

# Hunt Calls for Solutions to Crime Problems

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
**RALEIGH** — Saying North Carolina could not wait for action to stem concerns that violent crime is growing unchecked, Gov. Jim Hunt called Wednesday for state lawmakers to convene Feb. 8 to take action.

"The time has come to fight back. The time has come to let the criminals know we're not going to stand for it. We're going to do whatever it takes to make our families, our neighborhoods and our state safer," Hunt said in a television and radio address broadcast statewide.

Hunt said that without legislative action before March 15 to expand the capacity of the state's overcrowded prisons, officials would be forced to release more than 3,000 criminals.

He said a crime package he would propose during the special session of the General Assembly would be aimed at making prison a true deterrent to crime, keeping violent criminals behind bars longer, and establishing new programs to prevent children from turning to crime.

"I've concluded that the most important goal is to make sure violent criminals stay in prison longer," Hunt said. "The prison system today is no deterrent. We know it, and criminals know it."

"Too often, criminals walk out of the courtroom laughing. Even with a tough sentence, they can be back on the streets in a matter of months, weeks or even days. Chances are, they'll commit even more crimes."

Among the proposals he will submit are a request for new spending to create space to hold an added 1,500 prisoners, almost \$4 million for the Victims Compensation Fund, a statewide computerized information system to keep track of criminals and a new program aimed at cutting juvenile crime, Hunt said.

Hunt's speech did not include a price tag for his ambitious proposals, which could be expected to cost millions of dollars.

A contract signed last month with officials of a Rhode Island jail calls for North Carolina to spend more than \$500,000 per month for up to two years to hold 220 inmates.

Sen. Minority Whip Betsy Cochrane, R-Davie, and House Speaker Dan Blue, D-Wake, avoided the question of how the state would come up with financing for Hunt's proposals during an interview session with WRAL-TV in Raleigh.

Blue suggested that the most likely source of new financing to attack crime would come from a \$35 million allocation

lawmakers approved this summer to help coax a new Mercedes-Benz plant to North Carolina.

"The important thing to remember is that regardless of the dollars we spend as a state government, they all come from the same taxpayers," Blue said.

Jack Hawke, chairman of the state Republican Party, said he welcomed Hunt's attention to the crime problem.

He said he sincerely hoped Hunt would use his influence with legislative Democrats to push proposals through the General Assembly.

He said Hunt's call Wednesday for stiffening criminal penalties had the support of many Republicans. Hawke said Republicans introduced their own version of several of the proposals Hunt outlined in his speech during last year's legislative session.

One of those was Hunt's call for a mandatory life sentence without parole for offenders who commit three violent crimes, he said.

Hawke said that making North Carolina's streets safe from violent crime should be the first priority of state government and was worth added spending for new prison spaces.

He said he did not know how much new

# Gun-Trading Programs Heralded by U.S. Cities

BY BRONWEN CLARK  
 STAFF WRITER

Officials in several major American cities are lauding the early results of new programs that allow citizens to exchange their weapons for money or goods.

But while officials in New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles say they consider the programs to be successful, some members of gun-rights groups claim that instead of reducing gun violence, the programs are a waste of time.

"In many programs, the firearms acquired are destroyed with no checks to see if it was stolen and no effort to return it to the owner," said John Barnett, projects director for the Second Amendment Foundation. "Buyback programs encourage people to steal guns in order to make money."

"Let's focus on the individual committing the crime and not the object," Barnett said.

Victor Morisette, legislative assistant for New York councilman Guillermo Linares, said one of New York's exchange programs was proposed Dec. 21 by businessman Fernando Mateo.

Mateo purchased the initial \$5,000 worth of Toys R Us gift certificates with his own money to get the program started, Morisette said.

"(Mateo) called our office to see if we could help him. Councilman Guillermo called the police commissioner," he said.

