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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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B-2

DOLE MEETS WITH AIR FORCE SECRETARY; SO-CALLED B-2 PROBLEM POLITICAL, NOT TECHNICAL

I WANT TO TAKE JUST A FEW MINUTES TO TALK ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE B-2 BOMBER PROGRAM. THE LIBERAL DRUM BEAT TO CANCEL THIS VITAL PROGRAM HAS STARTED UP ONCE AGAIN. OVERBLOWN AND DISTORTED PRESS REPORTS ARE ATTEMPTING TO SIR UP MORE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE B-2. AND OPPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM ARE -- AS USUAL -- BASING THEIR JUDGMENT ON WHAT THE LIBERAL MEDIA LIKES RATHER THAN ON THE FACTS -- AND WHAT AMERICA NEEDS.

SENATOR SIMPSON AND I MET WITH SECRETARY RICE THIS MORNING TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE ISSUE. I KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU HAVE RECEIVED SIMILAR BRIEFINGS ABOUT THIS SO-CALLED "PROBLEM" WITH THE B-2. AFTER REVIEWING THE TECHNICAL DATA WITH THE SECRETARY, I AM CONVINCED, AS I AM SURE ANYONE WHO WILL TAKE THE TIME TO STUDY THE FACTS WILL BE, THAT THE SO-CALLED "PROBLEM" IS POLITICAL AND NOT TECHNICAL.

I REMIND MY COLLEAGUES THAT IT WAS THE AIR FORCE WHO CAME FORTH WITH THESE TEST RESULTS. AND THESE TEST RESULTS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE B-2 FLIES AS ADVERTIZED -- THE B-2 IS THE MOST STEALTHY AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD -- JUST AS ADVERTIZED -- AND THE B-2 WILL DO THE MISSIONS IT WAS DESIGN FOR -- JUST AS ADVERTIZED. THESE TEST RESULTS PROVE THAT THE B-2 -- AS IT SITS TODAY -- CAN PERFORM ALL THE MISSIONS THAT THE F-117 FLEW AGAINST IRAQ, AND DO THEM BETTER. TO BE SURE, THE AIR FORCE IS LOOKING INTO WAYS TO MAKE THE B-2 EVEN BETTER. BUT CHARGES THAT IT DOESN'T WORK OR THAT IT ISN'T STEALTHY ARE JUST PLAIN WRONG.

LIKE ANY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, PROBLEMS POP UP. THAT IS WHY YOU TEST. YOU DON'T CANCEL A PROGRAM EVERY TIME YOU UNCOVER A PROBLEM -- YOU ANALYZE IT, FIX IT, AND PRESS ON. THAT IS THE RESPONSIBLE APPROACH, AND WE IN THE CONGRESS SET IT UP THAT WAY.

I COMMEND THE AIR FORCE AND SECRETARY CHENEY FOR BEING UP FRONT WITH THE CONGRESS. THEY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE AND KEPT US WELL INFORMED. THE CONGRESS MUST ACT RESPONSIBLY TOO. GET THE FACTS. I HAVE. AND IN MY VIEW, THE "PROBLEM" IS POLITICS.

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