

17 APR 68

A100WX

czzcryyrWX

Pueblo-Documents 340

WASHINGTON AP - Some electronic equipment and classified documents aboard the intelligence ship Pueblo were seized intact by the North Koreans, testimony by Pentagon officials revealed today.

The testimony, just now released, was given by former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and aides to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 1. Included were portions of messages up to and during the boarding of the Pueblo off the North Korean coast on Jan. 23.

One of the last messages, timed between 2:22 and 2:32 p.m. that day, reported: "Being boarded at this time. Destruction incomplete. Several publications will be compromised."

At 1:28 p.m., the Pueblo had radioed: "We are being boarded. We are initiating emergency destruction of classified publications and equipment. Request help. SOS."

Sen. Stuart Symington, D-Mo., asked McNamara if the Defense Department knew how much equipment was destroyed and how much was captured.

"We have the messages from the captain that referred to destruction of equipment and documents," McNamara said. "We know that some was both destroyed on board and other were thrown overboard," he added.

The remainder of his answer was deleted for security reasons.

"I do not have any idea," McNamara went on, "exactly what was compromised."

Symington also asked McNamara why the ship was not scuttled.

"The ship, as I understand it, could not have been physically scuttled within the limited time available to it," the secretary said. "It's a difficult process to scuttle this kind of a ship."

He also noted that the water temperature was 35 degrees and that "a man could not live in those waters for very long."

Symington asked whether any thought has been given to designing such ships in the future so they can be scuttled.

"I think that is probably worth considering," McNamara said.

One of Pueblo's 83 crewmen has died; the others are still in captivity.

When President Johnson and South Korea's President Chung Hee Park meet in Honolulu today, the ship's case and the plight of her crewmen will be a prime subject.

LT1220pes April 17