Two days later, on Dec. 23, the 34th police precinct in New York City began a program in which citizens were given a \$100 gift certificate to Toys R Us when they turned in a firearm, Morisette said.

Morisette said Footlocker shoe retail company and local business merchants had joined in sponsorship of the program, each contributing about \$70,000 each.

Linares said the program had been more successful than other programs implemented by the police.

"We connected this initiative to an amnesty program established by the police 20 months before, in which the police would give a maximum of \$75 for a gun. In 20 months, only 54 arms were turned in," Linares said. "From the 23rd (of December) to the sixth (of January), 1,502 arms were brought in."

Chapel Hill Town Manager Cal Horton in November approved a similar "Buy Back the Hill" program that is to begin in February. Citizens can turn in their guns to the Chapel Hill Police Department in exchange for money and a receipt. The guns later will be destroyed.

The Los Angeles Police Department, sponsored by Ticketmaster and six local churches, also initiated a seven-day pilot program in which citizens could obtain tickets to sporting events or concerts by turning in their guns to the police, said officer Arthur Holmes, spokesman for the office of the chief of police.

"We collected 402 guns in seven days," Holmes said. "If all we get is one gun, that's one gun that will not hurt somebody."

Holmes said the department would implement similar programs in the future if more sponsors could be found.

"The program is being evaluated," he said. "We'll probably do it again. The police department having very little resources, we rely on sponsors."

Businesses and corporations in the

Washington area also have worked in conjunction with local police departments in an effort to reduce the number of guns on the streets.

The (Washington) D.C. Police Department and area sponsors began a short program Friday and Saturday exchanging weapons for various goods, said Sidney Bennett, public information officer for the police department.

"It was an overwhelming success. Over 200 guns were turned in on Saturday," Bennett said. "Shoe stores were providing us with coupons. Up Against the Wall (a clothing store) was supporting us. Sam Goody, also."

Morisette said he thought the New York program was successful because of the time of year and because the program allowed citizens to turn in their weapons without the fear of police action against them.

"The time of year, around Christmas time, was the ideal time for this initiative," he said. "People also could turn in their guns with no fear that there will be legal repercussions."

The program concluded Jan. 6 in New York's 34th precinct and began in the 75th precinct Monday, Morisette said. "The goal is to reach the five boroughs within the next month and a half, moving borough by borough," he said. "After that, then we will try to expand the plan statewide."

Bennett said he thought the Washington program was successful because it made the police station a less threatening place.

"We received so many weapons because of the 'no questions asked' situation," he said.

When the program was first proposed, many people doubted the program would be effective, Bennett said.

"Some people thought it wasn't going to work at all, that hardened criminals wouldn't turn in weapons. A broad range of weapons were turned in," he said. "If we can get just one, we consider it to be a success. One gun can inflict so much pain and misery on a family."

But Larry Pratt, executive director of Gunowners of America, said he was concerned about the government's restrictions on civil liberties.

"The idea of government being behind a program paying people not to exercise a personal liberty is offensive," Pratt said. "Government should not be encouraging people not to exercise a civil liberty."

Pratt said he thought the money could be used in a more constructive manner.

"These programs will not and have not reduced crime," he said. "Punishing criminals would be a more effective crime deterrent than government interference in the rights of gun-owners, Pratt said. He added that the funds for the gun-exchange programs should go for "executing murderers, putting violent criminals away for life, making it easier for people to defend themselves."

Jeff Muchnick, legislative director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, said he thought such programs were important in that they generated positive publicity for gun-control legislation.

"We concentrate on legislation. These programs and the attention they receive promotes legislation," Muchnick said.

"Private individuals are frustrated with government inaction. Gun turn-ins show that if the government does not act, the people will."

# Records Show Navy Involved In Radiation Experiments

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
**WASHINGTON** — In the earliest documented case of U.S. military involvement in human radiation experiments, Navy records show that researchers in 1945 injected two hospital patients with a radioactive compound to study how quickly the poisonous compound would be excreted from their bodies.

