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PEMEX well spilling 15,000 barrels daily; may take 3 months to control

United Press International
MEXICO CITY — An oil well spilling up to 15,000 barrels a day into the Gulf of Mexico is "out of control" and it may take more than three months to cap it, the government-owned Petroleos Mexicanos said Tuesday.

PEMEX Director General Jorge Diaz Serrano to cut short a trip to Venezuela to visit the well 42 miles offshore in the Bay of Campeche. PEMEX said it was "mobilizing all of its resources to face the situation" at the Ixtoc I well "which has been out of control since dawn Sunday."

The well was producing 30,000 barrels of oil per day at the time of the fire, PEMEX said — compared with about 6,000 barrels a day for the average oil well in Mexico's southeastern oil boom region. All that oil has been spilling into the sea since Sunday although about 15,000 barrels a day was burning up in the fire that still raged as of Monday, the company said.

PEMEX said up to 30 percent of the remaining oil spilled would evaporate and specialized ships could recover up to 5,000 barrels per day per ship. It did not say how many ships were at the site or whether they had started work. A marine drilling rig was on its way to the site to drill a slanted well that would intercept Ixtoc 1 and

stop the underwater gusher enough to cap it, PEMEX said. It may take more than three months to drill the new well. It added there is a "remotely possible" the gusher can be capped sooner if underwater divers are able to place valves on the ocean floor in enough condition to be replaced.

Taiwan treaty suit dismissed

United Press International
WASHINGTON — A federal judge Wednesday dismissed a lawsuit by Sen. Barry Goldwater, Ariz., and 24 other conservatives challenging President Carter's termination of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan.

U.S. District Judge Oliver Gash said although he agreed that decisions affecting treaties with foreign countries should be shared between the president and Congress, he believed the case does not belong in court unless Congress actually votes to nullify Carter's action.

"If the Congress approves the president's action, the issue presently before the court would be moot," Gash ruled. "If the Senate or the Congress takes action, the result of which falls short of approving the termination effort, then the controversy will be ripe for a judicial declaration respecting the president's authority to act unilaterally."

The suit by Goldwater, eight other senators, 16 House members and former Sen. Carl Curtis, R-Neb., sought a court order declaring termination of the 1954 treaty null and void on the grounds that Carter took the action without the advice and consent of the Senate or approval of both houses of Congress.

The legal challenge was potentially explosive because the cut-off of the defense pact with Taiwan was tied to the historic opening of relations with the People's Republic of China.

Gash ruled in the case after Goldwater and Attorney General Griffin Bell each appeared last month at a federal court hearing, during which he heard oral arguments.

Communists defeated

Elections a mistake — officials

United Press International
ROME — Premier Giulio Andreotti said Italy's Communist Party made a "grave error" by calling for early parliamentary elections but he stressed his hope it would not resort to the "old disruptive opposition tactics."

The five-time Christian Democratic premier said in an exclusive interview Tuesday that the Communists "might look back now and realize this (early elections) was unnecessary."

The West's largest Marxist party lost 4.1 percent at the polls and 27 seats in the all-important Chamber of Deputies, their first parliamentary loss in 31 years.

"I hope that the Communists in defeat don't go back to the old disruptive opposition tactics, which would set the unions into action and hurt everyone in Italy," Andreotti said in his office at the Palazzo Chigi, the traditional seats of presidents.

His Christian Democrats suffered

marginal losses in the election, the premier said he would gain support for the three-party centrist alliance formed prior to the elections.

Andreotti was reelected to a second term in a landslide vote.

"The Communists made a grave error in leaving the government, the results of the elections are clear. They put their feet on the accelerator, saying either a Cabinet or we're out," he said.

The Communists pulled out of government in 1976. Andreotti's five-party government, Jan. 31, provoking an election crisis and finally early elections. They participated in the government as a voting partner despite the fact they held no Cabinet seats.

Bombs dropped on besieged city

United Press International
MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Government warplanes heaped bombs onto the embattled city of Leon in an attempt to drive out Sandinista rebels holding the city. The fighting also spread to the key northern city of Matagalpa.

In a communique on Costa Rica's Radio Rector, Sandinistas claimed 500 of their soldiers controlled Leon, Nicaragua's second largest city, and said they shot down warplanes that bombed and strafed the city Tuesday.

Witnesses said guard planes fired around 80 rockets on Leon, 55 miles northwest of Managua. The city was without water or electricity and hospitals were full of wounded, they said.

The rebels dug trenches to prepare for more government reinforcements they said were being sent from Managua.

Costa Rica declared a 10-mile area along its northern border with Nicaragua a military zone and evacuated civilians in the region because of the fierce fighting on the Nicaraguan side, Radio Rector reported.

A Sandinista communique released late Tuesday said the Rigoberto Lopez Perez Column Tuesday attacked the town of Somotillo, near Chinandega and 77 miles north of Managua, where it blew up the guard command post and killed its commander.

It also said rebels dynamited the Panamerican Highway in a stretch between Sebaco and Matagalpa, about 70 miles north of Managua, blowing up a busload of soldiers.

Authorities reported a guerrilla attack on a guard patrol along the Masaya-Nandasmo Highway, 22 miles east of Managua but gave no casualty figures.

Mobil agrees to survey China Sea

United Press International
DALLAS — Mobil Oil Co. announced Wednesday it has signed a contract with the People's Republic of China to conduct geological surveys in a designated area of the South China Sea.

Mobil concluded the agreement with the Oil and Gas Corp. of the People's Republic of China.

Under terms of the year-long program, Mobil said it could seismic exploration as early as next summer. Mobil's new exploration vessel, T.W. Nelson, will take the project in the fall.

Mobil said the signing of the contract followed visits by congressional delegations to Peking and several to the United States by representatives of the Chinese oil industry.

The Mobil announcement came a day after an Exxon Corp. spokesman said it had signed a similar exploration agreement with the People's Republic of China.

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