

extent, we are already drawing on the Air Force for this. I think you have to recognize that we are developing a new technology, and I think, in all honesty, you also ought to recognize the people involved in this development process in the Government and among the contractors are probably among the most objective and dedicated people that you will find anywhere.

Our progress is determined by their willingness to examine objectively the things that they did wrong and take corrective action. It is always true that looking back you can say "Well, gee, this guy shouldn't have done that," and that is right, 20/20 hindsight is just marvelous. But in terms of your overlook at the procedures, you must determine, is our general attack on the problem proper? That is something that the President's Science Advisory Board did look at very carefully and tried to evaluate whether or not our approach was a sound one.

The result of that investigation was a clear feeling on their part that we were using the best practices that they could conceive of. They didn't rubberstamp it. They are a group that has competence in this field and are outside of our organization completely, but they did feel that we were doing everything that they thought one could do in this kind of an area.

Now, that doesn't say that you couldn't do better and we are striving very hard to find ways to do things better. I would only point out that independent review boards of specific accidents of the sort we have here are unlikely to be able to contribute effectively in a short time to curing the problem.

That is not because I am against an independent review board. I am enthusiastic about it. One has to get the proper people to serve, the proper amount of time, and it does take a fair amount of time, as you know, to know enough about these systems to be able to do something constructive.

Mr. RUMSFELD. You mentioned that these men are dedicated. Certainly I don't question in any way their dedication. You also mentioned the word "objectivity" and this is the area that I am probing in. You also mentioned that it is nice to have 20/20 hindsight, and I am not raising that question at all about the advance of hindsight in knowing that the pressure gage should have been working, but I am talking about this broader question of a review board.

You indicate that the President's Science Advisory Committee has tried to evaluate whether this program makes sense from a safety standpoint. I have trouble understanding the extent to which they went into the safety question in view of the fact that, according to you, they did not make any recommendations in the area.

It raises the question in my mind, was this even a minor part of their interest, let alone a major part? I am not referring to an independent review board with respect to specific accidents. I am thinking of an independent review board that would not have the problem that you mentioned of becoming knowledgeable enough to do a competent job after a specific accident. I am talking about an independent review board that would look at the overall picture, as you proceeded, to prevent accidents and to ask the hard questions that someone possibly too close to it isn't asking.