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DOOMED MARS MISSION

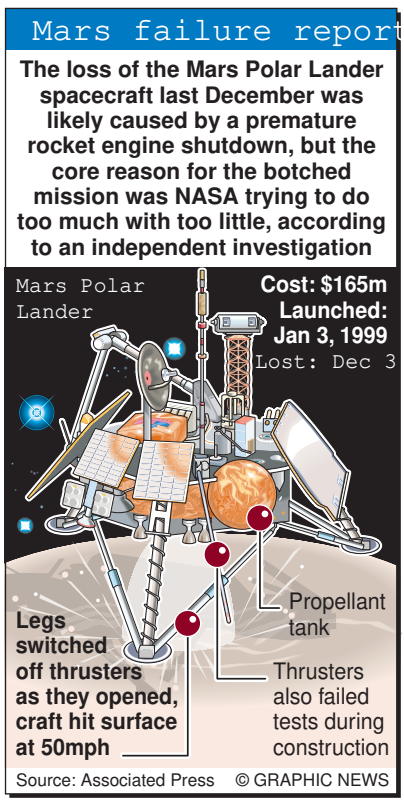
phic News: A PREMATURE rocket engine shutdown may
olar Lander, but the core cause of the botched mission
o much with too little, according to an independent report.
of the team that investigated the failure for NASA, said his
" that the Mars probe automatically stopped its engines
30 feet (40 metres), smashing into the Mars surface at
30 km/h).
with Mars Polar Lander's thrusters and landing legs had
on prior to its arrival at the Red Planet for its 90-day
et's climate and dig for frozen water beneath the surface.
gine shutdown probably was caused by a spurious signal
t's three landing legs. It's thought that the on-board
signal to mean the craft had landed and it then
to stop. "We're almost certain that if the lander got to this
face), then this was the cause of the failure," said Mr.

g cause of the failure was pinned on "inadequate funding
in the planning and execution of NASA's Mars exploration
sion Laboratory in California. The Mars program, Mr.
nded by at least 30 percent."
also identified a second design flaw with the braking
s during construction. But under pressure to meet NASA's
er, cheaper", rather than begin an expensive redesign
amed space official altered the test conditions until the

orted to have only realised the flaw with the $165 million
ers as it was about to enter the Martian atmosphere – at
to do anything about it.
ame less than three months after its sibling spacecraft,
was lost when Lockheed Martin Astronautics – the
hrusters – failed to convert critical navigation data into
y NASA. The $125 million orbiter probably burned up in

aniel Goldin categorically denied news reports that his
he problems. Mr. Goldin said stories that NASA withheld
blems with braking thrusters on the craft were incorrect.
a public briefing on the subject in early November, nearly
as scheduled to land on Mars.
determined that we were going to listen to the American
with less, we said we are not afraid of failure, we are not
y and we're going to push the limits, and when we have
accountable," Mr. Goldin said.

ated Press, UPI



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STANDARD MEASURES (SAU)