

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION MQ-9A "PREDATOR," S/N 02-4005 GREY BUTTE TEST FACILITY, CALIFORNIA 21 OCTOBER 2005

On 21 October 2005, at approximately 2:08 p.m. local time, an MQ-9A Predator, S/N 02-4005, landed short of the runway and suffered significant damage. The Predator was being flown as part of a student upgrade training flight at the Grey Butte Flight Test Operations Facility, Palmdale, California.

The mishap occurred approximately 3 hours into the flight. The mishap instructor pilot (MIP) had flown multiple no-flap approaches and landings during the mission, and elected to demonstrate a flap approach and landing for student training purposes. During the MIP's second flap approach, the Predator landed with a high sink rate 112 feet short of the runway threshold. Upon impact, the rear-engine propeller made contact with the ground causing enough damage to eliminate any possibility of a successful go-around. The Predator bounced, became airborne, and impacted again in the under-run. The landing gear eventually collapsed, and the Multi-spectral Targeting System was pushed up into the avionics and sensor bay. The mishap aircraft came to rest on the left shoulder of the runway.

There were no injuries or fatalities. The Predator suffered significant damage, primarily to the nose and main landing gears, fuselage, propeller, and Multi-spectral Targeting System. The worst case replacement cost was estimated at \$6,796,497. There was no apparent media interest regarding this accident.

The Accident Investigation Board (AIB) President found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the mishap was that the MIP failed to control aircraft glidepath, aimpoint, and airspeed on short final, and executed a go-around too late in the mishap sequence to avoid impacting the ground short of the runway. The AIB President also determined that significant contributing factors, supported by substantial evidence, were inadequate supervision, a breakdown in crew resource management, and human factors issues.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.