It had been known prior to recent Energy Department disclosures of its Cold War-era radiation testing on humans that the Defense Department did some of its own. The 1945 test is the earliest by the military and the first by the Navy to come to light.

The experiment, as described in an April 29, 1946, written report by the researchers, was intended mainly to verify a novel technique for measuring the rate at which the human blood and organs would rid themselves of antimony, a highly poisonous

chemical element then used to attack killer parasites.

The researchers wrote that theirs was the first test of its kind on humans.

Unlike experiments that have come to light from the Energy Department and elsewhere, the Navy experiment did not appear to be part of the government's effort to learn how radiation affected humans. Rather, it was used in this case mainly as a tool to help understand the use of antimony as a treatment for parasites.

Still, it is not clear whether the two test subjects, described by the researchers as volunteers, were told they were being injected with radioactive substances.

The names were not given but one subject, designated B-1, was described as 20 years old, not bedridden but apparently suffering from elephantiasis of the testicles, a chronic condition caused by the presence of a parasite in the lymphatic system.

efficiency of tax filing; electronic filing. By using this system, the filer enters their tax information into a computer, which can scan it for mistakes. Provided there are no mistakes, the computer then transmits the information to the IRS, which can then process it more quickly, thus making it able to send out the refund sooner.

Electronic filing is available throughout the Raleigh-Durham area through many accountants listed in the phone book. The cost to electronically file taxes is usually around \$30 for self-prepared returns.

The IRS provides a toll-free number to assist filers with any tax questions or problems: 1-800-829-1040.

# U.S. Undecided About China's Progress on Human Rights

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
**WASHINGTON** — Backing away from an upbeat assessment by the U.S. ambassador to Beijing, the State Department says China's human rights performance falls far short of U.S. conditions for an extension of trade benefits.

U.S. policy on China was thrown into confusion last week when Ambassador Stapleton Roy told an interviewer that "dramatic" progress had been made in the protection of human rights in China.

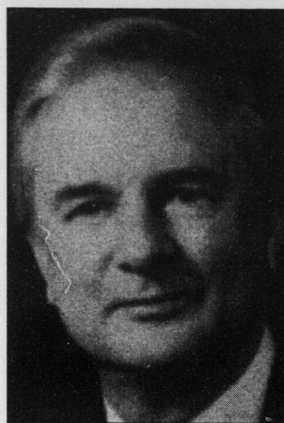
The statement seemed at odds with State Department evaluations on the subject. On Wednesday, acting spokeswoman Christine Shelly said the department stood by recent comments by Secretary of State Warren Christopher that "much more needs to be done."

At issue is whether goods imported from China will continue to incur the lowest possible tariffs permitted by the U.S.

Last spring, President Clinton issued an executive order approving a one-year extension of these trade benefits but said significant improvements in China's rights record would be required for an additional extension in 1994.

Given the volume of China's trade with the United States, an increase in tariffs could have a substantial impact on imports from that country. Total 1993 U.S. imports from China were about \$31 billion.

U.S. officials, asking not to be identified, said the rights issue would be taken up in the coming weeks during a yet-to-be-announced meeting between Christopher and China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. The meeting is expected to be held either in Europe or New York.



N.C. Gov. JIM HUNT announced on Wednesday night a special session of the General Assembly.

spending Republicans could support, because Hunt had provided few details on costs.

"Until we get some cost figures, that's difficult to address."

## CONFERENCE

FROM PAGE 3  
 Sponsors met at a breakfast meeting last semester to develop panel topics for the conference. "We sat around really brainstorming and throwing ideas around," Walden said.

One highlight of the conference will be the release of a study conducted by journalism doctoral student Arati Korwar. Korwar spent last summer at the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, where she conducted a nationwide study on university campus-speech codes. Her results will be presented during a midmorning panel and distributed to the audience.


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