

Argentina volunteers to cut gas emissions

1 BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Argentina offered to be the first developing nation to voluntarily cut back on greenhouse gas emissions, seeking a breakthrough Wednesday in talks to reduce global warming.

President Carlos Menem opened the final phase of the U.N. conference with a promise that Argentina would seek to join industrialized nations already bound by a 1997 treaty to reduce carbon dioxide output by 2012.

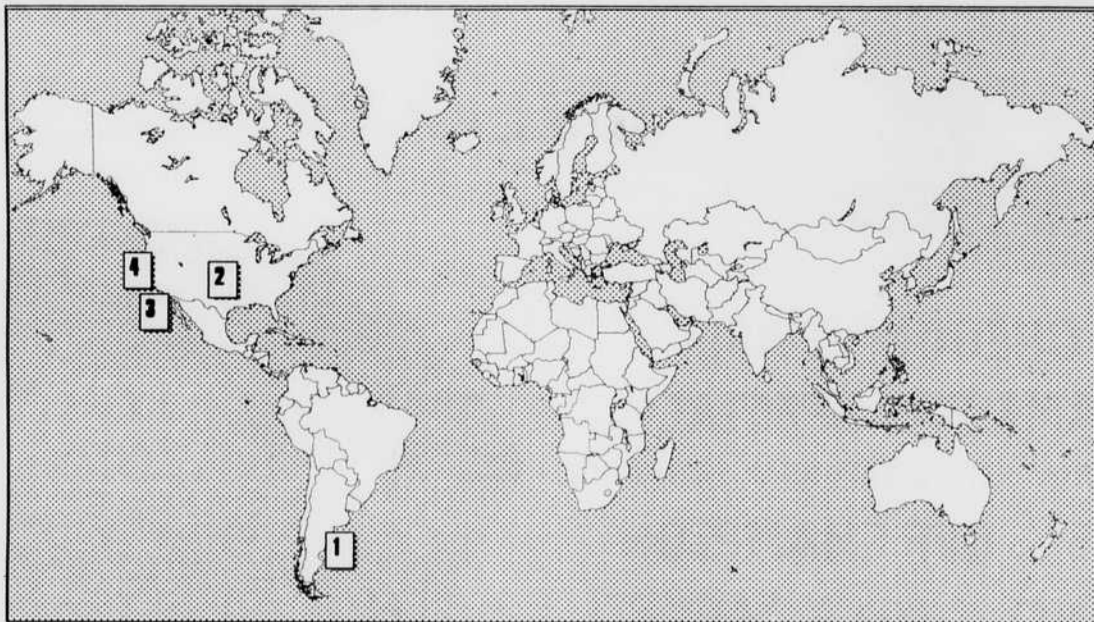
"Not only can highly advanced countries contribute to a new world order, but also emerging nations," Menem said. "We all have a responsibility."

Several developing countries have refused to even discuss the issue of voluntary targets at the 160-nation conference that ends Friday. China and India are among the developing countries which threaten to become the world's leading greenhouse gas polluters by 2015.

Yet, Clinton administration adviser Todd Stern told The Associated Press that Argentina's pledge opens "a new pathway for developing countries" to commit to emissions targets similar to those accepted by 38 industrialized nations bound by the treaty.

At the landmark conference in Kyoto, Japan, last year, more than three dozen industrialized nations agreed, by 2012, to cut their pollution output by 5 percent below 1990 levels. Poorer nations were merely asked to do what they can to curtail emissions.

The United States has yet to sign the Kyoto Protocol. Stalled in the Senate, opponents argue the treaty needs a greater commitment from the developing world.



Gunman's rampage targeted police

2 ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Authorities believe the man who gunned down a police officer in his squad car was targeting police because he apparently ignored people driving civilian vehicles.

William E. Lattin Jr., dressed in fatigues, strapped two guns to his body, walked down the stoop of his apartment and opened a barrage of gunfire Tuesday evening.

His rampage ended when police shot and killed him. In addition to the slain police officer, three people were wounded.

Police say they still don't know for sure what prompted Lattin, 33, to open fire, but he may have been targeting police officers, Lt. Jim Connors said.

"The indication from some statements by civilians indicate he'd look at some people and wave them on," he said "He

seemed to be going for vehicles that resembled police vehicles. That is what we believe at this time, that this was an assault on police officers."

Witnesses said Lattin shook the rifle in a taunting manner before exchanging fire with police behind a church about a block from the intersection where the shootings began in this city about 55 miles north of Kansas City.

Police officer Bradley T. Arn, 28, the first officer to respond to reports of gunshots, was killed when Lattin fired several times at his squad car with a rifle. One shot penetrated the right rear window and struck Arn in the head.

Simpson must prove parenting fitness

3 SANTA ANA, Calif. — In a twist on the "innocent until proven guilty" maxim, O.J. Simpson may have to show why he is a

fit parent in order to keep his children, legal experts said Wednesday.

