

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
C-17A, T/N 07-7172
KANDAHAR AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN
3 DECEMBER 2008

On 3 December 2008, 2200 local time (1730 Zulu), a C-17A aircraft, tail number (T/N) 07-7172, sustained damage to three engines and an Auxiliary Power Unit (APU). This damage occurred during engine shutdown after the mishap aircraft (MA) flew a mission from Spangdahlem Air Base (AB), Germany, to Kandahar AB, Afghanistan. The MA was assigned to the 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base (AFB), California. The MA sustained damage with the loss valued at \$10,157,056.00. No personal injuries or damage to private property resulted from the accident.

The MA, flew an uneventful sortie from Spangdahlem AB, Germany into Kandahar AB, Afghanistan. After entering their final parking spot, the Aircraft Commander (AC)/Mission Pilot 1 (MP1) shutdown all four engines by turning "Off" the Engine Shut Off Switches prior to calling for the "Engine Shutdown" checklist. MP2 did not realize that he had shutdown the engines. Thus, when the pilot team went through the checklist, there is clear and convincing evidence that MP2 inadvertently turned the Engine Shut Off Switches back to "On." This caused the mishap by allowing fuel to be reintroduced into the hot engines resulting in tailpipe fires on all four engines.

Additionally, the Accident Investigation Board (AIB) President found three factors substantially contributed to the mishap. First, the mishap crew did not follow technical order guidance. The technical order states that shutting down the engines is a pilot duty. The T.O. defines the pilot as the occupant of the left seat. When MP1 shut down the engines from the right seat, he did not follow T.O. guidance. Second, fatigue from a lack of sleep and circadian rhythm adjustments was a factor with this mishap. While this is a routine mission for an Air Mobility Command (AMC) augmented crew to fly in and out of Spangdahlem AB, Germany, into Kandahar AB, Afghanistan and back out to Rota AB, Spain, all three pilots were fatigued which caused a decrease in their overall performance. Third, the Engine Shut Off switches themselves are easily manipulated without any physical detent or manual backup and they are poorly lit for night operations.

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.