

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

#### MQ-1B, "PREDATOR," S/N 06-3158

#### AT A DEPLOYED LOCATION ON 9 APRIL 2008

On 9 April 2008, at 1606 zulu, an MQ-1B Predator crashed at a forward operating location. The MQ-1B Predator Remotely Piloted Aircraft, serial number 06-3158, assigned to the 361st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, 432d Wing, Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, was flying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. There were no reported injuries, fatalities, damage to private property, or media interest. The Mishap Remotely Piloted Aircraft (MRPA) was damaged beyond economic repair and the loss is valued at approximately \$5,000,000.

All maintenance and preflight activities were normal. Roughly 14.5 hours after becoming successfully airborne, the mishap crew (MC), consisting of the mishap pilot (MP) and the mishap sensor operator, was the sixth shift to assume control of the MRPA after an uneventful change-over briefing. The MC was current and qualified to conduct the mission.

Approximately 15.9 hours into the mission and not having displayed any abnormal fluctuations in flight characteristics, the MRPA experienced a blockage in the intake air circuit (decreased airflow) and departed straight and level flight. Despite power inputs by the MP, the engine was unresponsive and ran at idle speed due to a decrease in manifold air pressure (MAP) and engine rotations per minute (RPM). The MRPA's ability to draw vacuum was reduced as the engine speed decreased which reduced engine power and the ability of the MRPA to remain airborne. Directed by supervisory channels, the MP nosed the MRPA towards the ground until it crashed. Remains from the wreckage revealed no information useful to the investigation.

The Accident Investigation Board President determined by clear and convincing evidence, the cause of the mishap was a failure of the MQ-1B's engine throttle body assembly. This failure resulted in a restriction of airflow through the throttle body and caused the engine to fail.

*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 the accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.*