The 4th District Court of Appeal on Tuesday overturned a 1996 decision that gave Simpson custody of Sydney, 13, and Justin, 10. The justices ordered a new hearing to include evidence on whether Simpson killed the children's mother, Nicole Simpson Brown.

"It's almost going to be an extra burden for Simpson to get his children," said Laurie Levenson, a Loyola University Law School professor. "It's going to be in some ways a replay of the murder trial."

The appeals court acted on a petition by Ms. Simpson's parents, Louis and Juditha Brown. The Browns were guardians of the children while Simpson was in jail and on trial for the 1994 stabbing deaths of Ms. Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

Jurors in a criminal trial acquitted Simpson of murder in 1995,

but jurors in a civil case the following year awarded the victims' families \$33.5 million in damages from Simpson.

In the custody case, the justices said the lower court wrongly put the burden of proof on the Browns to show that it would be detrimental to return the children to Simpson.

"Rather it is upon the parent to show 'overall fitness' on his or her part 'sufficient to overcome the inherent trauma of removing a successful caregiver,'" the appeals court said.

The children, who asked in August to stay with their father, were disappointed with the ruling, their attorney said.

Secret meth lab found in blackberry thicket

4 CENTRAL POINT, Ore. — People on horseback rode by it. Police officers walked by it.

It wasn't until a narcotics officer spotted a Rottweiler known to belong to a man suspected of cooking methamphetamine that they finally found it: the hidden entrance to a 100-foot-long tunnel, through a blackberry thicket that led to a plywood shack where the illicit drug was allegedly being made.

A door of blackberry vines and cattails concealed the entrance.

"There is nothing similar to this," said Jim Anderson, commander of the Jackson County Narcotic Enforcement Team. "Most of the meth labs we find are in a house or an apartment or a building. This is in a jungle."

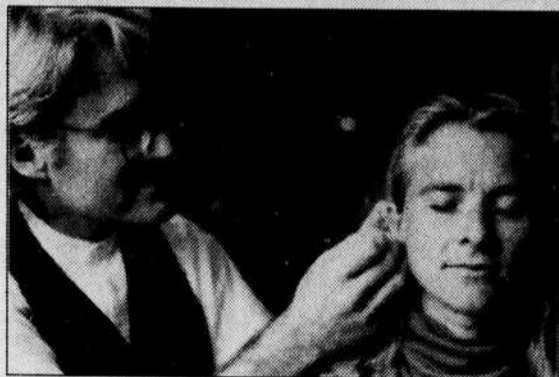
Zastera was held without bail on charges of possession, manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine and probation violation.

— The Associated Press

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For detectives, rapist takes over their world

The Associated Press

TACOMA — For Tacoma Police Detective Chris Pollard, the small gray office has become a second home.

One wall is covered with police sketches of the serial rapist who has terrorized a dozen women and girls in Pierce and King counties since the first incident Aug. 4.

Also plastering the wall are reports, a long chart listing the names of victims, times and dates of attacks, descriptions of the rapist and his means of escape.

"On a scale of one to 10, how much do I want to catch this guy? A 36," Pollard says.

For Lt. Nik Dunbar, who heads the manhunt, his second home is the no-frills sedan in which he cruises the areas where the rapist has hit.

"Your world all of a sudden becomes the rapist, the victim and the other officers who are in the vicinity working the case," Dunbar said. "Some cases are too hard to let go."

For Dunbar and more than a dozen colleagues on the case, 12-hour days have become routine.

On a typical day since the attacks began, the squad of eight Pierce County officers, five Tacoma officers and three Kent investigators meet just after 8 a.m. to divide up the most promising leads and discuss the case. The they go to work — some behind the wheel of a car, some staking out suspects, others taking turns at the hotline,

waiting for tips to dribble in.

Pollard says all the tips are checked out. Investigators are gaining a broader picture of the medium-built white man in his 20s or 30s, who wears glasses and frequently changes his facial hair.

He drives a light-colored, two-door hatchback. He probably is busy on weekends, since he has struck only during the week, and is probably a regular at strip clubs. He probably lives within a mile of the first attack and probably has a girlfriend or wife.

Investigators distributed the fifth artist's sketch of the suspect Tuesday.

"There's a million eyes out there," Pollard said. "You see someone out there being bothered by someone, do something."

The rapist hasn't attacked since Oct. 23, but authorities said no one should lower their guard. He's paused between attacks for as long as 10 days before.

"We think he could attack at any time," said Tacoma police spokesman Jim Mattheis.

Authorities say they believe the thrill of stalking the victim and grabbing her is a big part of the excitement for the man — as is the risk of being caught.

They also say they think he is a passive person: Most of the time, when the victim screams and fights back, he runs. So far he hasn't hit or stabbed anyone, though he has threatened women with sharp objects.