying out of the test. The test itself was under a contractor's supervision at the time. The stage had been turned back to the contractor to prepare for shipment and in this particular case there was not a NASA test supervisor. It was in a repair-rework cycle.

Mr. RUMSFELD. For the sake of definition when I use the word "independent", I would not include other NASA personnel even though they may not have been involved in the project. That is what I mean by the word. Also, did the President's Scientific Advisory Board take a look at this?

Dr. MUELLER. I don't know the answer to that, Mr. Rumsfeld. My timing is a little vague today. I don't know whether they actually looked at that particular failure or not.

Mr. WAGGONNER. This isn't a proper function of the Board, is it?

Dr. MUELLER. No.

Mr. RUMSFELD. I am trying to understand the general procedure. You indicate it is not a function of the President's Scientific Advisory Committee. That was my understanding. Yet your response yesterday led me to believe that you considered this body somewhat of an independent review board over NASA.

Dr. MUELLER. I said that they did review the Apollo program, Mr. Rumsfeld, from end to end. They did review the various failures. I don't know whether this failure occurred after the time that their review was completed or not. I believe it occurred after their review was complete. They do not serve as a case by case review board.

Mr. WAGGONNER. Will you yield?

Just before you came in, Mr. Fulton asked the same question on review boards for the same purpose, did he not?

Mr. FULTON. I asked about practices and procedures and I asked that it be put in the record.

Mr. RUMSFELD. I am aware of that. I asked a number of questions on it yesterday. I am still interested.

Mr. WAGGONNER. Proceed.