

# Program developed to combat telemarketing fraud

■ Telemarketing fraud is a \$40 billion-a-year industry in Canada and the U.S.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A joint program to combat telemarketing fraud was announced Thursday by U.S. and Canadian officials, who said such schemes cost citizens of the two nations as much as \$40 billion a year.

"Telemarketing fraud has become one of the most pervasive and problematic forms of white-collar crime in Canada and the United States," said a report prepared for President Clinton

and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

"Losses to each victim run from hundreds to thousands of dollars, and in some cases to much more," it explained. "A single offender can easily earn several hundred thousand dollars per year, with larger boiler room operations extracting tens of millions of dollars."

"Senior citizens in both countries are overrepresented among victims and offenders have advanced to targeting them specifically," the report noted.

"The evidence indicates that offenders believe older people have more assets and are more susceptible to techniques such as excitement tactics or appeals to altruism."

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**TELEMARKETING FRAUD REPORT** prepared for President Clinton and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien

In recent years, the report said, the use of telephones had enabled criminals to target victims at long distances and across provincial, state and international borders, making binational coopera-

tion particularly important.

Clinton and Chretien discussed the problem during their April summit and subsequently ordered a group to recommend ways to address it. The group included law enforcement and policy officials from both federal governments and state and provincial agencies.

Many of the report's recommendations involve improving, strengthening and coordinating enforcement efforts. But they also stress the need of educational materials and strategies to prevent people from being lured into fraudulent schemes. Binational strategies also are needed, it said, to enable quick reaction to telemarketing offenses; combine prevention, enforcement and punishment;

make strategies cost-effective; safeguard victims' interests; maintain flexibility; and retain a long-term commitment to the problem.

Specific recommendations included exploring the legal and technical potential and limits of electronic surveillance and examining the possibility of denying telephone services to offenders.

The report also suggested examination of extradition arrangements and a review of deportation laws that might apply to foreign nationals engaging in telemarketing fraud.

A binational group is needed, it added, to serve as an overall coordinator and deal with national and binational fraud issues as they arise.

# Clinton says Iraq must prove intent

■ The Pentagon continued to dispatch fighter jets to the Persian Gulf.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Refusing to trust Saddam Hussein, President Clinton said Thursday he would "wait and see" whether Iraq allows weapons inspectors to resume work. The White House insisted Hussein would not be rewarded for retreating and sent more military force to the Persian Gulf.

"This is not over," declared Sandy Berger, the president's national security adviser.

Three weeks after triggering an international show-down, Hussein suddenly revoked his ban on American weapons inspectors in Iraq. U.N. inspections chief Richard Butler said that if all went well, "We'll be on the plane tomorrow morning and back in business on Friday."

Underscoring U.S. skepticism about Iraq, the Pentagon continued its buildup, dispatching F-16 and F-15 fighters, B-1 long-range bombers, refueling planes and sending soldiers to man Patriot air defense missiles.

The White House insisted Hussein got nothing for backing down. Officials emphasized that the United States stood ready to veto any efforts by Russia or others to ease the United Nations' tough sanctions against Iraq.

"There is absolutely no understanding. There's no deal. There's no concessions," Berger said at a White House briefing.

However, officials also said the United States would support increasing the amount of oil Iraq is permitted to sell to raise money to buy food and medicine.

While the United States asserted that Hussein had failed, the three-week crisis exposed divisions among allies about the use of force against Iraq.

And it allowed Hussein to once again assert himself on the world stage. But it also focused world attention on Iraq's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Clinton, at a prayer breakfast with religious leaders, said, "The United States must remain and will remain resolute" in preventing Hussein from developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

"In the coming days we will wait and see whether he does, in fact, comply with the will of the international community."

# Rare cells offer hope for AIDS victims

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Some rare patients infected with the AIDS virus without becoming ill make white blood cells of a type missing from most patients of the immune system disorder, researchers say.

An analysis of blood from a Boston man infected with HIV for 18 years but still healthy showed that he was protected by a large number of immune system cells, called helper T-cells, that specifically attack the AIDS virus.

Most patients with long-term HIV infection have a low sup-

ply of helper T-cells targeting the AIDS virus, which leaves the immune system defenseless against the virus, Dr. Bruce Walker of the Massachusetts General Hospital said. He is senior author of a study being published Friday in the journal Science.

"Our work provides an explanation of why a very small group of people have been able to avoid getting sick from this virus even though they are infected," said Walker.

Helper T-cells direct the body's immune system. A variety of the cells exist, and each type is primed to attack a specific virus or other invader. As these cells detect the presence of a target virus, they reproduce by the billions, flooding the bloodstream with defenders.

But HIV, the AIDS virus, has broken down this defense. For reasons not understood, helper T-cells specific for HIV often are at low levels in or absent from patients infected with the virus.

Experiments at Massachusetts General confirmed that high levels of HIV-specific T-cells may be essential for the body to hold the AIDS virus in check.

Walker said laboratory tests of blood from HIV patients found that those with the strongest T-cell response to the HIV antigen had the lowest amount of virus in their bloodstream, but those with weak T-cell responses had high virus loads.

The discovery suggested the body might be able to control HIV if helper T-cells that target the virus could somehow be protected.

To test this idea, researchers used powerful anti-viral drugs to treat patients recently infected with HIV. Walker said the drugs caused the virus load to drop quickly, and the patients' immune systems then started producing T-cells that specifically attacked HIV.

