

**Congressman Wally Herger**  
**Speech at the "Global Hawk Industry Team Conference"**  
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Thank you for inviting me to be here this morning. I want to thank each of you for being an important part of the Global Hawk team, and developing America's state-of-the-art, high altitude reconnaissance UAV. It is because of the work of people like you that Americans can live in a nation that is free, secure, and prosperous. So I want to thank you for everything you do to strengthen our national defense.

As you may know, I have the privilege of representing Beale Air Force Base in Northern California. Beale has a long history as the home to our nation's leading reconnaissance aircraft, including the SR-71 and the U-2. In that tradition, Beale currently is the home of one Global Hawk, and dozens more are expected to arrive in the coming years. I'm very pleased that the Department of Defense said in the latest BRAC recommendations that the "emerging Global Hawk" will become a central mission at Beale.

We need only to look at current global conflicts and potential future challenges to understand the Global Hawk's profound importance.

More than four years after September 11, 2001, our nation remains engaged in the War on Terrorism. These terrorists are consumed by an ideology of religious fanaticism and hatred. They are a brutal enemy who has no rules for engagement, and plots to again unleash mass murder on American soil. Al Qaeda's old safe haven in Afghanistan has been removed, and replaced by a free government, but the terrorist network still has the desire--and possibly the means--to execute another attack. Indeed, Usama Bin Laden's recent threats reveal a network that is still seeking to harm Americans.

In the heart of the Middle East, Iraq has become the central front in the War on Terrorism. Al Qaeda's top deputy has proclaimed that the battle for the future of Iraq is the "greatest battle" in this War. Al Qaeda terrorists have entered Iraq in large numbers to stop their push toward a stable democracy. In just three years, remarkable progress has been made in Iraq, though our mission there is not yet finished.

Beyond the borders of Iraq, networks of terror aim to spread their influence throughout the world, and develop warm relations with hostile regimes. I'm especially concerned about Iran, because of its terrorist ties and efforts to develop nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran would undoubtedly threaten our allies in the Middle East, and would increase the

risk of terrorists obtaining a nuclear weapon and unleashing it on American soil. All agree that Iran's ambitions must not be ignored.

By looking at just some of our foreign policy challenges, it becomes very clear why the Global Hawk is critical to our national defense. As you know, intelligence and surveillance are essential components of preventing attacks and successfully prosecuting wars. We must have knowledge about a possible attack in order to prevent it, and we must be able to see an enemy in order to defeat it. So our nation should always look toward technological advances that can give our commanders and troops on the ground an advantage during war.

The Global Hawk does just that. It equips American military commanders with remarkable real time surveillance that can help lead our nation to victory in battle.

As all of you know, overall the prototype of the Global Hawk has performed very well in Afghanistan and Iraq. While flying relatively few missions, it helped track down Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan, and provided images leading to the destruction of hundreds of Saddam's tanks and other important targets in Iraq. This vehicle helps provide our commanders a detailed blueprint of enemy forces, a significant advantage that protects Americans in combat. Indeed, General Larry Wells, Commander of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing at Beale, recently said that the Global Hawk "saves lives on a daily basis."

Of course, the reason the Global Hawk is such an effective asset is that it has incredible capabilities. The vehicle you developed has the unique capacity to stay in the air for over a day and surveil large areas with remarkable accuracy. This enables U.S. Forces to be familiar with the strategy and capability of our enemy. And, most important, the Global Hawk allows sensitive reconnaissance missions to be conducted without endangering the life of a pilot.

Our men and women in uniform, from the private to the general, recognize the importance of the Global Hawk. Every Air Force official I speak to raves about its capability and its performance. It is a tremendous asset to our military's arsenal, and each of you can be extremely proud of playing a role in the development of this first-class reconnaissance vehicle.

But similar to other weapons systems, there are those who question the Global Hawk's cost, its necessity, and its effectiveness. Some wonder if other future UAVs can perform the same function for less money.

I appreciate the need to be fiscally responsible, but let me say that I find their arguments unpersuasive. From what I'm told, there is no other UAV with the capability and role of

the Global Hawk. The Global Hawk stands alone as the only high-altitude, long endurance, unmanned surveillance aircraft, and it has my firm support.

Still, we know that securing requested funding for this program has been challenging in the past. I was active last year in working with other Global Hawk supporters to prevent cuts to this program, and I'm pleased that the final funding level was far better than what the House initially passed.

As you know, President Bush's fiscal year 2007 budget proposal for the Global Hawk demonstrates the Administration's strong support for the program. And the recently released Quadrennial Defense Review calls for accelerating the acquisition of the Global Hawk. The president's budget and this report reiterated the Administration's view that the Global Hawk should play a critical role in defending our nation in the future.

Yet, like previous years, we can expect some in Congress to fight the president's funding request. That is why I greatly appreciate your efforts to educate members of Congress regarding the Global Hawk. As the true experts of its capability, you can walk the halls of Capitol Hill and talk about the importance of this vehicle, how it has overcome challenges the skeptics tend to mention, and why it has unique intelligence-gathering capabilities that cannot be duplicated. I believe your efforts have and will continue to make a difference as Congress considers funding for the Global Hawk.

As I mentioned, Beale Air Force will be the home of a large number of Global Hawks. I'm personally very excited to see Beale's reconnaissance mission extended to unmanned aerial vehicles. The people of Northern California are also very proud of Beale's leading role in supporting Global Hawk missions.

The upcoming deliverance of dozens of Global Hawks to Beale opens up the opportunity to have a UAV technology corridor in Northern California. Firms and organizations supportive of the Global Hawk mission could grow, invest, and develop new technology to expand and improve upon the existing intelligence capabilities of the Global Hawk. I believe the people of Northern California would strongly support an expansion of this important industry in their communities. I would certainly share their sentiment.

In closing, as the United States prosecutes the global War on Terrorism and hostile regimes seek to carry out their hostile intentions, it is essential that the United States continues to have the world's finest military. Now is not the time to relax our commitment to obtaining the very best military equipment that companies like yours provide. Instead, we must continue to develop and utilize superior technology that can help disrupt terrorist plots, destroy terrorist cells, and give our troops in combat information that can help save their lives, defeat our enemies, and protect Americans.

The Global Hawk certainly provides our nation's military a significant edge in combat. It is the world's elite high-altitude reconnaissance UAV, and it is already having a substantial impact in the War on Terrorism. As the more advanced models are deployed, I have no doubt that the Global Hawk will become an even stronger asset to our military.

For this reason, the Global Hawk has my full support, and I will continue to work to ensure it receives sufficient support in Congress.

Again, thank you for all that you do to improve our capability and defend our nation. Your hard work and innovation help keep the United States free and secure.

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