

Government ignores AIDS and drug use link, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal commission said Tuesday the government is failing to confront the deadly link between the twin epidemics of drug addiction and AIDS because of its "myopic" punitive approach to intravenous drug users.

The National Commission on AIDS said a third of all recent AIDS cases are related to intravenous drug use, yet federal agencies "have barely recognized the linkages."

"The failure to acknowledge this — the obvious — is bewildering and tragic," the commission said in its report, "The Twin Epidemics of Substance Use and HIV."

It called for full federal support of "outreach" programs that provide addicts with sterile needles while counseling them to enter treatment. And it said 11 states and the District of Columbia should lift laws prohibiting the sale or possession of syringes without a prescription.

The prescription requirement, it said, merely encourages the sharing of contaminated needles, thus increasing the risk of transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS.

"It is imperative that we remove these legal barriers so that the transmission of HIV can be lessened for those who cannot stop injecting drugs," the commission said.

"National drug policy must recognize the success of outreach programs which link needle-exchange and bleach-distribution programs with drug treatment," the report said. Bleach can kill the AIDS virus on contaminated needles.

The commission said such programs have proved successful at getting drug users to change their injection habits and, more importantly, often lead them into drug treatment programs.

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Merging banks reveal lending plan for community development loans

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — NCNB Corp. and C&S Sovran Corp. Tuesday unveiled a \$10 billion, 10-year lending plan for low-income areas in states where the two banks will operate after merging to create NationsBank.

C&S Sovran Chairman Bennett Brown and NCNB's Hugh McColl announced the plan at a news conference in Charlotte, calling it the largest community development by a U.S. bank.

"Ten billion dollars is a goal we plan to exceed," McColl said. "As soon as we get to that level, we intend to beat it. It will take a lot of loans."

The largest community lending plan to date was a \$5 billion plan by the Bank of America, they said.

"To double that isn't bad," McColl said. The program will target consumer and commercial affordable housing loans. It will include residential and small- and minority-owned businesses. Also covered by the program will be public and private partnerships and loans to non-profit groups, government agencies and other programs serving low- to moderate-income neighborhoods.

The program's goal is to reach people who missed out on the economic boom of the 1980s, McColl said.

"Historically, a segment of our country's population has been denied access to credit," he said. "That is especially true in the region NationsBank will serve. From Baltimore south to Miami and west to El Paso, economically disadvantaged segments of the population have been left on the sidelines of economic progress. The financial muscle of NationsBank will help change that."

Both Brown and McColl denied that the ambitious program was spurred by the threat of protests from community activists that could have delayed or threatened the merger of their two banks into NationsBank.

No formal protests have been filed against the proposed merger. But low-income housing activists in Atlanta and Charlotte said earlier they were considering that possibility.

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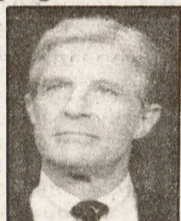
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Leaders urge U.S. to borrow weather satellite built for Japan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaders of a House subcommittee want the Commerce Department to take with a grain of salt NASA's assurances that it can launch a new weather satellite next year.

Instead of trying to rush the trouble-plagued satellite into the sky, they urge "borrowing" a satellite currently being built for Japan.



Reps. Howard Wolpe, D-Mich., and Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., say that would give NASA time to work out the problems in the GOES-Next weather satellite, already three years behind schedule and millions of dollars over budget.

Their recommendations are contained in a letter to Commerce Secretary Robert A. Mosbacher, whose department has jurisdiction over the National Weather Service.

There was no immediate response from Mosbacher.

"After an extensive two-month review of the GOES-Next program, we would urge you to accept NASA's plans and assurances with caution," the two wrote in the letter, which was dated Aug. 1 but released Tuesday.

Wolpe and Boehlert have been looking into problems with the satellite being developed for the weather service by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Kidnappers offer meeting U.N. leader could negotiate release

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Kidnappers holding two American hostages said Tuesday they would send a "special envoy" to the U.N. secretary-general within 48 hours in a bid to break the hostage deadlock.

