

CIA nuke device raises queries

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — The Indian government demanded Thursday that the United States explain reports that a secret CIA mountaineering team abandoned a nuclear device on a Himalayan peak 13 years ago.

Officials are especially concerned that the radioactive material could contaminate the Ganges River, a vital waterway.

U.S. Ambassador Robert Goheen was summoned to the Foreign Ministry and was told the reports caused "great concern to the Indian government, the Indian Parliament and the Indian people," a ministry spokesman said.

Foreign Secretary Jagat Mehta asked Goheen "to ascertain the truth as early as possible" and told him "it was essential to know what

hazards were involved," the spokesman said.

The foreign minister, A.B. Vajpayee, told an interviewer that if true the incident is bound to damage U.S.-Indian relations, which recently have been improving. Legislators planned to air the issue Friday on the floor of Parliament.

State Department spokesman Tom Reston said in Washington the department was checking into

the report. The Foreign Ministry spokesman said Goheen promised to provide further information as soon as it becomes available.

CIA Director Stansfield Turner refused to comment on the report.

The story was published in Outside, a publication of the American magazine Rolling Stone.

It said a Central Intelligence Agency group in 1965 tried to plant a nuclear-powered device atop 25,645-foot Nanda Devi, one of India's highest mountains, to

monitor atomic test explosions inside neighboring China.

Bad weather halted the climbers 2,000 feet short of the summit and the nuclear powerpack was left in some rocks, only to become buried in an avalanche by the time the climbers returned the following year, the magazine said.

It said the abandoned device contained plutonium 238, which remains dangerously radioactive for up to 500 years.

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Trapped miners assumed dead

GRUNDY, Va. — Three miners were trapped by a slate fall in a coal mine near here Thursday, and a spokesman for the mining company said all were presumed to have died.

Mike Muslin, a spokesperson for the Island Creek Coal Co., said the accident in the firm's Beatrice mine just east of here in Buchanan County "appears to have been a roof fall."

Senators stand firm on treaty

WASHINGTON — With five days remaining before a final vote, the Carter administration has not persuaded a key senator to back down on a Panama Canal treaty revision which has angered the Panamanians and threatened Senate approval of the pacts.

The revision would give the United States the right to keep the canal open after the year 2,000, whether its operations were threatened by a third country or internal problems in Panama.

IRS expects late night rush

WASHINGTON — Americans have an extra two days to struggle with their taxes this year, but the Internal Revenue Service is still expecting a big crush of last-minute returns.

Because April 15 falls on a Saturday, taxpayers have until next Monday to get their returns in the mail.

By last week, 30 million Americans still had not filed returns, an increase from 27 million at the same time last year.

Transkei's head sheds stereotype

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — By severing diplomatic links with South Africa, Transkei's Chief Kaiser Matanzima may have shed his image as black Africa's prime Uncle Tom. But he has also threatened his lonely country with economic disaster.

So far, South Africa's response to the chief's bizarre break with the only country that recognizes his administration — and supplies most of its budget — has been a stern expression of regret.

The Denmark-sized area was given independence by South Africa 18 months ago under its policy of setting up separate territories for the 19 million black majority denied the franchise in the 87 percent of South Africa declared white.

Criticism flares on bomb decision delay

PARIS (AP) — Pres. Carter's delay in deciding on the neutron warhead has intensified criticism of his foreign policies in the West European press and among government officials. Some even express doubts about his grasp of foreign affairs.

This questioning of Washington's actions seems to be getting louder as Carter's first-year honeymoon fades into the past and major European allies feel disappointed on critical issues.

"The time for realities has now arrived, and it's a difficult period," said a French official, who asked not to be identified. "People are talking about inconsistencies and vagueness, and at the same time absence of pragmatism."

Carter announced last week he was deferring a decision on

whether to produce the new neutron warhead pending evidence of new Soviet "restraint" in the arms race." The delay was interpreted by many Europeans — including both proponents and opponents of the weapon — as an inability to make a decision.

The respected magazine Der Spiegel reported that West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt sees Carter as "an unfathomable amateur who tries to stamp his private morals on world politics but in reality is incapable of fulfilling his role as leader of the West."

Schmidt declared support Thursday for Carter's position on neutron weapons, making a public show of good relations. But the lack of a final decision is known to have disconcerted the Bonn government, which previously had endorsed the weapon in private.



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