

UP Front

ANTITERROR TECH

MORE FINGERS
ON THE JAM BUTTON?

A BATTLE is shaping up in a high-tech corner of the antiterror world. A Coral Springs (Fla.) entrepreneur has sued the **FCC**, contending that the agency is wrongly invoking the Communications Act of 1934 to continue to prevent local authorities from buying the same jamming devices used by the military and feds to cripple remote-control bombs, some of which are triggered by cell phones.

Howard Melamed, CEO of **CellAntenna**, which sells such jamming devices to the U.S. government, filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Florida. His argument: that the 2002 Homeland Security Act, which requires authorities to take all necessary steps to fight terrorism, takes precedence over the earlier law, which says only the feds can buy devices that interfere with the nation's airwaves. "It makes no sense why a bomb squad shouldn't be allowed to use jamming equipment," Melamed says. He adds he wouldn't mind if his rivals got all the business should he manage to overturn the law. "It would

be my pleasure," he says.

Would local police like access to jammers? "If federal law were to relax somehow, of course we would like to be able to purchase whatever is out there to help in the fight against terror," says detective Delrish Moss, a spokesman for the **Miami Police Dept.** But, he adds, "at a moment's notice, federal agencies are at our side to help with brain-and manpower as well as equipment."

The **Justice Dept.** wants the court to throw out the suit, claiming CellAntenna hasn't suffered economic damage and thus has no standing. The case is scheduled to be heard in December.

—Dean Foust