The announcement came in a statement from Islamic Jihad, or Islamic Holy War, the pro-Iranian Shiite Moslem group that abducted Americans Terry Anderson and Thomas Sutherland in 1985. A photograph of Anderson accompanied the statement.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said in New York Tuesday night that he had not been contacted by Islamic Jihad but was willing to meet any emissary.

A Bush administration official said Tuesday night there

have been growing indications of a hostage release from a variety of channels. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, admitted that expectations had been raised in the past but said the current reports seemed more substantial than usual.

Asked whether there have been talks with Islamic Jihad, Perez de Cuellar said, "It's a very delicate subject," but he declined to confirm or deny any such talks. Perez de Cuellar heads to Geneva this week-end on an unrelated matter, but spokeswoman Nadia Younes refused to say if he would discuss the hostage issue there.

Anderson's sister, Peggy Say, said the U.S. State Department notified families of American captives on Monday of a possible hostage release.

Magazine recalls recipe

NEW YORK (AP) — Aunt Vertie's sugar cookies may be hazardous to your health — and not because of the calories.

Gourmet magazine sent 750,000 letters to subscribers last week because the recipe for the cookies in its July issue called for wintergreen oil, which can be toxic.

The recipe should have called for wintergreen extract, said Melissa Small, an assistant editor.

"We thought we should inform our readers of this," Small said. "Some people can be allergic to it." The letters urge readers to immediately "block out the reference to 1/4 teaspoon wintergreen oil (available at some pharmacies)," to make sure no one uses it.

They include a sticker of the corrected recipe and suggest it be pasted over the original.

Writer Helen Gustafson had called for wintergreen extract for the cookies she'd eat with lemonade while visiting her Aunt Vertie's Nebraska farm as a child.

WORLD/NATION BRIEFS

From wire reports

Yugoslavia calls for cease-fire

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Yugoslavia's presidency on Tuesday proclaimed a cease-fire in Croatia after rebellious Serbs in the war-torn republic agreed to abide by a truce, the state Tanjug news agency reported. The cease-fire was to become effective at 6 a.m. Wednesday (midnight EDT Tuesday), Tanjug said. Warring parties had 12 hours to move out of firing range of each other.

Federal Reserve cuts interest rates

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve signalled Tuesday that it was pushing short-term interest rates lower in what economists viewed as an emergency rescue effort to keep the country from slipping back into recession.

60 Minutes show host dies

NEW YORK — TV newsmen Harry Reasoner, whose elegant prose, dry wit and wry, self-effacing style helped make CBS' "60 Minutes" newsmagazine one of television's most popular shows, died Tuesday, the network said. He was 68. Reasoner died at Norwalk Hospital in Norwalk, Conn. He had been hospitalized there since June 11. Doctors had removed a blood clot from his brain, and he also suffered from pneumonia.

Pregnant whale dies in Orlando

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A pregnant killer whale, one of the star performers at Sea World of Florida, died early Tuesday after suddenly becoming ill overnight, said officials at the marine park.

The 17-foot, 5,000-pound mammal, which with others took turns performing under the famous stage name of Shamu, was about three-fourths through a 17-month pregnancy and had been in good health, said Brad Andrews, Sea World vice president of zoological operations.

"She had been very healthy, doing very well," Andrews said. "We had been expecting a healthy calf at the end of the year."

The animal, known as Kenua, began having elevated respirations early in the day, Andrews said. She then became extremely uncomfortable and somewhat toxic. She was being treated with antibiotics in a special pool when she died.

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Application forms and further information for students currently enrolled in Texas A&M University may be obtained from the TAMU Study Abroad Office, which is located at 161 Bizzell Hall West, 845-0544.

Note: The deadline for interviews is September 25, 1991 the deadline for application is Monday, October 7, 1991.

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