

Japan, U.S. reach trade accord



News... in a Minute

TOKYO (AP) — In Washington, the talk was of how a trade war was staved off. In Japan, they're wondering whether this is just a lull in the fighting.

The Clinton administration is hailing a trio of market-opening trade accords reached over the weekend that should result in billions of dollars more in sales of American goods and services in Japan.

U.S. officials also say Saturday's agreements on insurance, flat glass and government procurement of telecommunications and medical equipment could help put the acrimonious U.S.-Japanese trade relationship on a new footing.

In Tokyo, the accords were welcomed, but much is being made of the lingering threat of sanctions over autos and auto parts, which account for 60 percent of the United States' record \$60 billion trade deficit with Japan.

Japanese news reports about the agreements were peppered with the phrase "sanbyaku ichi," or 301, a section of U.S. trade law that provides for keeping an eye on Japanese practices in that sector while talks are held.

Washington said it would begin talks over the next 12 to 18 months on

opening Japan's auto market. But it refrained from citing Japan under the far harsher "super" 301 provision, which can be used to unilaterally punish countries designated as unfair traders.

Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's point man in the talks, said even the possibility of sanctions if the new round of auto talks fails is "very regrettable."

"We would like to make clear that we reserve all rights to take every measure, if the United States applies a unilateral measure to us," he said in a statement upon his return to Japan on Sunday.

Japan has said previously it might opt to break off talks under the threat of sanctions.

A key sticking point in the talks had been how to measure growth in market share. Japanese officials returned from Washington saying they had held the line against numerical trade targets, which they had strongly opposed.

The United States, however, said it had only wanted to set up objective criteria for measuring progress, and that the accords satisfied that goal without setting specific market-share targets.

The talks leading up to Saturday's

agreements coincided with a time of extraordinary political turmoil in Japan. The country is on its fourth prime minister since the talks began 15 months ago.

Failure to reach an accord could have further weakened the government of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, whose Socialists govern in an uneasy alliance with the conservative Liberal Democrats.

More political instability could delay deregulation and tax reform, seen by the United States as crucial to stimulating the Japanese market and making it more accessible to foreign goods and services.

The trade accord also comes at a time when both Washington and Tokyo have had enough of the surging yen. Early on in the dispute, the United States talked up the yen to put pressure on Japan, whose exports are hurt by a strong yen. But with the dollar hitting record lows against the yen, Washington has long abandoned that tactic.

After months of back-and-forth sniping, the agreements show that both sides realize that a trade war between the world's two biggest economies would be deeply damaging to both.

Lawyers predict no conviction

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A majority of lawyers in a national poll think O.J. Simpson will not be convicted in his murder trial.

Sixty-one percent believe the trial will result in either acquittal or a hung jury for Simpson in the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman, The National Law Journal reported in Monday's edition.

"I hope those lawyers get to serve on the jury," Simpson attorney Robert Shapiro told the legal journal.

In the survey, 78 percent of the lawyers said intense media coverage of the case reduces the likelihood of the ex-football player receiving a fair trial.

The same percentage thought the judge should issue a gag order prohibiting all parties from discussing the case publicly.

The telephone survey by Penn & Schoen Associates included 311 randomly selected lawyers interviewed Sept. 23-26. Results have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 6 percentage points.

Japan sends troops to Rwanda

GOMA, Zaire (AP) — The first unit of Japanese ground troops deployed under Japanese command since World War II landed in Goma Sunday on a mission that could lead to a greater Japanese role in international peacekeeping.

"This is our first humanitarian mission in Japanese history," said Col. Mitsunobu Kamimoto, commander of the Armed Self-Defense Forces. "This mission will be a standard for Japanese international contributions in the future."

He said he hoped Japan would "take its place ... in the world" after the mission, which will focus on providing medical support, water and sanitation for some of the 850,000 Rwandan refugees in the Goma area.

Japan, a country of strong pacifist sentiments since World War II, bans the use of its troops to settle international disputes.

