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Pueblo-North Korea

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WASHINGTON AP - The commander of the pirated U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo ordered top secret codes and electronic gear destroyed as North Koreans boarded his ship Monday nite, sources said today.

The disclosure came as a four-ship Navy task force including the carrier Enterprise cruised toward North Korea and the United States applied diplomatic leverage in a bid to recover its captured vessel and her 83 men.

The Pentagon knows the elaborate destruct procedures-designed to prevent critical information from falling into enemy hands-were initiated, sources disclosed.

It was not determined whether all the classified gear was burned or dumped overboard as the ship's plan called for. The Pentagon assumes that most of the valuable material was destroyed.

The procedure included the firing of explosive destruct devices around the communications paraphernalia.

There were reports the Pueblo's four wounded men were injured by the explosives but sources said, "We really don't know what happened," to the.

North Korea, in a monitored broadcast, claimed killing and wounding some of the Pueblo's crewmen.

Sources here said American authorities know that the North Koreans fired on the Pueblo when approaching or boarding the ship. They said they did not know just when the firing came, or what the circumstances were.

Tuesday night the Pentagon said a message from the Pueblo captain did not refer to any enemy firing.

The four-ship etc., A015WX at second graf.  
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