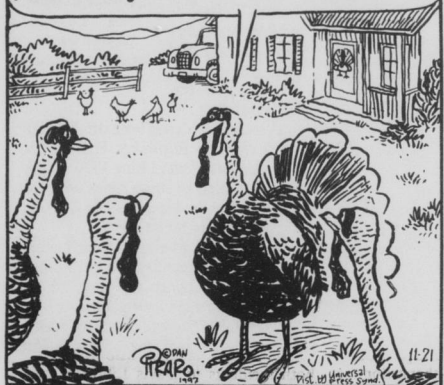
Walker said the HIV-specific T-cells were not produced in the bodies of patients who had been infected with HIV for more than six months.

"This suggests that there is a window of time during the acute phase of infection when anti-viral treatment can rescue the helper T-cell response to HIV," Walker said.

If treatment is delayed, he said, that natural protection might be lost forever.

Bizarro

I think they've finally accepted our superiority! There are images of us all over the house & the kid just came home from school with the cutest little picture of us—made entirely out of beans & macaroni!



## IN THE NEWS

Top stories from the state, nation and world.

### AAA reports gas prices to remain low for holiday

CHARLOTTE — Gasoline prices in North Carolina and South Carolina have dropped just in time for the busiest Thanksgiving holiday for motorists in more than a decade, according to AAA Carolinas.

The average price for unleaded self-service gasoline next week is expected to be \$1.15 per gallon in North Carolina, down 3 cents per gallon since Labor Day and nearly 5 cents since Thanksgiving 1996, the motor club said Thursday.

In South Carolina, the price decrease is more dramatic. A gallon of gas is expected to be \$1.06 per gallon, down 6 cents per gallon since Labor Day and down 10 cents from last Thanksgiving.

"Gasoline prices should remain low, even after the holidays, thanks to plenty of inventory at the refineries and settlement of the Iraqi crisis," AAA Carolinas President David Parsons said.

The average national price for self-service unleaded gasoline is \$1.23 per gallon.

"As long as supply lines are not disrupted and we don't have an exceptionally cold winter, prices should not fluctuate very much," Parsons said.

The highest average price for gas in North Carolina should be in Raleigh at nearly \$1.18 per gallon, with the lowest in High Point at just under \$1.13, the motor club said.

### New U.S. postage stamps to showcase works of art

WASHINGTON — American art, artist Alexander Calder and ballet are among the topics to be featured on postage stamps next year.

The centennial of Calder's birth will be marked by a set of five stamps displaying some of the colorful mobiles for which he was famed, the U.S. Postal Service announced Thursday.

In addition, the agency plans a single stamp showing a ballerina and a set of 20 stamps commemorating the history of American art.

Among the works to be included in the 20-stamp set are Rembrandt Peale's "Rubens Peale With a Geranium," John James Audubon's "Long-Billed Curlew," George Caleb Bingham's "Boatmen on the Missouri," Winslow Homer's "Fog Warning" and Mary Cassatt's "Breakfast in Bed."

### High unemployment rate sparks European protest

LUXEMBOURG — More than 20,000 protesters from across Europe converged in Luxembourg on Thursday, demanding that European Union leaders take action against unemployment.

The 15 government leaders were trying to downplay expectations for their first-ever jobs summit, a two-day meeting that opened Thursday, warning that it will not even set overall targets for reducing the ranks of Europe's 18 million unemployed.

"Don't expect any fireworks," said Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene.

Europe's biggest trade union bloc hoped the massive rally in prosperous Luxembourg, where labor problems rarely cause a stir, would focus European leaders' attention.

Europe's jobless rate stands at 10.6 percent, twice that of the United States and about three times that of Japan.

### German tanker cars burst into flames in train depot

ELSTERWERDA, Germany — A freight train pulling tanker cars full of gasoline and heating oil derailed and exploded in an east German station Thursday. Two firefighters died fighting the blaze.

The blast set afire two tanker cars, and flames spread to the roof over the tracks at Elsterwerda, 70 miles south of Berlin.

A wall at the burning station later collapsed, killing a firefighter. Authorities said another firefighter died on the way to the hospital, but they did not release a cause of death.

Three rescue workers were injured seriously, and several more had minor injuries, police said.

No injuries were reported among morning commuters.

FROM WIRE REPORTS

SUNDAY, NOV. 23

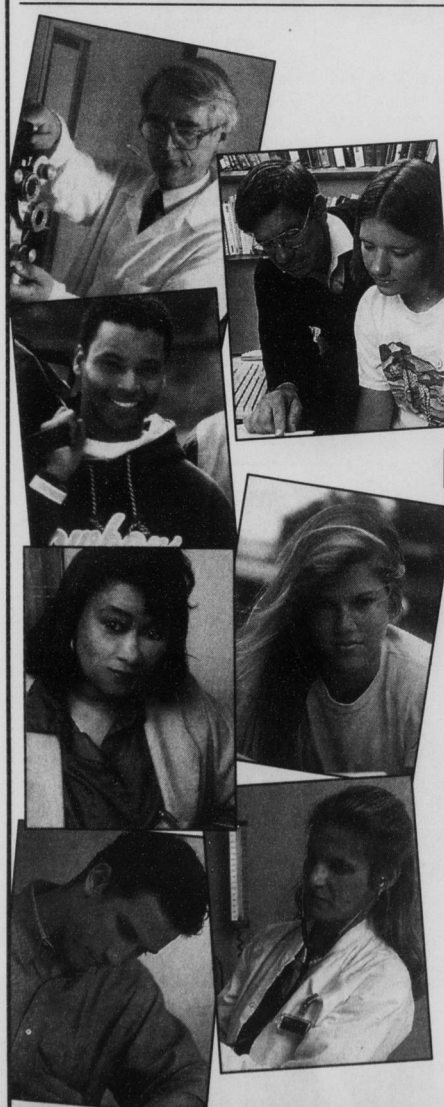
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