McDonald house opens in Omaha

By Ken Paulman
Staff Reporter

Gov. Ben Nelson and Ronald McDonald himself were in Omaha on Friday to celebrate the grand opening of Nebraska's first Ronald McDonald House.

The house, which is the 155th in the world, is intended to provide housing for the families of seriously ill children hospitalized in the Omaha area.

The 11,000-square-foot facility, located at 620 S. 38th Ave. in Omaha, is within walking distance of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The house provides all the amenities of home

and can provide for up to 10 families. The house is operated locally by The Heartland Children's Association, a volunteer, nonprofit organization.

Families who stay at the house are asked to pay a minimum donation of \$7.50 a night to help fund operating costs. Other donations cover the rest of the expenses.

One of the donors is Alpha Delta Pi Sorority at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Ronald McDonald House is the sorority's national philanthropy, and all the money raised by Alpha Delta Pi will go toward the house in Omaha.

In addition to financial support, the sorority will continue to volunteer at the

house, said Kristen Balelo, the sorority's philanthropy chairwoman and a senior English major.

Brenda Glessner of Junction City, Kan., will be one of the first to move into the house. Glessner's daughter, 10-year-old Emily, has been at an Omaha hospital since July for bone marrow transplants.

Glessner said the house was "quite a blessing" and provided a positive atmosphere that should help alleviate the stress of the past few months. She said Emily was all smiles when she learned her mother was staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

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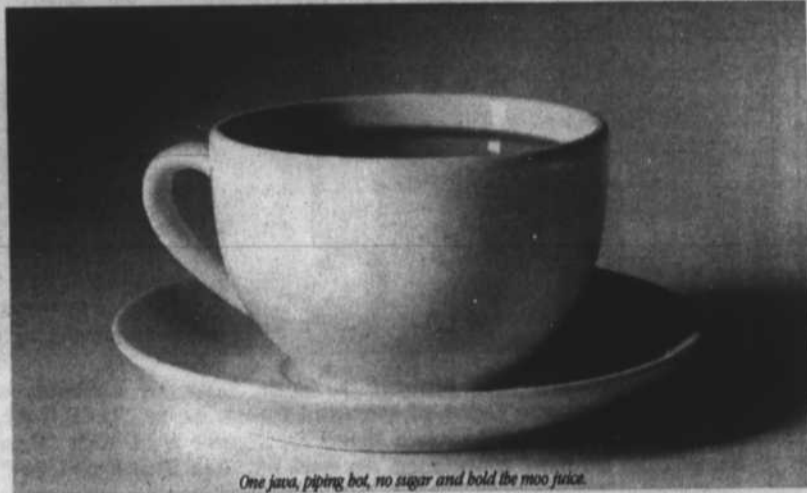
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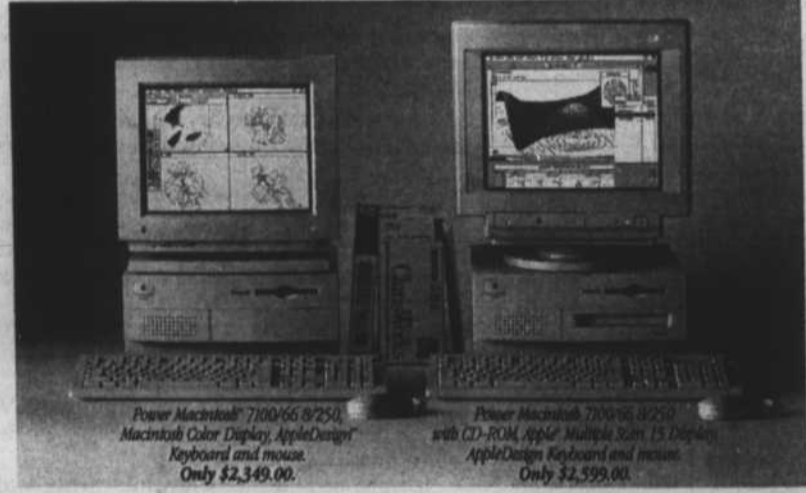
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