

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABBREVIATED AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION MQ-1B T/N 06-3174, JALABAD, AFGHANISTAN 10 JULY 2011

On 10 July 2011, at 0053 Local time (9 July 2011 at 1953 Zulu (Z)), the mishap aircraft (MA), a MQ-1B Predator, tail number (T/N) 06-3174, was lost and presumed crashed at a forward operating location. The MA was carrying one AGM-114 Hellfire missile. It was owned by the 432d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 432d Wing, Creech AFB, NV and flown by the 3d Special Operations Squadron, 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon AFB, NM. At 1953Z, the MA lost its return link (RL) while flying an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. RL refers to the data transmission capability from the aircraft to the Ground Control Station (GCS) via the Predator communications systems. Attempts to re-establish the RL were unsuccessful. The MA did not return to its forward operating base and is presumed crashed with no known injuries, deaths or reported property damage. The aircraft loss is valued at approximately \$4.4 million.

After normal maintenance and preflight checks, the MA taxied and departed from its forward deployed location at 0057Z for a planned 22 hour mission. At 1953Z, the RL between the MA and the GCS was lost. The Mishap Crew (MC) followed the required standard procedures in an attempt to regain the link, but was unable to do so. Subsequent Air Traffic Control and Launch and Recovery Element attempts to locate the MA were also unsuccessful. Contact with the MA was not re-established and the aircraft is presumed to have crashed. No wreckage has been found.

The post mishap investigation revealed no significant anomalies with regards to the MA at the time of the lost link. The only known anomaly was a LN100G navigation system failure, but the MA was operating normally on the backup navigation system at the time of the mishap. Preflight procedures and launch of the MA were all normal. There was no evidence of negative maintenance trends or issues and maintenance records showed no discrepancies. The MC had no problems with the operation of the MA immediately prior to the mishap.

The AIB President could not determine the cause of this mishap by clear and convincing evidence. Further, the AIB President also could not determine any factors which contributed substantially to the mishap by a preponderance of evidence.

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.