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TOPEKA, Kans., May 16 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) tonight urged the Defense Department "to give further consideration to an earlier release of those servicemen called to active duty last May."

Dole said he based his request on a May 16 WASHINGTON POST story, which quoted Roger Kelley, an assistant Secretary of Defense, as saying the number of Reserves activated after the Pueblo incident may have been in "excess of combat requirements." The thrust of the article, Dole said, is that former President Johnson "overreacted" in the Reserve callup which included about 400 Kansans. In addition, about 3500 members of the Kansas' 69th Infantry Brigade were also mobilized.

In a letter to Kelley, Dole said, "Your comments echo my sentiments as expressed last summer in correspondence with former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and further discussed in detail last September with former Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor."

"The men involved were called to active duty as a result of the seizure of the Pueblo, and yet none of those called to duty were sent to Korea," Dole noted.

"Former Secretary Resor advised me there were no plans to send members of the 69th to Vietnam as a unit, and that individual levies on the unit would be held to a minimum."

"However, since that time, about 2100 of the Kansas Guardsmen activated last year have been levied for Vietnam duty," he said.

"With negotiations underway to reach a peace settlement in Vietnam, and in view of the apparent doubt on the wisdom of activating these units in the first place, perhaps this would be a propitious time to give further consideration to an earlier release from active duty of those men mobilized last May," Dole said. "The Army Reservists should be given the same consideration."