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"QADAFFI NEVER LEARNS," DOLE SAYS  
US/LIBYA DOG-FIGHT IS "SELF-DEFENSE"

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KANSAS) TODAY SAID THE SHOOT-DOWN OF TWO LIBYAN JETS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN "APPEARS TO BE SELF-DEFENSE -- PURE AND SIMPLE."

"QADAFFI NEVER LEARNS," DOLE CONTINUED. "MAYBE THIS TIME HE WILL FINALLY GET IT STRAIGHT: WHENEVER HE THREATENS AMERICAN FORCES, WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES."

"THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK THIS INCIDENT -- WHICH QADAFFI INSTIGATED -- HAS ANY CONNECTION WITH THE QUESTION OF LIBYA'S HEAD-LONG RUSH TO DEVELOP CHEMICAL WEAPONS. BUT MAYBE WHAT HAPPENED TODAY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WILL MAKE HIM THINK TWICE ABOUT A LIKELY AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THAT EVEN MORE OMINOUS THREAT," DOLE SAID.

"WE'RE VERY THANKFUL THAT THE AMERICAN PILOTS INVOLVED RETURNED SAFELY TO THEIR SHIP. AND, OF COURSE, WE'RE PLEASED THAT, DUE TO THIS PROMPT AIR ACTION, THE USS JOHN F. KENNEDY AND ITS NAVAL CREW ESCAPED ANY DIRECT ATTACK," DOLE CONCLUDED.

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