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WASHINGTON, D.C., July 22 -- Congressman Bob Dole late today urged President Johnson "to ~~re~~inform the American people of his progress toward securing the release of the U.S. ship Pueblo and the 82-man crew."

In a statement in the House, Dole said, "Today marks the 182nd day of the crew's incarceration by the North Korean enemy. Each passing day prolongs the tragedy of the capture and imprisonment of the crew and their ship."

"Few Americans know anything of the prospects for the ship's release," he said. "We are as uninformed as the crew itself. We do not know what the Administration plans should the pattern of meaningless polemics continue in the so-called sessions with the North Koreans."

Noting that months have passed since the U.S. said the release of the Pueblo crew "must be accomplished immediately", the Congressman added, "The President has the clear responsibility to the families of the Pueblo crewmen to proceed with a plan for the eventual release of the American hostages."

Pointing out that EM2 Ronald Berens of his hometown of Russell is among the prisoners, the Congressman said, "In my visits with his family, I have told them of my continuing inquiries, and that my inquiries, like the questions of an anguished America, have gone unanswered."

"The sailors of the Pueblo deserve no less than for the President to secure their release. I appeal to him to inform us of his judgement and the progress of his efforts," Dole said.