

Statement of Congressman Wally Herger (CA-2)

On Provisions Relating to the U-2 and Global Hawk in H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 May 11, 2006

"Both the U-2 and Global Hawk currently provide first-rate and virtually real time surveillance to our commanders on the ground. They play an essential role in saving American service members' lives and winning the War on Terrorism. Beale personnel can be extremely proud of the crucial role they play in supporting these remarkable aircraft.

"I believe it's best that our Air Force leaders and defense experts in Congress determine the timing of any potential transition from the U-2 to exclusively the Global Hawk. The House Armed Services Committee shared the concerns of some in the Beale community that a 'capability gap' in our intelligence gathering could occur if this transition were to begin now. As such, I believe Congress acted responsibly by blocking the proposed beginning of the U-2's retirement.

"With that said, I am very pleased that the measure also fully funds the Bush Administration's request for the Global Hawk. This state-of-the-art and 'emerging' UAV has already contributed greatly to monitoring enemy activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, and will undoubtedly play a critical role in our intelligence gathering activities for many years to come. I will continue to work to secure full funding for this important program. Such funding would greatly assist the Air Force in delivering Global Hawks to Beale as expeditiously as it desires."