

**Congressman Wally Herger**  
**Speech at the Roll Out of the Global Hawk "Block 20"**  
**August 25, 2006 -- Palmdale, California**

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Thank you for inviting me to be here this morning. It is exciting to get a first-hand look at the advanced model of the remarkable Global Hawk. I want to thank those of you who are part of the Global Hawk team. And to those here with us who are serving our nation in uniform, thank you for everything you do to keep our nation free. It is because of you that our nation's military is the finest the world has ever seen.

I have the privilege of representing the Northern California congressional district that is home to Beale Air Force Base. As many of you probably know, 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 will soon be the home to dozens of Global Hawks, including the Block 20 model. I'm very pleased that the Defense Department and Air Force recognize the profound benefits of the "emerging Global Hawk," and we in Northern California look forward to this platform carrying out its mission at Beale.

I want to take a moment to recognize General Select Jake Polumbo, who is the commander of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing at Beale and plays such an important role in our nation's aerial intelligence gathering. It's good to join you today.

We must only recognize the agenda of terrorists to understand why the Global Hawk is so important to the defense of our nation.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of September 11, 2001, we are reminded once again of the terrorist threat we face, and why military success in Iraq and Afghanistan is so important to our future security. Unfortunately, as time has passed and those horrible images have left our TV screens and our collective conscience, we have tended to forget how that day changed our world -- and our national security mindset -- forever.

On that day, we began in earnest a potentially decades-long struggle against a global enemy unlike any we have faced in prior wars -- an enemy that lacks defined battle lines; one that doesn't have national borders or a respect for the laws of war; one that seeks to murder innocent Americans simply because of the freedom and

democratic ideals that we stand for and represent. It is a fight that we will be engaged in for my lifetime, and probably that of my children. The stakes couldn't be higher.

It is incredibly fortunate that we have not been attacked again in the five years since 9/11. It is a tribute to our armed forces, our intelligence officials, and our law enforcement personnel whose actions have almost certainly prevented another devastating attack on American soil. Yet, as the London terror plot showed, we remain at grave risk.

Even as time passes, I firmly believe the images of September 11 must compel our nation to boldly confront the terrorists and their radical ideology with every tool at our disposal. Our number one priority must be protecting Americans by working tirelessly to prevent another attack on our soil. And that is such an incredibly difficult challenge because we have to be successful 100 percent of the time -- the terrorists have to succeed just once. But it is a challenge we must take on with decisiveness and unwavering resolve.

The battle for the future of Iraq remains the central front in the War on Terror. Al Qaeda recognizes this, and so must we. That is why we must continue supporting Iraq's democratically elected government and its growing security forces until they can stand on their own. We must succeed because failure would be severely detrimental to our future security.

We must always bear in mind the likely alternatives to Iraq's current government. If it fails, it is possible that a pro-al Qaeda Sunni theocracy, like the Taliban in Afghanistan, would take power. Or perhaps a radical Shiite theocracy working closely with Iran would take control in Iraq. Both of these potential developments would have a devastating effect on regional stability and clearly threaten America's national security.

On the other hand, a democratic and stable Iraq would be a strong ally of the United States. A healthy democracy in Iraq would place pressure on other nations in this volatile region to move forward with their own political and civil reforms. And it would deal a serious setback to the agenda of terrorists. For these reasons, I strongly believe a democratic and stable Iraq would make our nation more secure.

This mission is requiring sacrifice and perseverance, and clearly many difficult obstacles lie ahead. But I believe running away from the mission prematurely would be a terrible mistake. The Prime Minister of Iraq recently declared, "Should democracy be allowed to fail in Iraq and terror permitted to triumph, then the war on terror will never be won elsewhere." I agree. If we want to win the War on Terror,

our nation must not allow terrorists to rise to power in Iraq. If we leave now, we embolden the terrorists there and elsewhere, and foster the erroneous and dangerous belief that America will retreat when the going gets tough.

Looking at these foreign policy challenges, it is very clear why the Global Hawk is critical to our national defense. Intelligence and surveillance are key to preventing attacks and successfully prosecuting the War on Terror. We must have knowledge about a looming attack in order to prevent it, and we must be able to see an enemy in order to defeat it. This, of course, is the Global Hawk's mission and purpose.

I am incredibly impressed by the capabilities of the Global Hawk. As you know, it has the unique capacity to stay in the air for over a day and monitor large areas with pinpoint accuracy. It equips American military commanders with virtually real time surveillance that can help lead our nation to victory in battle. Most important, the Global Hawk allows sensitive reconnaissance missions to be conducted without endangering the life of a pilot.

The Global Hawk has already demonstrated its value in Afghanistan and Iraq. While flying relatively few missions, I understand 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.

And that was just the prototype!

I understand the Global Hawk is approaching 11,000 flight hours and is increasingly being used in combat operations. This vehicle provides our commanders a detailed blueprint of enemy forces, which helps protect Americans in combat. In fact, General Larry Wells, former Commander of the 9th Reconnaissance Wing at Beale, stated that the Global Hawk "saves lives on a daily basis."

Today, we celebrate the rolling out of the more advanced Global Hawk. The Block 20 model has more payload capacity, which means greater capability. I understand the Block 20's advanced sensors and ability to simultaneously carry different cameras will provide even better images and greater information to our commanders, making it significantly harder for our enemies to stay in the dark and thereby helping to weaken the capabilities of those who wish to do us harm. As we fight the War on Terror and monitor other activities across the globe, this new and advanced Global Hawk will undoubtedly be a tremendous asset to our military. In doing so, the Global Hawk will make America more secure.

I want you to know that I will continue to fight in the halls of Congress to keep the Global Hawk program firmly on track and sufficiently funded. It is the only high-altitude, long endurance, unmanned surveillance aircraft, and it is those unique capabilities that make it crucial to our efforts in the War on Terror. It has my firm support, and that of many other members of Congress.

But I also want to be frank in saying that there are some in Congress who are not as convinced about the Global Hawk's capabilities, and would prefer to see our limited defense dollars directed to other areas. That is why it is so important for you, as creators and supporters of the Global Hawk, to communicate your message about the successes and potential of the Global Hawk and why it is an essential part of our national defense arsenal. So contact your members of Congress. Show your support. Help get the word back to Washington about the importance of this program to protecting America.

The people of Northern California are incredibly proud of Beale's leading role in supporting Global Hawk missions. We recognize that Beale's contributions in the War on Terror frequently stay silently in the shadows. Yet, we know that the men and women at Beale play a pivotal role in protecting Americans and keeping our nation free.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be here today to help roll out the world's elite high-altitude reconnaissance UAV. As the Block 20 enters the theater in the near future, it will help our nation win the War on Terror and confront global challenges. And this state-of-the-art UAV will help Beale Air Force Base live up to its motto -- "In God we Trust -- All Others We Monitor"!

Again, thank you for all that you do to enhance our military's capability and defend our nation.

God Bless you, your families, and our great nation.

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