

This morning I had the opportunity to speak at the Global Hawk Industry Team Conference just outside of our nation's capital. Global Hawk is our nation's most capable high-altitude unmanned spy plane and is operated from Northern California's Beale Air Force Base. It flies in excess of 60,000 feet and provides our commanders on the ground with near real time imagery that reveals enemy hideouts and threats, giving U.S. troops a significant advantage in war. It has also provided informative pictures during humanitarian missions in the wake of the recent earthquake in Haiti and during the devastating forest fires in California in 2007 and 2008. The conference was attended by the many defense companies that help build the aircraft.

In my remarks I discussed Global Hawk's contributions to our national security and how advanced models of the aircraft will make it an even greater asset to our military. I also discussed the growing threat from cyber attacks against our nation, which potentially could shut down our transportation, communications, banking, and energy systems. They also pose a severe threat to our military, as demonstrated by recent news stories detailing how insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan intercepted video feeds from the unmanned Predator spy plane using \$26,000 off-the-shelf software. I emphasized that the United States must take this digital threat seriously, and applauded the recent creation of U.S. Cyber Command and security features on Global Hawk that protect it against cyber exploitation. Last, I stressed that Global Hawk and other key military assets are as important today as ever before. Our security remains threatened by terrorists who want to strike the United States again, and by Iran who continues to defy the international community and develop nuclear weapons. I will continue to do everything I can to urge Congress to support Global Hawk and other vital weapons systems to ensure that our nation's military remains the best in the world. I will also continue to work to keep Beale AFB as the operating base for Global Hawk and to ensure that the base's airmen have the tools and resources they need to execute their mission."

To read my full speech, click [here](#) .